

## THE MISFORTUNES OF JOHN BULL

### *I. Darnozan*

It was the fault of an Englishman.

Maxime Darnozan had just been shipwrecked on the coast of New Zealand. The entire crew of the *Suzanne* had perished in the catastrophe, save for that extraordinary man, who was able to swim for more than five hours and come ashore in a safe place.

Having taken the precaution, before the ship sank, of putting all the money he possessed on his person, as well as a lifebelt, Maxime did not find himself devoid of resources in Auckland. He only stayed there, in any case, long enough to wait for a steamer, and three days later he left for San Francisco about the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's *Lapwing*.

The story has been inaccurately told of how, thanks to an extremely rare presence of mind, he saved the steamer during the crossing. It was the English newspapers that were the first to mention the fact, when Darnozan began to make them anxious, and, naturally, with their treacherous good faith, they had no scruple about depreciating his action—which was, moreover, the primary cause of what happened thereafter.

The *Lapwing* was making good progress. Four days out from Auckland, she was passing through the Kermadec Islands, traveling at twelve knots. The sea was sullen and the breeze stiff.

Long waves driven by the wind in the same direction as the ship seemed to be marching in step with her, and from time to time they fell in enormous masses on her stern, which groaned.

Maxime, enveloped in his overcoat, was sprawled on a bench on the poop deck, a short distance away from a group of three individuals who were protecting themselves from the splashes of sea-water with the aid of a huge umbrella. One has to be English to take the love of the umbrella to such extremes.

One of the three individuals was Lord Killyett, who was making a world tour in order to complete the education of his daughter, Lady Helena, Duchess of Wentworth. The second was James Wyndham, the *Lapwing's* first lieutenant. The third was Sir Nathaniel Robertson, a brigadier-general in the British Army.

It was nine o'clock in the evening; there was no moon, nor even any stars. The ship had all her lights blazing. It would have been impossible to see land two cables away.

Having straightened up somewhat, Maxime leaned his elbow on the rail and searched the horizon with his gaze. Suddenly, he leapt toward the helmsman, knocked him violently to the deck, and, while applying his Herculean strength to the tiller shouted: "Hard to starboard! Damned ship!"

And almost immediately, an enormous three-master was seen advancing like a gigantic black phantom, with all sails deployed, about to cut the Pacific Mail ship in two.

Fortunately, the *Lapwing* was obedient to her tiller, and obeyed Maxime like a good horse. She turned abruptly to the right. The other ship had, somewhat hastily, made an analogous maneuver, and a frightful cracking sound was heard at the stern.

There were cries, oaths and *damns* from one end of the ship to the other. There was a moment of chaos. A few sailors, anxious for their skin, leapt into the boats, assuming that the ship was about to sink.

Three or four passengers, including Lady Helena Killyett, arrived on the poop deck uttering cries of desperation. The captain came running, while, from the bridge, the officer of the watch commanded a maneuver and ordered the fearful sailors to get out of the lifeboats, under threat of the lash.

In the meantime, the three-master disappeared into the night, and the same hubbub was heard aboard her as on the deck of the *Lapwing*.

Maxime Darnozan had returned the vessel to its course, and made summary apologies to the mariner he has so rudely thrust aside. Then he examined the damage.

“Much ado about nothing,” he said, smiling, to the captain, who demanded to know the cause of all the racket.

“Thanks to this gentleman,” said Lieutenant Wyndham.

“What?”

“The gentleman was the first—and, I dare say, the only one—to see the big ship that was about to cut us in two, and if, instead of taking action, he’d been content to shout a warning, we’d all have gone to perdition.”

“You’re exaggerating,” said Maxime, modestly. “I didn’t do anything out of the ordinary.”

“You saved everybody’s life!” exclaimed General Robertson.

Maxime was surrounded, he was thanked, he was *fêted*, and then everything aboard resumed its customary appearance.

Darnozan, certainly, had not given himself full credit, and there are many people, even among the English, who would have put on infinitely superior airs in his place. He remained modest and cool—but he thought that the passengers, without heaping him with praise, might have treated him a little more graciously.

Now, this is what happened the following day, in the afternoon. The weather was milder than the day before, and the sea not as rough. General Nathaniel Robertson, Lord Killyett, his daughter and two other passengers were having lunch on the poop deck, and chatting as they ate—for Englishmen, in spite of their stiff and surly attitudes, are inexhaustible chatterboxes, who are only exceeded in that regard by Englishwomen.

Lord Killyett was talking, and what he was saying doubtless interested his auditors, for they had drawn closer to him and were listening avidly. On the other hand, the narrator seemed convinced that important matters were at stake, because, in order to be understood by the able seamen or the petty officers, he was speaking French.

“Yes,” he said, “Europe, and Bismarck himself, would be very astonished if they learned that the Egyptian campaign, from Arabi’s *pronunciamento* to the victory of Tel-el-Kebir, has been nothing but a comedy, all of whose details were agreed and regulated in advance.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Egyptian Army officer who called himself Ahmad Arabi, or Arabi Pasha (nowadays more often known as Orabi or Urabi) led a mutiny in 1879 that escalated into a general revolt against the Anglo-French backed administration of Khedive Muhammed Tewfik. He was accepted into Tewfik’s cabinet and started a program of civil and military reforms that worried the European powers, before nationalist demonstrations in Alexandria in 1882 provoked a bombardment by British naval forces commanded by Admiral Edward Seymour; British land forces under General Garnet Wolseley eventually defeated Arabi’s forces at Tel-el-Kebir and then marched on Cairo to take direct control of the government. The French, still weakened by the fallout of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and embroiled in the internal political squabbles of the Third Republic, did not participate in the military campaign

“What! Arabi was...”

“An accomplice, nothing more.”

At that precise moment, Maxime Darnozan arrived on the poop. He heard the last words and pricked up his ears. Either Lord Killyett was ignorant of Maxime’s nationality, or he considered him a person of too little importance to hold back in his presence, and the conversation continued.

The noble lord was an important man in England. He had been Viceroy of India, and had served as Chancellor of the Exchequer twice. Reasons of a private and entirely respectable nature had distanced him from militant politics, but he retained the closest links with the statesmen of the United Kingdom, especially with the diplomats who regarded him as an eminent man.

That elevated situation and the experience of the Duke, who had traveled the world in all directions and whom it was said that kings were pleased to consult, gave Lord Killyett an incontestable authority, and he was known to be too serious to state as fact something that he would not have been able to prove. That is why the declaration that he had just made acquired an indisputable importance in his mouth. The statement that he had just made could be considered as official.

“Every good Englishman,” he continued, “every intelligent subject of Her Majesty, has known for a long time that the Suez Canal was bound to be ours one day. Slowly, but with prudence, the governments of Lord Beaconsfield, like that of Mr. Gladstone, have been preparing for that.”

“Oh, yes—Cyprus!”<sup>2</sup>

“Precisely. England wants, before getting her hands on the Canal, to be in a position to protect it effectively, if necessary. She had Malta, she had Gibraltar; she needed Cyprus; she took it—you know how. All that, anyway, is ancient history—but what you might not know is that the Queen’s government had made advances to Khedive Ismail<sup>3</sup> to know whether he would aid us, when the moment came, to take possession of the route to India.”

“Ismail refused?” queried Sir Nathaniel.

“The Khedive, who always needed money—on which we were counting to get him aboard—sold us, in return for a large sum, the shares in the Canal that he possessed, but he was too intelligent not to understand that once we were in his homeland, we’d be the masters; to the rest, he turned a deaf ear. We waited for his money to run out. You know what happened. Ismail was deposed, with the aid of France, which benevolently lent us her assistance, and naively, her collaboration, and we installed Mehmet Tewfik, a worthless idiot, on the throne, who became putty in our hands.”

“Did the new Khedive put up any resistance once he was on the throne?”

“Not the slightest.”

“What need was there, then, to put Arabi forward?”

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and lost their influence over the Suez Canal in consequence. The story told by Lord Killyett is, however, a tissue of lies.

<sup>2</sup> The British took control of the administration of Cyprus in June 1878 after making a secret deal with the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. The British wanted the island to use as a base for possible naval operations in the Eastern Mediterranean, while Turkey—which maintained notional sovereignty—needed British support to protect her Asian possessions from Russian encroachment.

<sup>3</sup> Khedive Ismail, Tewfik’s father, was deposed in 1879 on the insistence of the British, after his modernizing efforts ran up huge debts—which were partly reduced by selling Egypt’s shares in the Suez Canal to the British government.

“I’ll tell you,” said Lord Killyett. “When the moment came to seize our prey, we were bound to find our ally, France, indisposed to do as we wished...”

“Which is quite natural, Milord,” agreed the General, laughing.

“So, we first had to embark on the adventure, thanks to the somewhat inexperienced good faith of Monsieur Gambetta.<sup>4</sup> It was then that we invented the colonels and their *pronunciamentos*. Monsieur Gambetta talked about putting down the rebels and was the first to suggest the expedition.

“That was only phase one of the affair. We knew that the Ministry might fall at any moment, and we gave the wheel at little push. When Gambetta was no longer in power we declared that we were ready to march with France, but she no longer wanted to do so, as we knew full well. Arabi and his friends played their role so well that Egypt was really split into two parties. We went to fight Arabi. The French parliament, adroitly moved to suspicion by us, prevented the ministry from going with us.”

People were listening religiously to Lord Killyett. In spite of the singularity of the revelations that his audience was hearing, they did not doubt their accuracy for a single moment, and they were right.

Maxime Darnozan had sat down on the bench in the same place as the previous evening, and he listened too, with a keen interest, without missing a word of what the Duke was saying.

Lady Killyett interrupted her father. “But if the French hadn’t been afraid of embarking on an adventure,” she said, “such as they had so often repeated, and had come to Egypt with the English, what would have happened?”

“What would have happened, Lady Helena, is that Bismarck might perhaps have taken advantage of the opportunity to make sure that there were still billions in France, and the cabinet in Paris would have been forced to recall its troops.”

“All right!” said Sir Nathaniel Robertson, smiling. “And then?”

“The French didn’t want to follow us,” the Duke went on, “and they acted wisely from many points of view...especially ours. We went to Egypt alone, and as it was necessary to appear to be doing something, we bombarded Alexandria, but after having waited until Arabi had abandoned it. He had his orders, and they were carried out to the letter. You know that he hadn’t cut either the railway or the Canal. You know that after a partial success obtained at Gassassine, which was designed to disturb Europe, General Garnet Wolseley fought the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, at the commencement of which Arabi, whose role was complete, went tranquilly to Cairo, where he allowed himself to be taken prisoner without putting up the slightest resistance, knowing that nothing would be done to him...unless...”

Lord Killyett stopped.

“Unless...?” interrogated his daughter, slightly anxiously.

“Unless imperious necessities obliged us to sacrifice him.”

“Oh, Father!” said Lady Helena, in a reproachful tone.

“What do you expect? That’s politics, and sentiments don’t enter into politics. Anyway, everything worked out well. Ceylon, rich and happy, is now our partner. Perhaps it cost us dearly, but monetary wounds, as the French say...”

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<sup>4</sup> The Radical Léon Gambetta was President of the Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs from 14 November 1881-26 January 1882, during a very turbulent period in the politics of the Republic; had he remained in office he would certainly have supported the British in Egypt; it was the government that replaced him, led by the opportunist Charles de Freycinet, which only held on until August, that shirked the task.

“If I understand you correctly, Milord,” said Maxime Darnozan suddenly, having risen to his feet and approached the group, “it’s also necessary to count among the number of imperious necessities the massacres in Alexandra that you provoked.”

Maxime had spoken in a tone of indignation. Lord Killyett turned round slowly, and then, having looked him up and down, picked up a saucer from the table that had contained butter and held it out to Darnozan. “My friend,” he said, “you’re doubtless a steward, to permit yourself to speak to us without having been introduced. Do me the favor, then, of taking this to the kitchen.”

The Duke was short in stature, and Maxime was a tall man. Scarcely had the former finished pronouncing his insolent remark than the untimely saucer was in the sea. The Duke tried to stand up then, but did not have the time. Darnozan had seized him by the belt, lifted him up like a feather, and, in his legitimate and profound anger, was just about to send him to join the butter-dish, when Lady Helena, frightened, launched herself toward her father, crying: “Oh, Mr. Darnozan! Mr. Darnozan!”

She spoke English this time. Maxime looked at the young woman, and seemed to hesitate. Then he replaced Lord Killyett in his chair, sitting him down there forcefully, and said: “I don’t know whether I ought to permit you to speak to me, Mademoiselle, for you haven’t been introduced to me...but your father should thank you—you’ve just saved his life.”

Maxime bowed to Lady Helena and went down to his cabin. That evening, he did not appear at dinner.

The Captain of the *Lapwing* was very discontented with what had happened. He blamed Lord Killyett, and even went to see Maxime in order to ask him to come to the table.

“No, thank you, Captain,” Darnozan replied. “I’m incapable of eating.”

“Come, come! You can’t hold the whole ship responsible for the insult that one old fool leveled at you. No one here approves.”

“I believe you, Monsieur, but let me alone, I beg you; that’s the best remedy for my ill-humor.”

The Captain was obliged to withdraw. That evening, he approached Lord Killyett and did not hide the inclination of his thoughts.

“We’re not in England here, where the most ridiculous customs are the most honored,” he said.

“What does that mean?” asked the Duke, in a haughty tone.

The mariner was not a man to be intimidated, however. An American of old stock, he cared very little for the old formulas of the Three Kingdoms.

“I mean,” he replied, “that when traveling, one ought to leave behind the prejudices and fashions that don’t sit well with the mores of other peoples.”

“I’m the sole judge...”

“Oh! Permit me to say that if Monsieur Darnozan had thrown you into the sea, I would have been very annoyed to have to put in irons and bring before a maritime tribunal a man who had saved us all not twenty-four hours earlier.”

“Oh, saved...”

“Yes, sir, saved us all! You and your daughter along with everyone else, as you know very well!”

“You’re taking the tone...”

“Of a master—yes, Milord, for, don’t forget that you’re only a passenger here, and since you’ve been a Commodore, you ought to be the first to set a good example. Repudiating a

deplorable pride, you should testify to that young man some regret for a moment of impetuosity.”

“Me?”

“Yes, you! Anyway, it’s only an item of advice, but you’d be wrong not to follow it, because, either I’m much mistaken, or Monsieur Darnozan will harbor a grudge against you whose effects you might one day suffer.”

Lord Killyett burst out laughing, like a man too highly placed for Maxime ever to be able to reach him.

The captain turned his back on him and the conversation ended there.

Darnozan nursed his wrath and ruminated his vengeance. He did not close his eyes that night.

In the morning, when he came out of his cabin, he went to see the Captain and said to him: “I want to thank you again, sincerely, for the kind words you brought me yesterday evening. I’m profoundly grateful to you, and I’d like to have an opportunity to prove it to you—but that will doubtless be for later. For the moment, on the contrary, I’d like to ask you for a favor.”

“What? Speak.”

“Do me the kindness of introducing me to Lord Killyett.”

The Captain looked Maxime in the eyes.

“Oh, don’t worry; I no longer want to throw him in the sea.”

“All right! Come on—but on one condition, which is that I witness the conversation.”

“I’d like nothing better.”

The Captain assumed that Darnozan was going to make some cruel remark to the Commodore—which, deep down, he would not be sorry to see. That is why he did not even ask the Duke’s opinion. He merely had himself announced by the steward.

Lord Killyett had a small apartment at the rear of the ship, composed of two large cabins and a small reception room, very nicely furnished. It was in that reception room that he received the visitors.

As soon as they had come in, the Captain made the introduction, as he had promised. Needless to say, Lord Killyett was not a little surprised by the incident. His astonishment gave birth to a malicious smile on the Captain’s lips; he could not wait to hear what Maxime was about to say.

Darnozan had dressed with a certain care, and was looking very dapper.

“Milord,” he said, “I am full of gratitude to the captain, who, having introduced me to you, has put me in a position to make a request that, I hope, will be very welcome.”

“I’m listening, sir,” said the Duke, with rancorous iciness.

“Milord Killyett, Duke of Wentworth, peer of England, I beg you to listen. I was born of a French father and a Russian mother on an American ship, which means that I don’t know exactly to what nationality I belong. If I consulted my tastes, my choice would soon be made...”

“I don’t suppose, sir, that you’ve come here to tell me your life story?”

“Perhaps...”

“In that case, sir, get to the point.”

“I’m getting there, Milord. Yesterday, you insulted me gratuitously and boorishly...”

“Boorishly? I beg you to choose your expressions carefully.”

“It is because I am choosing them very carefully that I am employing them. But let me continue: I have avowed a durable hatred for you.”

“Ah!”

“And the hatred of a man like me is not one that a prudent Englishman should disregard.”

“Really?”

“It is as I have the honor of telling you,” Maxime added, smiling with the expression of a man completely in control of himself. “There is, Milord, a means for you to avoid the vengeance that I have the intention of exacting.”

“And that is?”

Maxime bowed profoundly, straightened up again, and, looking directly into the Commodore’s eyes, still smiling said: “I have the honor of asking you for the hand of Lady Helena, your daughter.”

The Duke was a diplomat and a mariner; he believed that he had familiarized himself with the most improbable emotions and the most unexpected events, but such a pretention on the part of a man he did not know took him completely aback. For some time he was unable to reply, so much was indignation stifling him.

As for the Captain, he was expecting something enormous, but he had never imagined such a demand, and his smile disappeared to give way to the most visible amazement.

Maxime was still planted before Lord Killyett like a question mark, awaiting his reply.

After a few minutes, the Englishman found his voice again. “Sir,” he said, “you’re a witty man and I compliment you: the joke is full of humor. You have a fine manner of disarming my anger, and I don’t bear you any grudge.”

Lord Killyett did not bear Maxime any grudge!

The Captain nearly fell over, but Darnozan did not give him time.

“It’s good of you to forgive me,” he said, “but I wouldn’t like you to labor under an illusion any longer. My request could not be more serious, and you know my conditions. I implore you to give me a response, affirmative or negative.”

“Sir,” said the noble lord, “my daughter belongs to a family that, if it does not make its alliances in England, wants princes or kings for its heirs. You’re not even noble!”

“Oh, my God,” said the young man, negligently, “by putting an apostrophe after the *d* in my name, I’d make a very presentable gentleman.”

“I said princes or kings,” said the Duke, with a cold fury.

“Don’t let that hold you back, Milord,” said Maxime. “I don’t insist on marrying immediately. In six months, if you require it, I’ll be a prince—even a king, if necessary, not to say an emperor. Does that suit you?”

Lord Killyett and the Captain stared at Darnozan, who added: “Word of honor, Messieurs!”

“I can’t hear any more,” said the Duke, “and I thank you for your visit.”

That was a dismissal.

“So you refuse, Milord?”

The Commodore assumed an expression of disdainful condescension and replied: “Yes, sir, I refuse.”

“You heard that, Captain!” Darnozan exclaimed. “Lord Killyett refused me the hand of his daughter, and you can bear witness to that fact, can you not?”

“Certainly!” said the Captain, with conviction.

“I wish that God gives you a long life, Captain, for you’re a worthy man, and you may count on me in future if circumstances become difficult for you. *Salut*, Milord!”

Maxime withdrew.

When the Duke and the Captain were alone, the Master of the *Lapwing*, after God, impressed by Maxime's attitude, said to Helena's father: "You've made a mistake, Milord. That fellow is some prince of the blood in disguise."

"That fellow is insolent," replied the noble lord. "Give me the pleasure of not mentioning him to me again."

Between a fortnight and eighteen days later, the *Lapwing* arrived in San Francisco. During the crossing, since Maxime had made his singular marriage request, there had been no further incident. Only once had Captain Ellis said to Darnozan, laughing: "Well, do you still want to marry Lady Helena?"

"Still!" replied the young man, also smiling. "And you'll see that one day, Lord Killyett will come to offer me her hand, with all manner of respect—but perhaps he'll be too late."

"She's very pretty, Lady Helena."

"Yes, not bad—but there's better, even in England."

"She'll be very rich."

"Oh I don't care a flying fish about that. By asking for Lady Helena's hand I wanted to offer her father an opportunity to repair the outrage he caused me, and since he didn't agree, things will take their course. I assure you, Captain, that he'll regret it very bitterly."

There was no more mention of it until the ship docked. The Duke, the young lady and General Robertson, who formed a clan apart, had maintained a considerable distance between them and the other passengers.

Maxime had not changed his ways in the slightest. He neither avoided nor sought out the Duke or his daughter, and when, by chance, he had an opinion to offer, he did not hold back.

Lord Killyett—who, in spite of everything, remembered very clearly being suspended over the sea, from which he probably would not have got out again—had softened his arrogance and drawn in his claws.

At the moment of disembarkation, Darnozan stepped aside to let Lady Killyett, the Commodore and Robertson pass. The last-named, who doubtless shared the other's confidence, saluted Maxime with a hint of irony. "Adieu, Monsieur," he said.

"Oh, General, we'll see one another again, perhaps imminently. Yes, yes, we'll meet again, I hope. That's why I shan't say adieu myself."

Lord Killyett went pass stiff and haughty. The young woman looked at Maxime with a very amiable gaze, and the trio went to take up residence in Montgomery, where a house had been rented and furnished for the Duke and his daughter.

Darnozan, for his part, booked a room in the first hotel he came to. On leaving Auckland he had had no intention of staying in San Francisco for twenty-four hours, but the adventure aboard the *Lapwing* had modified his plans. He booked the room for an indefinite stay.

San Francisco is the ultimate city of adventurers. One cannot count the number of people who have disembarked in California during the last thirty years with the formal intention of making a fortune by hook or by crook; it would be impossible to imagine the courage expended, and the sum of physical and mental energy brought to that corner of the earth. And the historian who could recount the acts of heroism, the infamies, the follies, the temerities and the crimes that have been committed in San Francisco and the surrounding areas during a quarter of a century would need more than a hundred volumes to write the most curious book ever.

Yes, it would be more gripping than the *Divine Comedy* itself, more interesting than *Pantagruel*, the theater of Shakespeare and the gigantic oeuvre of Balzac. Remember that the city has been founded, destroyed, rebuilt, destroyed again, developed and solidified, and has



become a powerful metropolis in less than twenty-five years. Imagine, if you can, what must have happened in an alembic where all the constitutive elements of a society are combined in such a short time, and have produced a city as honest as any other.

It is nonetheless true that the sons of the men who founded San Francisco had the blood of adventurers in their veins. It cannot, therefore, be difficult to find among them those whose father have not succeeded as well as others, or who have seen their own efforts turn out badly: men capable of any audacity, who are not frightened by the great filibuster, and who seem expressly made for attack.

Maxime knew that, for, during his career as a mariner he had often come to California, and he had made a great many acquaintances here. The doors there on which one can knock with the greatest certainty of finding bold companions were known to him.

He did not waste any time. Within a fortnight he had assembled a little troop of fifty men, no more than twenty five or thirty years of age, the least valiant of whom had made himself famous in the city by means of three or four notable exploits.

It was not enough to have men, however; to do what Darnozan wanted to do also required money.

Fortunately, he knew the adventurous temperament of those Americans who know how to risk a hundred to gain a thousand. He therefore presented himself in the office of a banker with whom he had once gone to Europe and encountered thereafter in Paris.

After the usual compliments he asked the banker to listen to him, and said to him: "I need twenty thousand dollars. Can you furnish me with them?"

"Yes," the financier replied, "if you give me a guarantee, or allow me to glimpse a more or less considerable profit. In the former case—the guarantee, that is—I can give you them at eight, ten or twelve per cent a year, which is, as you know, the standard rate of interest in San Francisco."

"I have no other guarantee to offer you but my word and my signature."

"Very well. You'll tell me what your plans are, then, and I'll see if I can become a partner. In that case, you'll give me half the profit, or seventy-five per cent a year."

"Listen to me," Maxime continued. "I want to make war on England. Don't take me for a madman. If I explain my plan to you you'll quickly fall into agreement with me that success is possible."

"In America, we admit everything, so I believe that you can succeed. Except that it's not with a hundred thousand francs that you can undertake such a project."

"Obviously. But the twenty thousand dollars I'm asking you for are simply designed to facilitate the acquisition of the sums I need to commence hostilities. I ask you for two years to return that sum, and I accept the seventy-five percent interest."

"Would you care to enter into a few details, for which I promise you, of course, absolute secrecy?"

"I'm counting on it, for those I can make into my officers will only know in Europe, at the moment of action."

Maxime then set out, in half an hour, the details of the plan than he had made.

He had not yet finished when Mr. Thompson, the banker, stopped him. "The twenty thousand dollars," he said, "or even thirty thousand, are now at your disposal. I consider the operation to be entirely excellent. How much do you want?"

"Since you don't see any inconvenience in lending me thirty thousand, I'll take them."

"When?"

“Tomorrow.”

Such was the definitive departure point of the astonishing adventure that changed the face of the world, and set against England, at the end of the nineteenth century, an enemy as prodigiously endowed as the gigantic man had been at the beginning, whose army had traveled from one end of Europe to the other. Except that Napoléon had never been able to reach England in his great endeavors—British soil, that is—while Maxime Darnozan was going to attack in Ireland, Scotland, and even London itself.