

Mrs. C. L. Anderson.

THE WHITES AND THE BLUES

THE WORKS OF
ALEXANDRE DUMAS

IN THIRTY VOLUMES



THE WHITES AND
THE BLUES



ILLUSTRATED WITH DRAWINGS ON WOOD BY
EMINENT FRENCH AND AMERICAN ARTISTS



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INTRODUCTION

IN THE preface of "The Companions of Jehu" I told why that romance had been written; and those who have read it cannot fail to have seen where I borrowed from Nodier in the description of the execution, of which he was an ocular witness. In short, I borrowed my dénouement from him.

Now "The Whites and the Blues," being a continuation of "The Companions of Jehu," my readers will not be astonished if I again borrow from Nodier for the beginning of my story.

During his long illness, which was simply a gradual decay of physical and vital strength, I was one of his most constant visitors; and as, on account of his incessant labors, he had not had the time to read my books relating to the epoch with which he was so familiar, he sent for the seven or eight hundred volumes while he was ill and confined to his bed, and read them eagerly.

In proportion as he became better acquainted with my methods, his literary confidence in me increased, until, when I spoke to him of his own work, he would reply: "Oh! I have never had time to do more than outline rough drafts of events which, if you had possessed the facts, would have furnished you with material for ten volumes, instead of the two hundred lines that I have made of them."

And thus it was that he came to relate the four pages which served me as the foundation for the three volumes of "The Companions of Jehu," and the anecdote of Euloge Schneider, from which he declared that I would have made at least ten.

"But," he continued, "some day, my friend, you will

write them, and if it is true that any part of us survives, I shall rejoice yonder over your success and shall feel that I have had some share in it."

Well, I have written "The Companions of Jehu," and since the great success which it achieved I have been tormented with a desire to write a great romance, entitled "The Whites and the Blues," from what he told me, taking my point of departure for this new book from Nodier's "Episodes de la Révolution," as I did the motive for a former one from his "Réaction Thermidorienne."

But, as I was about to begin, I was seized by a scruple. This time I wished not only to borrow a few pages from him, but to make him assume a rôle in the action of the drama.

Then I wrote to my dear sister, Marie Mennessier, to request her permission to do what I had already done once without her permission; namely, take a graft from the paternal tree to improve my own stock.

This is what she replied:

Anything and everything that you wish, dear brother Alexandre. I deliver my father to you with as much confidence as if he were your own. His memory is in good hands.

MARIE MENNESSIER-NODIER.

From that moment there was nothing more to stop me; and as I had already outlined my plot, I set to work at once.

I therefore offer this publication to-day; but in giving it to the public, I desire to acquit myself of the following duty:

*This book is dedicated to my illustrious friend and
collaborator,*

CHARLES NODIER.

I have used the word "collaborator," because the trouble I should take in seeking for a better would be thrown away.

ALEX. DUMAS.

THE WHITES AND THE BLUES

PROLOGUE

THE PRUSSIANS ON THE RHINE

CHAPTER I

FROM THE HÔTEL DE LA POSTE TO THE HÔTEL DE LA
LANTERNE

ON THE 21st Frimaire of the year II. (11th of December, 1793), the diligence from Besançon to Strasbourg stopped at nine o'clock in the evening in the courtyard of the Hôtel de la Poste, behind the cathedral.

Five travellers descended from it, but the youngest only merits our attention.

He was a boy of thirteen or fourteen, thin and pale, who might have been taken for a girl dressed in boy's clothes, so sweet and melancholy was the expression of his face. His hair, which he wore cut à la Titus—a fashion which zealous Republicans had adopted in imitation of Talma—was dark brown; eyelashes of the same color shaded eyes of deep blue, which rested, with remarkable intelligence, like two interrogation points, upon men and things. He had thin lips, fine teeth, and a charming smile, and he was dressed in the fashion of the day, if not elegantly, at least so carefully that it was easy to see that a woman had superintended his toilet.

The conductor, who seemed to be particularly watchful of the boy, handed him a small package, like a soldier's knapsack, which could be hung over the shoulders by a pair of straps. Then, looking around, he called: "Hallo!

Is there any one here from the Hôtel de la Lanterne looking for a young traveller from Besançon?"

"I'm here," replied a gruff, coarse voice.

And a man who looked like a groom approached. He was hardly distinguishable in the gloom, in spite of the lantern he carried, which lighted nothing but the pavement at his feet. He turned toward the open door of the huge vehicle.

"Ah! so it's you, Sleepy-head," cried the conductor.

"My name's not Sleepy-head; it's Coclès," replied the groom, in a surly tone, "and I am looking for the citizen Charles."

"You come from citizeness Teutch, don't you?" said the boy, in a soft tone that formed an admirable contrast to the groom's surly tones.

"Yes, from the citizeness Teutch. Well, are you ready, citizen?"

"Conductor," said the boy, "you will tell them at home—"

"That you arrived safely, and that there was some one to meet you; don't worry about that, Monsieur Charles."

"Oh, ho!" said the groom, in a tone verging upon a menace, as he drew near the conductor and the boy.

"Well, what do you mean with your 'Oh, ho'?"

"I mean that the words you use may be all right in the Franche-Comté, but that they are all wrong in Alsace."

"Really," said the conductor, mockingly, "you don't say so?"

"And I would advise you," continued citizen Coclès, "to leave your *monsieurs* in your diligence, as they are not in fashion here in Strasbourg. Especially now that we are so fortunate as to have citizens Lebas and Saint-Just within our walls."

"Get along with your citizens Lebas and Saint-Just! and take this young man to the Hôtel de la Lanterne."

And, without paying further heed to the advice of citizen Coclès, the conductor entered the Hôtel de la Poste.

The man with the torch followed the conductor with his eyes, muttering to himself; then he turned to the boy: "Come on, citizen Charles," he said. And he went on ahead to show the way.

Strasbourg, even at its best, was never a gay, lively town, especially after the tattoo had been beaten for two hours; but it was duller than ever at the time when our story opens; that is to say, during the early part of the month of December, 1793. The Austro-Prussian army was literally at the gates of the city. Pichegru, general-in-chief of the Army of the Rhine, after gathering together all the scattered forces at his command, had, by force of will and his own example, restored discipline and resumed the offensive on the 18th Frimaire, three days before; organizing a war of skirmishing and sharpshooting, since he was powerless to offer battle. He had succeeded Houchard and Custine, who had been guillotined because they had met with reverses, and Alexandre de Beauharnais, who was also in danger of being guillotined.

Furthermore, Saint-Just and Lebas were there, not only commanding Pichegru to conquer, but decreeing the victory. The guillotine followed them, charged with executing their decrees the instant they were made.

And three decrees had been issued that very day.

The first one ordered the gates of Strasbourg to be closed at three o'clock in the afternoon; any one who delayed their closing, if only for five minutes, did so under pain of death.

The second decree forbade any one to flee before the enemy. The rider who put his horse to a gallop, or the foot-soldier who retreated faster than a walk, when turning his back on the enemy on the field of battle, thereby incurred the penalty of death.

The third decree, which was due to fear of being surprised by the enemy, forbade any soldier to remove his clothing at night. Any soldier who disobeyed this order, no matter what his rank, was condemned to death.

The boy who had just entered the city was destined to

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