



ROYAL DE LUXE NANTES

Liverpool
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Letter N°4

Diary

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I, John McCulloch, will tell you a tale that comes from my grandfather.

Fishermen aboard a large boat lost in the Irish Sea, were heartily shaken when their nets seemed to catch on a gigantic rock attached to the seabed.

We find ourselves in 1911.

The vessel had stopped, lost control, and was bullied by the mountainous waves. The captain was forced to cut the ropes which, every second, lifted the prow of the ship.

It was in the wee hours of the morning that the crew, drunk on the night's emotion, saw two huge stone birds, diving like sperm whales, disappearing and then suddenly taking off to flying close to the ship.

Everyone could bear witness to the lack of feathers and could absolutely distinguish the presence of two huge granite statues, their wings deployed and flying towards Liverpool.

A few hours later, whilst docking in the harbour, the mariners noted the two Liver birds completely still and perched on the Royal Liver building. The building's construction had just been completed.

The reason I am telling you all this, is that I myself was witness to a phenomenon that was equally peculiar.

When I arrived in Liverpool, I was jubilant and feeling as though I was witnessing the sublime flight of pink flamingos whenever I encountered anyone. After Lord Derby's speech, the city had transformed and settled into a well-being that was infectious.

In order to enrol, I had lied regarding my age and the recruiting sergeants calmly

closed their consciences to it: only bravery mattered in the face of the storm that awaited us all.

The city became a kind of playground, carried along by the smiles and laughs of the future heroes that we already were.

Training camps were held in Liverpool factories.

Workers and bosses marched side by side.

Meanwhile, the city had taken on a grey colour. As if to disappear and protect itself from the wolves on winter nights, in order to be better hidden under the blankets.

Danger, at that time, was nothing more than an order.

But here are the unbelievable events that I was witness to.

I had only just started my classes so my captain stationed me as a guard outside the mayor of the city's apartment.

Suddenly, at 2 o'clock in the morning, I see approaching, like frightened leopards, dozens of civilians,

their eyes rolling in their sockets,

their lips trembling like the beating of a butterfly's wings

and their words as audible as an orang-utan learning the alphabet.

To look at them, I thought we were dealing with the Normandy landing.

One of them, having been shaken by a slap from the great beyond, dealt by his wife, put his feet back on the ground and said to me "The Liver birds have disappeared!"

As I lifted my gaze, I acknowledged the facts.

The Royal Liver Building had indeed lost its birds.

Recalling my grandfather's tales and responsible, at my lowly level, of the largest army in the world, I dipped my blood into ice.

I took it upon myself to wake the mayor up, who surveyed the phenomenon from his balcony.

He almost fainted.

But as the day began to dawn, I saw the Liver birds floating in the sky from the balcony: they were circling the city with pride before delicately placing their talons on top of the building and resuming their positions and silent vigil.

The next day we heard that 12 German submarines had sunk to the bottom, squashed by huge stones fallen from the sky.

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