



Mrs. E. D. Child







THE  
PAGE OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY







"HAVE YOU THE WICK?" ASKED THE ONE WHO CARRIED THE LANTERN

*Dumas, Vol. Twenty*



THE WORKS OF  
**ALEXANDRE DUMAS**

IN THIRTY VOLUMES



THE PAGE OF THE  
DUKE OF SAVOY

VOLUME ONE



ILLUSTRATED WITH DRAWINGS ON WOOD BY  
EMINENT FRENCH AND AMERICAN ARTISTS



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# THE PAGE OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY

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## *FIRST PART*

### I

WHAT A MAN, IF PLACED ON THE HIGHEST TOWER OF HESDIN-FERT, MIGHT HAVE SEEN ON THE 5TH OF MAY, 1555, AT ABOUT TWO O'CLOCK IN THE AFTER-NOON

LET us at once transport, without further preface or preamble, those of our readers who do not fear to take a leap of three centuries across the past in our company, into the presence of men we would have them know, and into the midst of events we would have them witness.

The time is the 5th of May, of the year 1555. Henry II. is reigning over France; Mary Tudor over England; Charles V. over Spain, Germany, Flanders, Italy, and the two Indies—that is to say, over a sixth part of the world.

The scene opens in the neighborhood of the little town of Hesdin-Fert, which Emmanuel Philibert, Prince of Piedmont, has lately rebuilt, intending it to take the place of Hesdin-la-Vieux, captured by him last year, and razed to the ground. So you see we are travelling in that part of old France which was then called Artois, and which is known to-day as the department of the Pas-de-Calais.

We say of old France, because Artois did actually become a portion of the patrimony of our kings under Philippe-Auguste, the conqueror of Saint-Jean-d'Acre and Bouvines; but, though it formed a part of France in

1180, and was given by Saint Louis to his younger brother, Robert, in 1237, it afterward lapsed, somehow or other, into the hands of three women—Mahaud, Jeanne I., and Jeanne II.—thus falling under the control of three different houses. Then, with Marguerite, sister of Jeanne II. and daughter of Jeanne I., it passed to Comte Louis de Mâle, whose daughter brought it, together with the counties of Flanders and Nevers, into the house of the Dukes of Burgundy.

Finally, after the death of Charles the Bold, Mary of Burgundy, the last heiress of the gigantic name and immense possessions of her father, made, on the day she married Maximilian, son of the Emperor Frederick III., both name and possessions part and parcel of the domains of the house of Austria, in which they were swallowed up, as a river is swallowed up in the ocean.

It was a great loss for France, for Artois is a fine and rich province. Consequently, for three years, with varying fortunes and unforeseen results, Henry II. and Charles V. have been struggling face to face, and foot to foot, the one to regain, the other to keep it.

During the furious war in which the son encountered the old enemy of the father, and, like the father, was to have his Marignano and Pavia, each had his good and bad days, his victories and defeats. France had seen the army of Charles V. driven in disorder from the siege of Metz, and had taken Marienbourg, Bouvines and Dinant; the Empire, on the other hand, had stormed Théroutanne and Hesdin, and, furious at its defeat before Metz, had burned the one, and levelled the other to the ground.

We have compared Metz to Marignano, and the comparison is not exaggerated. An army of fifty thousand infantry and fourteen thousand cavalry, decimated by cold and disease, had vanished like a mist, leaving as the sole trace of its existence ten thousand dead, two thousand tents and a hundred and twenty cannon!

So great was the demoralization that the fugitives did

not even try to defend themselves. Charles of Bourbon was pursuing a body of Spanish cavalry; the captain who commanded it halted and rode straight up to the hostile leader.

"Prince, duke, or simple gentleman," he said, "or whatever else you be, if you are fighting for glory, seek it elsewhere; for to-day you are butchering men too feeble to fly, even, far less to resist you."

Charles of Bourbon sheathed his sword, and ordered his men to do the same; and the Spanish captain and his troop continued their retreat without being further troubled by them.

Charles V. was very far from imitating such clemency. When Théroutanne was taken, he ordered it to be delivered up to pillage and razed to the ground. Not only were the private houses destroyed, but even the churches, monasteries, and hospitals; not a vestige of a wall was left standing, and that there might not be one stone left on another, the inhabitants of Flanders and Artois were called in to scatter all that remained.

The summons was eagerly obeyed. The garrison of Théroutanne had been a thorn in the side of the people around, and they flocked to it, armed with spades, hammers and pickaxes, which they plied with such goodwill that the city disappeared like Saguntum under the feet of Hannibal, or Carthage before the breath of Scipio.

Hesdin was treated in the same way as Théroutanne.

But, in the meanwhile, Emmanuel Philibert had been named commander-in-chief of the troops of the Empire in the Low Countries, and, if he could not save Théroutanne, he was at least able to rebuild Hesdin.

He had accomplished this immense work in a few months, and a new city sprang up as if by enchantment, a quarter of a league from the old. This new city, planted in the middle of the swamps of the Mesnil, on the banks of the Canche, was so well fortified that it excited the admiration of Vauban a hundred and fifty years after, although, during the course

of these one hundred and fifty years the system of fortification had entirely changed.

Its founder called it *Hesdin-Fert*; that is to say, he had joined, in order to compel the new city to remember its origin, these four letters to its name, F. E. R. T., given with the white cross by the Emperor of Germany, after the siege of Rhodes, to Amadeus the Great, thirteenth count of Savoy; they signified: *Fortitudo ejus Rhodum tenuit*, which means, "His valor saved Rhodes."

But this was not the only miracle wrought by the promotion of the young general to whom Charles V. had just confided his army. Thanks to the rigid discipline which he established, the unhappy country, which for four years had been the theatre of war, was beginning to breathe; the severest orders were given to prevent pillaging and marauding; every officer guilty of disobedience was disarmed and imprisoned in his tent for a longer or shorter period, in sight of the whole army, and every private, taken in the act, was hanged.

The result was that, as hostilities had very nearly ceased on both sides, during the winter of 1554 and 1555, the last four or five months seemed to the inhabitants of Artois, when compared with the years that had elapsed between the siege of Metz and the reconstruction of Hesdin, something like a golden age.

There was still, now and then, some castle burned here and there, some farm pillaged, or house plundered, either by the French, who held Abbeville, Doullens and Montreuil-sur-Mer, and who ventured on excursions into the enemy's territory, or by the incorrigible marauders, reiters and gypsies who hovered on the outskirts of the imperial army; but Emmanuel Philibert was so successful in clearing the country of the French, and dealt such rough justice to his own soldiers that these catastrophies were becoming daily more rare. Such, then, was the condition of the province of Artois, and especially in the neighborhood of Hesdin-Fert, on the day when our story opens; that is to say, the 5th of May, 1555.



But after giving our readers a rapid sketch of the moral and political state of the country, it remains for us, in order to complete the picture, to give them an idea of its material aspect—an aspect that has totally changed since that period, thanks to the invasions of manufactures and the improvements in agriculture.

In order to accomplish this difficult task, and revive a past that has almost vanished, let us try to depict the scene which would meet the gaze of a spectator standing with his back to the sea on the loftiest tower of Hesdin, and having under his eyes the horizon, extending in a semicircle from the northern extremity of the little chain of hills which hides Béthune, to the last southern bluffs of the same chain at the foot of which Doullens rises.

He would have first, in front of him, advancing in a point toward the banks of the Canche, the thick and gloomy forest of Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise, whose vast green foliage, spread like a mantle over the shoulders of the hills, continued until its borders were dipped in the sources of the Scarpe, which is to the Scheldt what the Moselle is to the Rhine.

To the right of this forest, and, as a consequence, to the left of the observer we are imagining placed on the loftiest tower of Hesdin, at the back of the plain, sheltered by the same hills that bound the horizon, the villages of Enchin and Fruges indicated, by the bluish clouds of smoke which enveloped them like a transparent mist or translucent veil, that the chilly natives of these northern provinces had not yet bid adieu, in spite of the appearance of the first days of spring, to their kitchen fires, those jovial and comforting friends of the days of winter.

In front of these two villages, and not unlike a half-distrustful sentinel, who, though he has ventured to leave the forest, still thinks it better to keep close to its border, rose a pretty little dwelling, half chateau and half farm, called the Parcq.

A road, which shimmered like a gold ribbon on the green robe of the plain, might be seen stretching for some

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