Chapter 5

Marguerite

In a moment the pleasant oak-raftered coffee-room of the inn became the scene of hopeless confusion and discomfort. At the first announcement made by the stable boy, Lord Antony, with a fashionable oath, had jumped up from his seat and was now giving many and confused directions to poor bewildered Jellyband, who seemed at his wits' end what to do.

'For goodness' sake, man,' admonished his lordship, 'try to keep Lady Blakeney talking outside for a moment, while the ladies withdraw. Zounds!' he added, with another more emphatic oath, 'this is most unfortunate.'

'Quick, Sally! the candles!' shouted Jellyband, as hopping about from one leg to another, he ran hither and thither, adding to the general discomfort of everybody.

The Comtesse, too, had risen to her feet: rigid and erect, trying to hide her excitement beneath more becoming *sang-froid*, she repeated mechanically,—

'I will not see her!—I will not see her!'

Outside, the excitement attendant upon the arrival of very important guests grew apace.

'Good-day, Sir Percy!—Good-day to your ladyship! Your servant, Sir Percy!'—was heard in one long, continued chorus, with alternate more feeble tones of—'Remember the poor blind man! of your charity, lady and gentleman!'

Then suddenly a singularly sweet voice was heard through all the din.

'Let the poor man be—and give him some supper at my expense.'

The voice was low and musical, with a slight sing-song in it, and a faint *soupçon* of foreign intonation in the pronunciation of the consonants.

Everyone in the coffee-room heard it and paused, instinctively listening to it for a moment. Sally was holding the candles by the opposite door, which led to the bedrooms upstairs, and the Comtesse was in the act of beating a hasty retreat before that enemy who owned such a sweet musical voice; Suzanne reluctantly was preparing to follow her mother, whilst casting regretful glances towards the door, where she hoped still to see her dearly-beloved, erstwhile school-fellow.

Then Jellyband threw open the door, still stupidly and blindly hoping to avert the catastrophe which he felt was in the air, and the same low, musical voice said, with a merry laugh and mock consternation,—

'B-r-r-r-r! I am as wet as a herring! *Dieu*! has anyone ever seen such a contemptible climate?'

'Suzanne, come with me at once—I wish it,' said the Comtesse, peremptorily.

'Oh! Mama!' pleaded Suzanne.

'My lady…er…h'm!…my lady!…' came in feeble accents from Jellyband, who stood clumsily trying to bar the way.

'*Pardieu*, my good man,' said Lady Blakeney, with some impatience, 'what are you standing in my way for, dancing about like a turkey with a sore foot? Let me get to the fire, I am perished with the cold.'

And the next moment Lady Blakeney, gently pushing mine host on one side, had swept into the coffee-room.

There are many portraits and miniatures extant of Marguerite St Just—Lady Blakeney as she was then—but it is doubtful if any of these really do her singular beauty justice. Tall, above the average, with magnificent presence and regal figure, it is small wonder that even the Comtesse paused for a moment in involuntary admiration before turning her back on so fascinating an apparition.

Marguerite Blakeney was then scarcely five-and-twenty, and her beauty was at its most dazzling stage. The large hat, with its undulating and waving plumes, threw a soft shadow across the classic brow with the aureole of auburn hair—free at the moment from any powder; the sweet, almost childlike mouth, the straight chiselled nose, round chin, and delicate throat, all seemed set off by the picturesque costume of the period. The rich blue velvet robe moulded in its every line the graceful contour of the figure, whilst one tiny hand held,

feud between him and my cousin, the Marquis de St Cyr. The St Justs are quite plebeian, and the republican government employs many spies. I assure you there is no mistake…You had not heard this story?'

'Faith, Madame, I did hear some vague rumours of it, but in England no one would credit it…Sir Percy Blakeney, her husband, is a very wealthy man, of high social position, the intimate friend of the Prince of Wales…and Lady Blakeney leads both fashion and society in London.'

'That may be, Monsieur, and we shall, of course, lead a very quiet life in England, but I pray God that while I remain in this beautiful country, I may never meet Marguerite St Just.'

The proverbial wet-blanket seemed to have fallen over the merry little company gathered round the table. Suzanne looked sad and silent; Sir Andrew fidgeted uneasily with his fork, whilst the Comtesse, encased in the plate-armour of her aristocratic prejudices, sat, rigid and unbending, in her straight-backed chair. As for Lord Antony, he looked extremely uncomfortable, and glanced once or twice apprehensively towards Jellyband, who looked just as uncomfortable as himself.

'At what time do you expect Sir Percy and Lady Blakeney?' he contrived to whisper unobserved, to mine host.

'Any moment, my lord,' whispered Jellyband in reply.

Even as he spoke, a distant clatter was heard of an approaching coach; louder and louder it grew, one or two shouts became distinguishable, then the rattle of horses' hoofs on the uneven cobble stones, and the next moment a stable boy had thrown open the coffee-room door and rushed in excitedly.

'Sir Percy Blakeney and my lady,' he shouted at the top of his voice, 'they're just arriving.'

And with more shouting, jingling of harness, and iron hoofs upon the stones, a magnificent coach, drawn by four superb bays, had halted outside the porch of 'The Fisherman's Rest.'

And all only for sport? Impossible! Suzanne's eyes as she sought those of Sir Andrew plainly told him that she thought that *he* at any rate rescued his fellow-men from terrible and unmerited death, through a higher and nobler motive than his friend would have her believe.

'How many are there in your brave league, Monsieur?' she asked timidly.

'Twenty all told, Mademoiselle,' he replied, 'one to command, and nineteen to obey. All of us Englishmen, and all pledged to the same cause—to obey our leader and to rescue the innocent.'

'May God protect you all, Messieurs,' said the Comtesse, fervently.

'He has done that so far, Madame.'

'It is wonderful to me, wonderful!—That you should all be so brave, so devoted to your fellow-men—yet you are English!—and in France treachery is rife—all in the name of liberty and fraternity.'

'The women even, in France, have been more bitter against us aristocrats than the men,' said the Vicomte, with a sigh.

'Ah, yes,' added the Comtesse, whilst a look of haughty disdain and intense bitterness shot through her melancholy eyes. 'There was that woman, Marguerite St Just, for instance. She denounced the Marquis de St Cyr and all his family to the awful tribunal of the Terror.'

'Marguerite St Just?' said Lord Antony, as he shot a quick and apprehensive glance across at Sir Andrew. 'Marguerite St Just?— Surely…'

'Yes!' replied the Comtesse, 'surely you know her. She was a leading actress of the Comédie Française, and she married an Englishman lately. You must know her— '

'Know her?' said Lord Antony. 'Know Lady Blakeney—the most fashionable woman in London—the wife of the richest man in England? Of course, we all know Lady Blakeney.'

'She was a school-fellow of mine at the convent in Paris,' interposed Suzanne, 'and we came over to England together to learn your language. I was very fond of Marguerite, and I cannot believe that she ever did anything so wicked.'

'It certainly seems incredible,' said Sir Andrew. 'You say that she actually denounced the Marquis de St Cyr? Why should she have done such a thing? Surely there must be some mistake— '

'No mistake is possible, Monsieur,' rejoined the Comtesse, coldly. 'Marguerite St Just's brother is a noted republican. There was some talk of a family

with a dignity all its own, the tall stick adorned with a large bunch of ribbons which fashionable ladies of the period had taken to carrying recently.

With a quick glance all around the room, Marguerite Blakeney had taken stock of everyone there. She nodded pleasantly to Sir Andrew Ffoulkes, whilst extending a hand to Lord Antony.

'Hello! my Lord Tony, why—what are *you* doing here in Dover?' she said merrily.

Then, without waiting for a reply, she turned and faced the Comtesse and Suzanne. Her whole face lighted up with additional brightness, as she stretched out both arms towards the young girl.

'Why! if that isn't my little Suzanne over there. *Pardieu*, little citizeness, how came you to be in England? And Madame too!'

She went up effusively to them both, with not a single touch of embarrassment in her manner or in her smile. Lord Tony and Sir Andrew watched the little scene with eager apprehension. English though they were, they had often been in France, and had mixed sufficiently with the French to realise the unbending hauteur, the bitter hatred with which the old *noblesse* of France viewed all those who had helped to contribute to their downfall. Armand St Just, the brother of beautiful Lady Blakeney—though known to hold moderate and conciliatory views—was an ardent republican; his feud with the ancient family of St Cyr—the rights and wrongs of which no outsider ever knew—had culminated in the downfall, the almost total extinction, of the latter. In France, St Just and his party had triumphed, and here in England, face to face with these three refugees driven from their country, flying for their lives, bereft of all which centuries of luxury had given them, there stood a fair scion of those same republican families which had hurled down a throne, and uprooted an aristocracy whose origin was lost in the dim and distant vista of bygone centuries.

She stood there before them, in all the unconscious insolence of beauty, and stretched out her dainty hand to them, as if she would, by that one act, bridge over the conflict and bloodshed of the past decade.

'Suzanne, I forbid you to speak to that woman,' said the Comtesse, sternly, as she placed a restraining hand upon her daughter's arm.

She had spoken in English, so that all might hear and understand; the two young English gentlemen as well as the common innkeeper and his daughter.

The latter literally gasped with horror at this foreign insolence, this impudence before her ladyship—who was English, now that she was Sir Percy's wife, and a friend of the Princess of Wales to boot.

As for Lord Antony and Sir Andrew Ffoulkes, their very hearts seemed to stand still with horror at this gratuitous insult. One of them uttered an exclamation of appeal, the other one of warning, and instinctively both glanced hurriedly towards the door, whence a slow, drawly, not unpleasant voice had already been heard.

Alone among those present Marguerite Blakeney and the Comtesse de Tournay had remained seemingly unmoved. The latter, rigid, erect and defiant, with one hand still upon her daughter's arm, seemed the very personification of unbending pride. For the moment Marguerite's sweet face had become as white as the soft fichu which swathed her throat, and a very keen observer might have noted that the hand which held the tall, beribboned stick was clenched, and trembled somewhat.

But this was only momentary; the next instant the delicate eyebrows were raised slightly, the lips curved sarcastically upwards, the clear blue eyes looked straight at the rigid Comtesse, and with a slight shrug of the shoulders—

'Hoity-toity, citizeness,' she said gaily, 'what fly stings you, pray?'

'We are in England now, Madame,' rejoined the Comtesse, coldly, 'and I am at liberty to forbid my daughter to touch your hand in friendship. Come, Suzanne.'

She beckoned to her daughter, and without another look at Marguerite Blakeney, but with a deep, old-fashioned curtsey to the two young men, she sailed majestically out of the room.

There was silence in the old inn parlour for a moment, as the rustle of the Comtesse's skirts died away down the passage. Marguerite, rigid as a statue, followed with hard, set eyes the upright figure, as it disappeared through the doorway—but as little Suzanne, humble and obedient, was about to follow her mother, the hard, set expression suddenly vanished, and a wistful, almost pathetic and childlike look stole into Lady Blakeney's eyes.

Little Suzanne caught that look; the child's sweet nature went out to the beautiful woman, scarce older than herself; filial obedience vanished before girlish sympathy; at the door she turned, ran back to Marguerite, and putting her arms round her, kissed her effusively; then only did she follow her mother,

'Faith, Madame, I would like you to find it then…as for me, I vow, I love the game, for this is the finest sport I have yet encountered.—Hair-breadth escapes…the devil's own risks!—Tally ho!—and away we go!'

But the Comtesse shook her head, still incredulously. To her it seemed preposterous that these young men and their great leader, all of them rich, probably well-born, and young, should for no other motive than sport, run the terrible risks, which she knew they were constantly doing. Their nationality, once they had set foot in France, would be no safeguard to them. Anyone found harbouring or assisting suspected royalists would be ruthlessly condemned and summarily executed, whatever his nationality might be. And this band of young Englishmen had, to her own knowledge, bearded the implacable and bloodthirsty tribunal of the Revolution, within the very walls of Paris itself, and had snatched away condemned victims, almost from the very foot of the guillotine. With a shudder, she recalled the events of the last few days, her escape from Paris with her two children, all three of them hidden beneath the hood of a rickety cart, and lying amidst a heap of turnips and cabbages, not daring to breathe, whilst the mob howled 'À la lanterne les aristos!' at that awful West Barricade.

It had all occurred in such a miraculous way; she and her husband had understood that they had been placed on the list of 'suspected persons,' which meant that their trial and death were but a matter of days—of hours, perhaps.

Then came the hope of salvation; the mysterious epistle, signed with the enigmatical scarlet device; the clear, peremptory directions; the parting from the Comte de Tournay, which had torn the poor wife's heart in two; the hope of reunion; the flight with her two children; the covered cart; that awful hag driving it, who looked like some horrible evil demon, with the ghastly trophy on her whip handle!

The Comtesse looked round at the quaint, old-fashioned English inn, the peace of this land of civil and religious liberty, and she closed her eyes to shut out the haunting vision of that West Barricade, and of the mob retreating panic-stricken when the old hag spoke of the plague.

Every moment under that cart she expected recognition, arrest, herself and her children tried and condemned, and these young Englishmen, under the guidance of their brave and mysterious leader, had risked their lives to save them all, as they had already saved scores of other innocent people.

'The Scarlet Pimpernel?' said Suzanne, with a merry laugh. 'Why! what a droll name! What is the Scarlet Pimpernel, Monsieur?'

She looked at Sir Andrew with eager curiosity. The young man's face had become almost transfigured. His eyes shone with enthusiasm; hero-worship, love, admiration for his leader seemed literally to glow upon his face.

'The Scarlet Pimpernel, Mademoiselle,' he said at last, 'is the name of a humble English wayside flower; but it is also the name chosen to hide the identity of the best and bravest man in all the world, so that he may better succeed in accomplishing the noble task he has set himself to do.'

'Ah, yes,' here interposed the young Vicomte, 'I have heard speak of this Scarlet Pimpernel. A little flower—red?—yes! They say in Paris that every time a royalist escapes to England that devil, Foucquier-Tinville, the Public Prosecutor, receives a paper with that little flower dessinated in red upon it… Yes?'

'Yes, that is so,' assented Lord Antony.

'Then he will have received one such paper to-day?'

'Undoubtedly.'

'Oh! I wonder what he will say!' said Suzanne, merrily. 'I have heard that the picture of that little red flower is the only thing that frightens him.'

'Faith, then,' said Sir Andrew, 'he will have many more opportunities of studying the shape of that small scarlet flower.'

'Ah! Monsieur,' sighed the Comtesse, 'it all sounds like a romance, and I cannot understand it all.'

'Why should you try, Madame?'

'But, tell me, why should your leader—why should you all—spend your money and risk your lives—for it is your lives you risk, Messieurs, when you set foot in France—and all for us French men and women, who are nothing to you?'

'Sport, Madame la Comtesse, sport,' asserted Lord Antony, with his jovial, loud and pleasant voice; 'we are a nation of sportsmen, you know, and just now it is the fashion to pull the hare from between the teeth of the hound.'

'Ah, no, no, not sport only, Monsieur…you have a more noble motive, I am sure, for the good work you do.'

Sally bringing up the rear, with a pleasant smile on her dimpled face, and with a final curtsey to my lady.

Suzanne's sweet and dainty impulse had relieved the unpleasant tension. Sir Andrew's eyes followed the pretty little figure, until it had quite disappeared, then they met Lady Blakeney's with unassumed merriment.

Marguerite, with dainty affectation, had kissed her hand to the ladies, as they disappeared through the door, then a humorous smile began hovering round the corners of her mouth.

'So that's it, is it?' she said gaily. 'La! Sir Andrew, did you ever see such an unpleasant person? I hope when I grow old I sha'n't look like that.'

She gathered up her skirts, and assuming a majestic gait, stalked towards the fireplace.

'Suzanne,' she said, mimicking the Comtesse's voice, 'I forbid you to speak to that woman!'

The laugh which accompanied this sally sounded perhaps a trifle forced and hard, but neither Sir Andrew nor Lord Tony were very keen observers. The mimicry was so perfect, the tone of the voice so accurately reproduced, that both the young men joined in a hearty cheerful 'Bravo!'

'Ah! Lady Blakeney!' added Lord Tony, 'how they must miss you at the Comédie Française, and how the Parisians must hate Sir Percy for having taken you away.'

'Lud, man,' rejoined Marguerite, with a shrug of her graceful shoulders, ''tis impossible to hate Sir Percy for anything; his witty sallies would disarm even Madame la Comtesse herself.'

The young Vicomte, who had not elected to follow his mother in her dignified exit, now made a step forward, ready to champion the Comtesse should Lady Blakeney aim any further shafts at her. But before he could utter a preliminary word of protest, a pleasant, though distinctly inane laugh, was heard from outside, and the next moment an unusually tall and very richly dressed figure appeared in the doorway.

me so solemnly that my husband would be safe. But, oh! now that I am here—amongst you all—in this beautiful, free England—I think of him, flying for his life, hunted like a poor beast…in such peril…Ah! I should not have left him…I should not have left him!…'

The poor woman had completely broken down; fatigue, sorrow and emotion had overmastered her rigid, aristocratic bearing. She was crying gently to herself, whilst Suzanne ran up to her and tried to kiss away her tears.

Lord Antony and Sir Andrew had said nothing to interrupt the Comtesse whilst she was speaking. There was no doubt that they felt deeply for her; their very silence testified to that—but in every century, and ever since England has been what it is, an Englishman has always felt somewhat ashamed of his own emotion and of his own sympathy. And so the two young men said nothing, and busied themselves in trying to hide their feelings, only succeeding in looking immeasurably sheepish.

'As for me, Monsieur,' said Suzanne, suddenly, as she looked through a wealth of brown curls across at Sir Andrew, 'I trust you absolutely, and I *know* that you will bring my dear father safely to England, just as you brought us to-day.'

This was said with so much confidence, such unuttered hope and belief, that it seemed as if by magic to dry the mother's eyes, and to bring a smile upon everybody's lips.

'Nay! you shame me, Mademoiselle,' replied Sir Andrew; 'though my life is at your service, I have been but a humble tool in the hands of our great leader, who organised and effected your escape.'

He had spoken with so much warmth and vehemence that Suzanne's eyes fastened upon him in undisguised wonder.

'Your leader, Monsieur?' said the Comtesse, eagerly. 'Ah! of course, you must have a leader. And I did not think of that before! But tell me where is he? I must go to him at once, and I and my children must throw ourselves at his feet, and thank him for all that he has done for us.'

'Alas, Madame!' said Lord Antony, 'that is impossible.'

'Impossible?—Why?'

'Because the Scarlet Pimpernel works in the dark, and his identity is only known under a solemn oath of secrecy to his immediate followers.'

'To His Majesty George Three of England. God bless him for his hospitality to us all, poor exiles from France.'

'His Majesty the King!' echoed Lord Antony and Sir Andrew as they drank loyally to the toast.

'To His Majesty King Louis of France,' added Sir Andrew, with solemnity. 'May God protect him, and give him victory over his enemies.'

Everyone rose and drank this toast in silence. The fate of the unfortunate King of France, then a prisoner of his own people, seemed to cast a gloom even over Mr Jellyband's pleasant countenance.

'And to M. le Comte de Tournay de Basserive,' said Lord Antony, merrily. 'May we welcome him in England before many days are over.'

'Ah, Monsieur,' said the Comtesse, as with a slightly trembling hand she conveyed her glass to her lips, 'I scarcely dare to hope.'

But already Lord Antony had served out the soup, and for the next few moments all conversation ceased, while Jellyband and Sally handed round the plates and everyone began to eat.

'Faith, Madame!' said Lord Antony, after a while, 'mine was no idle toast; seeing yourself, Mademoiselle Suzanne and my friend the Vicomte safely in England now, surely you must feel reassured as to the fate of Monsieur le Comte.'

'Ah, Monsieur,' replied the Comtesse, with a heavy sigh, 'I trust in God—I can but pray—and hope…'

'Aye, Madame!' here interposed Sir Andrew Ffoulkes, 'trust in God by all means, but believe also a little in your English friends, who have sworn to bring the Count safely across the Channel, even as they have brought you to-day.'

'Indeed, indeed, Monsieur,' she replied, 'I have the fullest confidence in you and in your friends. Your fame, I assure you, has spread throughout the whole of France. The way some of my own friends have escaped from the clutches of that awful revolutionary tribunal was nothing short of a miracle—and all done by you and your friends— '

'We were but the hands, Madame la Comtesse…'

'But my husband, Monsieur,' said the Comtesse, whilst unshed tears seemed to veil her voice, 'he is in such deadly peril—I would never have left him, only…there were my children…I was torn between my duty to him, and to them. They refused to go without me…and you and your friends assured

Chapter 6

An Exquisite of '92

SIR Percy Blakeney, as the chronicles of the time inform us, was in this year of grace 1792, still a year or two on the right side of thirty. Tall, above the average, even for an Englishman, broad-shouldered and massively built, he would have been called unusually good-looking, but for a certain lazy expression in his deep-set blue eyes, and that perpetual inane laugh which seemed to disfigure his strong, clearly-cut mouth.

It was nearly a year ago now that Sir Percy Blakeney, Bart., one of the richest men in England, leader of all the fashions, and intimate friend of the Prince of Wales, had astonished fashionable society in London and Bath by bringing home, from one of his journeys abroad, a beautiful, fascinating, clever, French wife. He, the sleepiest, dullest, most British Britisher that had ever set a pretty woman yawning, had secured a brilliant matrimonial prize for which, as all chroniclers aver, there had been many competitors.

Marguerite St Just had first made her *début* in artistic Parisian circles, at the very moment when the greatest social upheaval the world has ever known was taking place within its very walls. Scarcely eighteen, lavishly gifted with beauty and talent, chaperoned only by a young and devoted brother, she had soon gathered round her, in her charming apartment in the Rue Richelieu, a coterie which was as brilliant as it was exclusive—exclusive, that is to say, only from one point of view: Marguerite St Just was from principle and by conviction a republican—equality of birth was her motto—inequality of fortune was in her eyes a mere untoward accident, but the only inequality she admitted was that of talent. 'Money and titles may be hereditary,' she would say, 'but brains are not,' and thus her charming salon was reserved for originality and intellect,

for brilliance and wit, for clever men and talented women, and the entrance into it was soon looked upon in the world of intellect—which even in those days and in those troublous times found its pivot in Paris—as the seal to an artistic career.

Clever men, distinguished men, and even men of exalted station formed a perpetual and brilliant court round the fascinating young actress of the Comédie Française, and she glided through republican, revolutionary, bloodthirsty Paris like a shining comet with a trail behind her of all that was most distinguished, most interesting, in intellectual Europe.

Then the climax came. Some smiled indulgently and called it an artistic eccentricity, others looked upon it as a wise provision, in view of the many events which were crowding thick and fast in Paris just then, but to all, the real motive of that climax remained a puzzle and a mystery. Anyway, Marguerite St Just married Sir Percy Blakeney one fine day, just like that, without any warning to her friends, without a *soirée de contrat* or *dîner de fiançailles* or other appurtenances of a fashionable French wedding.

How that stupid, dull Englishman ever came to be admitted within the intellectual circle which revolved round 'the cleverest woman in Europe,' as her friends unanimously called her, no one ventured to guess—a golden key is said to open every door, asserted the more malignantly inclined.

Enough, she married him, and 'the cleverest woman in Europe' had linked her fate to that 'demmed idiot' Blakeney, and not even her most intimate friends could assign to this strange step any other motive than that of supreme eccentricity. Those friends who knew, laughed to scorn the idea that Marguerite St Just had married a fool for the sake of the worldly advantages with which he might endow her. They knew, as a matter of fact, that Marguerite St Just cared nothing about money, and still less about a title; moreover, there were at least half a dozen other men in the cosmopolitan world equally well-born, if not so wealthy as Blakeney, who would have been only too happy to give Marguerite St Just any position she might choose to covet.

As for Sir Percy himself, he was universally voted to be totally unqualified for the onerous post he had taken upon himself. His chief qualifications for it seemed to consist in his blind adoration for her, his great wealth, and the high favour in which he stood at the English court; but London society thought that, taking into consideration his own intellectual limitations, it would have

Chapter 4

The League of the Scarlet Pimpernel

THEY all looked a merry, even a happy party, as they sat round the table; Sir Andrew Ffoulkes and Lord Antony Dewhurst, two typical good-looking, well-born and well-bred Englishmen of that year of grace 1792, and the aristocratic French comtesse with her two children, who had just escaped from such dire perils, and found a safe retreat at last on the shores of protecting England.

In the corner the two strangers had apparently finished their game; one of them arose, and standing with his back to the merry company at the table, he adjusted with much deliberation his large triple caped coat. As he did so, he gave one quick glance all around him. Everyone was busy laughing and chatting, and he murmured the words 'All safe!': his companion then, with the alertness borne of long practice, slipped on to his knees in a moment, and the next had crept noiselessly under the oak bench. The stranger then, with a loud 'Good-night,' quietly walked out of the coffee-room.

Not one of those at the supper table had noticed this curious and silent manœuvre, but when the stranger finally closed the door of the coffee-room behind him, they all instinctively sighed a sigh of relief.

'Alone, at last!' said Lord Antony, jovially.

Then the young Vicomte de Tournay rose, glass in hand, and with the graceful affectation peculiar to the times, he raised it aloft, and said in broken English,—