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"A DAUGHTER OF
THE REVOLUTION"
BY JOHN REED

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A DAUGHTER OF THE REVOLUTION

John Reed

THAT night there was one of those Paris rains, which never seem to wet one as other rains do. We sat on the *terrasse* of the Rotonde, at the corner table—it was a warm night, though November—Fred, Marcelle and I, sipping a Dubonnet. The cafés all closed at eight sharp because of the war, and we used to stay until then almost every night before we went to dinner.

Next to us was a young French officer with his head done up in a bandage, and his arm comfortably around Jeanne's green-caped shoulder. Beatrice and Alice were farther down along under the glare of the yellow lights. Behind us we could peek through a slit in the window-curtain and survey the smoke-filled room inside, an uproarious band of men sandwiched between girls, beating on the table and singing, the two old Frenchmen at their tranquil chess-game, an absorbed student writing a letter home, his *amie's* head on his shoulder, five utter strangers and the waiter listening breathlessly to the tales of a muddy-legged soldier back from the front.

The yellow lights flooded us, and splashed the shining black pavement with gold; human beings with umbrellas flowed by in a steady stream; a ragged old wreck of a man poked furtively for cigarette-butts under our feet; out in the roadway the shuffling feet of men marching fell unheeded upon our accustomed ears, and dripping slanted bayonets passed athwart a beam of light from across the Boulevard Montparnasse.

This year all the girls at the Rotonde dressed alike. They had little round hats, hair cut short, low-throated waists and long capes down to their feet, the ends tossed over their shoulders Spanish-fashion. Marcelle was the image of the others. Besides, her lips were painted scarlet, her cheeks dead white, and she talked obscenities when she wasn't on her dignity, and sentimentalities when she was. She had regaled us both with the history of her very rich and highly respectable family, of the manner of her tragic seduction by a Duke, of her innate virtue—and had remarked proudly that she was no common ordinary street-walker.

At this particular instant she was interlarding a running fire of highly-flavored comment upon what passed before her eyes, with appeals for money in a harshened little voice; and I thought to myself that we had got to the bottom of Marcelle. Her comments upon things and persons were pungent, vigorous, original—but they palled after while; a strain of recklessness and unashamed love of life held only a little longer. Marcelle was already soiled with too much handling.

We heard a violent altercation, and a tall girl with a bright orange sweater came out from the café, fol-

lowed by a waiter gesticulating and exclaiming: "But the eight anisettes which you ordered, *nom de Dieu!*"

"I have told you I would pay," she shrilled over her shoulder. "I am going to the Dome for some money," and she ran across the shiny street. The waiter stood looking after her, moodily jingling the change in his pockets.

"No use waiting," shouted Marcelle, "There is another door to the Dome on the Rue Delambre!" But the waiter paid no attention; he had paid the *caisse* for the drinks. And, as a matter of fact, the girl never reappeared.

"That is an old trick," said Marcelle to us. "It is easy when you have no money to get a drink from the waiters, for they dare not ask for your money until afterward. It is a good thing to know now in time of war, when the men are so few and so poor."

"But the waiter!" objected Fred. "He must make his living!"

Marcelle shrugged. "And we ours," she said.

"There used to be a *belle type* around the Quarter," she continued after a minute, "who called herself Marie. She had beautiful hair—*épatante*,—and she loved travelling. . . . Once she found herself on a Mediterranean boat bound for Egypt without a *sou*,—nothing except the clothes on her back. A monsieur passed her as she leaned against the rail, and said, 'You have marvellous hair, mademoiselle.'

"I will sell it to you for a hundred francs," she flashed back. And she cut off all her beautiful hair and went to Cairo, where she met an English lord.

The waiter heaved a prodigious sigh, shook his head sadly, and went indoors. We were silent, and thought of dinner. The rain fell.

I don't know how it happened, but Fred began to whistle absent-mindedly the *Carmagnole*. I wouldn't have noticed it, except that I heard a voice chime in, and looked around to see the wounded French officer, whose arm had fallen idly from the shoulder of Jeanne, staring blankly across the pavement, and humming the *Carmagnole*. What visions was he seeing, this sensitive-faced youth in the uniform of his country's army, singing the song of revolt! Even as I looked, he caught himself up short, looked conscious and startled, glanced swiftly at us, and rose quickly to his feet, dragging Jeanne with him.

At the same instant Marcelle clutched Fred roughly by the arm.

"It's *défendu*—you'll have us all pinched," she cried, with something so much stronger than fear

in her eyes that I was interested. "And, besides, don't sing those dirty songs. They are revolutionary—they are sung by *voyous*—poor people—ragged men—"

"Then you are not a revolutionist yourself?" I asked.

"I? *B'en* no, I swear to you!" she shook her head passionately. "The *méchants*, the villains, who want to overturn everything—!" Marcelle shivered.

"Look here, Marcelle! Are you happy in this world the way it is? What does the System do for you, except to turn you out on the street to sell yourself?" Fred was launched now on a boiling flood of propaganda. "When the red day comes, I know which side of the Barricades I shall be on—!"

Marcelle began to laugh. It was a bitter laugh. It was the first time I had ever seen her un-self-conscious.

"*Ta gueule*, my friend," she interrupted rudely. "I know that talk! I have heard it since I was so high. . . . I *know!*" She stopped and laughed to herself, and wrenched out—"My grandfather was shot against a wall at Père Lachaise for carrying a red flag in the Commune in 1870." She started, looked at us shame-facedly, and grinned. "There, you see I come of a worthless family. . . ."

"Your grandfather!" shouted Fred.

"Pass for my grandfather," said Marcelle indifferently. "Let the crazy, dirty-handed old fool rest in his grave. I have never spoken of him before, and I shall burn no candles for his soul. . . ."

Fred seized her hand. He was exalted. "God bless your grandfather!"

With the quick wit of her profession, she divined that, for some mysterious reason, she had pleased. For answer she began to sing in a low voice the last lines of the *Internationale*.

"*C'est la lutte finale*—" She coquetted with Fred.

"Tell us more about your grandfather," I asked.

"There is no more to tell," said Marcelle, half-ashamed, half-pleased, wholly ironical. "He was a wild man from God knows where. He had no father and mother. He was a stone-mason, and people say a fine workman. But he wasted his time in reading books, and he was always on strike. He was a savage, and always roaring 'Down with the Government and the rich!' People called him 'Le Farou.' I remember my father telling how the soldiers came to take him from his house to be shot. My father was a lad of fourteen, and he hid my grandfather under a mattress of the bed. But the soldiers poked their bayonets in there and one went through his shoul-

der—so they saw the blood. Then my grandfather made a speech to the soldiers—he was always making speeches—and asked them not to murder the Commune. . . . But they only laughed at him—” And Marcelle laughed, for it was amusing.

“But my father—” she went on; “Heavens! He was even worse. I can remember the big strike at the Creusot works,—wait a minute,—it was the year of the Great Exposition. My father helped to make that strike. My brother was then just a baby,—eight years he had, and he was already working as poor children do. And in the parade of all the strikers, suddenly my father heard a little voice shouting to him across the ranks,—it was my little brother, marching with a red flag, like one of the comrades!”

“Hello, old boy!” he called to my father. ‘*Ca ira!*’

“They shot many workmen in that strike.” Marcelle shook her head viciously. “Ugh! The scum!”

Fred and I stirred, and found that we had been chilled from resting in one position. We beat on the window and ordered cognac.

“And now you have heard enough of my miserable family,” said Marcelle, with an attempt at lightness.

“Go on,” said Fred hoarsely, fixing her with gleaming eyes.

“But you’re going to take me to dinner, *n’est-ce pas?*” insinuated Marcelle. I nodded. “*Pardi!*” she went on, with a grin. “It was not like this that my father dined—hè! After my grandfather died, my old man could get no work. He was starving, and went from house to house begging food. But they shut the door in his face, the women of my grandfather’s comrades, saying ‘Give him nothing, the *salaud*!’ he is the son of Le Farrou, who was shot.” And my father sneaked around the café tables, like a dog, picking up crusts to keep his soul and body together. It has taught me much,” said Marcelle, shaking her short hair. “To keep always in good relations with those who feed you. It is why I do not steal from the waiter like that girl did; and I tell everybody that my family was respectable. They might make me suffer for the sins of my father, as he did for his father’s.”

Light broke upon me, and once more the puzzling baseness of humanity justified itself. Here was the key to Marcelle, her weakness, her vileness. It was not vice, then, that had twisted her, but the intolerable degradation of the human spirit by the masters of the earth, the terrible punishment of those who thirst for liberty.

“I can remember,” she said, “how, after the Creusot strike was ended, the bosses got rid of their troublesome workmen. It was winter, and for weeks we had had only wood that my mother gathered in the fields, to keep us warm—and a little bread and coffee that the Union gave us. I wasn’t but four years old. My father decided to go to Paris, and we started—walking. He carried me on his shoulder, and with the other a little bundle of clothes. My mother carried another—but she had already tuberculosis, and had to rest every hour. My brother came behind. . . . We went along the white, straight road, with the light snow lying on it, between the high naked poplars. Two days and a night. . . . We huddled down in a deserted road-mender’s hut, my mother coughing, coughing. Then out again before the sun rose, tramping along through the snow, my father and my brother shouting revolutionary cries, and singing

‘*Dansons la Carmagnole*

‘*Vive le son—Vive le son—*

‘*Dansons la Carmagnole*

‘*Vive le son du canon!*’”

Marcelle had raised her voice unconsciously as

she sang the forbidden song; her cheeks flushed, her eyes snapped, she stamped her foot. Suddenly she broke off and looked fearfully around. No one had noticed, however.

“My brother had a high, little voice like a girl, and my father used to break off laughing as he looked down at his son stamping sturdily along beside him, and roaring out songs of hate like an old striker.

“*Allons! Petit cheminot*,—you little tramp you! I’ll bet the police will know you some day!” And he would slap him on the back. It made my mother turn pale, and sometimes at night she would slip out of bed and go to the corner where my brother slept, and wake him up to tell him, weeping, that he must always grow up to be a good man. Once my father woke up and caught her. . . . But that was later, at Paris. . . .

“And they would sing—

‘*Debout freres de misere!*

(Up! Brothers of misery!)

‘*Ne voulons plus de frontieres*

(We want no more frontiers)

‘*Pour egorger la bourgeoisie*

(To loot the bourgeoisie)

‘*Et supprimer la tyrannie*

(And suppress tyranny)

‘*Il faut avoir du coeur*

(We must have heart,

‘*Et de l’energie!*

(And energy!)

“And then my father would look ahead with flashing eyes, marching as if he were an army. Every time his eyes flashed like that, my mother would tremble,—for it meant some reckless and terrible fight with the police, or a bloody strike, and she feared for him. . . . And I know how she must have felt, for she was law-abiding, like me—and my father, he was no good.” Marcelle shuddered, and gulped her cognac at one swallow.

“I really did not begin myself to know things until we came to Paris,” she went on, “because then I began to grow up. My first memory, almost, is when my father led the big strike at Thirion’s, the coal-yard down there on the avenue de Maine, and came home with his arm broken where the police had struck him. After that it was work, strike,—

work, strike,—with little to eat at our house and my mother growing weaker until she died. My father married again, a religious woman, who finally took to going continually to church and praying for his immortal soul. . . .

“Because she knew how fiercely he hated God. He used to come home at night every week after the meeting of the Union, his eyes shining like stars, roaring blasphemies through the streets. He was a terrible man. He was always the leader. I remember when he went out to assist at a demonstration on Montmartre. It was before the Sacré Coeur, the big white church you see up there on the top of the mountain, looking over all Paris. You know the statue of the Chevalier de la Barre just below it? It is of a young man in ancient times who refused to salute a religious procession; a priest broke his arm with the cross they carried, and he was burned to death by the Inquisition. He stands there in chains, his broken arm hanging by his side, his head lifted so,—proudly. *Eh b’en*, the workingmen were demonstrating against the Church, or something, I don’t know what. They had speeches. My father stood upon the steps of the basilica and suddenly the *curé* of the church appeared. My father cried, in a voice of thunder, ‘*A bas* the priests! That pig burned him to death! he pointed to the statue. ‘To the Lanterne with him! Hang him!’ Then they all began to shout and surge toward the steps,—and the police charged the crowd with revolvers. . . . Well, my father came home that night all covered with blood, and hardly able to drag himself along the street.

“My step-mother met him at the door, very angry, and said, ‘Well, where have you been, you good-for-nothing?’

“‘At a manifestation, *quoi!*’ he growled.

“‘It serves you right,’ she said. ‘I hope you’re cured now.’

“‘Cured?’ he shouted, roaring through the bloody toothlessness of his mouth. ‘Until the next time. *Ca ira!*’

“And true enough, it was at the guillotining of Leboeuf that the cuirassiers charged the Socialists, and they carried my father home with a sabre cut in his head.”

Marcelle leaned over with a cigarette in her mouth to light it from Fred’s.

“They called him *Casse-tête* Poisot—the Head-breaker, and he was a hard man. . . . How he hated the Government! . . . Once I came home from school and told him that they had taught us to sing the Marseillaise.

“‘If I ever catch you singing that damned traitors’ song around here,’ he cried at me, doubling up his fist, ‘I’ll crack your face open.’”

To my eyes came the picture of this coarse, narrow, sturdy old warrior, scarred with the marks of a hundred vain, ignoble fights with the police, reeling home through squalid streets after Union meeting, his eyes blazing with visions of a regenerated humanity.

“And your brother?” asked Fred.

“Oh, he was even worse than my father,” said Marcelle, laughing. “You could talk to my father about some things, but there were things that you could not talk to my brother about at all. Even when he was a little boy he did dreadful things. He would say, ‘After school come to meet me at such and such a church,—I want to pray.’ I would meet him on the steps and we would go in together and kneel down. And when I was praying, he would suddenly jump up and run shouting around the church, kicking over the chairs and smashing the candles burning in the chapels. . . . And when—

PROMETHEUS

ACROSS the clean canopy of night the mighty planets revolving,

Each on its destined track through trackless space and through incalculable aeons,

Measuring miles by the million million, measuring time by the unit of eternity—

Silent, serene:

In a filthy ten-foot alley the man that cannot grow taller than seventy-two inches, whose brain is compressed in a cell of bone;

Entombed, and tearing the fleshy walls of his tomb with yearnings for an endless life, whose life is three score years and ten;

Wearied if he walk a dozen miles, surrendering to sleep if he remain awake above sixteen hours:

Which is the happier, stronger, greater?

The stars that see not the man, that perform prodigies because they are ordained to perform them?

Or the man that sees the stars obey and yet refuses to obey?

The stars serve and live,

The man defies and is slain:

But the man defies!

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.



Drawn by John Sloan.

The Bachelor Girl

ever he saw a *curé* in the street, he marched along right behind him crying, '*A bas les calottes! A bas les calottes!*' Twenty times he was arrested, and even put in the Reformatory. But he always escaped. When he had but fifteen years he ran away from the house and did not come back for a year. One day he walked into the kitchen where we were all having breakfast.

"'Good morning,' he said, as if he had never gone away. 'Cold morning, isn't it?'"

"My step-mother screamed.

"'I have been to see the world,' he went on. 'I came back because I didn't have any money and was

hungry.' My father never scolded him, but just let him stay. In the daytime he hung around the cafés on the corner, and did not come home at night until after midnight. Then one morning he disappeared again, without a word to anyone. In three months he was back again, starving. My step-mother told my father that he ought to make the boy work, that it was hard enough with a lazy, fighting man to provide for. But my father only laughed.

"'Leave him alone,' he said. 'He knows what he's doing. There's good fighting blood in him.'

"My brother went off and came back like that until he was almost eighteen. In the last period,

before he settled down in Paris, he would most always work until he had collected enough money to go away. Then he finally got a steady job in a factory here, and married. . . .

"He had a fine voice for singing, and could hold people dumb with the way he sang revolutionary songs. At night, after his work was finished, he used to tie a big red handkerchief around his neck and go to some music hall or cabaret. He would enter, and while some singer was giving a song from the stage, he would suddenly lift up his voice and burst out into the *Ca ira* or the *Internationale*. The singer on the stage would be forced to stop, and

all the audience would turn and watch my brother, up there in the top benches of the theatre.

"When he had finished, he would cry 'How do you like that?' and then they would cheer and applaud him. Then he would shout 'Everybody say with me 'Down with the Capitalists! A bas the police! To the Lanterne with the flics!'" Then there would be some cheers and some whistles. 'Did I hear somebody whistle me?' he'd cry. 'I'll meet anybody at the door outside who dared to whistle me!' And afterward he would fight ten or fifteen men in a furious mob in the street outside, until the police came. . . .

"He, too, was always leading strikes, but had a laughing, gallant way that made all the comrades love him. . . . He might perhaps some day have been a deputy, if my father had not taught him lawlessness when he was young—"

"Where is he now?" asked Fred.

"Down there in the trenches somewhere." She waved her arm vaguely Eastward. "He had to go with the others when the war broke out, though he hated the Army so. When he did his military service, it was awful. He would never obey. For almost a year he was in prison. Once he decided to be promoted, and within a month they made him corporal, he was so intelligent. . . . But the very first day he refused to command the soldiers of his squad. . . . 'Why should I give orders to these comrades?' he shouted. 'One orders me to command them to dig a trench. *Voyons*, are they slaves?' So they degraded him to the ranks. Then he organized a revolt, and advised them to shoot their officers. . . . The men themselves were so insulted, they threw him over a wall.—So terribly he hated war! When the Three Year Military Law was up in the Chamber, it was he who led the mob to the Palais Bourbon. . . . And now he must go to kill the *Bôches*, like the others. Perhaps he himself is dead,—I do not know, I have heard nothing." And then irrelevantly, "He has a little son five years old."

Three generations of fierce, free blood, struggling indefatigably for a dim dream of liberty. And now a fourth in the cradle! Did they know why they struggled? No matter. It was a thing deeper than reason, an instinct of the human spirit which neither force nor persuasion could ever uproot.

"And you, Marcelle?" I asked.

"I?" She laughed. "Shall I tell you that I was not seduced by a Duke?" She gave a bitter little chuckle. "Then you will not respect me,—for I notice that you friends of passage want your vice seasoned with romance. But it is true. It has not been romantic. In that hideousness and earnestness of our life, I always craved joy and happiness. I always wanted to laugh, be gay, even when I was a baby. I used to imagine drinking champagne, and going to the theatre, and I wanted jewels, fine dresses, automobiles. Very early my father noticed that my tastes led that way; he said, 'I see that you want to throw everything over and sell yourself to the rich. Let me tell you now, that the first fault you commit, I'll put you out the door and call you my daughter no more.'

"It became intolerable at home. My father could not forgive women who had lovers without being married. He kept saying that I was on the way to sin—and when I grew older, I wasn't permitted to leave the house without my step-mother. As soon as I was old enough, he hurried, to find me a husband, to save me. One day he came home and said that he had found one,—a pale young man who limped, the son of a restaurant-keeper on the same street. I knew him; he was not bad, but I couldn't bear to think of marrying. I wanted so much to be free."

TO A SOAP-BOX ORATOR

HOW can we hate enough to fight?

How can we think enough to win?

It is a reeling summer night,
And you, young man in the street-lamp's glare,
Tell us the world and all's our share. . . .
You might as well talk of eternal sin!
What does it matter? What do we care? . . .
With noises and smells all soaking in,
And the pressing crowds and beckoning eyes. . . .
Your words come hot and urgent and wise,
But . . . it's Saturday night—and a dime to spare!

FREDA KIRCHWEY.

We started, Fred and I. "Free!" Wasn't that what the old man had fought for so bitterly?

"So that night," she said, "I got out of bed and put on my Sunday dress, and my everyday dress over that, and ran away. All night I walked around the streets, and all the next day. That evening, trembling, I went to the factory where my brother worked and waited for him to come out. I did not know whether or not he would give me up to my father. But soon he came along, shouting and singing with some comrades. He spied me.

"Well, old girl, what brings you here?" he cried, taking my arm. "Trouble?" I told him I had run away. He stood off and looked at me. "You haven't eaten," he said. "Come home with me and meet my wife. You'll like her. We'll all have dinner together!" So I did. His wife was wonderful. She met me with open arms, and they showed me the baby, just a month old. . . . And so fat! All was warm and happy there in that house. I remember that she cooked the dinner herself, and never have I eaten such a dinner! They did not ask me anything until I had eaten, and then my brother lighted a cigarette and gave me one. I was afraid to smoke, for my stepmother had said it was to bring hell on a woman. . . . But the wife smiled at me and took one herself.

"Now," said my brother. "Well, what are your plans?"

"I have none," I answered. "I must be free. I want gaiety, and lovely clothes. I want to go to the theatre. I want to drink champagne."

"His wife shook her head sadly.

"I have never heard of any work for a woman that will give her those things," she said.

"Do you think I want work?" I burst out. "Do you think I want to slave out my life in a factory for ten francs a week, or strut around in other women's gowns at some *couturière's* on the Rue de la Paix? Do you think I will take orders from anyone? No, I want to be free!"

"My brother looked at me gravely for a long time. Then he said, 'We are of the same blood. It would do no good to argue with you, or to force you. Each human being must work out his own life. You shall go and do whatever you want. But I want you to know that whenever you are hungry, or discouraged, or deserted, that my house is always open to you,—that you will always be welcome here, for as long as you want.' . . ."

Marcelle wiped her eyes roughly with the back of her hand.

"I stayed there that night, and the next day I went around the city and talked with girls in the cafés,—like I am now. They advised me to work, if I wanted a steady lover; so I went into a big Department-store for a month. Then I had a lover,

an Argentine, who gave me beautiful clothes and took me to the theatre. Never have I been so happy!

"One night when we were going to the theatre,—as we passed by my brother's house, I thought I would stop in and let him know how wonderful I found life. I had on a blue charmeuse gown,—I remember it now, it was lovely! Slippers with very high heels and brilliants on the buckles, white gloves, a big hat with a black ostrich feather, and a veil. Luckily the veil was down; for as I entered the door of my brother's tenement, my father stood there on the steps! He looked at me. I stopped. My heart stood still. But I could see he did not recognize me.

"*Va t'en!*" he shouted. "What is your kind doing here, in a workingman's house? What do you mean by coming here to insult us with your silks and your feathers, sweated out of poor men in mills and their consumptive wives, their dying children? Go away, you whore!"

"I was terrified that he might recognize me!

"It was only once more that I saw him. My lover left me, and I had other lovers. . . . My brother and his wife went out to live near my father, in St. Denis. I used sometimes to go out and spend the night with them, to play with the baby, who grew so fast. Those were really happy times. And I used to leave again at dawn, to avoid meeting my father. One morning I left my brother's house, and as I came onto the street, I saw my father, going to work at dawn with his lunch pail! He had not seen my face. There was nothing to do but walk down the street ahead of him. It was about five o'clock,—few people were about. He came along behind me, and soon I noticed that he was walking faster. Then he said in a low voice, 'Mademoiselle, wait for me. We are going the same direction, *hein?*' I hurried. 'You are pretty, mademoiselle. And I am not old. Can't we go together some place?' I was in a panic. I was so full of horror and of fear that he might see my face. I did not dare to turn up a side-street, for he would have seen my profile. So I walked straight ahead,—straight ahead for hours, for miles. . . . I do not know when he stopped. . . . I do not know if now he might be dead. . . . My brother said he never spoke of me. . . ."

She ceased, and the noises of the street became again apparent to our ears, that had been so long deaf to them, with double their former loudness. Fred was excited.

"Marvelous, by God!" he cried, thumping the table. "The same blood, the same spirit! And see how the revolution becomes sweeter, broader, from generation to generation! See how the brother understood freedom in a way which the old father was blind to!"

Marcelle shot him an astonished look. "What do you mean?" she asked.

"Your father,—fighting all his life for liberty,—yet turned you out because you wanted *your* liberty."

"Oh, but you don't understand," said Marcelle. "I did wrong. I am bad. If I had a daughter who was like me, I should do the same thing, if she had a frivolous character."

"Can't you see?" cried Fred. "Your father wanted liberty for men, but not for women!"

"Naturally," she shrugged. "Men and women are different. My father was right. Women must be—*respectable!*"

"The women need another generation," sighed Fred, sadly.

I took Marcelle's hand.

"Do you regret it?" I asked her.

"Regret my life?" she flashed back, tossing her head proudly, "Dame, no! I'm free! . . ."