

He looked round at all the faces flushed with wine.

"I will give you a faint chance of saving him. Mind, I know what I say. You would not make anything for me: I said I should not ask you again; but you must fashion something beautiful—quite beautiful—for his highness here. The most beautiful thing you ever made, or your brother dies!"

"We know you are inventive," said his highness slowly.

The general pushed across a silver spoon from his plate. "You can have that to make it out of."

"And that," said the prince, drawing a long white hair from his mustache.

"Take him away. The prince leaves to-morrow at ten."

It was near midnight. The three were locked into their cottage, the woman loudly lamenting. Jules sat in his little workshop, a German soldier at his door.

Jules Gadraux strove to realize his situation. He did not find the task easy. In a foreign invasion native life has a greatly lessened value: a citizen lies dead before he dreamed it, just because he got in a conqueror's way. It is all very well to say now that the thing wasn't so serious; it might be very serious indeed. There could be no use in confessing to the insolent change of the group which, of course, was entirely his idea; Armand's exculpation required the betrayal of Pierre. Nothing seemed left but to wait and work. All night he toyed with his tools. In vain. He could think of nothing. Nothing good enough. Once or twice he started an idea and abandoned it, his hands hopeless in his lap. The woman's occasional sobbing disturbed him. And the presence of the unwilling sentry before the door.

"They will hang him," the sergeant had declared in broken French. "As an example. Serve him right."

"The scoundrels! The murderers! The robbers!" It was as if his sister-in-law's spirit, deserting her, had entered into Jules.

"God!—for an idea!" said, between his teeth, the mild-faced artist. Suddenly it came to him, the idea: the face lightened in the blaze of the sun. He kicked away the silver spoon they had given him; he snatched at a trifle or two lying around him. The idea had come with fresh

sight of the Napoleonic emblem he had been gazing at, till blinded with tears he no longer beheld it. The dream of days when France was great and victorious. He had dashed away the tears. He held the little silver eagle in his hand.

"Ready?" He looked up from his feverish exertion: the sweat stood out on his brow. "In a moment! One moment!" he said. They hurried him. "The prince was breakfasting on the terrace. The prince was leaving at ten!" "One moment!" he pleaded. "Ready!" He stood before the uniformed Prussians—his highness, the general—by the coffee-table, white and silver, on the shining terrace, in the brilliant morn.

He looked round in vain for his brother. The guard fell back. He stood alone.

"We know who shot the lieutenant," said the general. "He has written. He has escaped."

Jules made no reply.

"Are you glad—say?"

"It was not right to shoot, but he had his reasons," said Jules, red.

"And we know who insulted us last night."

"If you know, you can punish," said Jules, white.

"I can punish, and I can pardon," replied the general, in the best of spirits, for the prince had brought him the good tidings of his immediate recall.

The prince finished his coffee.

"You can earn your own pardon," said the general. "It is in your hand. What have you brought?"

Jules laid the trinket on the table—on the white cloth, under the glittering sky.

The little eagle wore the Germanic fortress-crown; in its beak it held the white hair of the Teuton mustache; from one end of that hair hung the small shield of Alsatia, from the other end the small shield of Lorraine.

Jules Gadraux stood very still. The prince looked at the general; the general looked at the prince. Both looked straight out at Jules Gadraux. Then both burst into laughter that rolled out to the laughing landscape as only honest laughter can.

"You are a brave man," said Von Krell, "and you are a dreamer. Brave deeds find their reward. And dreams seldom come true."