



# THE MONEY MASTER

BEING THE CURIOUS HISTORY OF  
JEAN JACQUES BARBILLE, HIS LABOURS  
HIS LOVES AND HIS LADIES

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"THE JUDGMENT HOUSE" ETC.

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# CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	THE GRAND TOUR OF JEAN JACQUES BARBILLE . . .	I
II.	"THE REST OF THE STORY TO-MORROW" . . . . .	22
III.	"TO-MORROW" . . . . .	32
IV.	THIRTEEN YEARS AFTER AND THE CLERK OF THE COURT TELLS A STORY . . . . .	41
V.	THE CLERK OF THE COURT ENDS HIS STORY . . .	57
VI.	JEAN JACQUES HAD HAD A GREAT DAY . . . . .	71
VII.	JEAN JACQUES AWAKES FROM SLEEP . . . . .	86
VIII.	THE GATE IN THE WALL . . . . .	94
IX.	"MOI—JE SUIS PHILOSOPHE" . . . . .	103
X.	"QUIEN SABE"—WHO KNOWS! . . . . .	116
XI.	THE CLERK OF THE COURT KEEPS A PROMISE . . .	129
XII.	THE MASTER-CARPENTER HAS A PROBLEM . . .	139
XIII.	THE MAN FROM OUTSIDE . . . . .	153
XIV.	"I DO NOT WANT TO GO" . . . . .	175
XV.	BON MARCHÉ . . . . .	186
XVI.	MISFORTUNES COME NOT SINGLY . . . . .	209
XVII.	HIS GREATEST ASSET . . . . .	233
XVIII.	JEAN JACQUES HAS AN OFFER . . . . .	245
XIX.	SEBASTIAN DOLORES DOES NOT SLEEP . . . . .	261
XX.	"AU 'VOIR, M'SIEU' JEAN JACQUES" . . . . .	268
XXI.	IF SHE HAD KNOWN IN TIME . . . . .	292
XXII.	BELLS OF MEMORY . . . . .	305
XXIII.	JEAN JACQUES HAS WORK TO DO . . . . .	317
XXIV.	JEAN JACQUES ENCAMPED . . . . .	326
XXV.	WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE? . . . . .	338
	EPILOGUE . . . . .	355

# EPOCH THE FIRST



# THE MONEY MASTER

## CHAPTER I

THE GREAT CITY OF LONDON WAS A BEEHIVE

of activity and life. The streets were filled with people of all ranks and conditions. The air was thick with the smoke of chimneys and the sound of hooves and wheels. The money masters of the city were at work, their hands busy with the gold and silver that flowed through the streets like a river. They were the unseen power behind the scenes, the ones who made the city what it was. They were the money masters, and they were everywhere.

# THE MONEY MASTER

## CHAPTER I

### THE GRAND TOUR OF JEAN JACQUES BARBILLE

“PEACE and plenty, peace and plenty”—that was the phrase M. Jean Jacques Barbille, miller and money-master, applied to his home-scene, when he was at the height of his career. Both winter and summer the place had a look of content and comfort, even a kind of opulence. There is nothing like a grove of pines to give a sense of warmth in winter and an air of coolness in summer, so does the slightest breeze make the pine-needles swish like the freshening sea. But to this scene, where pines made a friendly back-ground, there were added oak, ash, and hickory trees, though in less quantity on the side of the river where were Jean Jacques Barbille’s house and mills. They flourished chiefly on the opposite side of the Beau Cheval, whose waters flowed so waywardly—now with a rush, now silently away through long reaches of country. Here the land was rugged and bold, while farther on it became gentle and spacious, and was flecked or striped with farms

## The Money Master

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on which low, white houses with dormer-windows and big stoops flashed to the passer-by the message of the pioneer, "It is mine. I triumph."

At the Manor Cartier, not far from the town of Vilray, where Jean Jacques was master, and above it and below it, there had been battles and the ravages of war. At the time of the Conquest the stubborn *habitants*, refusing to accept the yielding of Quebec as the end of French power in their proud province, had remained in arms and active, and had only yielded when the musket and the torch had done their work, and smoking ruins marked the places where homes had been. They took their fortune with something of the heroic calm of men to whom an idea was more than aught else. Jean Jacques' father, grandfather, and great-great-grandfather had lived here, no one of them rising far, but none worthless or unnoticeable. They all had had "a way of their own" as their neighbours said, and had been provident on the whole. Thus it was that when Jean Jacques' father died, and he came into his own, he found himself at thirty a man of substance, unmarried, who "could have had the pick of the province." This was what the Old Curé said in despair, when Jean Jacques did the incomprehensible thing, and married *l'Espagnole*, or "the Spanische," as the lady was always called in the English of the *habitant*.

When she came it was spring-time, and all the world was budding, exuding joy and hope, with the sun dancing over all. It was the time between the sowing and the hay-time, and there was a feeling



## Grand tour of Jean Jacques Barbille

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of alertness in everything that had life, while even the rocks and solid earth seemed to stir. The air was filled with the long happy drone of the mill-stones as they ground the grain; and from farther away came the soft, stinging cry of a saw-mill. Its keen buzzing complaint was harmonious with the grumble of the mill-stones, as though a supreme maker of music had tuned it. So said a master-musician and his friend, a philosopher from Nantes, who came to St. Saviour's in the summer just before the marriage, and lodged with Jean Jacques.

Jean Jacques, having spent a year at Laval University at Quebec, had almost a gift of thought, or thinking; and he never ceased to ply the visiting philosopher and musician with questions which he proceeded to answer himself before they could do so; his quaint, sentimental, meretricious observations on life saddening while they amused his guests. They saddened the musician more than the other because he *knew* life, while the philosopher only thought it and saw it.

But even the musician would probably have smiled in hope that day when the young "Spanische" came driving up the river-road from the steamboat-landing miles away. She arrived just when the clock struck noon in the big living-room of the Manor. As she reached the open doorway and the wide windows of the house which gaped with shady coolness, she heard the bell summoning the workers in the mills and on the farm—yes, M. Barbille was a farmer, too—for the welcome home to "M'sieu' Jean Jacques," as he was called by everyone.

## The Money Master

---

That the wedding had taken place far down in Gaspé and not in St. Saviour's was a reproach and almost a scandal; and certainly it was unpatriotic. It was bad enough to marry the Spanische, but to marry outside one's own parish, and so deprive that parish and its young people of the week's gaiety, which a wedding and the consequent procession and tour through the parish brings, was little less than treason. But there it was; and Jean Jacques was a man who had power to hurt, to hinder, or to help; for the miller and the baker are nearer to the hearth-stone of every man than any other, and credit is a good thing when the oven is empty and hard times are abroad. The wedding in Gaspé had not been attended by the usual functions, for it had all been hurriedly arranged, as the romantic circumstances of the wooing required. Romance indeed it was; so remarkable that the master-musician might easily have found a theme for a comedy—or tragedy—and the philosopher would have shaken his head at the defiance it offered to the logic of things.

Now this is the true narrative, though in the parish of St. Saviour's it is more highly decorated and has many legends hanging to it like tassels to a curtain. Even the Curé of to-day, who ought to know all the truth, finds it hard to present it in its bare elements; for the history of Jean Jacques Barbille affected the history of many a man in St. Saviour's; and all that befel him, whether of good or evil, ran through the parish in a thousand invisible threads.

What had happened was this. After the visit of

## Grand tour of Jean Jacques Barbille

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the musician and the philosopher, Jean Jacques, to sustain his reputation and to increase it, had decided to visit that Normandy from which his people had come at the time of Frontenac. He set forth with much *éclat* and a little 'innocent posturing and ritual, in which a cornet and a violin figured, together with a farewell oration by the Curé.

In Paris Jean Jacques had found himself bewildered and engulfed. He had no idea that life could be so overbearing, and he was inclined to resent his own insignificance. However, in Normandy, when he read the names on the tombstones and saw the records in the baptismal register of other Jean Jacques Barbilles, who had come and gone generations before, his self-respect was somewhat restored. This pleasure was dashed, however, by the quizzical attitude of the natives of his ancestral parish, who walked round about inspecting him as though he were a zoological specimen, and who criticized his accent—he who had been at Laval for one whole term; who had had special instruction before that time from the Old Curé and a Jesuit brother; and who had been the friend of musicians and philosophers!

His cheerful, kindly self-assurance stood the test with difficulty, but it became a kind of ceremonial with him, whenever he was discomfited, to read some pages of a little dun-coloured book of philosophy, picked up on the quay at Quebec just before he sailed, and called, "Meditations in Philosophy." He had been warned by the bookseller that the Church had no love for philosophy; but while at Laval he had

## The Money Master

---

met the independent minds that, at eighteen to twenty-two, frequent academic groves; and he was not to be put off by the pious bookseller—had he not also had a philosopher in his house the year before, and was he not going to Nantes to see this same *savant* before returning to his beloved St. Saviour's parish!

But Paris and Nantes and Rouen and Havre abashed and discomfited him, played havoc with his self-esteem, confused his brain, and vexed him by formality, and, more than all, by their indifference to himself. He admired, yet he wished to be admired; he was humble, but he wished all people and things to be humble with him. When he halted he wanted the world to halt; when he entered a cathedral—Notre Dame or any other; or a great building—the Law Courts at Rouen or any other; he simply wanted people to say, wanted the cathedral, or at least the cloister, to whisper to itself, "Here comes Jean Jacques Barbille."

That was all he wanted, and that would have sufficed. He would not have had them whisper about his philosophy and his intellect, or the mills and the ash-factory which he meant to build, the lime-kilns he had started even before he left, and the general store he intended to open when he returned to St. Saviour's. Not even his modesty was recognized; and in his grand tour no one was impressed by all that he was, except once. An ancestor, a grandmother of his, had come from the Basque country; and so down to St. Jean Pied de Port he went; for he came of a race who set great store by

## Grand tour of Jean Jacques Barbille

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mothers and grandmothers. At St. Jean Pied de Port he was more at home. He was, in a sense, a foreigner among foreigners there, and the people were not quizzical, since he was an outsider in any case and not a native returned, as he had been in Normandy. He learned to play pelota, the Basque game taken from the Spaniards, and he even allowed himself a little of that oratory which, as they say, has its habitat chiefly in Gascony. And because he had found an audience at last, he became a liberal host, and spent freely of his dollars, as he had never done in either Normandy, Paris, or elsewhere. So freely did he spend, that when he again embarked at Bordeaux for Quebec, he had only enough cash left to see him through the remainder of his journey in the great world. Yet he left France with his self-respect restored, and he even waved her a fond adieu, as the creaking *Antoine* broke heavily into the waters of the Bay of Biscay, while he cried:

“My little ship,  
It bears me far  
From lights of home  
To alien star.

*O vierge Marie,  
Pour moi priez Dieu!*  
Adieu, dear land,  
Provence, adieu.”

Then a further wave of sentiment swept over him, and he was vaguely conscious of a desire to share the pains of parting which he saw in labour around him—children from parents, lovers from loved. He could not imagine the parting from a parent, for



## The Money Master

---

both of his were in the bosom of heaven, having followed his five brothers, all of whom had died in infancy, to his good fortune, for otherwise his estate would now be only one-sixth of what it was. But he could imagine a parting with some sweet daughter of France, and he added another verse to the thrilling of the heart of Casimir Delavigne:

“Beloved Isaure,  
Her hand makes sign—  
No more, no more,  
To rest in mine.

*O vierge Marie,  
Pour moi priez Dieu!*  
Adieu, dear land,  
Isaure, adieu!”

As he murmured with limpid eye the last words, he saw in the forecastle not far from him a girl looking at him. There was unmistakable sadness in her glance of interest. In truth she was thinking of just such a man as Jean Jacques, whom she could never see any more, for he had paid with his life the penalty of the conspiracy in which her father, standing now behind her on the leaky *Antoine*, had been a tool, and an evil tool. Here in Jean Jacques was the same ruddy brown face, black restless eye, and young, silken brown beard. Also there was an air of certainty and universal comprehension, and though assertion and vanity were apparent, there was no self-consciousness. The girl's dead and gone conspirator had not the same honesty of face, the same curve of the ideal in the broad forehead, the same poetry of rich wavy brown hair, the same good-

## Grand tour of Jean Jacques Barbille

---

ness of mind and body so characteristic of Jean Jacques—he was but Jean Jacques gone wrong at the start; but the girl was of a nature that could see little difference between things which were alike superficially, and in the young provincial she only saw one who looked like the man she had loved. True, his moustaches did not curl upwards at the ends as did those of Carvillho Gonzales, and he did not look out of the corner of his eyes and smoke black cigarettes; but there he was, her Carvillho with a difference—only such a difference that made him to her Carvillho II., and not the ghost of Carvillho I.

She was a maiden who might have been as good as need be for all life, so far as appearances went. She had a wonderful skin, a smooth, velvety cheek, where faint red roses came and went, as it might seem at will; with a deep brown eye; and eh, but she was grandly tall—so Jean Jacques thought, while he drew himself up to his full five feet, six and a half with a determined air. Even at his best, however, Jean Jacques could not reach within three inches of her height.

Yet he did not regard her as at all overdone because of that. He thought her hair very fine, as it waved away from her low forehead in a grace which reminded him of the pictures of the Empress Eugénie, and of the sister of that monsieur le duc who had come fishing to St. Saviour's a few years before. He thought that if her hair was let down it would probably reach to her waist, and maybe to her ankles. She had none of the plump, mellow softness of the beauties he had seen in the Basque country.

## The Money Master

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She was a slim and long-limbed Diana, with fine lines and a bosom of extreme youth, though she must have been twenty-one her last birthday. The gown she wore was a dark green well-worn velvet, which seemed of too good a make and quality for her class; and there was no decoration about her anywhere, save at the ears, where two drops of gold hung on little links an inch and a half long.

Jean Jacques Barbille's eyes took it all in with that observation of which he was so proud and confident, and rested finally on the drops of gold at her ears. Instinctively he fingered the heavy gold watch-chain he had bought in Paris to replace the silver chain with a little crucifix dangling, which his father and even his great-grandfather had worn before him. He had kept the watch, however—the great fat-bellied thing which had never run down in a hundred years. It was his mascot. To lose that watch would be like losing his share in the promises of the Church. So his fingers ran along the new gold—fourteen-carat—chain, to the watch at the end of it; and he took it out a little ostentatiously, since he saw that the eyes of the girl were on him. Involuntarily he wished to impress her.

He might have saved himself the trouble. She was impressed. It was quite another matter, however, whether he would have been pleased to know that the impression was due to his resemblance to a Spanish conspirator, whose object was to destroy the Monarchy and the Church, as had been the object of the middle-aged conspirator—the girl's

## Grand tour of Jean Jacques Barbille

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father—who had the good fortune to escape from justice. It is probable that if Jean Jacques had known these facts, his story would never have been written, and he would have died in course of time with twenty children and a seat in the legislature; for, in spite of his ardent devotion to philosophy and its accompanying rationalism, he was a devout monarchist and a child of the Church.

Sad enough it was that, as he shifted his glance from the watch, which ticked loud enough to wake a farm-hand in the middle of the day, he found those Spanish eyes which had been so lost in studying him. In the glow and glisten of the evening sun setting on the shores of Bordeaux, and flashing reflected golden light to the girl's face, he saw that they were shining with tears, and though looking at him, appeared not to see him. In that moment the scrutiny of the little man's mind was volatilized, and the Spanische, as she was ultimately called, began her career in the life of the money-master of St. Saviour's.

It began by his immediately resenting the fact that she should be travelling in the forecastle. His mind imagined misfortune and a lost home through political troubles, for he quickly came to know that the girl and her father were Spanish; and to him, Spain was a place of martyrs and criminals. Criminals these could not be—one had but to look at the girl's face; while the face of her worthless father might have been that of a friend of Philip IV. in the Escorial, so quiet and oppressed it seemed. Nobility was written on the placid, apathetic countenance, except when it was not under observation, and then the