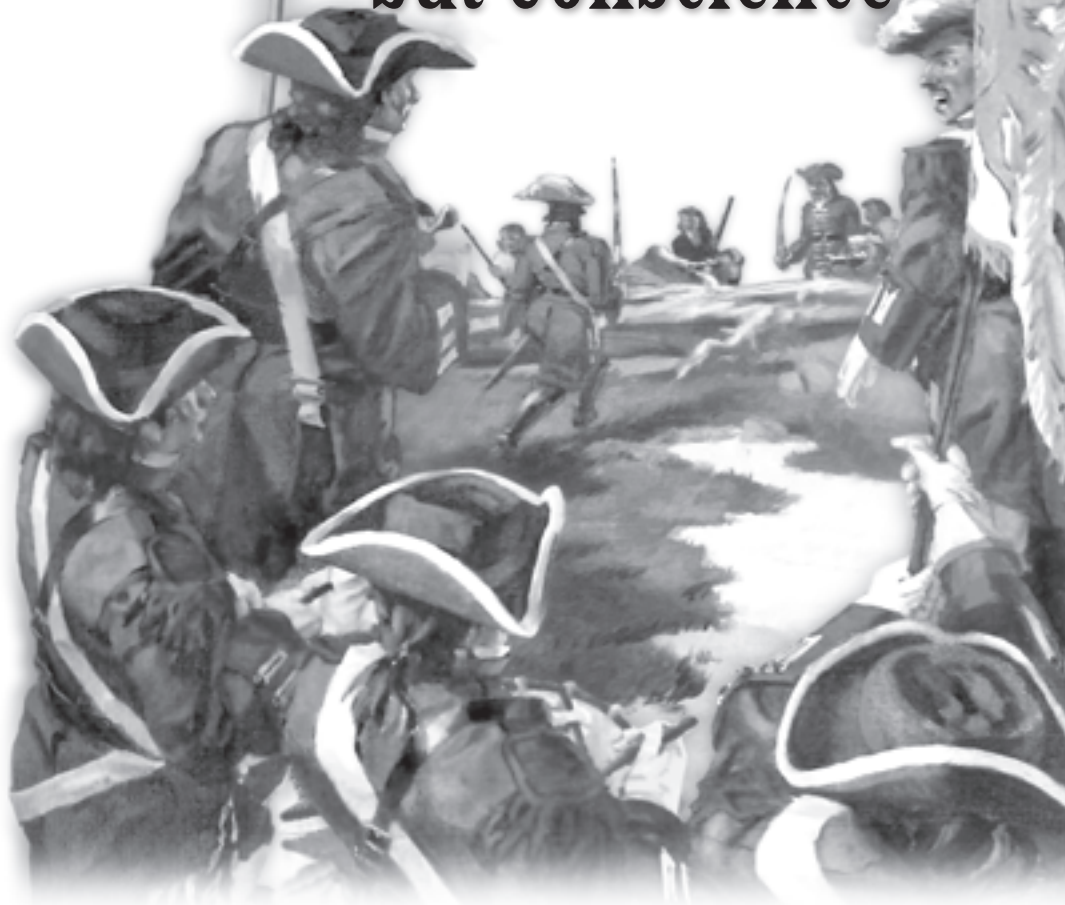


Any Sacrifice but Conscience



A Historical Epic of Faith and Courage in the Face of Persecution

Walter C. Utt / Helen G. Pyke



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Foreword

A generation of readers who enjoyed earlier books by Walter Utt—*The Wrath of the King* (1966) and *Home to Our Valleys* (1977)—may have wondered about the fate of their Huguenot hero, Armand de Gandon. The publication of this new volume, *Any Sacrifice but Conscience*, and its companion book, *No Peace for a Soldier*, provides the “rest of the story” and completes what might be called the “Huguenot Quartet.”

These new volumes are the result of serendipity and hard work. It was long known that at his death, Dr. Utt had left an extensive manuscript uncompleted that described the further story of Armand de Gandon. A careful reading of this manuscript led to the realization that it contained the full story of the further adventures and struggles of conscience of the Huguenot soldier created by Dr. Utt. However, the manuscript was clearly a work in progress. The seamless and satisfying narrative you will find in *No Peace for a Soldier* and *Any Sacrifice but Conscience* is the work of the outstanding Christian writer Helen Godfrey Pyke. The story of Armand de Gandon unfolds clearly and seemingly effortlessly because of her creative gifts and her love for this story. In its present configuration, *No Peace for a Soldier* combines the earlier story *The Wrath of the King* with extensive new material from Dr. Utt’s unfinished manuscript. Likewise, *Any Sacrifice but Conscience* includes the earlier work *Home to Our Valleys* with the rest of the previously unpublished material to complete the full story.

ANY SACRIFICE BUT CONSCIENCE

Dr. Utt was himself a hero to generations of college students who appreciated not only his legendary and apparently limitless knowledge of the past but also his abhorrence of pomp and pretense and his love of students, who so often became his friends and correspondents. After Dr. Utt's death, a group of former students, friends, and colleagues determined not to allow the legacy of this great Christian teacher to be lost. In 1985, this group formed the Walter C. Utt Endowment at Pacific Union College, Angwin, California. Among the results of their work have been an endowed professorship at Pacific Union College in the name of Walter Utt and the completion, with Professor Brian Strayer, of the book *The Bellicose Dove: Claude Brousson and Protestant Resistance to Louis XIV, 1647–1698*. The story of this Huguenot pastor, Claude Brousson, was Dr. Utt's lifetime research interest.

The support of Pacific Union College and members of the Walter C. Utt Endowment Committee plus the generosity of hundreds of former students and friends of Dr. Utt have made the achievements noted above possible. Dr. Richard Osborn, current president of PUC, and former PUC president Malcolm Maxwell have unfailingly supported these efforts. The Walter C. Utt Endowment Committee has been a rock of support. Members of the committee have included Earl Aagaard, Victor Aagaard, Bruce Anderson, Eric Anderson, Charles Bell, Martha Utt-Billington, John Collins, Ileana Douglas, Arleen Downing, Lorne Glaim, Elizabeth Hamlin, Wayne Jacobsen, Grant Mitchell, David Westcott, and Elle Wheeler.

Thanks are due as well to the editors of Pacific Press® for recognizing the importance of completing this story of a soldier and a Christian.

Bruce Anderson, chair
Walter C. Utt Endowment Committee
April 2007

If you haven't read *No Peace for a Soldier...*

This book, *Any Sacrifice but Conscience*, concludes the story begun in *No Peace for a Soldier* (Pacific Press®, 2007). The story takes place near the end of the seventeenth century, when King Louis XIV determined that all of France should have one religion. The resulting persecution has torn apart French Protestant—Huguenot—communities and families. Descriptions of the main characters follow.

Isaac Cortot—a well-to-do Huguenot businessman who lived in the town of Saint Martin, France. His children were taken from him and his house broken up by the *dragonnades*—the billeting of French soldiers in the homes of civilians with the intention of forcing their “conversion” to Catholicism. The shock of the experience resulted in the death of his wife. Sometime later, a betrayal has resulted in his being condemned to serve as a galley slave for the rest of his life.

Madeleine Cortot—Isaac Cortot’s nineteen-year-old daughter, who nearly four years previously had been helped to escape from a convent to safe exile in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. She is burdened with the realization that her attempt to help her father escape from France has resulted instead in his betrayal. She loves Armand but is too proud to let him know her feelings.

Alexandre Cortot—the lively, blunt fifteen-year-old son of Isaac Cortot. He managed to get himself thrown out of a House for New Catholics—a sort of religious reform school—and to escape to the

Netherlands with his siblings. Armand de Gandon found him a position as a drummer boy in the English army.

Louis and Louise Cortot—ten-year-old twins. Armand de Gandon broke up an attempt to kidnap them and helped them escape to Rotterdam with their siblings.

Armand de Gandon—a Huguenot officer formerly in the French army. His heroic stand in battle made him a favorite of the Duc de Lauzières, a well-placed French aristocrat who wishes to promote him to the command of his own regiment and to the highest levels of French society—which would require that he abjure or at least hide his religious convictions. Armand rescued three of the Cortot children and helped all four escape to the Protestant Netherlands. Now he is serving in the army of the Dutch Protestant William of Orange, who has just assumed the throne of England at the invitation of the English. He loves Madeleine but is hesitant to tell her so.

Pastor Merson—the faithful Huguenot minister who served in the Cortots' hometown and is now living in the Netherlands.

Mathieu Bertrand—Pastor Merson's nephew who at one time was a rising star among the Huguenots. He has since ostensibly converted to Catholicism and was instrumental in the betrayal of Isaac Cortot to the authorities. Once engaged to Madeleine, he is extremely jealous of Armand de Gandon.

PART I



1689



Couriers of Conspiracy

A short young man in a frayed red coat a couple of sizes too large for him clambered down from the top of the mail coach. He dropped his haversack on the cobbles and greeted the tall military gentleman, perhaps thirty years of age, who came forward in the post house courtyard to embrace him. In the tumult, others were also meeting passengers. Ordinarily, officers did not embrace privates, but these two were speaking French, and many customs of the Huguenot refugees must have seemed a little strange to their Dutch hosts.

It was a bright spring morning in Rotterdam in 1689. The two Frenchmen walked out into the crowded streets of the busy port city, dodging messenger boys, servant girls out shopping, heavily laden porters, sailors, and businessmen from all over the world who all seemed to be gesticulating, shoving, and shouting at once. The two crossed a square and turned onto a smaller, quieter street along a placid canal.

"I came as soon as I could get permission, Armand," said the new arrival. "What is this all about? Is it worth interrupting my military career? Are we going on another uncomfortable journey?"

Alexandre Cortot, the younger and shorter of the pair, was vivacious, wiry, and dark of complexion and hair. His expression was one of amiable foxiness. The white cross belts on his hand-me-down coat suggested an English soldier, and the empty slots in the cross belts that were meant for sticks indicated that he had been a drummer. A sack was slung over his shoulder, and he wore a short, triangular-bladed bayonet at his belt.

"Yes to all of your questions!" the older man laughed. "But did you have a good journey? How did you find your sisters and brother?" Armand de Gandon, onetime major in the armies of His Very Christian Majesty Louis XIV of France, was arrayed in the long blue coat and orange vest and hose of an officer of the Dutch Foot Guards. He was erect and soldierly, with a handsome, thoughtful face, dark eyes, and a rather prominent nose. He wore a shoulder-length, chestnut-colored wig. A straight sword was at his side, and gold lace on his wide cuffs and along his hat brim identified him as an officer and a gentleman.

"We had a good passage," said Alexandre. "I reached Helder two days ago but had to walk most of the way to The Hague. Madeleine and the twins are well and look no different in six months. But where are we going?"

"We go right now to see Pierre Jurieu, the famous pastor, here in Rotterdam, and then we will carry some letters for important people!"

"You sent me money and told me to hurry, so why do we take time to visit a minister?" complained the boy.

"We are truly in haste, Alexandre, but Pastor Jurieu is no ordinary preacher. Surely you know his name! No one writes more continually or furiously against our persecutors."

"My education has been neglected since we escaped," said the younger one with a touch of the impudence that was never far beneath the surface. "Who had time to read when I was pushing bales and boxes about in that fusty warehouse? And since you convinced Colonel Churchill that he needed another drummer—I will be eternally grateful to you for rescuing me—I have been too busy saving the English from the papists to be reading books! Studying is for children anyway."

The officer smiled indulgently. "Grown up at sixteen," he marveled, "and with all the education he will ever need!" He stopped a passing citizen and in his painful Dutch asked directions.

"But what are these letters? Why are they so important?" persisted the boy.

"For now let me say these are troublous times, and not everyone is well-affected by King William, particularly in England. And some of those who joined him so swiftly a few months ago during the Glorious Revolution could just as quickly desert the Good Cause if they calculated King James might come back. You know, copies of the king's

dispatches have strange ways of showing up in the hands of French diplomats, and the mails are unsafe too. As I said, great and mysterious things are now afoot. I am less likely to be suspected as a courier, seeming but an ordinary officer posted to a new assignment, so we leave at once for Switzerland. But it is wartime, and the trip through Germany could be hazardous, so I asked to have you as a valet, or, if you prefer, a bodyguard. Does that answer your question?"

"No," said Alexandre mutinously. "What's it all about?"

"It has to do with the affairs of the French refugees in some way, and also with the Protestant cause in Switzerland." Gandon tried to remain patient. "You know, when we sailed for England last fall, I was on the staff of the duke of Schomberg. The king sent him to Ireland against King James and the Catholic rebels. He wished me to come with him, as he had always been kind to me for the sake of my late father, but it seemed to me that fighting the papists in the bogs of Ireland was a long way from our France, and I would rather be where I might more directly help our people still in Babylon. From Switzerland, who knows what might open up? When the duke was convinced I would rather go this way, he recommended me to the British secretary of state, Lord Shrewsbury, who needed an inconspicuous French-speaking courier. There are spies everywhere."

They halted while the officer again asked directions. Then they turned down a narrow alley.

"Whatever these letters contain, I know that if I were robbed, there would be embarrassment all the way from the Alps to the Irish coasts. Of course," he added, his face straight, "the doubts the king and Milord Shrewsbury had of my ability to perform this mission vanished when they learned you would accompany me!"

Alexandre halted and bowed from the waist. "It seems I am in your debt twice over," he said. "You rescued me from that appalling warehouse and away from my dear sister's constant surveillance, and then you took me away from my responsibilities as drummer. In truth, the excitement of that calling was beginning to abate also, and I left my drum in Hounslow without regret. It was a very civilized revolution, after all, and I never heard a shot fired from the time the expedition sailed last fall till now. If I had not been seasick the first time the fleet tried to sail, I'd have nothing to talk about at all—King James running

away so fast, you know. Of late, I think the English are growing tired of foreign visitors, and the winter weather was as bad as here in Holland. Well! So when are we going back to France?"

"I didn't say we were, and please don't tell anyone that I said anything like that! There *is* a great war going on now, and it is just possible that, as it spreads, something might occur to the advantage of our poor oppressed brethren."

Armand de Gandon stopped and searched for the pastor's door in the dark little street. The upper stories of the houses on each side of the street appeared almost to meet above it, effectively blocking the sunlight.

Armand spoke with elaborate unconcern and without looking at his companion. "When we met just now, I had wondered if you might be carrying any messages for me. It is six months since I left for England and last saw your sister and the twins. How are things at Rotterdam?"

Alexandre shot him a quizzical glance. "Madeleine and the twins are in good health. It is like your kind heart to ask. I'd say she is snappish as ever, at least when I offer her advice. I offered to carry a message to you from her, and she completely mistook my intention and told me to mind my own business. You'd think working for four years in that House for Huguenot Gentlewomen would have advanced her saintliness. In the kindest and most solicitous manner I merely asked her when she was going to be sensible and find herself a better and more available fiancé than Mathieu. He went back home again, but in four years he has not written or tried to escape from France as far as we know. And I asked did she wish a suggestion, seeing that she is now twenty and maybe already too old to marry. Well, she blew up like a grenade, and what with one thing and another she wrote no messages for me to carry."

The officer bit his lip, and his tone was short. "I'm sure your intentions were good, Alexandre, but I wish I could convince you that I don't consider your sister under any obligation to me whatsoever, nor do I want her harassed on my behalf!"

Alexandre rolled his eyes despairingly but said nothing.

Armand would never forget the wintry journey through the Ardennes four years before, when he took the Cortot children out of France in defiance of the king's edict, and the feelings he then had and

still had for Alexandre's older sister, that most appealing and beautiful Huguenot, Madeleine Cortot. Alexandre despised Mathieu, his sister's fiancé, a viewpoint Armand found easy to share, for the absent Mathieu had always seemed an austere and unlikable sort. But Madeleine's sense of loyalty, or perhaps other reasons, kept her faithful to the commitment made long before in happier days in her native French village.

Well, he must not let these memories distract him. He must put those violet eyes and that classic profile out of mind and not dwell on might-have-beens. There was the Good Cause to serve.

Suddenly, Armand realized he was standing in front of the door he sought. Though at the moment he would have liked to give Alexandre a clout across his much-too-busy mouth, it was good to have the cocky upstart as a travel companion again. So, instead, he nodded curtly, and Alexandre stepped up to the door and gave the knocker two vigorous blows.

* * * * *

"I should have liked above all things to be able to be at the coronation of their Majesties," said Pastor Jurieu, his intense, almost feverish gaze on Armand de Gandon. "You have had a privilege to remember all your life, to see how God has visibly taken hold of the affairs of our poor oppressed church and set our Joshua on the three British thrones, and with Her Majesty, too, for Queen Mary has ever been the tender consolation of our necessitous refugees here. I must show you the letter His Majesty has sent me in reply to the little compliment I wrote him after the late glorious and providential expedition to England."

Pierre Jurieu had received Armand in his study and sickroom. He was recovering from a long illness. Clothed in clerical black and wearing a black skullcap, he sat in his armchair with a fur robe over his knees even though the coal fire in the grate made the room almost too stuffy for breathing. The dark little room was piled with books and papers. Even while ill, Jurieu produced polemics and sermons at such a prodigious rate that it was said he could write them faster than his audience could read them. He was a thin, dark man with long black hair and a slim mustache, fidgety and irascible, quick to fire up at a name or expression he disliked—and these were many. One of the most contentious of the Huguenot writers ever since the king had

closed the Protestant colleges and he had to leave his professorship at Sedan, he was a power in exile circles, and his pen was feared and respected far beyond Rotterdam. He spared neither Catholics nor his own lukewarm brethren.

His most recent notoriety was from the seeming fulfillment of his predictions about the death and resurrection of the Two Witnesses of the eleventh chapter of the Revelation. In his 1686 book, *The Accomplishment of the Prophecies*, he had identified the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, which banned Protestant religion in France, as the low ebb of God's truth—the death of the Two Witnesses. Nearly a million succumbed in an almost total extinction of visible Protestantism. But when the Glorious Revolution of 1688 saved Protestantism in England, put William and Mary on the throne, and added Britain to the list of Louis XIV's enemies in the new war, it seemed that the fortunes of Protestantism had indeed recovered most notably. The time between the Revocation and the crowning of the new British sovereigns on April 21, 1689, was just three-and-a-half years, which, on the year-for-a-day prophetic reckoning, was just the time the Two Witnesses, the two Testaments, were to be dead but not buried in the land of persecution.

Jurieu's father-in-law had written a book of the same title long before, and though their computations differed somewhat, both saw 1689 as a very significant year for God's people. Jurieu wrote that the 1,260-year period of persecution began under Leo the Great, an appropriate "man of sin," in 450 or 455, so he suggested the end of the papacy and the beginning of the millennium to be about 1710 or 1715. The resurrection of the Two Witnesses might mean the conversion of France to the gospel in the meantime, for France was the tenth part of the anti-Christian city that was to fall. The interest in his interpretations was keen, and many writers rushed into print to attack or defend his prediction. Jurieu had hedged somewhat, but the startling events in England, needless to say, aroused the hopes of the Huguenots and the fears of the Catholic authorities in France.

Jurieu had not been waiting idly. He published fortnightly *Pastoral Letters* to his brethren "sighing and crying under the persecution in Babylon." Each number was half doctrinal study and half news notes on the persecutions and martyrdoms inside France. His contacts with the Huguenots stranded inside that unhappy country were obviously good;

and the French authorities, finding his writings wherever allegedly converted Protestants were numerous, were alarmed. The writings, said the Catholic clergy, prevented “good conversions” and incited readers to rebellion and illegal assemblies. The clergy charged that Jurieu’s writings encouraged the rash of preaching and prophesying that was sweeping southern France. Was Jurieu the agent of an international Protestant conspiracy?

Jurieu had always been a vigorous champion of the Reformation, but he had remained respectful of Louis XIV personally. Now, however, his tone changed, and in flaming wrath he denounced the king as a tyrant who had broken faith with his Protestant subjects. His assertion that authority in government derives from the people scandalized all Catholics and not a few Huguenots, some of whom still hoped that Louis XIV would realize he had taken bad advice and allow them to return home and to worship freely.

“Milord Shrewsbury presents his compliments, Monsieur. He hopes that your health will soon be fully reestablished to the greater service of God’s cause,” said Armand when he had an opportunity to speak. “He asked me to give you these letters and with them the thanks of His Majesty for the consolation you have brought the church and the good service you have rendered him. We are all concerned that you spend yourself so prodigally.”

The thin lips under the slender mustache curled in a pleased smile, and the sick man looked visibly revived. “The Lord is stretching out His hand in a marvelous way, both in my poor concerns and those greater matters! When it pleased God to reward my diligent searching in the prophecies with some light to guide and comfort His church, the whole crew of Romish scribblers and scorners were quick to deride me, and so did their apes here in our own temples, shame though it be to have to say it. I leave them all to the judgment of God and to their own confusion at the outfalling of events and the notable prodigies that have revived the hopes of the church everywhere. Some here in the exile still yearn for the leeks and the garlic of Egypt, but God overrules. I do hope for some signal event for 1689, but these matters are hidden and only revealed as God ordains. So we may yet have worse tribulations to pass through. Perhaps the death of the Two Witnesses is yet to come. One day soon the Lord will separate out the tares and burn them.

"I will cease to publish the *Pastoral Letters* soon now, but this is not because of my weakness according to the flesh; rather, it is that we are passing from a time of exhortation to a time of deeds. I doubt not that we shall see yet judgments as evident as the overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea and the smiting of Herod with worms. God has raised up William of Orange and the League of Augsburg to abase and humiliate the enemies of His truth and for the encouragement of His people. The bombardment of Genoa; the devastation of Holland and the Palatinate; the treason of Strasbourg; the plottings and conspiracies in England, Scotland, and Ireland; the flow of corrupting gold to every court in Europe; but above all, the destruction of the worship of God in France and the barbarous murders of the poor people who come together in desert places to call upon God—the cup of the wine of the wrath of God is full and running over! The Jesuits will have their portion in the lake of fire, and I doubt not that Madame de Maintenon will suffer the fate of Jezebel!"

Armand, who had seen that prim, black-clad, and matronly *dévote** at Versailles, smiled in spite of himself, but the Prophet of Rotterdam didn't notice it. "I trust, sir," said the officer, "that the journey I am making to Switzerland may advance these events. In that regard, besides the greetings I bear from those well-affected to your person, I am charged by Milord Shrewsbury not only to give you these letters but to carry into Switzerland any you may wish to send."

Jurieu accepted the two letters Gandon offered and broke the seals. He seemed pleased by what he read. Armand, without especially trying, was able to read Shrewsbury's short note upside down from where he sat. It was a letter of credit for two hundred pounds sterling. Putting this together with some of Milord's comments, Armand surmised that as Jurieu did have the best network of Huguenot informers within France, possibly not all the information was directly connected with persecution of the believers. The British and Dutch governments might be interested in news from France too—especially in seaports and fleet movements.

As if reading Armand's mind, Jurieu placed other papers over the letter of credit. "I perceive that you are highly regarded by those who

* Feminine of *devotee*—an overly religious person.

sent you and are a man of confidence," he said solemnly. "I will ask you to bear letters for me also to the brethren in Zurich and Lausanne. All is falling into place. I see that besides God's raising up our deliverer, the revival in France itself calls for our moving forward at once. I have the honor to head the Refugee Committee here in Holland, as Pastor Arzeliers does in London and Monsieur Mirmand in Switzerland. Our labors for the restoration of God's church in France have reached a critical time; yet we must be very prudent, for it is a sad truth that we must often have greater caution of our own brethren than of the papists, if all is not to be uselessly unraveled." He frowned as if in pain.

"Our latest advices from France, particularly from Dauphiné and Languedoc, tell of the revival among the people. They have no pastors, but the Spirit is moving upon young men and women, many without letters at all, to rise and lead, praying, exhorting, and rebuking apostasy. This brings on them the fury of the persecutors, and some have already sealed their testimony with their blood."

"Is it possible, sir," asked the soldier, "that this revival of piety may lead to an open resistance? Is it the work of the committee to encourage a revolt against the authorities?"

Pastor Jurieu shot a suspicious glance at Armand, almost as if he would change his mind about the letters. He didn't reply at once.

Armand tried again, very deferentially. "These matters are common rumor in England, sir; and, before God, I am not an agent of the French king. I go to Switzerland to await the arrival of King William's ambassador, who hopes to make a treaty of alliance with the Protestant cantons to furnish hired troops for our cause. Forgive me if I run ahead and speculate if all this may have a bearing on the persecution in France."

"Possibly, quite possibly," said Jurieu at last, apparently mollified. "As I said, it appears that all may very shortly fall in place. The people are being made ready for the time when help may come. When their elders fail, even the children prophesy!" He became excited, the words tumbling out again. "You must read the account I have just now from the printer of Isabeau, the young shepherdess of Crest, who is one of the innumerable children crying out against backsliders and prophesying the imminent restoration of the church. The authorities place them in convents and hospitals, but there are always more. The land is smoking and ready to burst into flame. We of the Refuge must labor to pour oil,

not water, on these sparks and to strengthen the hand of princes chosen by God for the restoration of His worship in France. The time is at hand, and the Laodiceans should beware lest they be found opposing the purposes of God."

It was obvious that to Jurieu there was no difference between the purposes of God and those of the committee.

An elderly housemaid appeared at the door. "Monsieur Vivens," she announced. Armand rose to go as the stranger appeared.

"Nay, Monsieur," said the pastor. "Tarry yet a moment and meet this young man."

Vivens, short, dark, and rumped, limped noticeably as he entered the room. He was clad in brown homespun, and his short black wig fitted poorly. He bowed deeply and awkwardly to the pastor and rather less to Armand. His intense, almost hostile gaze suggested that he might not be pleased to find a uniformed officer in the room. Jurieu sealed the letters Armand was to take, and Armand stood waiting while the monologue continued. The young newcomer fidgeted, obviously ill at ease.

"Monsieur Vivens is one of the new preachers of whom I spoke—a Son of the Prophets, as it were, raised up to console and exhort the people of the Cévennes after the great falling away in 1685. He was so successful in this ministry that Bâville, the intendant of Languedoc, was on his trail day and night to prevent these assemblies. Such was the danger and the suffering of the faithful ones that Brother Vivens finally consented to leave the country if all those who wished to depart peaceably with him might be suffered to do so. The servants of antichrist made him these promises, and in his innocence of heart he gave them the names of those wishing to go. They arrested almost all of them! His desire now is to return to France and rebuke the betrayers. In view of his great services to the cause of God, we have given him an exceptional ordination here, and he now prepares to return to preach 'under the cross.' Perhaps you may meet him there!"

Vivens did not seem thrilled by the prospect, but he agreed vehemently that the time had come to return and console the people, who were as sheep abandoned by their shepherds. Elijah was his ideal, and his eyes blazed as he spoke rabidly in his thick patois of the fate of those who bowed the knee to Baal and of the apostates who had betrayed brethren. He quoted Psalm 58 verses 6, 8, and 10 with feeling: "Break

their teeth, O God, in their mouth. . . . As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away. . . . The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.”

Feeling somehow abashed in the presence of this angry young man, Armand once again made his *adieux*, put the letters of Jurieu safely in an oilskin pouch in his coat pocket, and took his leave. He had to wait a few moments at the street door for Alexandre to be torn from the good eating and the rapt audience provided by the ladies in the kitchen, and then they went on to Armand’s inn to prepare for their departure.

* * * * *

Stars twinkled brightly in the clear blue-black sky. Only the dim outline of the peaks surrounding Zurich could be seen to the south. The black waters of the Limmat reflected in yellow ripples the torches borne by lackeys escorting citizens to their evening appointments. A watchman passed by with lantern and clapper, his boots echoing on the cobblestones.

Armand de Gandon had withdrawn from the reception at the house of the popular Monsieur Fabrice, the envoy of the Dutch States General to the Protestant cantons of Switzerland, and was conversing with Gabriel de Covenant, special agent of the same government, responsible for the care of the Vaudois* exiles in Switzerland. The eating was good, and Fabrice was generous with “gratifications” of gold and promises to Zurich bourgeois who seemed “well-intentioned” to the Anglo-Dutch cause and who would tickle his ears to that effect.

Armand had become unintentionally a social lion, the objective of the Zurich matrons wishing to try their French on the newly arrived and handsome officer. He had made his escape quite discreetly with Covenant, a quiet diplomat of about fifty, and now they strolled and chatted by the riverbank, talking in low tones as if the dark houses overhanging the street might be listening.

In these days, this was prudent anyway, for the partisans of the French were everywhere in Switzerland. Covenant had come from the town of Orange in southern France, a possession of the Dutch royal house, and from which they had taken their name. The French army

* The Vaudois are perhaps better known as the Waldenses.

had "converted" the district four years before, and Convenant, like Armand, had left the country for freedom elsewhere. His post was now Bern, but he was a frequent visitor to Zurich.

"Besides the letters I brought you today," said the officer, "I have others from London and Rotterdam for the Committee of Refugees at Lausanne and some for Geneva. I am here principally to be of use to Monsieur Coxe when he arrives to negotiate the treaty with the Swiss. I now learn he will not be here before October, so I am free until then to be of service to any of His Majesty's agents who wish to call upon me."

"I am grateful to have you here," said Convenant. "I have word to send to Geneva also, but I am so well-known to the French resident there that it could be an embarrassment or even a danger to those I would see. You are not known in those parts, and it would serve the Good Cause well if you could go."

"Gladly," agreed Armand. Then he asked, "Sir, you represent the interests of the poor Vaudois. How do their affairs connect with those of the Huguenot exiles here—or, for that matter, why are they of concern to King William?"

Convenant lowered his voice. All Armand could see of him in the dark was the white lace of the jabot at his throat.

"It is an intricate matter, captain. As you know, these simple evangelical folk were almost destroyed in 1686 when their duke had to permit the French army to 'cleanse' the Piedmont valleys of the Reformed Faith. Those who survived are mostly in exile here in Switzerland.

"But Switzerland is overcharged with refugees, and these unhappy people are a burden on this poor country, so the churches in England and Holland collect offerings for their support. Her Majesty Queen Mary has the most tender concern for these unfortunates, and I disburse these 'collects' for their food and shelter as she intends. But not all the money I handle [and his voice dropped almost to a whisper] goes thus.

"Twice now this pitiful handful of Vaudois have tried to go home to their valleys to regain their patrimony, but the Bernese authorities have been embarrassed in their relations with France and Savoy, for these attempts were made, of course, from the territory of Bern. So, for both financial and diplomatic reasons, the Swiss Protestant cantons wish to settle the exiles far off in safe, permanent homes in the German states or even Holland or Ireland. The Vaudois have had to agree to go, but the

exodus has been delayed because of the incommodity of the weather in winter. Now spring is here, and the Swiss press for the departure." He stopped and glanced suspiciously behind him, but the sound he had heard was only a mongrel trotting by on his lawful occasions.

"Last year we settled some hundreds of the poor Vaudois in Württemberg and the Palatinate, and even a few went to Brandenburg. But now, with the outbreak of war, those in the Rhineland have had to flee and are back in Switzerland again. Most are now in Schaffhausen, and were it not for the collects, that little canton couldn't bear the expense. In truth, the Swiss have been both patient and charitable.

"We sense that His Majesty and the Estates of Holland are, may I say, favorable to having the Vaudois remain all together in a body. Yet we are committed to moving them hence, and the agreed deadline has already passed. If we could but move for appearances' sake some of the very old and very young and the females! It is a delicate matter, for many Swiss, not all necessarily Catholics, ask questions, and the spies of the duke of Savoy are also vigilant. I hope to convince the Swiss authorities that very important personages are concerned with the fate of these poor folk and that no great haste be used to solve the difficulty."

"Do I suspect that a third attempt will be made by the Vaudois to return to their valleys, perhaps with the charitable assistance of these good Samaritans?" asked Armand quite innocently.

"Odd you should think so! One does hear so many rumors." Conventant smiled. "But speaking of rumors, it is whispered that the young duke of Savoy is sick to death of the heavy hand of his kinsman Louis XIV and the tutelage of his French mother. He is so discreet, or as some would say, devious, that one does not know if he would really oppose the Vaudois if they should try to return to their valleys. Some have said that if we waited till he breaks with the French, he might then call his Vaudois subjects back home again, for it was Louis XIV who made him expel them. But then this may never happen, and the Vaudois are becoming impatient. The war is somewhat of a religious war, and as they are the original, primitive Protestants, their return might commend itself to the Protestant princes. You and I, as Huguenots, should wish to help this pious project along, Brother Gandon."

They stopped in the shadows. Armand scuffed his shoe on the cobbles thoughtfully.

"Hard by the Vaudois valleys lies Dauphiné." Armand seemed to be speaking to himself. "Next to Dauphiné lies Vivarais, next to Vivarais lies Languedoc, and in all of these are thousands of irritated and repentant Protestants who might be inspired by a successful return of the Vaudois or by the appearance of a rescuing army coming from the Vaudois valleys into France." He ended his summary with a direct question: "Do I read you aright, Monsieur?"

"You are very astute, Monsieur Gandon," Covenant whispered. "Does it seem too fantastic?"

"I am not a prophet nor a seer," replied Armand. "I did have a long conversation with Pastor Jurieu the day I left Rotterdam, however. What troubles me is the somewhat chimerical nature of such projects—and even Pastor Jurieu is not immune—the nonchalance with which it is assumed that one has but to call these poor folk of the Religion to arms some fine day and the success is assured. Am I doubting God when I wince at this easy assurance that the people, angry as they are and sorely mistreated since the Revocation, can hold their own against the king's army? Oh, I grant you the king would be embarrassed if he were fighting a war elsewhere, but these folks are neither armed nor led. The same lovely emotions that would bring them out suddenly could send them home again just as suddenly, and utterly discouraged. As I see it, there must be a real invasion by regular troops and with proper leaders, and then the support of these folk would be very helpful. Pray correct me if I view matters too darkly."

Covenant thought for a moment. "You are acquainted with the wild country over the Rhône? The valleys, the abysses and gorges, the wilderness around the headwaters of the Tarn, the Ardèche? Determined people, supplied with arms and chiefs, could embarrass large armies, which could hardly fight them in the usual fashion." He paused for a while as the significance of his words took effect.

"When Monsieur Coxe arrives," continued the diplomat, "I hope the Swiss Protestant cantons will agree to join the allies, but if they will not furnish the Grand Alliance with soldiers, at least they should recall their men from the armies of the great persecutor.

"True, Switzerland has no other considerable business or commodity to sell than the blood of their young men, so they may not wish to

break their perpetual covenant with France—their best customer. At the very least, they ought to allow us to recruit French and Vaudois exiles here and to concert measures for the restoration of our faith in France!”

“Well and good, Monsieur,” said Armand after a silence. They were leaning on the balustrade of a bridge, looking down at the water, which they could hear but not see. “There is another point that troubles me. You well know there is contention among us Huguenots whether our duty to the king of France requires us to suffer patiently until God softens his heart or whether we are released from allegiance to him because he violated the solemn edict his grandfather made for our liberty of worship. I gave up my rank and prospects in France rather than my religion, but I am not certain that I could in conscience serve against the king, even in the name of our religion. Fear God and honor the king says the Scripture. Is my conscience an enlightened one?”

“I understand your scruples,” replied Covenant, “but does not God come first? Our fathers resisted persecuting kings once even to the point of civil war. I don’t see that to serve a Protestant prince and force Louis XIV to restore the liberties he has violated would be more reprehensible than that. You know, this question is debated in a great battle of books in Holland and England since the late happy revolution. Was it legitimate to rebel against King James when he violated the law, or is a king above the law? May the people resist a faithless tyrant? Some of tender conscience say this is republicanism, but it seems to me that there are times in the history of the church when resistance to tyrants is obedience to God.”

“Pastor Jurieu, in his sixteenth *Pastoral Letter*, affirms that sovereignty belongs to the people. At Lausanne, Pastor Merlat argues such absolute submission to authority that he says Bathsheba didn’t sin but that on the contrary she was virtuous, for she obeyed her king.” Armand shrugged.

“Because the early Christians did not use arms, does it follow that no Christian can?” Covenant asked. “To restore liberty to one’s fatherland is to render an inestimable service to Catholic and Protestant alike!”

The older man paused when Armand didn’t reply. “Well, would you see any difficulty in being of service to the poor Vaudois?”

"Not at all," said Armand. "I would help them with very good will."

"You may have the opportunity, Monsieur. Soon I hope you may meet the very remarkable leader of the Vaudois, Pastor Henri Arnaud—like us, born a Frenchman—who is the heart and soul of their enterprise. He must depend upon us to supply the needs of his people and the wherewithal for any return to their valleys. But as we must answer to our governments, we have to be careful not to let him run ahead of us. That is not easy to prevent; for, as I say, he is a most remarkable man, and his ways are mysterious.

"Spies and assassins from the French and Savoy embassies dog his footsteps, though by the particular favor of God he has thus far escaped them. I can't, any more than they, tell you where he is—closeted with William of Orange at The Hague or secretly parleying with the Spanish in Milan, perhaps even in Turin—who knows? His family lives in Neuchâtel, and I will get word to him about you as soon as I can. When you have an opportunity to talk to him, you will understand the Vaudois better and perhaps gain enlightenment on one's duty to one's prince and to the Good Cause."

The gathering at the Fabrice house was breaking up. Sedan chairs gathered at the door for the ladies, and other guests walked in cheerful groups down the street, their way lighted by torches held by their servants. Covenant laid his hand on Armand's sleeve. "In the meantime, say little of your doings to Monsieur Fabrice. He is a loyal colleague and well-intentioned but a little indiscreet. When in pleasant company he finds it hard to remember that Zurich is one big whispering gallery and that some very amiable people here are sold to the French. My business here is to dispense *relief* to the poor Vaudois—you understand me? We do *not* speak of expeditions."

He patted Armand's sleeve, bowed, and disappeared in the darkness. Not feeling sleepy, Armand strolled down to the lakeside. For a long time he stood looking out over the dark waters.

* * * * *

The next morning Armand and Alexandre lounged in the common room of the inn where Gabriel de Covenant lodged, awaiting his instructions. Soon the latter entered the room accompanied by a stocky, florid gentleman of forty-five or fifty with a thin mustache, shoulder-

length chestnut hair, and lively black eyes. Under his red riding cloak he wore a suit of excellent blue material with lace at neck and cuffs. The broad-brimmed hat he carried had a white plume.

"It is my pleasure, pastor, to introduce to you Captain Armand de Gandon of His Majesty's Dutch Guards, on special duty here. He has long served the Good Cause, as has his companion, Alexandre Cortot, lately of His Majesty's troops in England. This is Pastor Henri Arnaud, leader of the Vaudois!"

Everyone bowed, but the newcomer caught the look of surprise on their faces.

"Ah, gentlemen, you feel I ought to be wearing a black clergyman's suit and a white collar." The pastor laughed heartily. "Where I go and for what I do, it is not prudent to look like a parson!"

"It is a great honor to meet you, Monsieur," said Armand. "I have already given Monsieur Covenant a letter for you from Monsieur Clignet, the postmaster at Leiden. I didn't know that I would be meeting you in person."

"My thanks, Monsieur. Truly without Monsieur Clignet and his sister, all our purposes would come to naught. May God reward him according to his works! Brother Covenant has already passed this letter on to me. Once again, thanks to this good brother in the Lowlands, the bill of exchange is most providentially at hand just as we need it!"

"I trust, Monsieur Gandon," said Covenant, "that you have been thinking of the matters we discussed last evening. I had not expected to see Pastor Arnaud this soon, but he tells me he has just had word that the difficulty at Schaffhausen is serious."

"Yes," agreed the pastor. "The Swiss must be dissuaded from carrying out their threat, for God most visibly intends that His poor peoples of the valleys not be scattered but held together in one place. I leave the matter in the capable hands of Monsieur Covenant. Unfortunately, I must journey elsewhere."

"Brother Covenant tells me of your serviceable qualities, Monsieur, and of your disposition to forward the work of the Lord for His poor people of the valleys. We work to restore the light of the gospel in the Wilderness from which the servants of the Red Dragon have driven us these three years. I leave at once for the Grisons and perhaps farther. Could I have your company for the journey?"

"I should like it above all things," said Armand with a bow, "but tomorrow I must go to Lausanne and Geneva to deliver messages I brought from England and Holland. I hope I may be of service later. However, if you wish, I can recommend my friend Alexandre Cortot as a trusty travel companion. We have seen some rude journeys together, and we were in King William's expedition last fall. He is a young man of prudence and steadiness and would be honored if you would have him."

Alexandre hung his head modestly. Pastor Arnaud looked him over quickly, noting his slight but wiry build and his alert, slightly vulpine expression. The pastor smiled broadly and clapped Alexandre on the shoulder. "'Tis done, then," he cried. "Monsieur Covenant and I have matters to discuss about this affair of Schaffhausen, but I must be on my way within the hour. Meet me here, if you please," he said to Alexandre.

The two older men disappeared into the parlor, and the double doors were shut behind them. The two soldiers looked at each other.

"That was smoothly done," said Alexandre a little sourly, buttoning his ragged red coat. "Only my dear sister was faster at volunteering my services for some foul *corvée*."*

"You were always one to dramatize," Armand grinned. "I thought I did you a favor. We have done nothing for Monsieur Covenant that a stable boy could not have done, and I have had an impression that Zurich was boring you already."

Alexandre didn't trouble to deny it. "It's true I have many good qualities," he said as they climbed to the garret where they had been staying, "but that doesn't include money or good looks, and you need both to make much sensation in this town. I think they are weary of foreigners, too—especially those who speak French."

"Pastor Arnaud seems an unusual man," mused Armand. "Were I not carrying these messages—and some are oral—it would be a privilege to travel with him. I can see that he would be an extremely interesting person." They entered their little cubbyhole and began their few preparations for travel.

"They are all overblown talkers," said Alexandre ungraciously as he pulled on a heavy boot, "but it will be better than sitting around here day after day."

* Unpaid labor.

"I worry about him. I hope you'll forgive my saying anything to you, but we know that they have tried at least twice to kidnap him, and there is a price on his head." Marguerite Bastia Arnaud, a plump, gray-haired little lady with a careworn face, sat in her parlor attempting to sew, but she was too distracted to accomplish much. She dropped the work in her lap and looked most pathetically at Alexandre Cortot, who stood uneasily before her while the pastor finished preparations upstairs. "We are safe enough here among our friends. There are thirty of our Vaudois families here in Neuchâtel. We receive free lodgings and a pension, but to have my husband traveling all the time, and often in Catholic lands . . ." Her voice faltered as a tear escaped down her cheek.

Only four days had passed since Alexandre joined the pastor, and already he was almost wilted by the pace. They had rushed from Zurich to Neuchâtel—less, it appeared, to visit the family than to consult mysteriously with certain armorers and retired soldiers. This morning the town council, learning that the pastor was in town, held him for hours in close examination. They wished to know about reports of orders for muskets and powder and about rumors that Arnaud was undercutting efforts to move Vaudois to Brandenburg, where they could, indeed, have peace and freedom of worship. Why were the Vaudois not yet on the road to the Germanies?

Arnaud had talked his way out, not for the first time, but hadn't vouchsafed many details to his young companion, who had cooled his heels for those hours on a bench in the town square. Alexandre felt sorry for the distressed lady. She might not have known all that was going on, but she knew enough to be worried.

"You know," she was saying, "city officers and even complete strangers come here and want to know where he is. My heart stops beating when they do that. The duke and the king of France have their spies everywhere, and here in Neuchâtel, after all, we do have a Catholic governor, though he has not yet done us any unkindness."

"We will do our best, Madame," said Alexandre with more assurance than he really felt. "The pastor knows what he is doing. It is God's work, and surely the Lord will protect us."

"Yes," she said, sighing. "Henri's work is important, and God has spared him most wonderfully in the past." She made a halfhearted stab

at resuming the sewing. "He doesn't tell me where he is going, and, for his safety, this is right, of course. But if you should go as far as the valleys—" She paused and lowered her voice. "My sister and her husband are at Torre Pellice. They abjured," she said apologetically, "and he is a magistrate. The name is Gautier. It was weak of them, surely, but I know their hearts are still with us. They must feel dreadful, knowing that they have sinned exceedingly; and yet they are still suspected by the priests and the duke's people on the one hand, and they know what we think too. If you should see my sister, tell her we pray for her and her family always. My husband is a kind man, but he is God's minister and cannot excuse apostasy. If you could, see how they do, if they are well, and give them my love—"

She broke off as her husband's footsteps sounded on the stair.

"I have everything now, Madame," he said heartily. "I must be going. I pray God be with you and the children."

He kissed her. She dabbed at her eyes and rose to her feet.

"How long will you be gone, Henri?"

"There is no need for worry, wife. The matter is the Lord's. I could hardly say whether it will be two weeks or two months, but I have this excellent young man with me and our own Baptiste—and our guardian angels."

His tone was cheerful and patient, as if he had been through this before. He handed the saddlebags to Alexandre, patted his wife's cheek kindly, and headed out the door. Alexandre, sympathetic but stricken momentarily dumb, could only bow deeply to the unhappy lady and follow the pastor.