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THE MARIE ANTOINETTE ROMANCES.

LA COMTESSE DE CHARNY.

VOL. II



MARIE ANTOINETTE AND MIRABEAU.

Drawn and etched by E. Van Muyden.

LA COMTESSE DE CHARNY, II.

LA COMTESSE DE CHARNY.

BY

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

VOL. II.

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LA COMTESSE DE CHARNY.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH CAGLIOSTRO'S PREDICTION IS FULFILLED.

THE same day, an hour after noon, a clerk of the Châtelet Court descended, with four armed men, into the dungeon of Favras, and summoned him to appear before his judges.

During the night Favras had been warned of this by Cagliostro; and at about nine o'clock in the forenoon, the sub-director of the prison had notified him of the same likelihood.

The general proceedings had begun at half-past nine, and as late as three o'clock in the afternoon the trial still continued.

Ever since nine the hall had been filled with gossips, who packed themselves in, to see the man against whom sentence was to be pronounced. We use these last words advisedly, because no one doubted the condemnation of the accused.

In political conspiracies there are some unfortunates whose sacrifice is a foregone conclusion. It is felt that there must be expiatory victims; and these are fated to be those victims.

Forty judges were seated in a raised circle at the upper end of the hall, the President under a canopy. Behind him was a painting of Jesus Crucified; while opposite, at the other end of the hall, was a portrait of the King.

A row of National Grenadiers surrounded the place of trial, both inside and outside. The door was guarded by four men.

At quarter-past three the judges gave orders for the accused to be brought in. A detachment of a dozen grenadiers — who, with guns at their sides, awaited this order, in the middle of the hall — at once marched out. All heads, even those of the judges, were turned towards the door at which Favras must enter.

At the end of ten minutes or so four grenadiers reappeared. Behind them walked the Marquis de Favras. The other eight grenadiers followed him.

The prisoner entered amidst one of those oppressive pauses, which two thousand people, crowded into the same apartment, are sure to make, when the man or the thing appears which is the object of general expectation.

His face was calm. His toilet had been made with great care. He wore a silk coat, brodered with bright gray, a white satin waistcoat, small-clothes of the same material as his coat, silk stockings, and buckled shoes; and at his buttonhole hung the cross of Saint Louis.

His hair was dressed with rare nicety, and powdered with white. As it is said by the Two Friends of Liberty, in their History of the Revolution, “not one hair displaced its neighbor.”

During the short time which it took for Favras to traverse the interval from the door to the prisoner’s dock, everybody’s breath seemed suspended.

Several seconds intervened between the arrival of the

accused, and the first words addressed him by the President. At last he made the customary gesture for enforcing silence, — though in this case it was entirely needless, — and asked, with a voice full of emotion: “Who are you?”

“I am an accused prisoner,” responded Favras, with great calmness.

“What is your name?”

“Thomas Mahi, Marquis de Favras.”

“Whence come you?”

“From Blois.”

“What is your business?”

“I am a colonel in the King’s service.”

“Where do you live?”

“Place Royale, 21.”

“What is your age?”

“Forty-six years.”

“Be seated.”

The Marquis obeyed. Not till then, seemingly, did the crowd breathe again; and their respiration sounded like a blast, — a blast of vengeance.

The accused did not shrink when he looked about him, and saw all eyes burning with hate, and so many fists threateningly raised. There was a feeling that some victim must be provided for the populace, from whom Augeard and Besenval had been snatched, and who daily demanded, with great outcries, that the Prince of Lambesq should be hanged, at least in effigy.

Amidst these angry countenances and flaming glances, the accused recognized the calm figure and sympathetic eye of his nocturnal visitor, whom he saluted with an imperceptible gesture, and then continued his survey.

“Accused,” said the President, “hold yourself ready to answer questions.”

Favras bowed. "I am wholly at your orders, Monsieur President."

Then began a second examination, which the accused sustained as calmly as the first.

Next came the witnesses for the prosecution.

Though Favras refused to save his life by flight, he wished to defend it by argument, and fourteen witnesses had been summoned for the defence; but after the evidence for the prosecution was heard, the President unexpectedly said: "Gentlemen, the arguments are ended."

"Excuse me, Monsieur," said Favras, with his habitual courtesy, "you forget one thing. True, it is of no great importance, but you have forgotten to hear the fourteen witnesses summoned in my behalf."

"This Court has decided," said the President, "that no more witnesses shall be heard."

Something like a cloud passed over the face of the accused, and then lightning shot from his eyes.

"I believed myself on trial before the Châtelet Court of Paris," he said. "I was mistaken. It appears that I am judged by the Spanish Inquisition."

"Remove the accused," commanded the President.

Favras was reconducted to prison. His calmness, courtesy, and courage made a favorable impression on those spectators who came unprejudiced to the courtroom; but it must be admitted that the number of such auditors was small. The exit of Favras was accompanied by cries, menaces, and howls.

"No mercy! No mercy!" shouted five or six voices on the way, and these clamors followed him the other side of the prison gates.

Then he said, as if talking to himself: "This comes of conspiring with princes!"

Immediately after the departure of the accused, the judges began their deliberations.

At his usual hour Favras went to bed. Towards one o'clock in the morning somebody came into the cell and roused him. It was the turnkey Louis, who made a pretext of bringing to the prisoner a bottle of bordeaux, which he had not asked for.

"Monsieur," he said, "the judges are at this moment pronouncing your sentence."

"My friend, if it is for this thou hast awakened me, better leave me sleeping."

"No, Marquis, I have awakened you to ask if you have nothing to say to the personage who visited you last night."

"Nothing!"

"Reflect, Monsieur. When judgment is finally pronounced, you will be more carefully guarded; and then, however powerful that personage may be, even his will may be fettered by impossibilities."

"Thanks, my friend; but I have nothing to ask of him, either now or later."

"Then I am sorry I awakened you; but you would have been roused within an hour."

"So in thy opinion," smilingly said Favras, "it is hardly worth my while to fall asleep again?"

"Wait, and judge for yourself."

Indeed, they could already hear a great noise in the upper stories, — doors opening and shutting, and the butt-ends of muskets striking the ground.

"Ah ha!" said Favras, "is all this turmoil for me?"

"They are coming to deliver your sentence to you in person, Monsieur."

"The Devil! Ask Monsieur the Registrar to give me time to get into my breeches."

The jailer went out, and pulled the door to behind him.

Favras drew on his silk hose, his buckled shoes, and his small-clothes, and had so far made his toilet, when the door reopened. He did not think it necessary to further dress himself, but remained as he was. Truly a handsome man, with his head thrown proudly back, his hair half disarranged, his lace shirt open on his breast!

At the moment when the Registrar entered, the Marquis pushed away his shirt-collar from his shoulders, and said to the new-comer: "You see, Monsieur, that I await you in fighting costume;" and he passed his hand over his uncovered neck, ready for the aristocratic sword or the plebeian rope. "Speak, Monsieur, I am all attention."

The Registrar read, or rather mumbled over, the judicial sentence.

The Marquis was condemned to death. He was to make public confession in front of Notre Dame, and then be hanged in Place de Grève.

Favras listened to this reading with the utmost calmness. He did not even frown at the word *hanged*, — a word harsh to a nobleman's ears. Only, after a moment of silence, he looked the Registrar square in the face, and said: "I pity you, for being compelled to condemn a man on such meagre proofs!"

The Registrar avoided an answer. "Monsieur, you know that now there remain to you only the consolations of religion?"

"You are mistaken, Monsieur; there remain to me the consolations of a conscience void of offence."

Upon this Favras saluted the Registrar, who withdrew, having no further duties in that department.

At the door he turned, however, and said to the condemned man: "Do you wish me to send you a confessor?"

“A confessor sent by those who assassinate me? No, Monsieur! I should suspect him. I am willing to deliver my body to you, but I reserve my salvation! I should be glad to see the Curate of Saint Paul’s, however.”

Two hours later the venerable ecclesiastic whom he had named was in the cell.

CHAPTER II.

PLACE DE GRÈVE.

THESE two hours were well employed, for immediately after the Registrar had gone, two other men entered, with solemn faces, and dressed like executioners. Favras understood that they were the forerunners of death, the advance-guard of the hangman.

“Follow me !” said one of these men.

Favras bowed, in token of assent ; but pointing to the rest of his clothes, which lay on a chair, he asked : “Will you not give me time to dress ?”

“Take it !” said the same man who had spoken before.

Favras went to the table, whereon were scattered different articles from his dressing-case. With the aid of his little glass, which ornamented the wall, he buttoned the collar of his shirt, bestowed a graceful fold upon his frill, and gave the most aristocratic turn he could to the bow of his cravat. Then he slipped on his vest and coat.

“Ought I to take my hat, gentlemen ?” he asked.

“It is useless,” replied the same speaker.

Meanwhile the man who had been silent looked at Favras, in a way to attract his attention. It even seemed as if this man made him some incomprehensible sign with his eye, but so rapidly, that the Marquis was left in doubt. Besides, what could this man have to say to him ? So the Marquis thought no more about it, but waved his hand to the jailer Louis, with an amicable gesture, and said : “All right, gentlemen ! Go ahead ! I’m with you.”

An usher was in attendance outside the door. He walked first, then Favras; and after them came the two funereal messengers.

This sinister group directed their steps upwards towards the ground floor of the prison.

Between the two wickets a platoon of National Guardsmen were in waiting.

Feeling himself sustained by their presence, the usher then said: "Monsieur, as you are condemned, give me your Saint Louis Cross."

"I supposed I was condemned to death, not degradation," said Favras.

"That's the order, Monsieur," responded the usher.

Favras detached his cross; but not wishing to deliver it to this legal officer, he placed it in the hands of the sergeant-major, who commanded the platoon of National Guards.

"That is just as well," said the usher, without insisting that the cross should be delivered to himself personally. "Now then, follow me!"

They went up some fifty stairs, and then stopped in front of an oaken door, heavily spiked with iron, — one of those doors which send a shiver through the veins of a condemned man, — one of those doors whereof there are two or three on the road to the sepulchre, behind which he conjectures that something terrible awaits him, though he does not know what.

This door opened. They did not give Favras time to enter, but pushed him inside. Then the door suddenly closed, as if under the impulsion of an iron arm.

Favras saw that he was in the torture-chamber. "Ah, gentlemen," he said, growing slightly pale, "when you take a man into such tight places, — the Devil, you ought to let him know beforehand!"

Hardly had he uttered these words when the two followers threw themselves upon him, tore off his coat and waistcoat, pulled away his cravat, so artistically arranged, and tied his hands behind his back. In fulfilling his part of this duty with his comrade, the same torturer who, as Favras fancied, had previously made a sign to him, whispered in his ear : " Will you be rescued ? There is still time ! "

This offer brought a smile to the Marquis's lips, for it reminded him of the greatness of his mission ; but he softly shook his head.

A sort of rack, called a wooden horse, was already prepared, on which they stretched the condemned man. The other torturer approached with his apron full of oaken wedges, and an iron mallet in his hand. Favras extended to this man his handsome leg, still graced by his red-heeled shoe and his silk stocking ; but the usher lifted his hand and said : " That is enough ! The Court excuses the condemned from the torture."

" Ah ! It seems that the Court is afraid that I may speak out. None the less am I thankful. I shall march to the gallows on two good legs, and that's something. Meanwhile, gentlemen, you know I am quite at your disposal."

" You are to spend an hour in this hall," replied the usher.

" If not very amusing, it is at least interesting," said Favras ; and he began to walk about the hall, examining, one after another, certain hideous implements, resembling colossal spiders and gigantic iron scorpions. He felt as if at any given moment, by command of a fatal voice, all these instruments might become animate, and bite cruelly.

There were patterns of torture, of all ages, — from the time of Philip Augustus to the reign of Louis Sixteenth.

There were the hooks, wherewith they lacerated Jews in the Thirteenth Century. There were the wheels, whereon they crushed Protestants in the Seventeenth.

Favras stopped before each trophy, and demanded the name of each implement. This coolness astonished even the torturers themselves, — fellows not easily astonished, as everybody knows ; and one of them asked Favras : “ With what object do you ask these questions ? ”

The prisoner regarded him with a jesting air, common with gentlemen. “ Well, Monsieur, it is possible that I may encounter Satan on the journey I am about to take, and I should not be sorry to make a friend of him, by communicating what I know about machines for torturing the damned, machines *he* has never heard of.”

The prisoner had just completed his examination, when five o'clock sounded from the bell on the Châtelet. Two hours had elapsed since he left his dungeon. They took him back again, and there he found the Curate of Saint Paul's, already waiting.

As may be seen, Favras had not wasted the two hours of delay ; and if anything could favorably dispose a man towards death, it must be such a spectacle as he had contemplated.

On seeing him, the curate opened his arms. “ My father,” said Favras, “ excuse me if I can only open to you my heart. These gentlemen have taken good care that I shall open nothing else to you ; ” and he showed his hands, bound tight behind him.

“ Can you not release the arms of the condemned man, during the little time he is with me ? ” asked the kind old priest.

“ It is not in my power,” responded the usher.

“ Father,” said Favras, “ ask them if they cannot fasten my hands in front, instead of behind. That will

be more convenient for the time when I have to hold the penitence candle, in order to read my sentence."

The two assistants looked inquiringly at the usher, who nodded, as much as to say, there would be nothing out of the way about that; and so the favor which the Marquis asked was granted. Then he was left alone with the priest.

What took place at this supreme interview, between the man of the world and the man of God, is known only to themselves. In the presence of the sanctities of religion, did Favras unseal his heart, which had remained firmly closed before the majesty of law? In the presence of the consolations offered by that unknown world he was about to enter, were his eyes, heretofore dry with irony, moistened with the tears pent-up in his heart, as he thought of the cherished objects he must leave alone in the world behind him?

These things were not even revealed to those who entered his dungeon about three hours after noon, and found him with a smiling mouth, dry cheeks, and a stout heart. They came to announce the hour of his death.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I ask your pardon, but you have kept me waiting."

As he was already without vest and coat, and as his hands were bound, they took off his shoes and hose, and put a white shirt over the rest of his attire; and on his breast they placed an inscription bearing these words:

CONSPIRATOR AGAINST THE STATE.

At the Châtelet gate a tumbrel was in waiting, surrounded by a numerous guard. In the wagon was a lighted torch.

Perceiving the condemned, the multitude clapped

their hands. The judgment had been noised abroad since six in the morning, and the crowd thought the hours very tedious which intervened between the sentence and its execution.

Some fellows ran about the streets claiming drink-money from the passers-by.

“Why do you demand drink-money?” they were asked.

“We wished to drink to the execution of the Marquis de Favras,” responded these death-mendicants.

Favras mounted the wagon with a firm step. He sat down on the side where the torch was placed, rightly believing the torch was there with that intention.

The Curate of Saint Paul's followed, and sat at his left hand.

The executioner mounted last, and sat behind the prisoner.

This executioner was the same man, with the grave but mild face, whom we saw at the Bicêtre Prison, when the trial of Guillotin's new machine was made. We have seen him before, we see him now, we shall see him again, — the true hero of the epoch upon which we are entering.

After seating himself, the hangman passed a rope about the Marquis's neck, — the rope wherewith Favras was to be hanged; but the hangman retained the end in his own hand.

When the tumbrel began to move, there was a movement in the crowd. Favras naturally glanced towards the quarter where this movement took place. He saw some fellows pressing forward, so as to be in the front ranks, and have better places on the street.

Suddenly he started, in spite of himself; for in the first row — in the midst of five or six companions who

had forced their way through the crowd — he recognized, in the costume of a porter from the market-place, his nocturnal visitor, who had promised to watch over him up to the last moment.

The condemned man made him a sign with his head, but it was only a sign of recognition, with no other meaning.

The wagon continued on its way, till it stopped in front of Notre Dame. The central door was open, so as to allow a view, at the other end of the darkened church, of the high altar, aflame with lighted candles.

There was such a rush of curiosity-seekers, that the wagon had been compelled to pause now and then, and could only go on when the guards had cleared the way, which was repeatedly closed up again by a flood of bystanders, breaking through the frail dike opposed to them.

In front of the Cathedral, there was a struggle to make an empty place.

“It is necessary to get out here, Monsieur,” said the executioner to the condemned man, “in order to make public confession.”

Favras obeyed without a word.

The priest dismounted first, then the prisoner, then the hangman, still grasping his end of the rope.

The prisoner's arms were tied somewhat loosely at the wrists, so as to allow him the use of his hands.

In his right hand they placed the torch ; in his left hand, the sentence. The condemned man advanced as far as the portico, and knelt. In the front ranks of those who surrounded him, he recognized the same market-porter and his companions, whom he had seen as he emerged from the Châtelet. This persistence seemed to touch him, but not a word of appeal escaped his lips.

A clerk from the Châtelet was in attendance. "Read, Monsieur!" he said, in a loud voice; adding, in a whisper: "Monsieur, if you wish to be rescued, you have only to say the word."

Without answering, Favras began to read. This he did in a firm voice, with nothing in its accent to betray the least perturbation.

When the reading was over he addressed the crowd around him, and said: "About to appear before my God, I pardon those men who, contrary to their own consciences, have accused me of criminal projects. I love my King, and to this sentiment I die faithful. This is an example which I leave behind me, and which I hope will be followed by many noble hearts. The populace demand my death, with a great outcry. They must have a victim. So be it! I am glad this fatality falls on me, rather than on some faint heart, whom the sight of an unmerited scaffold might lead to despair. — Now, unless there is something else for me to do here, let us continue our journey, gentlemen."

The procession passed on. It was not far from the porch of Notre Dame to the Place de Grève, and the tumbrel made good time on the road.

When they reached their destination Favras said: "Gentlemen, may I not enter the Hôtel de Ville awhile?"

"Have you any revelations to make, my son?" asked the priest, quickly.

"No, my father; but I wish to dictate my last will and testament; and I have heard it said that this last favor is never refused to the condemned man who asks for it."

Instead therefore of going straight to the gibbet, the wagon turned towards the Hôtel de Ville, on the other

side of the square. A great clamor was heard among the people.

"He's going to make revelations! He's going to make revelations!" they shouted on all sides.

At this cry an observer might have noticed that a young man, clad in black, — who stood upright on a horseblock, at the corner of the Quay Pelletier, — grew pale.

"Fear nothing, Count Louis!" said a satirical voice near him. "The condemned will not speak a word as to what took place in the Place Royale."

The young man in black turned quickly. These words had been spoken to him by a market-porter, whose face could not be seen, because, in the very act of speaking, he had pulled his large hat over his eyes.

Moreover, if the fine young man cherished any doubt about the matter, it was speedily dissipated.

At the top of the portico of the Hôtel de Ville, Favras made a sign that he wished to speak. On the instant all noises were hushed, as if a puff of east wind had passed by, and blown away all disturbance.

"Gentlemen," said Favras, "I hear it rumored about me that I am going into the Hôtel de Ville to make revelations. Not so! In case there is any man among you, — as is possible, — who has anything to fear from such revelations, he may rest easy; for I am only going to make my dying testament."

With firm step he passed under the sombre vault and ascended the stairway, which led to the chamber whither it was customary to conduct prisoners at such a time, and which was therefore called the Chamber of Revelations.

Three men in black were there on duty; and among the three Favras recognized the clerk who had spoken to him near the cathedral.

As the condemned man could not write with his hands tied, he began to dictate his will.

We have heard much of the testament of Louis Sixteenth, because much is said of kingly documents; but we have the testament of Favras before our eyes, and we must say this one thing to the dear public: *Read and compare!*

His will finished, Favras asked the privilege of reading it, in order to sign it. They untied his hands, and the papers were given him. He read them carefully, and corrected such mistakes in spelling as the clerk had made. At the bottom of each page he wrote, *Mabi de Favras.*

After that he held out his hands, that the bands might be again tightened, an operation accomplished by the hangman, who had not left his side for a single instant.

The dictation of this will had taken over two hours. The populace, who had been on hand ever since the forenoon, became very impatient. Many excellent fellows had come there with empty stomachs, intending to breakfast when the execution was over; but they were still fasting.

The crowd began to murmur; and it was such a threatening murmur as had been already heard in the same place, — on the days when De Launay was killed, when Foulon was hanged, when Berthier was torn asunder.

Moreover the public began to think that Favras had been allowed to escape by some back passage.

At this juncture it was even proposed to hang the municipal officers in Favras's stead, and to demolish the Hôtel de Ville.

Fortunately, about nine in the evening, the prisoner reappeared. Torches were furnished to the soldiers, who formed a hedge about the place. All the windows on the

square were lighted. The gibbet alone remained in mysterious and terrible obscurity.

The appearance of the condemned man was greeted with unanimous cries, and by a great commotion among the fifty thousand people who crowded the square.

Now they were sure, not only that he had not escaped, but that he *could* not escape.

Favras looked about him. Speaking to himself, with an ironical smile peculiar to him, he murmured: "Not a carriage? Ah, nobility is forgetful. They were more polite to Count Horn than to me."

"That was because Horn was an assassin, while as for thee, thou art a martyr," responded a voice.

Favras turned, and again saw the market-porter, whom he had noticed twice before on the way to the gallows.

"Adieu, Monsieur," said Favras to him, "I hope, if there is any need of it, you will testify in my behalf."

Then, with a steadfast walk, he came down the vestibule steps, and walked towards the scaffold.

As he placed his foot on the first rung of the ladder leading to the gallows, a voice cried: "Jump, Marquis!"

The prisoner replied with a voice sonorous and serious: "Citizens, I die innocent. Pray to God for me!"

At the fourth round he stopped again, and spoke in a voice as firm and clear as before: "Citizens, I ask the aid of your prayers. I die innocent!"

At the eighth step, the one from which he was to be launched into eternity, he repeated, for the third time: "Citizens, I die innocent. Pray to God for me!"

One of the two hangman's assistants, who mounted the stairs with him, said again: "You do not wish to be rescued?"

"Thanks, my friend, no! But God reward you for your good intentions."

Then bowing to the executioner, who seemed to wait for orders, instead of giving them, Favras said : " Do your duty ! "

Hardly had he uttered these words than the hangman pushed him off, and the body swung into vacancy.

During the immense commotion produced in the Place de Grève, — while some amateurs clapped their hands, and cried *Encore !* as they might have done after a topical song in a vaudeville, or a grand aria in the opera, — the young man in black slipped away from the horseblock on which he was mounted, threaded his way through the crowd, and at the corner of the New Bridge sprang swiftly into a carriage, without livery or escutcheon, exclaiming to the coachman : " To the Luxembourg, at the top of your speed. " The carriage started at a gallop.

Three men were awaiting the arrival of this carriage with much impatience.

These three men were *Monsieur* de Provence, and two of his gentlemen already named in the course of this narrative, but whom it is needless to name again at this point.

They waited with the greatest impatience, because they would have been at table two hours ago, but for their anxiety.

On his part the cook was in despair. This was the third dinner he had begun ; and as it had been ready for ten minutes, it would be spoiled in another quarter-hour.

At this critical moment they heard a carriage roll into the courtyard.

Provence hurried to the window. In the darkness he could only see a shadow leap from the upper step of the carriage to the platform of the palace. So he left the window and ran towards the door ; but before the future

King of France reached it, for his pace was always somewhat halting, the door opened, and admitted the young man in black, saying : " Monseigneur, all is over ! Favras died without speaking a word."

" Then we can eat our dinner in peace, my dear Louis ?"

" Yes, Monseigneur. — By my faith, he was a worthy gentleman, that man !"

" I am of your opinion, my dear fellow," said his Royal Highness. " At dessert, let us drink his health in a glass of Constance. — To dinner, gentlemen."

As he spoke, the two leaves of the door swung apart, and the illustrious comrades went into the dining-room.

CHAPTER III.

THE MONARCHY IS SAVED.

SEVERAL weeks after the execution which we have just described, — into the details whereof we entered, in order to forewarn our readers what gratitude may be expected from kings and princes, towards those who sacrifice themselves in behalf of such royal patrons, — a man, riding a dapple-gray horse, was climbing slowly up the Avenue de Saint Cloud.

This slowness must be attributed neither to the lassitude of the rider nor the fatigue of his horse. That neither the one nor the other had taken more than a short trip, it was easy to see ; for the foam which escaped from the horse's mouth was not the result of over-riding, but rather of hard restraint.

As to the horseman, one could see, at first sight, that he was a gentleman ; and his entire dress was not only free from dirt, but attested the precautions taken to preserve his garments from the mud which covered the road.

What retarded the horseman was the deep thought wherein he was evidently absorbed, and possibly his wish not to reach his appointment until a certain hour, which had not yet sounded.

He was a man about forty years old, whose powerful ugliness did not conceal his greatness of character. He had a head disproportionately large, bloated cheeks, a face seamed by the smallpox, an animated expression,

eyes with latent lightning, a mouth accustomed to deliberate irony and biting sarcasm. Such was the aspect of this man, destined, as one instinctively felt, to occupy a large place and make a great noise in the world.

His whole physiognomy, however, seemed covered with a veil, thrown over it by one of those organic maladies against which the most vigorous temperaments struggle in vain. His complexion was dull and gray. His eyes were weary and red. His jaws were overweighted with flesh, — the beginning of an unwholesome obesity.

Thus appeared the man whom we wish to place before the eyes of our readers.

Reaching the head of the avenue, he passed, without hesitation, through the gate opening into the courtyard of the palace, and measured the recesses of that courtyard with his eyes.

At the right, between two wings, which enclosed a sort of blind lane, a man was in waiting, who made a sign for the rider to come in that direction.

A gate was open. The attendant led the way beneath that gate. The horseman followed, and presently found himself in a second courtyard.

There the man on foot — who, by the way, wore coat, breeches, and waistcoat of black — stopped. Looking about him, and seeing that the place was quite deserted, he approached the horseman, hat in hand; and the cavalier, by leaning over his horse's neck, brought himself nearer to the man in black, and said in a low tone: "Monsieur Weber?"

"Monsieur de Mirabeau?" was the response.

"The same," said the rider, as he sprang to the ground, with more lightness than one would have believed possible.

“Enter,” said Weber, quickly, “and be kind enough to wait an instant, till I can put your horse in the stable myself.”

Meantime he opened the door of a parlor, whose windows and a second door looked out into the park.

Mirabeau entered this parlor, and employed the few minutes, during which Weber left him alone, in unbuckling his leathern overboots, which had excluded the dirt from his silken hose, and kept the gloss of his shoes untarnished.

As he had promised, Weber came back in five minutes, saying: “Come, Monsieur, the Queen is waiting for you.”

“The Queen waiting?” replied Mirabeau. “Am I so unhappy as to have kept her waiting? I thought I was right on time.”

“I only meant that the Queen was impatient to see you. Come, Monsieur!”

Weber opened the door leading into the garden, and entered the labyrinth of alleys which led to the most solitary and elevated portion of the park.

There, amid trees with outstretched and leafless arms, in an atmosphere gray and cheerless, appeared a pavilion, of the sort known as a *kiosk*.

The shutters of this pavilion were hermetically sealed, with the exception of two; and even these were pushed close together, and only allowed a brace of rays of light to enter, as through loopholes in tower-walls, — rays barely sufficient to render the darkness visible.

A huge fire burned in the fireplace, however, and two candelabras burned on the chimney-piece.

Weber made the gentleman he guided enter a sort of antechamber. Then, opening the door of the main room of the kiosk, after softly rapping, he announced the

Count Riquetti de Mirabeau, and drew back to let the visitor pass in front of him.

If he had been carefully listening, at the moment when the Count passed by, Weber would certainly have heard the statesman's heart beating against his great breast.

At this announcement a lady arose in the farthest corner of the room, and took several steps forward, with some hesitation, and even fear. This lady was the Queen.

Her heart also beat violently. Here, before her eyes, was this hated, decried, dangerous man ; the man accused of bringing about the terrors of early October ; the man towards whom royalty had turned for one instant, but who had been presently repulsed by political courtiers ; the man who had since made them feel the necessity of conciliating him, by his two magnificent outbursts of wrath, which became almost sublime.

The first of these outbursts was his apostrophe to the Clergy.

The second was an address, in which he explained how the representatives of the people, from being merely the deputies of certain townships, had constituted themselves the National Assembly.

Mirabeau approached with graceful courtesy, which the Queen was surprised to note in a man whose energetic organization seemed to exclude such niceties.

Then he bowed respectfully, and waited.

The Queen was the first to break silence, with a voice in which she could not entirely suppress her emotion.

“ Monsieur Mirabeau, Doctor Gilbert has assured us of your readiness to ally yourself with our party.”

Mirabeau bowed, in token of assent.

The Queen resumed: "A former overture was made to you, to which you responded with a plan for a new cabinet."

Again Mirabeau bowed.

"It was not our fault, if this first plan failed."

"I so believe, Madame, especially on the part of your Majesty; but it was the fault of fellows who pretend to be devoted to the monarchy."

"What can you expect?" said the Queen. "This is one of the misfortunes of our position. Kings can no more choose their friends than they can choose their enemies; and sometimes they are compelled to accept the most disastrous sacrifices. We are surrounded by men who wish to save us, but who really ruin us. Their resolution to rule out of the King's cabinet all members of the Assembly, was a specimen of this blundering, directed against yourself. Do you wish me to cite a blunder which works against me? Can you believe that one of my most faithful friends, — a man who, I am sure, would readily die for us, — can you believe that this man, without giving us any hint in advance of his plan, brought to our dinner, — generally enjoyed under the public eye, as you know, — the widow and children of Monsieur de Favras, all three clad in deep mourning? My first thought was to rise and run to them, and to place these orphans of a man who so courageously died for us, — for I am not one of those who deny their friends, — to seat these children, I say, between the King and myself. All eyes were fixed on us, waiting to see what we would do. I turned. Do you know whom I saw behind me, not four steps from my armchair? Santerre, the man from the Faubourg Saint Antoine. I sank back into my chair, almost weeping with anger, and not daring to look again on that widow and her orphans. The Royalists blame

me for not braving everything, in order to mark my interest in that unhappy family. The Revolutionists are furious, not believing that these visitors were brought there without my permission. Oh Monsieur," continued the Queen, shaking her head, "we must indeed perish, when attacked by men of genius, but defended by men — very estimable no doubt — who have no idea of our situation;" and the Queen sighed, as she pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Madame," said Mirabeau, touched by her great misfortune, which was not unknown to him, — and which, either from the Queen's habitual policy, or through her womanly weakness, she allowed him to discern, by her tears and agony, — "Madame, when you talk of men who attack you, you do not include me, I trust? I professed monarchical principles, when I could see nothing but weakness in the Court, when I understood neither the heart nor mind of the imperial daughter of Maria Theresa. I fought for the rights of the throne, when I inspired only suspicion, and all my measures, poisoned by malignant misinterpretation, appeared like so many snares. I served the King, when I knew well that I could expect from him — just, but deceived as he was — neither benefit nor reward. What may I do now, Madame, when confidence restores my courage, and gratitude — for your Majesty's reception of me — makes my former principles a duty and delight?"

Mirabeau continued, in his turn shaking his head: "It is late, very late, — I know it, Madame. In asking me to save it, perhaps the monarchy only proposes to me, in reality, that I should die with itself! If I had reflected, perhaps I should have chosen, in accepting the favor of this interview, some other moment than this one, so soon after his Majesty had delivered over to the Chamber of

Deputies his famous Red Book, — thus most unfortunately betraying the honor of his friends.”

“Oh Monsieur, can you believe the King guilty of such intentional treason? Are you ignorant how it happened? The Red Book, forced from the King, would never have been delivered to the committee, if they had not promised to guard it sacredly. Then they had it printed! This was an offence of the committee against the King, not the King’s betrayal of his friends.”

“Alas, Madame! you know what causes led the committee to this publication, — which I disapproved as a man of honor and which I disavowed as a Deputy. At the very time when the King was swearing his love for the Constitution, he had a permanent agency at Turin, amidst the mortal enemies of that Constitution. When he was talking of financial reforms, and apparently accepting those proposed by the Assembly, his stables, large and small, were established at Trèves, hired and equipped by himself, and maintained under the orders of the Prince de Lambesq, — the mortal enemy of the Parisians, whose hanging they daily demand, — at least, in effigy. Enormous pensions have been paid to Artois, to Condé, to all the Court fugitives, and this in spite of a decree passed two months ago, which suppressed these pensions. True, the King forgot to sanction this decree. Well, Madame, what would you have? For two months there had been an unsuccessful effort to find out what was done with sixty millions of francs. The King was urged, pleaded with, to say what had become of that money; but he refused to say. The committee therefore believed themselves released from their pledge, and they accordingly printed the Red Book. Why did the King give up a weapon which could be so cruelly turned against him?”

“Oh Monsieur,” cried the Queen, “if you were admitted

to the honor of membership in the King's Council, you would not advise him to such disastrous weaknesses, by which, — oh yes, I must use the word, — by which he is not only ruined, but dishonored.”

“If I was honored by a call to the Royal Council, Madame, I should be near him as the defender of monarchical power, regulated by laws, and as the apostle of liberty, guaranteed by the monarchical power. This liberty, Madame, has had three enemies, — the Clergy, the Nobility, the Royal Parliaments. The Clerical Power does not belong to this age, and was killed off by the resolutions of Talleyrand. The Nobles are to be found in every age, and I fancy we cannot reckon without them, — because, without Nobility, there can be no monarchy; but they must be restrained, and this is possible, only through the coalition of the people with the royal authority. Now so long as Royal Parliaments continue to exist, or can be summoned at the King's will, the royal authority cannot coalesce in good faith with popular legislation; because these Royal Parliaments, in France, are not representative and popular, like the English Parliament or the American Congress, but are more like conventions of lords; and they keep alive, in the King and the Nobility, a fatal hope, — the desire to restore the ancient order of things. After the Clerical Power is annihilated, and the Royal Parliaments forever dissolved, the Executive Power of the Crown may revive, regenerate the royal authority, and reconcile it with liberty. There you have my political policy! If it is also the King's, let him adopt it. If not his, let him repudiate it.”

The Queen was impressed with the irradiation which his vast intelligence shed over the past, present, and future.

“Monsieur, Monsieur,” she said, “I do not know whether or not these are the King’s political views; but this I know, if I have any weight, — they are *my* views. As for the means of reaching this desirable end, make me to know them. I will listen to you, not only with attention, but with avidity, — yes, if I may say so, with gratitude.”

Mirabeau glanced rapidly at the Queen, as if to measure her heart with his eagle eye; and he saw that, if not already convinced, she was in a fair way to be so.

This triumph, over so superior a woman as Marie Antoinette, petted the vanity of Mirabeau in the sweetest fashion.

“Madame, we have lost Paris, or nearly so; but there remain to us multitudes of Royalists, scattered through the provinces, and of these we must make our bundle of sound sticks, our sheaf of good wheat. That is why it is my opinion the King should quit Paris, but not France, — that he should retire to Rouen, in the midst of his troops; that from there he should publish ordinances more popular than the decrees of the Assembly. Then there need be, could be, no civil war, because the King would be more Revolutionary than the Revolution itself.”

“But this Revolution, whether it goes ahead of us or behind us, does it not terrify you?”

“Alas, Madame! I believe I know, better than anybody else, that the Revolution must have its part in the matter. It must have its cake, — the sop thrown to Cerberus. I have already said to the Queen, that any attempt to reconstruct, on its ancient basis, the monarchy which the Revolution has destroyed, involves an enterprise beyond human power. All France has concurred in this Revolution, from the King to the poorest of his subjects, — either intentionally and actively, or negatively. It is

scarcely the old monarchy which I pretend to defend, Madame; for I dream of modification and regeneration, so as to establish a form of government more or less like that which has led England to the height of glory and power. Gilbert has told me something about the King's meditation over the prison and scaffold of Charles the First. After such a terrible vision, will his Majesty not be better contented with a throne like that of the Third William or the First George?"

"Oh Monsieur," cried the Queen, — to whom a single word spoken by Mirabeau recalled, with its mortal shiver, the vision at the Château Taverney, — the outline of the death-instrument invented by Guillotin, — "Oh Monsieur, restore to us such a liberal monarchy, and you will see if we are such ingrates as we are often represented to be."

"Well, Madame, this is what I will do," said Mirabeau, in his turn. "If the King sustains me, and the Queen encourages me, here at your feet I lay my oath as a nobleman, that I will accomplish the promise I now make to your Majesty, or die in the attempt, with all my armor on."

"Count, Count, do not forget, — it is more than a woman who hears your oath. You are heard by a dynasty of five centuries, — seventy kings of France, from Pharamond down to Louis Fifteenth, sleeping in their tombs, — which will be dethroned with us, if our throne should crumble."

"I know the obligations I incur. The task is immense. I know it! But it is not grander than my will, or stronger than my devotion. If sure of the sympathy of my Queen and the confidence of my King, I could undertake any work."

"If such promises only are needed, I can pledge

both!" and as she spoke, she saluted Mirabeau, with that siren smile which won all hearts.

He understood that his audience was over. The pride of the politician was satisfied, but his vanity as a gallant required something more; so he said, with bold but respectful courtesy: "Madame, when your imperial mother, Maria Theresa, admitted a subject to the honor of her presence, she never dismissed him without offering her hand for his kiss."

As he stood there, upright and expectant, the Queen looked upon him as a chained lion, who asked nothing better than to crouch at her feet.

With a smile of victory on her lips she extended her hand slowly, — that beautiful hand, cold as alabaster, and almost as transparent.

Mirabeau bowed, pressed his lips on that hand, and lifted his head proudly, saying: "Madame, through this kiss the monarchy is saved."

He went out, much moved, but joyous, himself believing — poor man of genius! — in the fulfilment of the prophecy he had made.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RETURN TO THE FARM.

WHILE Marie Antoinette is opening her aching heart to fresh hopes, and for a time forgetting her sufferings as a woman, in her anxiety for her safety as a queen, — while Mirabeau, like Alcidas, the classic athlete, dreams of sustaining, single-handed, the dome of the falling monarchy, which threatens to crush him in its ruins, — we will take the reader, weary of so much politics, back among more humble people, and into an atmosphere less tainted.

We have seen with what fears Billot's heart was inspired by Pitou, the Lafayette of Haramont Village, when the latter made his second journey to the capital, — fears which recalled the farmer to his farm, — or, rather, the father to his daughter's side; and these fears were not exaggerated.

This return took place on the second day after the famous night on which occurred three important events: the flight of Sebastien Gilbert from his school to Paris; the hasty and unexpected departure of Isidore de Charny for Turin, following his equally sudden arrival in Paris; and Catherine's swoon on the highway from Villers Cotterets to Pisseleu.

In another chapter of this book we have related how Pitou, after having carried Catherine home to the farm, after having learned from her, in the midst of tears and moans, that the accident which had prostrated her arose

from the departure of Isidore, — we have related how, after all this, Pitou, overcome by her avowal, returned at once to his own home ; where he found Sebastien's letter, which led him to hurriedly follow the boy to Paris ; where we saw him awaiting the return of Doctor Gilbert, with so much anxiety that he did not at first think of speaking to Billot about affairs at the farm.

It was only when reassured as to Sebastien's fate, by seeing him come to the Rue Saint Honoré with his father, only when he learned, from the lad's own mouth, the details of his journey, — his meeting with Isidore, who had brought him to the city on the crupper of his horse, — it was only then that Pitou remembered Catherine, the farm, and Mother Billot, and spoke to Father Billot of the bad harvest, the continual rains, and Catherine's swoon.

As we have said, this swoon was what particularly disturbed Billot, and decided him to ask his dismissal of Gilbert, which was at once granted.

All the way along, Billot catechized Pitou about this fainting-fit. He loved his farm, this worthy farmer ; he loved his wife well, this excellent husband ; but above all else he loved his daughter Catherine ; although, thanks to his unvarying ideas of honor and his invincible probity, this love, even if there had been any occasion, would have found him as inflexible a judge as he was a tender father.

When Billot questioned, Pitou answered. He had found Catherine lying across the road, so mute, motionless, and lifeless, that at first he believed her dead. In despair he lifted her in his arms, and placed her across his knees. Then, perceiving that she yet breathed, he ran with her towards the farmhouse, where, aided by Mother Billot, he put her to bed.

There, while Mother Billot was lamenting, he brutally

(as he said) threw water into her face. The cool shock made Catherine open her eyes. Seeing this, Pitou, as he told Billot, felt that his presence at the farm was no longer necessary, and went away to his own lodgings in Haramont.

The rest of Pitou's recital, — that is, what related to Sebastien, — Father Billot only heard once, and that sufficed; but thinking unceasingly of Catherine, Billot exhausted himself with conjectures about her accident, and its possible causes.

These conjectures crystallized themselves into questions addressed to Pitou, questions which Pitou answered diplomatically: "I don't know!"

There was the more merit in this answer, "I don't know," because Catherine had been cruelly frank in telling him everything, and consequently Pitou *did* know.

He knew that her heart was bruised by Isidore's farewell, and that this was why she fainted where Pitou found her; but this is what he would not have told the farmer, for all the gold in the world.

On the contrary, he was seized with the greatest pity for Catherine.

Pitou loved Catherine, — more, he admired her. We saw, at the proper time and place, how this love and admiration, though so little appreciated and so badly recompensed, brought both suffering to Pitou's heart and transports to his imagination; but however sharp his grief, — however exalted these transports, — causing Pitou such gastric disturbances that sometimes he could not dine or breakfast for an hour or two after his usual time, — these transports and sorrows had never brought him to such a point of weakness as to make him swoon.

Pitou put his feelings into the form of a syllogism, which he divided into three parts, with his accustomed

logic : “ If Mademoiselle Catherine loves Isidore so much as to swoon when he goes away, then she loves Isidore more than I love Mademoiselle Catherine ; for I never swooned in parting from her.”

From this first premise he proceeded to the second : “ If she loves him more than I love her, she must suffer more than I ; in which case she suffers very much.”

Thence he passed to the third part of his syllogism, — the conclusion, — a conclusion the more logical, because, like every right conclusion, it grew naturally out of its premises : “ She suffers more than I, since she fainted, while I never swooned in my life.”

These feelings rendered Pitou mute, in Billot’s presence, as to Catherine’s exact condition, a silence which augmented Billot’s anxiety.

Billot’s worriments became sharper as he drew nearer home, and they sought relief in the blows of the whip which the worthy farmer applied without stint, sometimes with one arm and sometimes with the other, to the flanks of the horse he hired from the stable in Dammartin. So effectual were his efforts, that by four in the afternoon the tilt-cart, with its two travellers, stopped at the door of the farmhouse, where their presence was greeted by the barking of the dogs.

Hardly had the cart come to a standstill in the courtyard, when Billot leaped to the ground and ran into the house ; but an obstacle, which he did not expect, met him on the threshold of the girl’s bedroom, which opened from the kitchen, on the ground floor.

This was Doctor Raynal, — a man we have already had occasion to see in these narratives, — who declared, that in Catherine’s present state, not only would excitement be dangerous, but might prove fatal. This was a fresh blow to Billot.

He knew the fact of her swoon ; but from the moment when Pitou told him how he saw her reopen her eyes and return to herself, Billot's mind had been preoccupied — if it may be so expressed — with only the moral causes and consequences of this event ; but now, as ill luck would have it, here was a physical result, outside of moral cause and effect.

This physical consequence was a cerebral fever, which had declared itself the day before, and threatened to reach a high degree of intensity.

Doctor Raynal was busy fighting this fever, with all the means used for such cases by old-fashioned medical experts, — bleeding and mustard-plasters included ; but this treatment, active as it was, did not overtake the malady. The struggle had hardly begun between disease and remedy, and since morning Catherine had been a prey to violent delirium.

In this delirium the young girl undoubtedly said some strange things ; so, under the pretext of shielding her from excitement, Doctor Raynal had kept her mother well out of the way, as now he meant to keep her father.

Mother Billot was seated on a stool, in the shadow of the huge chimney. Her head was buried in her hands, and she seemed to be a stranger to what was going on around her.

She was insensible to the noise of the wagon, to the barking of the dogs, to Billot's entrance into the kitchen ; but she roused herself at the sound of his voice, disputing with the Doctor, and began to collect her wits, which had been drowned in her gloomy revery.

She accordingly raised her head, opened her eyes, fixed her dull look on Billot, and cried : “ Hey, it's our old man ! ”

Rising, she tottered forward with open arms, and threw herself upon the breast of Billot, who looked at her in a wild sort of way, as if he hardly knew her.

“Hey,” he said, as the sweat of agony stood on his brow, “what’s been going on here?”

“This,” said the Doctor, “that your daughter has what we call acute meningitis; and when patients have that disease, they must take only certain remedies, and see only certain persons.”

“But is it dangerous, this sickness, Doctor? Will she die of it?” asked Billot.

“People die of all sorts of diseases, my dear Monsieur Billot, if not properly cared for; but let me care for your girl in my own way, and she will not die.”

“Truly, Doctor?”

“I will answer for her; but it is important, for two or three days, that only myself, and the persons whom I designate, should enter her chamber.”

Billot sighed. He believed himself conquered, but made one more effort.

“Mayn’t I at least *see* her?” he asked, in the tone of a child begging a last favor.

“And if you see her, if you embrace her, will you leave me in peace three days thereafter, without any more teasing?”

“I swear it!”

“Very well! — Come in!”

The Doctor opened the door of Catherine’s room, and Father Billot could see the young girl, her eyes wild, her face flushed and feverish, her forehead bound with a band wet in icy water.

She muttered a few broken words, and when Father Billot pressed his pale and trembling lips on her damp

brow, it seemed to him as if he caught, among her incoherent words, the name of Isidore.

On the threshold of the door, which led into the kitchen, were several friends: Mother Billot, with clasped hands; Pitou, standing on tiptoe, and trying to see over her shoulder; and two or three day-laborers, who, being in the house, were curious to see for themselves what was the matter with their young mistress.

Faithful to his promise, Father Billot retired as soon as he had kissed his child; only he came away with a frowning brow and dark looks, murmuring: "Go to, go to! I see it was indeed time for me to come home!"

He re-entered the kitchen, whither his wife followed him mechanically; and whither Pitou was about to follow, when the Doctor pulled him by the flap of his blouse, and said hastily: "Don't quit the farmhouse. I must speak to thee!"

Somewhat surprised, Pitou turned, and was about to inquire of the Doctor of what use he could be; when the latter, in a mysterious way, pressed a finger to his lips, by way of enforcing silence.

Pitou therefore remained standing upright in the kitchen, on precisely the same spot where he had been before, imitating, though in a fashion more grotesque than poetic and beautiful, those terminal gods of classic antiquity, who, with their feet rooted closely in the earth, marked the limits of their own particular domains.

In five minutes the door of Catherine's chamber opened, and the Doctor's voice was heard calling for Pitou.

"Hey?" said Pitou, coming out of his prolonged reverie. "What do you want of me, Doctor?"

"Come and help Madame Clement hold Catherine, while I bleed her for the third time."

“A third time!” murmured Mother Billot. “They ’ll bleed her the third time! My God! Oh my God!”

“Woman, woman,” muttered Billot, in a severe voice, “all this would not have happened if you had watched over your child better.”

Then he entered his own chamber, from which he had been absent three months, while Pitou, raised to the rank of surgical student, by Doctor Raynal, went into Catherine’s room.

CHAPTER V.

PITOU AS SICK-NURSE.

PITOU was much surprised that he could be thought good for anything in the sick-room, by Doctor Raynal ; but he would have been yet more astonished had he known that the aid expected from him was moral, rather than physical.

As a matter of fact, the Doctor had remarked, in her delirium, that Catherine generally coupled Pitou's name with Isidore's ; that is, she best remembered the last faces which had been in her normal mind, — Isidore's, when she closed her eyes, Pitou's, when she reopened them.

As the sick girl did not pronounce these two names with the same accent, Doctor Raynal — a no less careful observer than his illustrious namesake, the author of the "Philosophical History of the Indies" — promptly inferred from these different, but equally expressive tones, used by the girl, that *Ange Pitou* must be the name of a friend, and *Isidore* the name of a lover ; and he concluded that it would not be disadvantageous to have the friend near the invalid, with whom she could talk about her lover.

To Doctor Raynal, — and without wishing to decry the acumen of Doctor Raynal, we must hasten to say that the whole thing seemed very simple, — to Doctor Raynal, everything was now clear as day, and it was only necessary for him to do what physicians always have done in their professional studies, — group the facts together, — in order to learn the entire truth.

Everybody in Villers Cotterets knew that George de Charny was killed on that terrible night at Versailles ; and that on the evening of the next day, his brother Isidore, summoned by the Count de Charny, started for Paris.

Now Pitou had found Catherine in a swoon on the road between Villers Cotterets and Pisseleu, which is also the highway from Boursognes to Paris. He bore her, insensible, to the farmhouse ; and as a result of this occurrence, the girl was seized with brain fever. This fever led to delirium ; and in this delirium she implored a fugitive to return, and called that fugitive *Isidore*.

It was therefore very easy for the Doctor to divine the secret of Catherine's malady, which was really the secret of her heart.

In this conjunction of facts the Doctor reasoned as follows :

The first need, of a patient with a head-trouble, is calmness.

What will bring this tranquillity to Catherine's heart ? News as to the whereabouts of her lover.

From whom can she obtain this news ? From somebody who knows about him.

And who is likely to know about him ? Pitou, who has just come from Paris.

This reasoning was at once simple and logical, and the Doctor compassed it without difficulty.

Although it was as surgeon's assistant that he first employed Pitou ; yet the Doctor could have done very well without Pitou in that capacity, for it was not a new bleeding of the patient which was proposed, but only a reopening of the former gash.

The Doctor lifted Catherine's arm softly from the bed, loosened the knot which compressed the wound,

separated its unhealed lips with his thumbs, and the blood flowed.

Seeing this blood, for which he would gladly have sacrificed his own, Pitou felt his strength begin to fail.

He therefore went and sat down in Madame Clement's armchair, sobbing, with his hands over his eyes; and each sob drew these words from his heart: "Oh Mademoiselle Catherine! Poor Mademoiselle Catherine!"

At each of these words he said to himself, with that double mentality which considers at the same moment the present and the past: "Certainly she loves Monsieur Isidore more than I love her. Certainly she suffers more than I ever suffered, for they have been obliged to bleed her because she is delirious with brain fever, — two very disagreeable things, which I never had."

As he drew this fresh blood from Catherine's arm, the Doctor, who had not taken his eyes from Pitou, felicitated himself on having shrewdly guessed that in this young man his patient would have a devoted friend.

As the Doctor expected, this slight flow of blood lessened the fever. The arteries in her temples beat more peacefully. Her breast was freer. Her breathing, which had been labored, became mild and regular. Her pulse fell from one hundred and ten pulsations to eighty-five. Everything indicated a quiet night for the girl.

Raynal breathed more freely in his turn. He gave Madame Clement all necessary instructions, — among others this strange direction, that she should sleep two or three hours, while Pitou watched in her stead.

Then, with a sign for Pitou to follow, the Doctor returned to the kitchen. Pitou did follow, and they found Mother Billot still buried in the shadow of the great chimney-piece.

The poor woman was so stunned, that she hardly

understood what the Doctor said, though his were comforting words for a mother's heart.

"Come, come! Courage, Mother Billot!" said the Doctor. "Things are going as well as we can expect."

The good woman seemed like one coming from another world as she said: "Oh, dear Monsieur Raynal, is it really true, what you say?"

"Yes. She won't have a bad night. Don't be anxious, even if you hear some crying in your daughter's chamber; and, above all, don't go in there."

"My God, my God!" said Mother Billot, with an accent of deep sorrow. "That's hard, that a mother may n't go into her child's room!"

"What would you have?" said the Doctor. "This is my absolute prescription, — neither you nor Monsieur Billot."

"But who will take care of my poor girl?"

"Be easy as to that! We have both Madame Clement and Pitou."

"What? Pitou?"

"Yes, Pitou. I find him very capable in medical matters. I shall take him to Villers Cotterets, where I will have a prescription prepared by the apothecary. Pitou will bring back this potion. Madame Clement will have the invalid take it by the spoonful. If anything unexpected should happen, Pitou, who is to watch with Madame Clement, will put his long legs in motion, and be at my place in ten minutes! — Hey, Pitou?"

"In *five*, Monsieur Raynal," said Pitou, with such confidence in himself as left no room for doubt in the minds of his auditors.

"You see, Madame Billot!" said the Doctor.

"Well, so be it!" said Mother Billot; "only, say a hopeful word to poor father."

“Where is he?” asked the Doctor.

“Up in this side room.”

“Useless!” said a voice from the door, up a short flight of stairs. “I have heard everything.”

As the three interlocutors turned at this unexpected response, they saw the farmer standing, pale and upright, in the doorway.

Then, as if this was all he wished to hear or say, Billot returned to his own room, making no comment whatever on the arrangements Raynal had made for the night.

Pitou kept his word. In the course of a quarter-hour he returned with the composing draught, ornamented with the label and guaranteed by the seal of Master Pacquenaud, — pharmacist at Villers Cotterets, like his father before him.

The messenger crossed the kitchen and entered Catherine’s chamber, not only without hindrance, but without hearing anything from anybody, except a few words from Madame Billot: “Ah, it’s thee, Pitou?” to which he only answered: “Yes, Ma’am Billot!”

Catherine was asleep, as the physician had foreseen, and her slumber was quiet. Near by — stretched out in a big armchair, her feet on the andirons — was the nurse, a prey to the special drowsiness peculiar to the honorable class to which she belonged. Having neither the right to sleep, nor yet the strength to keep awake, these nurses seem like Virgil’s unfortunate ghosts. Forbidden to descend into the Fields Elysian, and yet unable to return to the light of earth, they wander like shades on the borders of night, continually hovering between slumber and wakefulness.

In the state of somnambulism habitual with her she received the bottle from Pitou’s hands, uncorked it, set it

on the lightstand, and placed near it a silver spoon, so that the patient might only wait as short a time as possible, in her next hour of need. Then the nurse returned to her armchair.

As for Pitou, he sat on the window-seat, from which he could easily see Catherine.

The sentiment of pity which he felt, in thinking about Catherine, was not diminished by the sight of her. When he was permitted to touch her disease with his finger, if we may so express it, and to see for himself what terrible ravages could be committed by the abstraction called *love*, he was more than ever disposed to sacrifice his love to hers, — *his* love, which seemed to him a very simple affair, compared with the importunate, feverish, terrible passion, which appeared capable of consuming the young girl in its fierce flame.

Unconsciously to himself, these thoughts put him into the condition most favorable to the Doctor's plan. In fact, that sensible man rightly believed, that the remedy Catherine chiefly needed, was what is commonly called a *confidant*.

Though not a great physician, one thing is sure, — that, as we have said, Raynal was a quick observer.

About an hour after Pitou's return, Catherine moved, sighed, and opened her eyes.

In justice to the worthy Clement it should be said, that at the first movement made by the invalid the nurse was standing by her side, stammering: "Here I am, Mademoiselle! What do you want?"

"I am thirsty!" murmured the sick girl, returning to life through physical distress, and a feeling of bodily need.

The nurse poured into a spoon several drops of the sleeping mixture brought by Pitou, pressed the spoon

between Catherine's parched lips and set teeth, and the girl mechanically swallowed the soothing liquid.

Then Catherine let her head fall on the pillow, and the nurse, satisfied with the conviction that she had fulfilled her duty, again sought her comfortable armchair.

Pitou uttered a sigh, believing that Catherine had not even seen him.

Pitou was in error. When he aided Madame Clement to raise the girl's head, as she swallowed the decoction, as her head fell upon the pillow, Catherine half opened her eyes, and in the misty view which she had through her lashes, she fancied she could see Pitou; but in the delirium of fever, which had now endured for three days, she had seen so many phantoms, appearing only to vanish, that she now regarded the real Pitou as if he were but another phantasm.

Pitou's sigh was not a very loud one; but thereby this apparition of her old friend, towards whom she had sometimes been so unjust, made a deeper impression on her delirious mind than all the preceding phantoms. As she lay with closed eyes, her calmer and less feverish mind seemed to see before her the brave traveller, whom she had imagined, in the broken thread of her ideas, as being with her father in Paris, — as was partly true.

The result of this was, that after being awhile tormented with the doubt if Pitou was a reality, and not the evolution of feverish dream, she timidly opened her eyes, and looked about, to see if he was still in the same place.

It goes without saying that he had not budged. Seeing her eyes reopen, and rest on him, Pitou's face brightened. Seeing those eyes once more filled with life and intelligence, he extended his arms.

"Pitou!" she murmured.

“Mademoiselle Catherine!” exclaimed Pitou.

“Hey?” said Madame Clement, suddenly turning.

Catherine gave the nurse a restless glance; and then, with a sigh, she again let her head fall upon the pillow.

Pitou surmised at once that Madame Clement disturbed the girl; so he went to the nurse, and said to her very softly: “Don’t deprive yourself of sleep. You know very well that Doctor Raynal had me stay here to watch Mademoiselle, purposely so that you could take some repose.”

“Ah, yes! That’s true,” said Madame Clement; and as if she only awaited this permission, the good woman once more disposed herself comfortably in her big chair, and sighed.

After an instant of silence she indicated, by her snoring, — which was at first timid, but grew rapidly bolder, till in a few minutes it dominated the whole situation, — that she had entered the enchanted land of sleep with all sails set, — a land she usually visited only in disjointed dreams.

Catherine noted Pitou’s movements with astonishment. With the peculiar acuteness of invalids she did not lose a word of what Pitou said to Madame Clement.

He stayed near the nurse a moment, to be sure that her sleep was sound. When there was no longer any doubt of it, he approached Catherine, shaking his head, and letting his arms listlessly fall.

“Ah, Mademoiselle Catherine! I well knew that you loved him; but I did not know that you loved him so much as all this.”

CHAPTER VI.

PITOU AS A CONFIDANT.

PITOU spoke these words in such a fashion that Catherine could discern therein, not only the expression of his great sorrow, but a proof of his great kindness.

Each of these two sentiments, emanating simultaneously from the heart of the brave fellow who was gazing at her so sadly, touched the sick girl in an equal degree.

So long as Isidore lived at Boursonnes, so long as she felt that her lover was only three quarters of a league away, — in a word, so long as Catherine was happy, — except for little annoyances, such as Pitou's persistence in accompanying them in their walks, and some slight disquietude raised by certain paragraphs in her father's letters, — so long as this happy time lasted, Catherine buried her love in herself, like hid treasure, to be safely guarded, lest a single farthing of it should tumble into any heart save her own ; but now that Isidore was gone, while Catherine remained behind, and her felicity was thereby changed to infelicity, and the poor girl was vainly seeking for courage equal to her former self-satisfaction, she felt that it would be a great solace to meet some one with whom she could gossip about her fine gentleman, who had left her so suddenly, without being able to say anything positive about the date of his return.

She could not talk about Isidore, either with Madame Clement, Doctor Raynal, or her mother, and she was suffering sharply from this enforced silence ; when suddenly,

at the moment when she least expected it, Providence placed a friend before her eyes, just as they were reopening to life and reason, — a friend who, for an instant, she suspected of not having kept silence concerning her affairs, but whose first words banished all such doubt from her breast.

Therefore, when these compassionate words escaped so painfully from the heart of Aunt Angelica's poor nephew, Catherine responded, without the least attempt to conceal her sentiments : " Ah, Monsieur Pitou, you see how unhappy I am."

From that moment the dike was broken through on one side, and the current flowed freely from the other.

" Anyhow, dear Mademoiselle Catherine," said Pitou, " though it gives me no great pleasure to talk about Monsieur Isidore, if that subject is most agreeable to you, I will give you some news of him."

" Thou ? " asked Catherine.

" Oh yes ! " said Pitou.

" Thou hast seen him ? "

" No, but I know he reached Paris in good health."

" And how knowest thou that ? " she asked, her face radiant with love.

This look drew a great sigh from Pitou ; but he answered, in his usual conscientious way : " I know about him through my young friend Sebastien Gilbert, whom Monsieur Isidore overtook that night, just beyond Clear Water Spring, and carried to Paris on his crupper."

Making an effort, Catherine raised herself on her elbow, and said pointedly, looking full at Pitou : " Thou he is in Paris ? "

" Well, no," objected Pitou, " he can't be there at present."

" And where can he be ? " languishingly asked the girl

“I don't know. I only know this, that he had to go away on a mission, — to Spain, or Italy.”

At the words *go away*, Catherine let her head fall upon her pillow, with a sigh which was followed by abundant tears.

“Mademoiselle,” said Pitou, whose heart was bruised by her sorrow, “if you must absolutely know where he is now, I will find out.”

“From whom?”

“From Doctor Gilbert, who left him at the Tuileries! — Or, if you like it better,” he added, seeing Catherine shake her head, with a smile of negative thanks, “I will go back to Paris for intelligence. — Oh Lord, it would n't take long. It's only an affair of twenty-four hours.”

Catherine extended her feverish hand, and offered it to Pitou, who, not guessing that she could mean to accord him such a favor, did not permit himself to touch it.

“Well, Monsieur Pitou,” said she, smiling, “art afraid of catching my fever?”

“Oh, excuse me, Mademoiselle,” said Pitou, squeezing the girl's moist hand between his two big fists. “I did n't quite understand, you see. — Then you accept?”

“No, Pitou, quite the contrary; but I thank thee. It would be useless. It is impossible that I should get no letter from him to-morrow morning.”

“A letter from him?” said Pitou, abruptly; and then he paused, looking anxiously about him.

“Why, yes, a letter from him,” said Catherine, also looking about, to see what could thus disturb his usual placidity.

“A letter from him, — the Devil!” repeated Pitou, biting his nails, as an embarrassed man is apt to do.

“Why certainly, a letter from him. Is it astonishing that he should write to me, — astonishing to one who

knows all?" she asked, — adding softly to herself, "or *nearly* all."

"I am not astonished that he should write you. If I was allowed to write you, God knows I would do so quick enough, and long letters, too; only I'm afraid —"

"Afraid of what, my friend?"

"That Monsieur Isidore's letter might fall into your father's hands."

"My father's?"

Pitou nodded thrice.

"What, my father's?" asked Catherine, more and more surprised. "Isn't he in Paris?"

"Your father is in Pisseleu, at the farm, here, in the chamber on the other side of the kitchen; only, Monsieur Raynal forbade his coming in here, because of your delirium; and I think the Doctor was right."

"And why so?"

"Because Monsieur Billot does not appear well inclined towards Monsieur Isidore; and once, when you pronounced that name, and he heard it, he made a grimace, — I can tell you."

"My God, my God!" ejaculated Catherine, all of a shiver. "What art thou telling me, Pitou?"

"The truth! I even heard him growl, between his teeth, that though nothing could be said while you were ill, yet when you were well, he should *see about that*."

Catherine grasped Pitou's hand, with so vehement a gesture that he trembled before her.

"Monsieur Pitou!"

"Mademoiselle Catherine!"

"Right. My letters must not fall into father's hands. My father would kill me!"

"You see, you see! In such a matter as this, Father Billot would not listen to reason."

“What ’s to be done?”

“Gracious! *You* must answer that question your own self, Mademoiselle.”

“There must be some way out — ”

“If there *is* a way, we must adopt it,” said Pitou.

“I dare not!”

“How, you *dare* not?”

“I dare not tell thee what ought to be done.”

“The means are in my hands, and yet you dare not tell me?”

“Oh Pitou — !”

“Ah, that is not right, Mademoiselle Catherine! I would n’t have believed you could have so little confidence in me.”

“I do not lack confidence in thee, dear Pitou!”

“That sounds better,” responded Pitou, much flattered by her growing familiarity.

“But it will be a bothersome task for thee, my friend!”

“Oh, it won’t be hard for me. Don’t let that trouble you, Mademoiselle.”

“Thou wilt consent in advance, to do what I ask.”

“Certain sure! Gracious goodness! — at least, if it is n’t impossible.”

“It is very simple, on the contrary.”

“Well, if it’s so simple, speak out!”

“Go to Mother Colombe’s — ”

“The barley-candy seller?”

“Yes. She is also distributor for the letters which come by post.”

“Ah, I see! And I am to tell her to deliver your letters only to yourself?”

“Thou wilt bid her give my letters only to *thyself*, Pitou.”

“To me? Ah, yes. At first I did n’t understand,” said Pitou; and he sighed three or four times.

“That is the surest way, thou seest? At least, unless thou dost refuse me this service.”

“Me? *Refuse?* Mademoiselle Catherine!”

“Thanks, then, thanks!”

“I’ll go! Certainly, I’ll go — to-morrow.”

“To-morrow will be too late, dear Pitou. This must be done to-day!”

“So be it, Mademoiselle. I’ll go to-day, this morning, right off!”

“Thou’rt a brave lad, Pitou!” said Catherine. “How I love thee!”

“Oh Mademoiselle, only say such words to me, and I’ll go through fire for your sake.”

“See what time it is, Pitou!”

He looked at the girl’s watch, hanging over the mantel-piece, and said: “Half-past five in the morning.”

“Well, my good friend —”

“Well, Mademoiselle?”

“It is perhaps time —”

“To go and see Mother Colombe? — I am at your orders. — But you had better take a little medicine. The Doctor advised a spoonful every half-hour.”

“My dear Pitou,” said Catherine, herself pouring out a spoonful of the druggist’s compound, and looking at Pitou with glances which went straight to his heart, “what *thou* doest for me is better than all the decoctions on earth.”

“That’s why Doctor Raynal said I had such an aptitude for medical study!”

“But where canst thou pretend to be going, Pitou, so that nobody at the farm shall have any suspicion?”

“Oh, be easy as to that!” said Pitou, taking his

hat. Then he paused to ask: "Shall I wake Madame Clement?"

"Oh no! Let her sleep, poor woman! I have no need of anything, except —"

"Except what?"

Catherine smiled.

"Ah yes, I catch on," murmured Cupid's messenger, — "except the letter from Monsieur Isidore." After an instant's silence he added: "Well, be calm! If it's there, you shall have it. If it is n't there —!"

"Well, if it is n't there?" anxiously asked Catherine.

"If it is n't there! — Well, for the sake of having you look at me again, as you did just now, — of having you smile on me again, as you did just now, — of having you call me your dear Pitou and your friend, — well, if the letter is n't there, I'll go to Paris after it."

"Good and kind heart!" murmured Catherine, following Pitou with her eyes, as he left the chamber. Then, tired with her long conversation, she laid her head on her pillow once more.

Ten minutes later the girl could hardly tell herself whether what had happened was a real accompaniment of returning reason, or a dream born of her delirium; but this was sure, that a refreshing and sweet calm had spread from her heart, throughout her feverish and aching extremities.

As Pitou passed through the kitchen, Mother Billot raised her head. She had not been abed, and for three days she had scarcely slept. During these three days she had hardly quitted her stool, buried under the shadows of the great chimney-piece, whence her eyes, in default of seeing her daughter's self, could at least see the door of her daughter's room, which the mother was forbidden to enter.

“What is it, Pitou?” she asked.

“Everything goes well, Mother Billot!”

“Whither goest thou?”

“To Villers Cotterets.”

“What to do there?”

Pitou hesitated. Pitou was not the man for petty evasions.

“What am I to do there?” he repeated, to gain time.

“Yes,” said Father Billot’s voice: “My wife asks thee, what thou art to do there.”

“I’m going to let Doctor Raynal know —”

“He told thee not to rouse him, unless there was some change.”

“Well,” said Pitou, “when Mademoiselle is so much better, it seems to me that’s a change.”

Whether it was because Father Billot found Pitou’s response so peremptory, or whether he did not wish to bother a fellow who brought him such good news, Billot raised no further objection to Pitou’s departure; and the lad passed along as soon as the farmer re-entered his chamber, and Mother Billot let her head fall again on her breast.

Pitou reached Villers Cotterets at a quarter-past six in the morning. He scrupulously awoke Doctor Raynal, to tell him how much better Catherine was, and to ask if anything different should be done.

The Doctor questioned him about his night-watch; and to the great astonishment of Pitou, who was as circumspect as possible in his answers, the good fellow perceived that the Doctor soon knew what had passed between the lad and Catherine, almost as correctly as if he had been concealed in some corner of the chamber, behind the window-curtains or bed-hangings, overhearing the conversation of the girl with her confidant.

The Doctor promised to call at the farm during the day, giving but one direction, that Catherine should be *regularly dosed from the same cask*; and with this he dismissed Pitou, who meditated some time over these enigmatical words, finally concluding the Doctor meant him to continue his chats with the young girl about Isidore de Charny.

From the Doctor's, Pitou went to Mother Colombe's. The letter-agent lived at the end of the Rue Lormet, at the other side of the village. Pitou reached her house just as she was opening her door.

Mother Colombe was a great friend of his Aunt Angelica; but this friendship for the aunt did not prevent her from appreciating the nephew.

As he entered her shop, full of gingerbread and barley candy, Pitou began to realize, as he had not before, that if he wished to succeed in his negotiation, and have the agent deliver Catherine's letters to himself, it would be necessary to employ, if not bribery, at least persuasion; so he bought two sticks of barley sugar and a junk of gingerbread.

The purchase made and paid for, he ventured to ask the desired favor.

There were grave difficulties. Letters were to be delivered only to those persons to whom they were addressed, — or, at least, only to those who brought written orders from those persons.

Mother Colombe did not doubt Pitou's word, but she insisted upon his having written authority.

Pitou saw that he must make a sacrifice. He promised to bring next day a receipt for the letter, if there was a letter, and an order for him to take any more that might come for Catherine; and this promise he accompanied with a second investment in barley candy and gingerbread.

How could she refuse such a favor to such a persuasive hand, above all, to a hand that persuaded so liberally, so sweetly.

Mother Colombe made a few more feeble objections, but ended by authorizing Pitou to follow her to the post-house, where she would deliver to him Catherine's letter, if one had come for her.

Pitou followed, eating his two wedges of gingerbread and sucking his four sticks of barley sugar.

Never, *never* before had he permitted himself such extravagance; but, as we know, owing to the liberality of Doctor Gilbert, Pitou was comparatively rich.

When he came to the Great Square he climbed the bars enclosing the fountain, applied his mouth to one of the four jets then running, and for five minutes absorbed the entire stream of water, not losing a drop.

As he came down from the fountain he threw a glance about the square, and saw that in the middle of it a staging had been erected, a sort of theatre.

Then he remembered that, at the time of his departure after Sebastien, there was talk about a convention at Villers Cotterets, to form the basis of a federation between the surrounding villages and the chief town of the section.

Various private occurrences, enchaining his interest, had made him forget this political event, which was, nevertheless, not unimportant.

He at once thought of the twenty-five louis which, when he came from Paris, Doctor Gilbert had given him, to aid in putting the Haramont National Guard on the best possible footing.

He threw back his head with pride, dreaming of the splendid figure which, — thanks to these twenty-five

goldpieces — the thirty-three guardsmen now under his orders would make.

This helped him to digest the two wedges of gingerbread and four sticks of barley sugar, which, added to the jorum of water he had swallowed, might have proved too much for the warmth of the gastric juice with which nature had provided him, and lain heavily on his stomach, if he had not also possessed that excellent aid to digestion which we call *self-esteem*.

CHAPTER VII.

PITOU AS A GEOGRAPHER.

WHILE Pitou was drinking, while Pitou was digesting, while Pitou was cogitating, Mother Colombe finished her journey, and entered the posthouse.

This did not disturb Pitou. The posthouse was situated opposite the Rue Neuve, a sort of lane, running from that part of the park known as the Allée des Soupirs, — the scene of lugubrious memories.

With fifteen of his long strides he could overtake Mother Colombe. He took these fifteen long strides, and reached the threshold of the posthouse, just as Madame Colombe came out, with the packet of letters in her hand.

Amidst these letters was one carefully folded, and enclosed in a handsome envelop, which was daintily fastened with a waxen seal.

This letter was addressed to Catherine Billot. It was evidently the letter Catherine expected.

According to their agreement, this letter was delivered, by the agent, to her customer for barley sugar, who at once departed for Pisseleu, in a mental state at once joyful and sorrowful : joyful, because he had good news for Catherine ; sorrowful, because, in the source of the young girl's happiness, his lips found a fountain of bitter waters.

Despite this bitterness, the messenger was so generous-hearted that, in order to carry this confounded letter the

quicker, he unconsciously accelerated his walk into a trot, and his trot into a gallop.

Fifty yards from the farmhouse he suddenly stopped, rightly thinking, if he arrived in such a winded condition, and all covered with sweat, this would inspire Father Billot with distrust, since the good man appeared to have already entered the narrow and thorny way of suspicion.

At the risk therefore of being a minute or two late, Pitou decided to accomplish the rest of his journey at a more dignified pace; and to this end he walked with the gravity of some pretentious personage in classic tragedy, which, indeed, Catherine's confidence in Pitou caused him to resemble. As he passed by the side of the house whereon her chamber was located, he saw that the nurse had swung open half the window, doubtless to let fresh air into the room.

Pitou thrust first his nose and then his eyes into this opening. More he could not do, because of the bars; for in that time and region the windows all opened sideways, on hinges, like double doors, and the shutters were carefully provided with bars, especially on the ground floor.

This enabled him to see Catherine awake and expectant, and for her to see Pitou mysteriously making signs.

"A letter! A letter!" babbled the girl.

"Hus-s-s-sh!" said Pitou.

Looking about him like a poacher, who wishes to avoid the gamekeepers, and finding that they two were entirely alone, he scaled the letter through the opening, with such skill that it lighted in exactly the place she had arranged for it, beside her pillow.

Then, without waiting for the thanks which were sure

to come, he drew himself from the window, and kept on his way towards the door of the house, where he found Billot standing on the threshold.

But for the projection of the wall, the farmer must have seen what had taken place; and in his present attitude of mind, God knows what would have happened, if his surmises had been changed into certainties.

Honest Pitou no sooner found himself thus unexpectedly face to face with the farmer, than he felt that he was blushing up to his ears, in spite of himself.

“Oh Monsieur Billot, how you frightened me!” he said.

“Frightened, — thee, Pitou, — a captain in the National Guard, — a conqueror of the Bastille! — *Frightened?*”

“What would you have? There are some moments, — Great Heavens! — when one is n’t expecting —”

“Yes,” said Billot, “especially if a fellow expects to meet a girl, and runs into her father, — hey?”

“Oh Monsieur Billot, as to that, *no!* I did not expect to see Mademoiselle Catherine! Oh, no! Although she’s getting better little by little, as I hope, she is still too ill to get up.”

“Hast nothing to say?” asked Billot.

“To whom?”

“To Catherine!”

“Oh yes, I have to report that Monsieur Raynal says she’s doing very well, and that he’ll call in the course of the day; but somebody else can tell her that, as well as I.”

“Besides, thou must be hungry!”

“Hungry? — Peuh!”

“What? Thou’rt not hungry?” cried the farmer, very much surprised.

Pitou saw that he had made an asinine blunder. For

Pitou not to be hungry, at eight in the morning, would indicate a derangement in the equilibrium of nature.

“Certainly, oh yes, I *am* hungry!” said he.

“Very well, go in and eat. The hands are already at breakfast, but they’ve kept a place for thee.”

Pitou entered; and Billot watched him, although the lad’s good-nature had almost disarmed the farmer’s suspicions. He saw Pitou sit down at the upper end of the table, and attack the round loaf and his plate of bacon, as if he had not already in his stomach two balls of gingerbread, four sticks of barley candy, and a pint of water.

It is true, in all probability, that Pitou’s stomach had been liberalized in the two hours since he saw Mother Colombe.

Pitou could not do many things at a time, but what he did, he did well. Intrusted by Catherine with a commission, he executed it well. Invited to breakfast by Billot, he breakfasted well.

Billot continued to watch him; but seeing that Pitou did not turn his eyes from his plate, that his interest was absorbed in the bottle of cider in front of him, and that not once did he look at Catherine’s door, the farmer finally concluded that the little trip to Villers Cotterets had no other motive than Pitou had avowed.

Towards the end of Pitou’s breakfast Catherine’s door opened, and Madame Clement came into the kitchen, with the habitually humble smile of a nurse on her lips. She came, in her turn, for a cup of coffee.

Of course it is to be taken for granted that at six o’clock, a quarter-hour after Pitou’s departure, she had made her first appearance in the kitchen, to get her little glass of brandy, — the only thing, as she said, which sustained her, especially when she had to watch all night.

As soon as she appeared Madame Billot ran to her, and Monsieur Billot came into the house. Both wished to hear about Catherine's health.

"She 's doing very well," replied Madame Clement; "although I believe that just now she 's getting a little delirious."

"What 's that?" said the farmer. "A little delirium? Has that taken her again?"

"Oh my God! My poor child!" murmured Mother Billot.

Pitou raised his head and listened.

"Yes!" continued the nurse. "She talks about a city she calls Sardinia, and a country named Turin; and she calls for Monsieur Pitou to tell her which is the city and which the country."

"Here I am!" said Pitou, swallowing the rest of his can of cider, and wiping his mouth on his sleeve; but a glance at Father Billot checked him, so he added: "That is, if Monsieur Billot judges it proper for me to give Mademoiselle the explanations she wants."

"Why not?" said Mother Billot. "If she asks for thee, poor child, go to her, my boy. Did n't Monsieur Raynal declare thee a good helper?"

"Gracious!" said Pitou, innocently. "Ask Madame Clement how we cared for Mademoiselle all night. Madame Clement never slept a wink, the good woman, — no more than I."

It showed much cunning on the part of Pitou to attack the nurse's vulnerable point. She had taken a prolonged snooze, from midnight till six o'clock; and to declare that she had not slept a moment, was to make her a friend, — yes, and more than a friend, — an out-and-out accomplice.

"That 's all right!" said Father Billot. "If our

Catherine asks for thee, go to her. Perhaps the time will come when she'll ask for her mother and me."

Pitou felt instinctively that there was a storm in the air; and, like the shepherd out in the fields, though ready to confront the storm if necessary, he looked about in advance for some shelter for his head.

This shelter was Haramont, where he was king. King? — He was more than king. He was Commander of the National Guard, he was Lafayette!

Besides, many duties summoned him to Haramont. So he decided that, after making the proper arrangements with Catherine, he would return promptly to Haramont.

Thus meditating he entered the sick-chamber, having the permission of both the farmer and his wife.

Catherine was waiting impatiently. By the color of her cheeks and the fire in her eyes, one might well think, as Madame Clement had said, that she was still under the dominion of the fever.

Hardly had he shut the door when Catherine — recognizing his step, for which she had been longing an hour — turned quickly towards him, and extended both her hands. "Ah, it's thou! How late thou art!"

"That's not my fault, Mademoiselle! Your father detained me."

"My father?"

"His very self! Oh, he suspects something. Besides," added Pitou, with a sigh, "I did n't hurry! I knew you had what you most wanted."

"Yes, Pitou, yes," said the girl, lowering her eyes. "Yes, and I thank thee!" and then she added, in a low voice "Thou art so good, Pitou, and I love thee so!"

"You are very good, yourself, Mademoiselle," answered Pitou, ready to cry; for he felt that all this friendship was but a reflection of her love for another. Modest as

the brave fellow was, he could not help feeling humiliated, in his heart of hearts, at being only the moon to Charny's sun; so he answered quickly: "I have come to set you right, because they told me you wanted to know something."

Catherine put her hand on her heart, seeking Isidore's letter, in order to get courage from it for questioning Pitou. At last she made an effort, and said: "Pitou, thou art so wise, perhaps thou canst tell me something about Sardinia."

Pitou invoked all his geographical reminiscences. "Wait a minute, — wait a minute, Mademoiselle! I ought to know that. One of the things the Abbé Fortier tried to teach me was geography. Wait a minute! Sardinia? I'll get there! — Ah, if I could only catch the first word, I could tell you all the rest."

"Oh, try, Pitou, try!" said Catherine, clasping her hands.

"Parbleu, that's what I *am* doing! — Sardinia — Sardinia! — Ah, I have it."

Catherine breathed more freely.

"Sardinia, so named by the Romans, is one of the three large islands of the Western Mediterranean Sea. It is south of Corsica, from which it is separated by the straits of Bonifacio, and forms part of the Sardinian States, which derive their name from it, and are called the Kingdom of Sardinia. It measures sixty leagues from north to south, and sixteen from east to west, and has fifty-four thousand inhabitants. Cagliari is the capital. — There, that's what I know about Sardinia, Mademoiselle Catherine."

"Oh Heaven," said the girl, "how happy it must make one to know so many things!"

"The fact is," replied Pitou, as happy in his self-respect

as he was wounded in his love, "the fact is, I have a good memory."

Catherine ventured to say, with less timidity: "Now that I have heard what there is to hear about Sardinia, tell me about Turin."

"Turin? Certainly, Mademoiselle Catherine. I ask nothing better than to tell you all about it, — if I can remember."

"Try to recollect. This is the most important, Pitou, — dear Pitou!"

"The Devil! If it is so important, it must — Besides, if I can't recollect, I'll make inquiries."

"It is — it is — what I must know right away!" insisted Catherine. "Think, my dear Pitou, think!"

She spoke these words in so caressing a voice, that they sent a thrill through every part of his body.

"I *am* thinking, Mademoiselle," said he, "yes, I *am* thinking."

She covered her eyes. Pitou threw back his head, as if to interrogate the ceiling.

"Turin? Turin? Gracious, Mademoiselle, it's no harder than Sardinia. — Sardinia is a large island in the Mediterranean Sea. There are three great islands in the Western Mediterranean: Sardinia, which belongs to the King of Piedmont, Corsica, which belongs to the King of France, Sicily, which belongs to the King of Naples; whereas Turin is simply a capital."

"What didst thou say about Sardinia?"

"I said that Sardinia belongs to the King of Piedmont, and I'm sure I'm not mistaken, Mademoiselle."

"It is exactly so, my dear Pitou. In his letter Isidore says he is going to Turin, in Piedmont!"

"Ah," said Pitou, "I understand now. — Good, good, good! It is to Turin that Monsieur Isidore has been

sent by the King, and you are pumping me, in order to find out where *he* is!"

"Why should I do so, if not for his sake?" said the girl. "What else do I care about Sardinia, Piedmont, Turin? As long as he was not there, I was ignorant which was the capital and which the state, and little cared I; but now *he* has gone to Turin, — do you comprehend, dear Pitou, — and so I want to know about Turin."

He uttered a great sigh, shook his head; but none the less he made a further effort to satisfy Catherine.

"Turin — hold on! — Yes — Turin, capital of Piedmont. Turin, Turin! I've got it! Turin, called by the ancients, *Bodincemagus*, *Taurasia*, *Colonia Julia*, *Augusta Taurinorum*; to-day the capital of Piedmont and the Sardinian States; situated on the Po and the Doire; one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. Population, one hundred and twenty-five thousand; reigning King, Charles Emmanuel. There's your Turin, Mademoiselle Catherine."

"And how far is Turin from Pisseleu, Monsieur Pitou? Thou, who knowest so much, ought to know that."

"Gracious!" said Pitou. "I can tell you how far Turin is from Paris; but from Pisseleu, that's harder!"

"Well, tell me first about Paris. Then we can add the eighteen leagues from Paris to Pisseleu."

"That's so!" said Pitou, who then continued his lesson "Distance from Paris, two hundred and six leagues; from Rome, one hundred and forty; from Constantinople —"

"I only need to know about Paris, my dear friend. Two hundred and six leagues plus eighteen, — two hundred and twenty-four. So he is two hundred and twenty-four leagues away from me. Only three days ago he was right here, only three-quarters of a league from my side;

and to-day — to-day,” added Catherine, melting into tears and wringing her hands, “to-day he is two hundred and twenty-four leagues away from me.”

“Oh, not yet,” timidly suggested Pitou. “He only started day before yesterday. As yet he is only half-way, and hardly —”

“Where is he, then?”

“Oh, as to that, I know nothing about it,” responded Pitou. “The Abbé Fortier taught us all about the kingdoms and their capitals, but he said nothing about the roads leading to them.”

“Then this is all thou knowest, dear Pitou?”

“Oh Lord, yes!” said the geographer, humiliated that the limits of his knowledge were so soon reached, — “except that Turin is a great place for aristocrats.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“That Turin, Mademoiselle, is the rendezvous for all the princes, all the princesses, all the fugitives, — D’Artois, Condé, Madame de Polignac, — a parcel of brigands, who conspire against the nation, and whose heads will be cut off some day, it is to be hoped, by a very ingenious machine in process of invention by Monsieur Guillotin.”

“Oh Monsieur Pitou!”

“What then, Mademoiselle?”

“You’re getting ferocious again, as after your first visit to Paris.”

“Ferocious? Me? Ah, that’s true. Yes, yes, yes! Monsieur Isidore is one of the aristocrats, and you are afraid on his account!”

Then he added, with one of those big sighs, which we have more than once noticed: “Let us talk no more of that! Let us talk of yourself, Mademoiselle Catherine, and of the way in which I can be most useful to you.”

“My dear Pitou, the letter which I received this morning is probably not the only one I shall receive —”

“And you wish me to go after the others, as I did after this one?”

“Pitou, thou hast begun by being so good —”

“That I had better keep on, — would you say?”

“Yes.”

“I ask nothing better.”

“Thou seest, I am so watched by my father, that I cannot go to the village.”

“Ah yes! but I must tell you that he watches me also, this Father Billot. I can see it in his eye.”

“Yes, but thou, Pitou, he cannot follow thee to Haraumont, and we can agree upon some place of deposit for our letters.”

“Very well,” said Pitou, — “such, for example, as the great hollow willow-tree, near the place where I found you in that swoon.”

“Exactly! That is almost at the entrance of the farm, yet out of sight of the windows. It is then agreed that the letters shall be put in there?”

“Yes, Mademoiselle.”

“Only, have a care that nobody sees!”

“Ask the gamekeepers at Longpré, at Taille Fontaine, at Montaigu, if they ever saw me; nevertheless, I have started up hares by the dozen. — But you, Mademoiselle Catherine, how will you manage to go after these famous letters?”

“I?” said Catherine, with a smile full of hope and determination, “I shall set myself at work to get well right away.”

Pitou breathed the greatest of all possible sighs. At that moment the door opened, and Doctor Raynal appeared.

CHAPTER VIII.

PITOU AS DRESS-CAPTAIN.

DOCTOR RAYNAL's visit came very opportunely, to facilitate Pitou's departure.

The physician could not approach his patient, without perceiving the great change which had come over her since the evening before.

Catherine smiled upon the Doctor, and offered him her wrist.

"My dear Catherine," said he, "if it were not for the pleasure of touching your pretty hand, I should not even test your pulse. I wager it won't exceed seventy-five beats a minute."

"It's true I'm much better, Doctor, and your prescriptions have worked wonders."

"My prescriptions! *Hum-m-m!* You will understand, my child, that I ask nothing better than to be credited with all the honors of your convalescence; but, vain as I am, I must concede part of the credit to my medical student, Pitou."

Raising his eyes heavenward, he exclaimed: "Oh Nature, — powerful Ceres, mysterious Isis, — what secrets thou guardest, even from those who know how to question thee!"

Then, turning towards the door, he called out: "Now then, come in, you sober-visaged father, you restless-eyed mother, — come in, and see our dear invalid. She needs only one thing to complete the cure, — your love and your caresses."

At the Doctor's summons Father and Mother Billot hurried in, the father with a remnant of suspicion in his physiognomy, the mother's face all radiant with joy.

As they were going in, Pitou slipped out, after responding, with a knowing wink, to Catherine's farewell glance.

Let us now leave Catherine, — with Isidore's letter pressed against her heart, in place of having cold-water bandages about her head and mustard poultices on her feet, — let us leave Catherine, we say, to recover hope and life, under the caresses of her worthy parents, and follow Pitou, who has just accomplished, simply and unconsciously, one of the most difficult tasks imposed by Christianity on Christian souls, — forgetfulness of self, united with devotion to one's neighbor.

To say the brave fellow quitted Catherine with a joyous spirit, would be too much. We must be content to say that he went away with a satisfied heart. Although he did not stop to think of the greatness of his deed, he did feel — through the congratulations of that inward voice, which everybody carries about with him — that he had done a good and holy thing, from the human standpoint; though not perhaps from the standpoint of morality, which would certainly not have approved Catherine's intrigue with Isidore de Charny, — of a peasant-girl with a noble lord.

At the epoch of which we are speaking, *humanity* was one of the popular catchwords; and Pitou, who had often spoken this word, without quite knowing what it implied, now put his humanity into practice, though hardly knowing enough to call it by that name.

Had he not acted out of the genuine kindness of his heart, what he did for Catherine would have required unusual sharpness for its achievement.

From being the rival of Isidore de Charny, — a posi-

tion Pitou could not possibly have maintained, — he had become the confidant of Catherine. Instead of repulsing Pitou rudely, treating him like a brute, and putting him outside the door, as Catherine did on the return from his first trip to Paris, she now petted him, caressed him, and called him *thee* and *thou*.

As her confidant, he obtained a place in her regard which, as a rival, he could never have dreamed of holding, — without calculating that events must, sooner or later, necessitate his increasing participation in the intimate life and private sentiments of this beautiful peasant-girl.

In order to provide for a continuance of these friendly relations, Pitou began by carrying to Madame Colombe a billet, almost illegible, given him by Catherine, authorizing him to receive for her, and in her name, all letters which might come addressed to her.

To this written authority Pitou added Catherine's verbal promise, that on Saint Martin's Day she would give all the laborers at Pisseleu a treat of gingerbread and barley candy. Thanks to this authorization and this promise, — one of which satisfied the conscience, while the other gratified the business instincts of Mother Colombe, — she agreed to take from the post-packet, every morning, any letters which came for Catherine, and hold them at Pitou's disposal.

This point adjusted, and having nothing else to do in the *city*, — as Villers Cotterets was pretentiously styled, — Pitou took his homeward way.

Pitou's return to Haramont was a public event. His precipitate departure for the capital gave rise to a great many comments; for ever since the arrival from Paris, through one of Lafayette's aide-de-camps, of an order for the seizure of certain guns, kept in store at the Abbé

Fortier's, the Haramont citizens had not doubted Pitou's political importance.

Some declared that he had been summoned to Paris by Doctor Gilbert. Others thought he had been sent for by Lafayette. Others again — though, it must be acknowledged, these constituted the smallest number — thought he had been summoned by the King himself.

Although Pitou was ignorant of the rumors which were thus spread abroad during his absence, — rumors which added to his personal importance, however, — none the less did he set foot on his native heath with an air of such dignity, that everybody was greatly impressed therewith.

To be rightly estimated, men must be seen in their natural environment. At Fortier's seminary, Pitou was a pupil; at Billot's farm, he was a day-laborer; but at Haramont, he was a man, a citizen, the *Captain*. Without counting five or six louis which belonged to him personally, by virtue of his rank as Captain, it will be remembered that he had brought home twenty-five louis, generously bestowed by Gilbert, with a view to the equipment of the Haramont National Guard.

As soon as he reached home, and the drummer came to see him, Pitou ordered the lad to announce for the next Sunday, at noon, an official review, with arms and equipments, in the public square of the village. From this moment nobody doubted that Pitou had some communication to make, from the government to the Haramont Guards. Many came to chat with him, in order to learn this great secret in advance of their neighbors; but Pitou maintained a majestic silence as to public matters.

That evening, — for Pitou would no more allow his public affairs to distract him from his private duties, than he would allow his private affairs to distract him

from his public duties, — that evening he went to look after his hares, and present his compliments to Father Clouis; but this did not prevent him from calling on Master Dulauroy, the tailor, at seven o'clock next morning, — after leaving three rabbits and a hare at his own lodging, and asking Mother Colombe if there were any letters for Catherine.

There was not one; and this troubled Pitou, as he thought how disappointed the poor convalescent would be.

Pitou's visit to Monsieur Dulauroy was for the purpose of ascertaining if he would consent to undertake the job of clothing the Haramont National Guards, and what price he would charge for the same.

Master Dulauroy asked the usual questions about the height of the men, questions which Pitou answered by placing before his eyes the official list of thirty-three men, — officers, subalterns, and privates, — composing the active force of the Haramont Militia.

As all these men were known to Master Dulauroy, he could easily calculate their aggregate length and breadth; so, quill and pencil in hand, the tailor declared that he could not furnish thirty-three coats and thirty-three pairs of breeches, properly finished, for less than thirty-three louis; and that even at that price, Pitou must not expect entirely new cloth.

Pitou protested, declaring he had it from Lafayette's own mouth, that the General had clothed the three millions of men, composing the French Civic Guard, at the rate of twenty-five francs per man, or seventy-five millions for the whole.

Master Dulauroy replied, that with such an immense contract, what was lost in certain details might be retrieved in the grand result; but this was what *he* would

do, — and this was his last word, — he would uniform the Haramont Guards for twenty-two francs apiece ; but there must be an advance payment, for he could not undertake such a job on credit.

Pitou carelessly drew a handful of gold from his pocket. He declared that though there was no difficulty about cash payments, he was limited as to price ; and that if Master Dulauroy could not make thirty-three coats and thirty-three breeches for twenty-five golden louis, the captain must go to Master Bligny, Dulauroy's rival ; although the preference had been given to Dulauroy, because he was the friend of Pitou's aunt.

Indeed, Pitou was not sorry to have Aunt Angelica learn, in this roundabout way, that he had a spadeful of gold ; and he doubted not that, on that very evening, the tailor would report what he had seen, declaring that Pitou was as rich as Cræsus.

The threat of taking such an important order elsewhere, had its due effect. Master Dulauroy agreed to do as Pitou wished ; and even acceded to Pitou's demand for a captain's suit for himself, to be made of new cloth, and finished in good shape, epaulets included. He was not particular about fine cloth, — he even liked coarse cloth better than fine, — but it must be new.

This occasioned a new debate, not shorter or less fiery than the first ; but again Pitou was victorious, — thanks to that terrible threat of patronizing Master Bligny, if Master Dulauroy could not accept these terms.

The end of all this discussion was an agreement to furnish, by the next Saturday, thirty-one coats and thirty-one breeches for the privates, two coats and two breeches for the serjeant and lieutenant, and one coat and breeches for the captain, this last coat to be graced with epaulets.

In default of punctual delivery of the goods, the tailor would be held responsible for procuring the postponement of the ceremony of public confederation, — of Villers Cotterets and the other villages, — which was to take place in the chief town of the neighborhood, on the Sunday following that Saturday. This condition was accepted by the tailor, like the others.

By nine o'clock in the morning, the important bargain was concluded.

At half-past nine Pitou returned to Haramont, proudly anticipating the surprise which he had prepared for his fellow-citizens.

At eleven o'clock the drummer beat his call.

At noon the National Guard manœuvred under arms, with their usual precision, in the public square of the village.

After an hour of drill, which won for the brave guardsmen the praises of their chief, — and the cheers of the women, children, and old men, who looked upon this touching spectacle with the greatest interest, — Pitou summoned Sergeant Claude Tellier and Lieutenant Desiré Maniquet, and ordered them to call their men together, and invite them, in behalf of himself, in behalf of Doctor Gilbert, in behalf of General Lafayette, and in behalf of the King, to call upon Master Dulauroy, the tailor at Villers Cotterets, who had important communications for them all.

The drummer beat the call to order. The sergeant and lieutenant, who knew as little about it as those whom they addressed, transmitted the orders to the privates, in the exact words of their captain. Then the order to break ranks was pronounced by the ringing voice of Pitou himself.

Five minutes later the thirty-one brave privates of the

Haramont Guard, plus Sergeant Tellier and Lieutenant Desiré Maniquet, were hurrying along the road to Villers Cotterets.

That night the two fiddlers of Haramont gave the captain a serenade. The air was alive with crackers, gunshots, Roman candles, and pinwheels, and several voices — slightly inebriated, to be sure — called out at intervals: “Long life to Ange Pitou, the Father of the People!”

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH THE ABBÉ FORTIER GIVES A NEW PROOF OF HIS ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT.

THE following Sunday the inhabitants of Villers Cotterets were awakened by the drummer, enthusiastically beating his call to arms, at five o'clock in the morning.

In my opinion, nothing is more impertinent than this fashion of arousing people, the majority of whom—almost always, it is safe to say—would prefer to finish the night peacefully, and complete their seven hours of sleep, which, according to popular hygiene, every man needs, to keep himself in good health; but so it is in revolutionary epochs; and when a man lives in one of these periods of agitation and progress, he must philosophically reckon slumber among the sacrifices to be made for his country.

Satisfied or dissatisfied, Patriotic or Aristocratic, the inhabitants of Villers Cotterets were thus aroused on that Sunday, October 18, 1789, at five o'clock in the morning.

The ceremony was not to begin till ten, but five hours were none too long for the accomplishment of what yet remained to be done.

During the preceding ten days a large platform, or stage, had been erected in the middle of the square; but this stage, the rapid construction whereof attested the zeal of the carpenters, was but the skeleton of the edifice,—so to speak.

The structure was intended for a Patriot Altar; and, more than a fortnight before, the Abbé Fortier had been invited to come and celebrate Mass at that altar, on Sunday, October 18, instead of doing so in his church.

To make this stage worthy of its double purpose, religious and social, it was necessary to ask donations from the rich accumulations of the community; and it must be said that all had generously offered their possessions in aid of this grand solemnity, — one sending a carpet, another an altar-cloth, a third giving silk curtains, and a fourth lending a sacred picture; but as stability is not the strong point of the weather in the month of October, and as the barometer seldom points to *fair* during the reign of the Scorpion, nobody liked to expose his offering before the proper time, and each preferred to delay bringing forward his tribute till the feast-day arrived, and proved to be bright and pleasant.

The sun rose at six and a half o'clock, according to its custom at that period of the year, announcing, by the softness and warmth of its rays, one of those beautiful autumn days, which may well challenge comparison with the loveliest days of spring.

By nine o'clock the Patriot Altar was spread with a magnificent Aubusson carpet, draped with lace-edged linen, and surmounted by a picture representing John the Baptist preaching in the Wilderness; while it was sheltered by a canopy of gold-fringed velvet, from which hung magnificent brocade curtains.

The utensils necessary for the celebration of Mass would naturally be sent from the chapel, and everybody knew these would be all right.

Moreover, every citizen, as on Corpus Christi, decorated his doorway, or the front of his house, with tapestries

embroidered with flowers and human figures, or else with hangings twined with ivy.

All the young girls in Villers Cotterets and its vicinity — clad in white, wearing tricolored sashes, and carrying green branches — were to surround the Patriot Altar.

After Mass the men were to take the oath in support of the Constitution.

The Villers Cotterets National Guards, under arms since eight o'clock, awaited the coming of the military companies from the other villages, and fraternized with them as fast as they arrived.

It need scarcely be said that, among all these companies, the one expected with the most impatience was the Haramont Civic Guard, — it having been noised abroad that (thanks to the influence of Pitou and to the royal bounty) the thirty-three men composing that company, plus their captain Ange Pitou, would appear in new uniforms.

The shop of Master Dulauroy had not been empty all the week. Outside and inside there was a stream of inquisitive folks, anxious to see the ten workmen employed on this gigantic order, — an order unparalleled within the memory of the oldest inhabitant of Villers Cotterets.

The last uniform, the captain's, — for Pitou had insisted that he should not be served before the others, — the last uniform was ready for delivery, according to the agreement, on Saturday night, at fifty-nine minutes past eleven.

Equally according to agreement, Pitou counted out, on the nail, the twenty-five louis to Monsieur Dulauroy.

All this having made a great stir in the chief village of the canton, it is not astonishing, on the day appointed, that the Haramont Guards were so anxiously expected.

At precisely nine o'clock the sound of fife and drum was heard from the extremity of the Rue Lagny. Great cries of joy and admiration were also heard, and from afar could be perceived the form of Pitou, on his white horse, — or, rather, on the white horse belonging to his lieutenant, Désiré Maniquet.

The Haramont Guard, as is not commonly the case with things long expected, did not disappoint expectation.

It may be remembered what a triumph these Haramontonians obtained when their uniforms were only thirty-three similar hats, and Pitou had nothing distinctive to mark his rank, except a plain dragoon's cap and sabre.

One can imagine what a martial display Pitou's thirty-three men now made, with their uniform coats and breeches, and what an air their chief put on, with his little cap cocked over his eye, his gorget on his breast, his catspaw-epaulets on his shoulders, and his sword in his hand.

There was one cry of admiration from the end of Rue Lagny to the Place de la Fontaine.

Aunt Angelica could hardly bring herself to recognize her nephew; and she barely escaped being knocked down by Maniquet's white horse, in trying to look at Pitou under the animal's very nose.

Pitou made a majestic salute with his sword, and pronounced these words, in a tone to be heard twenty rods away: "Good-day, Madame Angelica."

Crushed by this respectful salutation, the ancient maiden took three steps backward, and exclaimed, lifting her eyes to Heaven: "Oh, the rascal! His honors have turned his head. He no longer knows his own aunt."

Pitou passed majestically along, without noticing this

apostrophe, and took his place at the foot of the Patriot Altar, — this place of honor being assigned to the Hararmont Guards, because they were the only company completely uniformed.

There Pitou dismounted, and gave his horse into the care of an urchin, who received for his task six big sous from the munificent captain.

In the course of the next five minutes this fact was reported to Aunt Angelica, who cried: “The wretch! Is he a millionaire?” Then she added, in a lower tone: “I was badly influenced when I quarreled with him. Aunts may inherit property from nephews!”

Neither exclamation nor reflection reached Pitou, who was simply in ecstasy; for among the girls belted with tricolored ribbons, and carrying green branches, he recognized Catherine.

She was still pale, for her disease was hardly vanquished; but she was more beautiful in her paleness than any other girl in the rosiest health.

Catherine was pale, but happy; for that very morning, thanks to Pitou, she had discovered a letter in the hollow tree.

As we have said, poor Pitou found time for everything. That morning, at seven, he found time to go to Mother Colombe’s, after a letter. At quarter-past seven he placed that letter in the willow. At eight he was all dressed in his new uniform, at the head of his thirty-three followers.

He had scarcely seen Catherine since the day he left her on her bed at the farmhouse; and — we repeat it — when he now beheld her, so beautiful and so happy, it threw him into ecstasies.

She made him a sign to come to her. Pitou looked about, doubtful if this sign could be intended for himself. Catherine smiled again, and renewed the invitation. He

was not mistaken ; so he replaced his sword in its scabbard, lifted his hat gallantly by one corner, and marched bare-headed toward the young girl ; whereas, in the presence of Lafayette, Pitou would simply have touched his hat.

“ Ah, Monsieur Pitou,” said Catherine, “ I hardly knew you. My goodness ! How fine we look, in our new uniform.” Then she added, in a whisper : “ Thanks, thanks, my dear Pitou. How kind you are, and how much I love you.”

As she spoke she took his hand, and pressed it between her own. A dizziness came over Pitou. His hat slipped from his relaxed hand, and fell to the ground ; and possibly the poor lover would have fallen atop of his hat, if a great noise, accompanied by threatening tones, had not been heard from the direction of Rue Soissons.

Whatever the cause of this disturbance, Pitou profited by the incident to escape from his embarrassment. He withdrew his hand from Catherine's pressure, replaced his hat, and shouted “ To arms !” as he ran to place himself at the head of his thirty-three men.

Let us see what caused this great tumult and these threatening cries.

It was well known that Abbé Fortier had been appointed to celebrate the Mass on this Patriot Altar, in honor of the local federation to be inaugurated, and that the sacred dishes, and other accessories of worship, — such as the crucifix, banners, candlesticks, — were to be transported from the church to this new altar, erected in the middle of the square.

The orders relating to this part of the ceremony had been given by the Mayor, Monsieur de Longpré.

It will be remembered that Monsieur de Longpré formerly had trouble with Abbé Fortier, when Pitou,

with Lafayette's warrant in his hand, made requisition for an armed force, in order to take possession of the guns unlawfully concealed by the priest. Acquainted well with the abbé's character, as was everybody else, Longpré knew him to be so self-willed as easily to lose his head, and irritable to the point of violence. He reasonably doubted whether the priest did not hold a grudge against the Mayor, on account of his interference in this old affair of the guns. So instead of calling personally upon Fortier, and conferring with him as to the respective duties of the civil and religious functionaries, the Mayor contented himself with sending to the worthy minister of God the programme of the festival, which was in part as follows :

ARTICLE IV.

Mass will be celebrated on the Patriot Altar, by the Abbé Fortier, commencing at ten o'clock in the morning.

ARTICLE V.

The sacred vessels, and other articles necessary for the service, under Abbé Fortier's care, will be taken from the church in Villers Cotterets, and placed on the Patriot Altar.

The Mayor's secretary had personally delivered this official programme to the priest, who glanced over it with a sneering air, and answered in a tone which corresponded with his looks : " Very well ! "

By nine o'clock, as we have said, the Patriot Altar was all prepared, with its carpet, curtains, linen, and the picture of Saint John Preaching in the Wilderness. There were lacking only the candles, the crucifix, the tabernacle containing the consecrated wafer, and such other utensils as are essential to the divine service called the Sacrifice of the Mass.

At nine and a half o'clock these articles had not yet appeared.

The Mayor grew uneasy, and sent his secretary to the church, to inquire when they would bring these things over.

The secretary returned, saying that he had found the church doors locked.

Then he received orders to run after the beadle, as the beadle would naturally be the man to take charge of the articles to be moved; but he found the beadle with his leg stretched out on a hassock, and making faces like one possessed. The unfortunate mace-bearer had sprained his foot.

The secretary next received orders to go after the choristers. Both their bodies were out of kilter. By way of remedy, one had taken an emetic and the other a purgative. Both medicines were operating miraculously well, and the two sick men hoped to be out by the next day.

The Mayor began to smell a conspiracy. He sent his secretary to the priest's house. Behold, Abbé Fortier had been seized, that very morning, with an attack of the gout, and his sister feared lest it should mount as high as his stomach.

There was no longer any doubt in Mayor Longpré's mind. Not only was Fortier unwilling to say Mass on the Patriot Altar, but in putting the beadle and the choristers out of service, and locking all the doors of the church, he meant to prevent any other priest — if perchance one was present — from celebrating Mass in his stead.

The situation was grave. At that epoch it was not yet thought possible for the civil to be separated from the religious authorities, on any important occasion, or that

any festival could possibly be celebrated without the Mass; though a few years later, men went to the other extreme.

Of course all these trips of the secretary to and fro, did not take place without his uttering hints about the sexton's sprain, the choral purgative and emetic, and the priestly gout.

A deep murmur began to make itself heard among the populace. They even talked of breaking down the church doors, in order to get the sacred utensils and ornaments, and of bringing the priest by force to the Patriot Altar.

The Mayor was essentially a conciliatory man. He checked the first effervescent movements, and offered to go as an ambassador to treat with Abbé Fortier.

He therefore went to the Rue Soissons and knocked at the priest's door, which was as carefully bolted as the doors of the church. He knocked in vain, for the door remained shut.

Monsieur de Longpré then concluded that it was time to call for the intervention of an armed force; so he sent word to the quartermaster and the corporal of gardarmes. Both were in Grand Square, and hastened to obey the official summons, followed by an immense concourse of people.

Having neither ram nor catapult wherewith to force the door, a locksmith was sent for; but at the moment when the locksmith inserted his picklock, the door opened, and Fortier appeared on the threshold. He did not look like Coligny, when he said to his assassins: "My brothers, what wish you with me?" but rather like Calchas, "with his hair standing on end, and his eyes brilliant with gory light," as Racine says in *Iphigenia*.

"Back!" cried the priest, lifting his hand with a menacing gesture. "Back, ye heretics, ye renegades, ye

Huguenots, ye backsliders! Back, Amalakites, Sodomitites, Gomorrites! Leave the threshold of God's servant!"

There was a great murmur in the crowd, a murmur not in the priest's favor.

"Pardon me," said the Mayor, in a mild voice, into which he conveyed the most persuasive possible accent; "pardon me, we only wish to learn whether you will or will not celebrate Mass on our Patriot Altar."

"Whether I will say Mass on that altar?" cried the priest, rushing at once into one of those fits of holy anger to which he was so inclined. "Do you wish me to sanction revolt, rebellion, ingratitude? Do you expect me to pray God to curse virtue and bless sin? You do not expect it, Monsieur Mayor! You want to learn, yes or no, whether I will celebrate your sacrilegious Mass? Well, take my answer! — No, *no*, no, — I will *not*!"

"Very well, Monsieur Fortier," replied the Mayor, "you are free, and no one can force you."

"Ah, it is indeed fortunate that I am free. It is indeed lucky that I am not to be compelled. — Indeed, you are too kind, Monsieur Mayor!"

Thus the Abbé replied, with a most insolent sneer, as he began to shut his door against the very noses of the authorities.

The door was about to present — as one might say in vulgar language — its wooden face to the stunned assemblage, when a man rushed out of the crowd, and, with one powerful effort, banged open the door, which was nearly shut, — thereby almost upsetting the priest, so vigorous was the attack.

This man was Billot, — Billot, pale with anger, his brows contracted and his teeth set.

It will be remembered that Billot was a philosopher.

In this quality he detested the priests, whom he called *smallcaps* and *loafers*.

He caused a profound silence. Everybody felt that something terrible was likely to happen between the two men.

Although compelled to use great force in holding the door open, Billot nevertheless spoke with a calm and almost gentle voice.

“Pardon me, Monsieur Mayor, but what did you say? You said — I beg to repeat it — you said, if Abbé Fortier did not wish to discharge the duties of his office, no one could compel him to do so?”

“Yes, about that!” stammered poor Monsieur de Longpré. “Yes, I said something like that!”

“Then you have advanced a great error, Monsieur Mayor; and, in our day, it is important such errors should not propagate themselves.”

“Back, profane one! Back, impious man! Back, renegade! Back, heretic!” cried Abbé Fortier, addressing Billot.

“Hold your tongue,” said Billot, “or, I give you fair warning, things will turn out very badly for you. I am not insulting you. I am here for discussion only. The Mayor believes that you cannot be forced to say Mass, and I say that you *can* be so compelled.”

“A Manichæan! a Calvinist!” cried the priest.

“Silence!” said Billot. “What I say, I can prove.”

“Silence, silence!” cried everybody.

“You hear, Monsieur Fortier,” said Billot with uninterrupted calmness, “everybody is of my opinion. I may not preach like you, but it appears to me that I can say some interesting things, if anybody will listen.”

The priest wanted to reply to this novel appeal, but the powerful voice of the multitude impressed him, in

spite of himself. "Speak, speak!" he said mockingly. "Let us hear what you have to say."

"You certainly *shall* hear!" said Billot.

"Go on! I'm listening!"

"Then you're doing well!" said Billot.

Throwing a side look at the priest, to see if he meant to keep still and listen, Billot continued: "I say that one thing is very simple, — whoever receives a salary is obliged, in exchange for that salary, to do the work for which it is paid."

"Ah!" said the priest, "I see what's coming."

"My friends," continued Billot, with the same easy voice, yet addressing himself to the two or three hundred spectators of the scene, "which do you prefer to hear, the anathemas of Monsieur Fortier, or my arguments?"

"Speak, Billot, speak! We are listening. Silence, Abbé Fortier, silence!"

This time Billot contented himself with a glance at Fortier, and then went on. "I say, that whoever touches a salary is obliged to do the work for which it is paid. For example, here is the Mayor's secretary. He is paid for doing certain writing for his Honor, for carrying his messages, for replying to certain letters which are addressed to him. His Honor sends him to you, Monsieur Abbé, to bring you a programme of this festival. Well, it would never enter his head to tell the Mayor that he would rather not take this programme to Monsieur Fortier! Am I not right, Monsieur Secretary, — that such a notion would not occur to you?"

"Certainly it would n't! My faith, no!" responded the secretary, ingenuously.

"Do you hear, Monsieur Abbé?" asked Billot.

"Blasphemer!" cried the priest.

“Silence !” cried the audience.

Billot went on : “Here’s the quartermaster of the police, who is paid to maintain good order, where good order is endangered. When his Honor the Mayor thought, just now, that you were likely to disturb the peace, and summoned the quartermaster to his aid, did that officer think of replying : ‘Execute the order if you will, Monsieur Mayor, but don’t expect me to execute it’ ? Did you even think of responding in such a way, Monsieur Quartermaster ? ”

“My faith, no !” replied the gendarme. “It was my duty to come, and I came.”

“You hear, Monsieur Fortier ?” said Billot.

The priest ground his teeth.

“Wait !” continued Billot. “Here is an honest man, a locksmith. Just now the Mayor sent for him to come and open your door. The locksmith did not think of replying that he did not wish to open Fortier’s door. Am I not right, Picard, in saying that idea did not occur to you ? ”

“To be sure,” replied the locksmith. “I took my picks, and here I am. When each one does his duty, the cows are well cared for.”

“You hear, Monsieur Abbé ?” said Billot.

The priest tried to interrupt, but the farmer stopped him with a gesture.

“Tell me now, how comes it that you, who are appointed to set a good example, — how comes it that you alone are excused, when everybody else is held fast to his duty ? ”

“Bravo, Billot ! bravo !” cried the audience, with one voice.

“Not only do you shirk your duty, but you set an example of disorder.”

“Oh!” said the priest, perceiving that it was necessary for him to defend himself, “the Church is independent. The Church obeys nobody, and is responsible only to herself!”

“There’s just the mischief of it,” said Billot. “You set up another power within the country, a separate body within the state. You are either French or foreign; either you are a citizen, or you are not a citizen. If you are Prussian, English, or Austrian, — if you get your pay from Pitt of England, from Cobourg, or from Kaunitz of Austria, then obey the directions of Pitt, Cobourg, or Kaunitz; but if you are a Frenchman, if you are a citizen, if the nation pays your salary, then obey the nation.”

“Yes, yes!” cried three hundred voices.

“Therefore,” said Billot, with a scowl on his face, and his eye full of lightning, laying his strong hand on the priest’s shoulder, “therefore, thou priest, in the name of the nation, I summon thee to fulfil thy mission of peace, to appeal for the favors of Heaven, the good bounty of Providence, the mercy of the Lord, to fall on all thy fellow-citizens and on thy country! Come on!”

“Bravo, Billot! Long live Billot!” shouted the crowd. “To the altar with the priest! To the altar!”

Encouraged by these acclamations, with his vigorous arm the farmer dragged the priest from the sheltering arch of his great doorway, — perhaps the first priest in France who openly took his stand in favor of a counter-revolution.

The Abbé Fortier understood that resistance was no longer possible; so he said: “Very well, make a martyr of me! I call for martyrdom! I pray for martyrdom! I demand martyrdom.” Then he intoned, in a full

voice, the Psalm, *Libera nos, Domine!* (Deliver us, oh Lord!)

This was the singular procession which advanced towards the public square, accompanied by the cries and clamors whose noise reached Pitou, when he was ready to faint under Catherine's thanks and tender words, added to the pressure of her hand.

CHAPTER X.

THE DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

PITOU, to whose mind this noise recalled the Parisian riots, which he had more than once witnessed, — believing that he saw a band of ruffians approaching, believing that he should be called upon to defend some new Flesselles, some new Foulon, some new Berthier, — gave the order “To arms!” and put himself at the head of his thirty-three men.

Then the crowd divided, and he saw advancing the Abbé Fortier, dragged along by Billot, and needing only a palm-branch to make him like the ancient Christians, when they were forced into the arena of the Coliseum.

A natural feeling impelled him to the support of his old teacher, of whose offence he was as yet ignorant.

“Oh Monsieur Billot!” he cried, throwing himself in front of the farmer.

“Oh father!” cried Catherine, with a movement so exactly like Pitou’s, that one might believe they had been trained by the same scene-manager.

It only required a glance from Billot, to check Pitou on one side, and Catherine on the other. There were both the eagle and the lion in that man, who represented the incarnation of the popular uprising.

At the foot of the staging he loosed his hold upon the priest, and said, pointing to the platform with his finger: “There is the Patriot Altar, at which thou hast disdained to officiate, but which I now declare thee unworthy to

serve. To ascend these sacred steps the heart should be filled with three sentiments — desire for liberty, devotion to country, love of humanity. Priest! dost thou desire the enfranchisement of the world? Priest! art thou devoted to thy country? Priest! lovest thou thy neighbor as thyself? Then ascend boldly to the altar, and call upon God! but if thou dost not feel thyself to be a leader among us, as a citizen, — chief among us, because best serving the common weal, — then yield thy place to one more worthy, and take thyself hence! — Go thy way! Disappear!”

“Wretch!” exclaimed the priest, as he retired, threatening Billot with his fist. “Thou dost not know against whom thou declarest war!”

“Yes, I do know!” said Billot. “I declare war against wolves, foxes, serpents, — against whatsoever stings, whatsoever bites, whatsoever wounds in the dark. Well,” he added, smiting his large breast with a powerful gesture of both hands, “stab, bite, sting! Here I am!”

There followed a moment of silence. The crowd opened to let the priest escape, and then closed up again, remaining motionless with admiration, in the presence of Billot’s vigorous nature, which offered itself as a target for the shafts of that terrible power, by which, at that epoch, half the world was still enslaved, and which was called the Clergy, or the Church. There was no longer any mayor, no longer a deputy-mayor, no longer a municipal council; there was only Billot!

Monsieur de Longpré drew near, saying: “But with all this, Monsieur Billot, we have still no priest.”

“And what then?”

“Having no curate, we can have no Mass.”

“Pity about that!” said Billot, who, since his boyhood’s first and only communion, had but twice set foot

in a church, — on the day of his own marriage, and the day of his daughter's baptism.

“I do not call it a misfortune,” replied the Mayor, who held, with good reason, that it was not best to cross Billot's grain, “but what can we have in place of the Mass?”

“In place of the Mass?” cried Billot, borne along by a wave of genuine inspiration. “I'll tell you. Ascend with me to this Patriot Altar, Monsieur Mayor! — ascend with me, Pitou! — you on my right hand, and you on my left, — so! What we will have in place of the Mass, — listen, all of you! — is the Declaration of Human Rights, which is the Creed of Liberty, the Evangel of the Future.”

There was a simultaneous clapping of hands. All these people, so recently emancipated, — barely unchained, — were hungry for some knowledge of the rights won for them, which they were some day to enjoy. They were more thirsty for that gospel, than for what Abbé Fortier called the Word Celestial.

Standing between the Mayor, who represented legal power, and Pitou, who represented military force, Billot stretched forth his hand. Speaking from his heart and memory, — for, it will be remembered, the worthy farmer knew not how to read, — he delivered his speech in a resounding voice, while the people listened, standing with uncovered heads. His speech took the form of a sermon on a series of texts, — texts furnished by the famous Declaration of Human Rights, written perhaps by Thomas Paine, who so ably defended it, — perhaps by Dumont, the friend and coadjutor of Mirabeau, — and adopted, while as yet the Constitution was in embryo, by the National Assembly, on August 18, 1789, two months before this confederation at Villers Cotterets.

As if the printed page were before him, Billot repeated each section of this remarkable document, often deducing certain inferences therefrom.

DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

Article One.

Men are born, and should live, with free and equal rights. Social distinctions should have no other foundation than the common welfare.

Article Two.

The object of political association should be the preservation of natural and inalienable human rights. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.

These words, *resistance to oppression*, were spoken by Billot as a man who had seen the walls of the Bastille tumble before his very eyes, and knew that nothing could resist the strength of the people, when they put forth that strength.

Then arose one of those murmurs which, coming from a multitude of people, sound like distant thunder, while Billot continued :

Article Three.

The principle of all government resides primarily in the Nation. No corporation, no individual, can rightfully exercise any authority which does not emanate directly from the Nation.

This last phrase so vividly recalled what had just been said in the discussion between Billot and the priest, — wherein Billot had invoked this very principle, — that the words could not pass by unnoticed ; and the farmer's recitation of the lines was therefore interrupted by cheers

and plaudits, which Billot allowed to die away before he resumed his address.

Article Four.

Liberty consists in the right to do anything which does not injure others. The exercise of any man's natural rights is therefore only limited by the restraints necessary to secure to other members of society their enjoyment of the same rights, similarly assured to them ; and these limits should be fixed only by law.

This article, though so fundamental, was somewhat too abstract for the simple folks who listened to it ; and so it was received more coldly than the others.

Article Five.

The law has only the right to condemn such actions as are injurious to society. Anything not prohibited by law cannot be rightfully forbidden ; and no one can lawfully be compelled to do what is not ordained by law.

“That is to say,” said a voice from the crowd, “if the law no longer ordains the *corvée*, or enforced public labor, and abolishes ecclesiastical tithes, then the priests have no longer any right to take their tithes from my fields, nor the King to force me to do public work without pay, on the highways, in the forests, or elsewhere.”

“Precisely,” said Billot, replying to his questioner ; “and for the present and future we are forever exempt from these shameful extortions.”

“In that case,” said the questioner, “Long live the Law !” and the whole audience repeated in chorus : “Long live the Law !”

Here Billot lifted his finger solemnly : “Listen well to this, — friends, brothers, citizens, men !” and as he went

on with the next article, he raised his voice higher and higher, so that not a syllable of it should be lost :

Article Six.

Law is the expression of the will of the community. All Frenchmen have the right to participate, personally, or by their representatives, in the establishment of law, which must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal before the law, are equally admissible to all dignities, places, and offices, *according to their individual capacities*, and without other distinctions than those which arise from *virtues and talent*.

This Sixth Article roused universal applause ; so Billot passed at once to the next :

Article Seven.

No man can be rightfully indicted, arrested, or imprisoned, except in cases determined by law, and in accordance with prescribed forms. All those who incite, expedite, or execute unlawful commands, or cause them to be executed, must be punished ; but every citizen, summoned or seized in the name of the law, should instantly obey, and not render himself culpable by resistance.

Article Eight.

The law should ordain only such penalties as are strictly necessary ; and no one should be punished, except in accordance with a law ordained and promulgated prior to the offence, and legally applied.

Article Nine.

Every man being presumably innocent, until he is declared guilty, if his detention is judged indispensable, all severity not found necessary for the custody of his person, should be severely forbidden by law.

Article Ten.

No man should be molested on account of his opinions, even in religion, provided their manifestation does not disturb the order established by law.

Article Eleven.

The free expression of thoughts and opinions is one of the most precious human rights. Every citizen may therefore speak, write, and print freely; although he must be held responsible for any abuse of this liberty, in cases determined by law.

Article Twelve.

A guaranty of the rights of men and citizens requires public force. This force is instituted for the benefit of all, and not for the special use of those to whom its duties are confided.

Article Thirteen.

For the support of public authority, and the defrayal of government expenses, a common contribution is indispensable; but it should be equally divided among all citizens, in proportion to their means.

Article Fourteen.

All citizens have the right to determine, either personally or by their representatives, the necessity of any public contribution, to discuss it freely, to learn how it is used, and to determine its proportional assessment, its collection, and its duration.

Article Fifteen.

Society has the right to demand of every public agent an account of his administration.

Article Sixteen.

Society in which the guaranty of rights is not assured, and the distribution of power is undefined, has no proper Constitution.

Article Seventeen.

The right to property being inviolable and sacred, no one should be deprived of it, except when it is evidently exacted by public necessity, legally determined, and under the condition of fair preliminary indemnity.

“Now,” said Billot, “here is the application of these principles, as adopted by the National Assembly. Hearken, my brothers! Hearken, fellow-citizens! Hearken, ye men of France, set free by this Declaration of Human Rights, — of *your* rights!”

“Hush! Silence! Hear!” shouted at least twenty voices together.

Billot went on, with a threatening accent, expressing his hatred of tyranny :

The National Assembly, wishing to establish the French Constitution on the principles recognized in this Declaration, abolishes irrevocably all institutions which wound liberty and equality.

Henceforth there shall be neither nobility nor peerage, neither hereditary distinctions nor distinctions of rank, neither feudal government nor hereditary judgeships, nor any of the titles, attributes, or prerogatives derived therefrom, no orders of knighthood, nor any corporations or decorations which may demand proofs of nobility, or which presuppose distinctions of birth; nor shall there be any superiority except that belonging to public officers in the exercise of their duties.

No public office shall henceforth be salable or hereditary. There shall not be for a part of the nation, nor for an individual thereof, any privilege or exemption not belonging equally to all the French people.

There shall be no restrictive guilds, no professional corporations, no monopolies of the arts and trades.

Finally, the law recognizes the validity, neither of religious vows, nor of any other pledges contrary to natural human rights and the Constitution.

Billot finished his address, which had been listened to in religious silence.

For the first time, and with surprise, the people heard their rights proclaimed in open day, in the light of the sun, and in the presence of their Lord, to whom they had long prayed for such a charter of natural rights, which they had now obtained only after cycles of slavery, misery, and suffering.

For the first time humanity, real manhood, on which the edifice of the monarchy — with the peerage on the right, and the clergy on the left — had been pressing for six hundred years, — for the first time the laborer, the artisan, the mechanic, could recognize his own strength, could appreciate his own value, could calculate his rightful position on the earth, could measure the shadow which he cast in the sunshine; and do all this, not by reason of the good pleasure of some master, who claimed an inborn right to rule, but at the word of one of his own equals.

After the last lines, which he repeated: "The law recognizes the validity neither of religious vows, nor of any other pledges contrary to natural human rights and the Constitution," Billot lifted up his voice in words so new as to seem almost wrong: "Long live the Nation!" When he thus spoke he extended his two arms, and drew to his breast, in one fraternal embrace, the Mayor's scarf and Pitou's epaulets. Though the Mayor ruled in a very small community, and Pitou was chief only of a handful of peasants, — despite the smallness of the things represented, — the principle was none the less grand, and every mouth repeated the shout, "Long live the Nation!"

All arms opened and closed in a general embrace. There was a sublime fusion of all hearts into one general

heart, — an absorption of all interests into one common devotion.

It was such a scene as Gilbert described to the Queen three months later, — in a conversation already recorded in this narrative, — a scene which she could not at all understand.

Billot came down from the Patriot Altar amidst the joyous acclamations of the whole population.

The musicians of Villers Cotterets, assisted by the musicians from the neighboring villages, soon began to play that melody of fraternal reunion, so familiarly used at weddings and baptisms :

Where can one better be
Than in his family ?

Dating from that era France became one grand national family. Religious hatreds were extinguished. Provincial prejudices were annihilated. What is one day to come to pass for all the world, then began for France. Geographical distinctions were erased. No more mountains, no more rivers, no more obstacles of any sort, intervened between man and man. There was one language, one country, one heart.

Hearing this rustic melody, wherewith the nation had formerly welcomed Henry the Fourth, and with which, even in our day, Liberty is still saluted, — the crowd began to wreathe themselves into that ancient dance from Provence, called the Farandole. In an instant they formed an endless chain, which rolled itself into living rings about the centre, and then strung itself out into the streets which led away from the square.

Then they set up tables in front of their doors. Poor or rich, every one brought his dish of food, his pot of cider, his mug of beer, his bottle of wine, or his jug of

water ; and the whole population blessed God, while they shared this love-feast, — this *agapé*, — which might well derive its name from the assemblages of the apostolic Christians. Six thousand citizens thus received the elements at the same table, as it were, — the holy table of fraternity, the Eucharist of Humanity.

Billot was the hero of the hour ; but he shared his honors generously with the Mayor and Pitou.

It is needless to say that in the dance Pitou managed to give his hand to Catherine, — needless to say that he found a place near her at the table.

She was unhappy, poor child. The joy of the morning had vanished, as the rosy and smiling rays of the dawn disappear beneath the storm-clouds of midday.

In his struggle with Fortier, in his speech over the Declaration of Human Rights, her father had bidden defiance to the Clergy and the Nobility, — a defiance the more terrible, coming from so humble a quarter.

She thought of Isidore, who was no longer anything, — that is, was nothing socially more than other men.

It was not his title, not his rank, not his wealth, which she regretted, for she would have loved Isidore as a simple peasant ; but it seemed to her that the world was violent, unjust, brutal towards this gentle youth. It seemed to her as if her father, by wresting from Isidore his titles and privileges, was separating him from her forever, instead of drawing him towards her.

As to the Mass, nobody said anything more about it. They almost pardoned the priest's anti-Revolutionary outburst ; although he perceived the very next day, by an almost empty class-room, that his refusal to officiate at the Altar of Liberty had deprived him of his popularity with the Patriots of Villers Cotterets.

CHAPTER XI.

BENEATH THE WINDOW.

THE ceremony we have just described was a local federation ; and the purpose of such local reunions was to more closely knit together all the communities in France.

Such celebrations were but the preludes, however, of a grander reunion, which was to take place in Paris, on July 14, 1790.

At these partial and local reunions the citizens looked about them, to decide upon the deputies who should be sent to this general federation.

The parts sustained by Billot and Pitou on Sunday, October 18, commended them naturally to the suffrages of their fellow-citizens, for the great day which was to come.

Meanwhile people resumed their ordinary routine of life, out of which they had temporarily emerged, through the wrench which this memorable event had given to their calm provincial habits.

When we speak of the usual stagnation of provincial habits, we do not mean to say that in the country, less than elsewhere, the course of life is cheered by joy or clouded by sorrow. There is not a streamlet, however small, — from that which bathes the grass of the poor peasant's little orchard, to the majestic river which descends from the Alps as from a throne, to throw itself like a conqueror into the sea, — but has along its banks (modest or proud, strewn with daisies or dotted with villages) its intervals of sunshine and shadow.

If we have any doubt about this, after seeing the trouble in the Tuileries, which we have unveiled, then the farm of Father Billot — whereto also we lead our readers — may furnish the needed example.

On the surface, however, everything appears calm and almost jubilant. At about five in the morning the great gate swings open, towards the field extending away to the forest, which in summer sways like a green curtain, and in winter stands like a dark shroud.

The sower goeth forth to sow, bearing on his back his bag, filled with wheat mingled with wholesome ashes. The laborer goeth forth to find, awaiting him in the field, the plow which overnight he left standing, at the end of the furrow. The herdsman leads forth her lowing troop, guided by the majestic and imperious bull, and followed by the cows and the heifers, among whom marches the favorite cow, recognizable by the clear-toned bell which hangs about her neck.

Behind them all, mounted on his vigorous Norman gelding, trotting and ambling along, comes Billot, — the master, the heart, the life, the soul of this world in miniature, this epitome of a nation.

A disinterested observer would remark nothing particular in his demeanor. From beneath his dark brows his eye looks searchingly about, and his ear is attentive to every sound within the radius of his view. During this investigation, by eye and ear, he is like a hunter who catches the scent of game, is tracing its flight, and dares not lift his eyes from the earth.

In all this the indifferent spectator may see only the natural action of the landed proprietor, assuring himself that the day is fine, and wondering if, during the night, the wolves have invaded his sheepfold, the wild boars have rooted up his potatoes, or the rabbits have inter-

ferred with his clover, sallying forth from the forest, the asylum wherein they can be shot only by the princely bullets of the Duc d'Orleans or his gamekeepers ; but to any one who can look into the heart of the sturdy farmer, each of his movements, his gestures, and glances will bear a graver interpretation.

Why is he gazing into the mist of the morning ? To see whether some prowler cometh nigh his farm, or is furtively stealing away from it.

Why is he so intently listening ? To ascertain if some mysterious signal is not sent from Catherine's chamber to the clustering willows along the roadside, or to the ditches which divide the forest from the plain.

What does his penetrating glance ask of the soil ? He looks to see if perchance it preserves the mark of a footstep, whose lightness and size denounce it as aristocratic.

As to Catherine, as we have said, although her father's face is softened towards her, she none the less feels the paternal distrust which encompasses her, like the shadowing wings of some watchful angel ; and this makes her wonder, during the long nights of winter, so solitary and anxious, whether she would prefer to have Isidore return to Boursonnes, or remain far away.

As for Madame Billot, she has resumed her vegetative life. Her husband having returned, and her daughter being restored to health, the mother sees nothing beyond this limited horizon ; and it would take a sharper insight than hers to find the suspicion at the bottom of her husband's mind, or the anguish in the depths of her daughter's heart.

Having enjoyed his military triumph, with a pride not unmingled with sadness, Pitou has fallen back into his ordinary condition of mild and benevolent melancholy.

With his customary regularity he daily visits Mother

Colombe. If there is no letter for Catherine, he returns mournfully to Haramont; because, on the day when she gets no letter from Isidore, she has no occasion to think of the fellow who brings it to her. If, on the contrary, there is a letter, he deposits it religiously in the willow; yet he often returns home more sorrowfully than on those days when there are no letters, because Catherine will only think of him on the rebound, — because that fine gentleman (who may be deprived of his title by the Assembly, and by the Declaration of Human Rights, but cannot be dispossessed of his grace and elegance) is the connecting link, through whom Pitou has received his life's most painful experiences.

Nevertheless, as may be easily understood, Pitou was no purely passive messenger. If he was dumb, he was not blind. Apart from Catherine's catechism about Turin and Sardinia, which revealed the goal of Isidore's journey, Pitou learned, from the postmarks on the letters, that the young gentleman was in the capital of Piedmont. One fine day the postmark showed the word *Lyons* in place of *Turin*; and two days later, — that is, on December 25, a letter arrived which bore the name *Paris*, instead of *Lyons*.

Without any great keenness, Pitou comprehended that Isidore de Charney had left Italy and returned to France.

Once in the capital, it would evidently not be long before he quitted Paris for Boursonnes.

Pitou's heart was pained. Although devotion was the fixed purpose of his life, his heart was not therefore insensible to the different emotions which assailed it.

On the day when the letter came which was dated at Paris, he resolved, by way of pretext, to go and place his snares in the Bruyère-aux-Loups, where he had effectually operated in former days.

As the Pisseleu Farm was situated exactly on the road between Haramont and that part of the forest called Bruyère-aux-Loups, it is not surprising that Pitou stopped at the farm on his way, choosing for his visit the hour when Billot was likely to be riding through the meadows, about dinner-time.

It was Pitou's custom to cut across the fields, take the highway which runs from Villers Cotterets to Paris, follow along the broad road to the Noue Fields, and thence to follow the ravine till he reached Pisseleu.

Then he would walk around the walls enclosing the farm, pass by the sheepfolds and stables, and at last come to the great gate, on the other side of which rose the dwelling-house of the inmates.

This time he followed his wonted route.

When he reached the gate he looked about him, after Billot's fashion, and saw Catherine at her chamber window.

She seemed to be waiting for some one. Without being fixed on any particular spot, her gaze ran vaguely up and down the part of the forest line comprised between the road from Villers Cotterets to Ferté Milon, and that from Villers Cotterets to Boursonnes.

Not wishing to surprise Catherine, he placed himself in such a position, within the range of her inquiring glance, that soon his presence arrested her eye.

She smiled upon him. For Catherine, Pitou was only a friend ; and yet he had become more than a friend, for he was her confidant.

“So it's you, my dear Pitou ! What good wind blows you here ?”

Pitou showed her his snare strings, rolled about his arm, and said : “I had a notion of getting a couple of rabbits for you to eat, tender and well-flavored ; and as

the best ones are to be found on Bruyère-aux-Loups, because of the thyme which grows there in profusion, I started very early, so as to come round this way, and see how you were getting along."

Catherine began to smile at this attention on Pitou's part; but after having thus responded to the first portion of his speech, she replied to the second half of it in these words: "You want news of my health? You are very good, dear Pitou. Thanks to the pains which you took for me when I was sick, and which you have continued during my convalescence, I am nearly well."

"*Nearly* well?" repeated Pitou, with a sigh. "I wish, with all my heart, that you were entirely well."

Catherine blushed, sighed in her turn, and grasped Pitou's hand, as if she had something very important to communicate; but thinking better of it, perhaps, she released his hand, and took several steps across the room, as if searching for her handkerchief. Having found it, she wiped her brow, which was wet with perspiration, albeit the day was one of the coldest of the year.

None of these movements escaped Pitou's keen regard.

"You have something to tell me, Mademoiselle Catherine?" he asked.

"Me?—Oh, no,—nothing!—You deceive yourself," replied the girl, in an altered tone.

Pitou made another effort. "You understand, Mademoiselle, if you need me, nothing must stand in your way—"

Catherine reflected, or rather hesitated, for an instant.

"My dear Pitou, you have proved that I can count upon you, when there is any occasion, and I am very grateful; but now, for a second time, I can only *thank* you for your offer."

Presently she added, in a lower voice: "It will be

useless for you to go to the post for me this week. I shall have no letters for several days."

Pitou was about to tell her what he thought, yet he wished to see how far her trust in him would extend; but she limited her statement to what she had just said, and her only purpose seemed to be, to save Pitou a needless walk every morning.

In his eyes, however, her words seemed to have a hidden meaning.

There was no reason why Isidore should not write, simply because he had returned to Paris. If Isidore no longer wrote to Catherine, it was because he expected to see her.

Who should assure Pitou that this Paris letter, which he had placed in the hollow tree that very morning, did not announce to Catherine her lover's immediate return? Who dare say that her gaze — which appeared lost in space, till his presence drew it towards himself — was not directed towards the line of the forest, for some sign which would indicate to the young girl that her lover was near at hand.

Pitou waited, to give Catherine time to debate within herself whether she had any further confidences for his ear. Then, seeing that she maintained an obstinate silence, he said: "Have you not observed the change which has come over your father?"

The girl trembled, and answered his question with another: "Ah! Have you also noticed something?"

"Mademoiselle Catherine," said he, mournfully shaking his head, "a moment will come, as sure as fate, when he who has caused this change will have a hard reckoning with your father, — let me tell you that! — though as to time and place, I know nothing. Do you understand?"

Catherine grew pallid, but all the same she looked

sharply at Pitou. "Why do you say *he* instead of *she*? It is perhaps a woman, and not a man, who must suffer from my father's smothered wrath."

"You frighten me, my dear Mademoiselle! Have *you* any reason to fear?"

"My friend," ruefully said the girl, "I have to fear what any girl must fear from an angry father, when she has forgotten her rank, and loves above her station."

"Mademoiselle," said Pitou, venturing to give his advice, "it seems to me that in your place —" He paused.

"It seems to you that in my place —" repeated Catherine.

"Well, it seems to me that in your place — But no! You almost died when he was simply absent. If you had to give him up altogether, you would die outright; and I do not want you to die. I would rather see you sick and sorry, than to see you laid down there, at the end of the valley. — Ah, Catherine, this is all very wretched!"

"Hush!" said she. "Let us talk of something else, or not talk at all. There's father!"

Pitou looked in the direction of Catherine's glance, and saw the farmer advancing on horseback, at a smart trot.

Perceiving a man near Catherine's window, the farmer stopped; but, seeing with whom he had to deal, he presently rode on.

Pitou stepped towards him, hat in hand, smiling as he did so.

"Ah, is it thou, Pitou? Comest thou after a dinner, my boy?"

"No, Monsieur Billot! I should n't think of doing such a thing; but —"

At that moment he noted an encouraging look on Catherine's face.

“But what?” asked Billot.

“Well, if I was invited, I should accept.”

“Very well,” said the farmer, “I invite you.”

“Then I accept,” rejoined Pitou.

The farmer touched the horse with his spur, and rode under the porch into the carriage-house.

Pitou turned towards Catherine. “Is that what you wished to speak about?” he asked.

“Yes. He is gloomier to-day than he ever has been before.”

Then she added to herself: “Oh, my God! does he know?”

“What, Mademoiselle?” asked Pitou, who overheard Catherine, though she spoke so low.

“Nothing!” said she, withdrawing her head into the chamber, and closing the window.

CHAPTER XII.

FATHER CLOÛS REAPPEARS ON THE SCENE.

CATHERINE was not mistaken. In spite of the affable reception he had accorded Pitou, her father was gloomier than ever.

He shook Pitou's hand, and Pitou noticed that the farmer's hand was cold and damp. According to her custom, his daughter offered him her pale and cold cheek, but he only brushed her forehead with his lips.

As to Mother Billot, when she saw her husband enter the room, she rose, as was her custom, thus expressing both her respect for him, and a sense of her own inferiority; but the farmer did not pay her the least attention.

"Is dinner ready?" he asked.

"Yes, goodman," replied Mother Billot.

"Then, let us sit down," said he, "for I have lots of things to do before night."

They went into the small, family eating-room, which overlooked the courtyard, so that nobody from outside could enter the kitchen without passing by the window, whereby this room was lighted.

A plate was added for Pitou, who was seated between the two women, facing the farmer, and with his back to the window.

Preoccupied as Pitou was, he had with him an organ over which his mental disturbance had little influence, — namely, his stomach. The result was that Billot, notwithstanding his clear-sightedness, could detect nothing

in his guest but evident satisfaction with an excellent cabbage soup, and with the platter of beef and bacon which followed.

Nevertheless, Billot wished to ascertain if it was chance or design which brought Pitou to the farm; so while they were taking away the beef and bacon, to give place to a quarter of roasted lamb, — a dish which Pitou beheld with obvious pleasure, — the farmer unmasked his batteries, and questioned Pitou directly.

“My dear Pitou, as thou knowest, thou art always welcome at the farm; but might one ask what draws thee into these parts to-day?”

Pitou smiled, and looked about him, to make sure there were no indiscreet observers or telltale ears, and then pulled up the right sleeve of his blouse, with his left hand.

“There, Father Billot,” he said, showing some twenty snares of wire, wound around his arm like a bracelet.

“Ah ha!” said Father Billot. “Hast thou depopulated the warrens of Longpré and Taille Fontaine, that thou comest trapping hither?”

“Not so,” said Pitou, naïvely; “but I’ve done business with those rascally rabbits over there so long, that they recognize my snares, and give them the go-by; so I thought I’d speak a couple of words to-night to Father Lajeunesse’s rabbits, who are less sly and more delicate, through constantly feeding on heather and thyme.”

“Pest! I knew not thou wast such an epicure, Master Pitou.”

“Oh, I’m not dainty for my own sake,” said Pitou, “but for Mademoiselle Catherine’s. As she has been ill, she needs good meat.”

“Yes,” said Billot, interrupting Pitou, “thou art right; for thou seest, she has no longer any appetite.”

As he spoke he pointed to Catherine's clean plate; for since eating a few spoonfuls of soup, she had touched neither the beef nor the bacon.

"I have no appetite, father," said Catherine, blushing at this sudden remark, "for I had just eaten a great bowl of bread and milk, when Monsieur Pitou passed near my window, and I called to him."

"I do not seek to know the cause of thy loss of appetite," said Billot, "I only state the fact." Then, glancing through the window into the courtyard, he rose, saying: "Ah, there 's somebody after me!"

Pitou felt Catherine's foot treading on his own, under the table. He turned towards her, and saw that she was pale as death, and trying to make him look towards the courtyard.

His glance followed Catherine's, and he recognized his old comrade, Father Clouïs, who passed in front of the window, with Billot's double-barrelled gun on his shoulder.

The farmer's gun was distinguishable from others, by having silver rings and trigger-guard.

"Ah!" said Pitou, who saw nothing alarming in all this, "it's Father Clouïs. He's bringing home your gun, Monsieur Billot."

"Yes," said Billot, reseating himself, "and he'll dine with us, if he has n't dined already.— Wife, open the door for Father Clouïs."

Mother Billot arose, and went to open the door; while Pitou, his eyes fixed on Catherine, was wondering how there could be, in what was taking place, anything to occasion her paleness.

Father Clouïs entered. On his shoulder he carried the farmer's gun; and in the same hand he carried a hare, which he had evidently shot with this gun.

It will be remembered that Father Clouis had received, from his Grace of Orleans, permission to kill one rabbit and one hare, on alternate days. This, it appeared, was hare-day.

With his unoccupied hand he doffed a sort of fur cap which he habitually wore, but of which there was little left beyond the skin, so constantly was it torn by the brakes, through which Father Clouis scrambled; for he was nearly as insensible to thorns as a wild boar.

"Monsieur Billot, and all the company," said he, "I have the honor of saluting you."

"Good-day, Papa Clouis," said Billot. "Well, I see you're a man of your word. Thanks!"

"Oh, what's agreed's agreed, Monsieur Billot. You met me this morning, and you said to me, like this: 'Father Clouis, you're such a good shot, that if you'll sort me out a dozen balls, of the calibre of my gun, you'll do me a favor.'—To which I answered: 'When do you want 'em, Monsieur Billot?'—You said: 'This afternoon, without fail.'—Then I said: 'That's all right! You shall have 'em.' And here they be."

"Thanks again, Father Clouis," said Billot. "You'll dine with us, won't you?"

"Oh, you're very kind, Father Billot, but really, I don't need anything."

Father Clouis believed that civility required him to say he was not tired, whenever he was asked to sit down, and that he was not hungry, whenever he was invited to eat.

Billot understood him, and said: "Never mind, draw up to the table. Here's both food and drink. If you can't eat, you can drink."

Meantime Mother Billot, as methodically and almost as silently as an automaton, laid another plate on the

table, with a napkin and a platter. Then she drew up a chair.

“Gracious, if you insist upon it—!” said Father Clouïs.

So he placed the guu in one corner, laid the hare on the edge of the buffet, and came to the table, where he found himself seated face to face with Catherine, who looked at him with terror.

The old guard’s placid face seemed so little calculated to inspire such a feeling, that Pitou could not account for the emotions betrayed, not only by Catherine’s face, but also in a nervous tremor, which agitated her whole form.

Meanwhile Billot filled the plate and glass of his guest, who attacked both, as bravely as if he had not declared himself free from hunger.

“Very pretty wine, Monsieur Billot,” he said, as if he wished to render proper respect to the facts, “and a very enjoyable lamb. It appears that you have the same opinion as the proverb, about eating the lambs when they’re too young, and drinking the wines when they’re too old.”

As nobody responded to this pleasantry, and the conversation flagged, Clouïs felt it his duty, as a guest, to sustain it; so he continued: “Just now I reminded myself as how this was hare-day; and as I can kill my hare on one side of the forest, as well as the other, I thought I would go into Father Lajeunesse’s ward, where I might, at the same time, try how a silver-mounted gun would carry a ball; for I had cast thirteen balls instead of twelve. Faith, it carried that ball very well,—your gun.”

“Yes, I know it,” said Billot. “It’s a good weapon.”

“Hold on!” said Pitou. “Twelve balls? Is there to be a shooting-match somewhere about?”

“No,” said Billot.

“Ah, I know that gun very well,” continued Pitou. “They call it hereabouts, the *silver-mounted customer*. I saw it do its work two years ago, at the Boursonnes festival. Hold on! That’s where it won the silver dish from which you’re eating, Madame Billot, — yes, and the mug from which you’re drinking, Mademoiselle Catherine. — Oh my!” cried Pitou, scared, “what is the matter with you, Mademoiselle?”

“Me? Nothing,” said Catherine, reopening her half-closed eyes, and sitting upright in her chair, against the back whereof she had been leaning, as if about to faint.

“Catherine? Why should anything be the matter with her?” said Billot, shrugging his shoulders.

“Exactly,” continued old Clouis. “Well, I must tell you, — among the old iron at Montagnon’s, — the gunsmith’s, you know, — I found a mould; and what’s more remarkable, it was just such a mould as you needed. Those devilish little harrels, made by Leclerc, nearly always take a calibre of twenty-four, — which don’t prevent them from carrying well, however, — though God knows how they do it; but here I found a mould of just your size, — a trifle smaller, perhaps; but that’s nothing, if you only cover your balls well with grease. Do you wish to shoot something in motion or standing still?”

“I don’t know yet,” answered Billot. “All I can say is, that it will be used on the watch.”

“Ah yes, I see,” said Clouis. “The Duke’s boars are very fond of your roots, and you recall the old proverb, that when once the pork’s in pickle, it never’ll eat any more.”

There was general silence, broken only by the labored breathing of the girl. Pitou’s eyes went from the old

gamekeeper to Billot, and from Billot to the daughter. He tried to see through the mystery, but could form no reasonable conclusion.

As to Mother Billot, it was useless to seek any light in her face. She could not understand what people were saying, not to mention what they were merely thinking about.

“Well,” said Clouis, continuing his own line of thought, “if them balls are for the boars, — well, they’re a *leetle* small, as one might say; because the hide of those gentlemen is very tough, not counting how much they can carry away. I’ve known boars who had five, six, or eight balls between the hide and the flesh, — regular balls, too, sixteen to the pound; and they were none the worse for it.”

“These are not for boars,” said Billot.

Pitou’s curiosity was irresistible. “Pardon me, Monsieur Billot, — if not for prize-shooting, and not for boars, for what then *do* you want these bullets?”

“A wolf!” said Billot.

“Oh, well, if it’s a wolf, here’s just your pattern,” said Father Clouis, taking a dozen balls from his pocket, and clinking them upon an empty plate, as he counted them out. “As to the thirteenth, that’s in the hare’s stomach. — Ah, I don’t know how your gun would carry small shot, but it carries a bullet to a charm.”

If Pitou had glanced at Catherine he would have seen that she was again nearly fainting. While Clouis was talking, the lad did not once look at the girl; but when he heard the old gamekeeper say that the thirteenth ball was in the hare’s stomach, he could not resist the temptation to lift the carcass and verify the statement.

“Sure enough,” he said, thrusting his little finger into the bullet-hole, “you did it, Father Clouis. Monsieur

Billot, *you* shoot well, but you can't kill hares with a free ball, like that."

"No matter!" said Billot. "As the animal I want to shoot is twenty times as big as a hare, I hope I sha'n't miss him."

"The fact is," said Pitou, "that a wolf — But talking of wolves, — are there any in the district? That's surprising, before the snow flies."

"It *is* surprising; but it is true, notwithstanding."

"You are sure, Monsieur Billot?"

"Very sure!" replied the farmer, looking both at Pitou and Catherine, which was very easy to do, as they sat so near each other. "The shepherd saw one this morning."

"Where?" asked Pitou, innocently.

"On the road from Paris to Boursonnes, near the Ivors Copse."

"Ah!" said Pitou, in his turn looking at the farmer and his daughter.

"Yes," continued Billot, tranquilly. "One was observed last season, and I was duly notified. After a while it was supposed he had gone away, never to return; but —"

"But — ?" asked Pitou.

"Well, it seems he *has* returned," said Billot, "and may take a turn about my farm. That's why I told Father Clouis to clean up my gun, and run me some balls."

This was as much as Catherine could bear. She rose, uttered a stifled cry, and went tottering towards the door.

Half-bewildered and half-anxious, Pitou also arose, and, seeing Catherine reel, he ran to her support.

Billot cast an awful look towards the door; but Pitou's

honest face manifested so much surprise, as to put to flight any suspicion the farmer might entertain, of the young fellow's complicity with Catherine.

Without showing any further anxiety about either Pitou or his daughter, the farmer went on: "As you say, Father Clouï's, to make the blow sure, it will be well to cover the balls thick with grease."

Pitou heard this question; but he did not hear the answer; because, at that moment, he had rejoined Catherine in the kitchen, and felt the girl sinking into his arms.

"What is it? My God, what is it?" he anxiously asked.

"Oh!" said she, "can't you understand? He knows that Isidore arrived in Boursonnes this morning; and he will kill him, if he comes near the farm."

At that moment the door of the dining-room flew open, and Billot appeared in the doorway.

"My dear Pitou," he said, in a severe tone which admitted no reply, "if thou hast really come for the Lajeunesse rabbits, I fancy it is time for thee to attend to thy snares. Later, thou'lt not be able to see."

"Yes, Monsieur Billot," said Pitou humbly, looking at both father and daughter, "I came for that, and for nothing else, I swear."

"Well, then —?"

"Well, then, I'm going!"

He went out by the door leading into the courtyard, while Catherine retired weeping to her chamber, bolting the door behind her.

"Yes," muttered Billot, "yes, — lock yourself in, wretched girl. No matter! It is not on *this* side I shall lay my ambush."

CHAPTER XIII.

A GAME OF TAG.

ALL dumfounded Pitou left the farmhouse. To be sure Catherine's last words let in the sunlight, upon what had been obscure up to that moment; but this sunlight blinded him.

Pitou now knew all he wanted to know, and more. He knew that Isidore de Charny had arrived the day before at Boursonnes, and that, if Isidore ventured to visit Catherine at the farm, he would run the risk of a gunshot.

Of this Pitou could no longer harbor a doubt. Billot's parabolic innuendos had been illumined by Catherine's few words. The wolf which had been seen last season, prowling about the farmer's sheepfold, — which had gone away for good, as was believed, but had been seen again that morning, near Ivors Copse, on the way from Paris to Boursonnes, — was the young Viscount.

For his benefit the gun had been cleaned; for him the bullets had been cast. The situation was very grave.

When there was occasion for it, Pitou had the force of a lion, and almost always the prudence of the serpent.

Ever since he attained the age of reason, he had been able, under the very noses of the country constables, to despoil the close-hedged orchards, or the fruit-laden trees in the open fields; and under the very claws of the wood-rangers, he had spread his snares and lime-twigs.

Thus had he gained a habit of practical thought, combined with rapid decision, which stood him in good stead

in the most perilous cases, and enabled him to get the best results from the most untoward circumstances. This time, calling to his aid his customary rapidity, he decided forthwith to gain the edge of the wood, which was only eighty paces from the farmhouse.

This wood was a covert, and under such a covert one could remain unseen, and meditate at his ease.

As may be seen, Pitou reversed the usual order of things, by putting the rapid action first, and leaving thought to come afterwards; for, with all his instinctive intelligence, Pitou was now hard pressed, and his most pressing need was, to find an immediate refuge.

He walked towards the forest with a careless air, as if he were not the bearer of a world of cogitation, and reached his retreat without looking behind him; although once, when he calculated that he was out of sight of the farmhouse, he stooped over, ostensibly to buckle his shoe, but really to take the opportunity of looking backward, between his long legs, and thus studying the outlook.

The outlook was clear, and no sign of danger presented itself. Seeing this, Pitou resumed his straight line, and with a bound was in the woods.

The forest was Pitou's domain. There he was at home; there he was free; there he was king.

He was king,—like the squirrel, whose agility he shared, like the fox, whose cunning he possessed, like the wolf, for Pitou also had eyes which could see in the night; but at this hour he needed neither the agility of the squirrel, the cunning of the fox, nor the night-seeing eyes of the wolf.

It seemed to Pitou a very simple matter, to cut diagonally across that part of the woods in which he was now concealed, and come out by another part of the border

of the forest, which extended along the whole length of the farm.

From a distance of sixty or seventy paces Pitou could see whatever took place. At sixty or seventy paces, Pitou could challenge anybody whatsoever, who was obliged to depend upon his hands and feet, whether for motion or attack.

Of course he could easily outrun a horseman, for there was not one who could make his way a hundred rods in the forest, by the tracks through which Pitou scrambled; therefore Pitou could not find any comparisons disdainful enough to express his contempt for a horseman—in the woods.

Pitou stretched himself along near a cluster of trees, placed his neck between two twin branches, where their stems separated, and then cogitated.

He wondered if it was in his power, much as he wished to do so, to prevent Father Billot from putting into execution the terrible vengeance which he meditated.

The first method of prevention which occurred to Pitou's mind, was to run to Boursonnes, and warn Monsieur Isidore of the danger which awaited him, if he ventured near the farm.

At the same time Pitou bethought himself of two things: first, that Catherine had not commissioned him to do so; second, that there was danger of not being able to forewarn Monsieur Isidore.

What certainty was there that the Viscount, who doubtless meant to conceal himself, would ride over a road frequented by vehicles, and not come by one of those pathways, whereof the woodcutters and foresters availed themselves, to shorten the journey through the woods?

Besides, in going after Isidore, Pitou would have to

abandon Catherine ; and, taking all things together, although Pitou would be sorry if any misfortune happened to the Viscount, he would be in despair if any ill befell Catherine.

It appeared wisest to remain where he was, and to take counsel of circumstances, whatever might happen.

Meantime he waited, and watched the farmhouse, his eyes as glaring and steadfast as those of a wildcat, crouching for its prey.

The first observable movement was the departure of Father Clouïs.

Pitou saw him take leave of Billot, under the porch, after which the old man hobbled along by the wall, and disappeared in the direction of Villers Cotterets, — which he must either go through or around, in order to return to his hut, which was a league and a half distant from Pisseleu.

When Clouïs went away, twilight was coming on.

As Father Clouïs was a very secondary personage in the drama which was taking place, — a sort of supernumerary, — Pitou gave him but a fragment of attention ; and having satisfied conscience by following the old man till he disappeared behind an angle of the wall, Pitou again fixed his eyes on the centre of the farmhouse, — that is, the porch and the windows.

In an instant one of these windows was lighted, — the one in Billot's chamber.

From Pitou's coign of vantage he could look straight into this chamber. Pitou could see Billot enter the room, and load his gun, with all the precautions recommended by Father Clouïs.

Meanwhile, night began to fall.

His gun being loaded, Billot extinguished his light, and closed both shutters of his window, but in such a way as

to leave a slight opening, doubtless to enable the owner to observe what was going on thereabouts.

From Billot's window, situated a short flight of stairs up from the kitchen, as we have perhaps already said, it was impossible, on account of an elbow formed by the outline of the house, to see Catherine's window, which was situated on the lower floor; but Billot's window commanded a view of the entire road from Boursonnes, and the circle of the forest, from the hill of Ferté Milon to Ivors Copse.

Although Billot could not see Catherine's window, yet if she should go out by the window, and try to reach the woods, he would be able to see her the moment she entered the radius included in his survey; only, as night was deepening, if Billot should see a woman, and suspect that woman to be Catherine, he could not identify her for a certainty.

We advance these remarks, because they were those which Pitou made to himself.

He did not doubt that Catherine would attempt a sortie, so as to warn Isidore, as soon as the darkness fully set in.

Without losing sight of her father's window, it was on Catherine's casement that Pitou's eyes were specially fixed.

Pitou was not mistaken. When the evening had reached a degree of obscurity which seemed to the girl sufficient for her purpose, Pitou — for whom, as we have said, there was no obscurity — saw half of her window slowly turning on its hinges. Presently she climbed over the sill, closed the window after her, and glided alongside the wall.

There was no danger of the girl's being seen, as long as she followed the line of the buildings and the fences,

and if she meant to go to Villers Cotterets, she might get away unperceived ; but if, on the contrary, her business took her in the direction of Boursonnes, she could not fail to come within the radius included in the view from her father's window.

At the end of the wall she hesitated a few seconds ; so, for an instant, Pitou cherished the hope that she might be bound for Villers Cotterets, and not for Boursonnes ; but suddenly her hesitation ceased. Bending over, so as to conceal herself as far as possible from all prying eyes, she crossed the roadway, and entered a narrow footpath, which would lead around, by a cut in the forest, to the Boursonnes highway, about a quarter-league farther on, at the crossways known as Bourg-Fontaine.

Once in this pathway, the course she intended taking was so clear in Pitou's mind, that he paid her no further attention, but watched the half-open shutters of Billot's window, through which, as through the loopholes of a citadel, Billot could see from one extremity of the forest to the other.

Apart from a shepherd, who was taking care of his flock, the whole field, included in Billot's vision, was solitary.

When she entered this field therefore, although her black mantle rendered her almost invisible, she could not escape the farmer's eye.

Pitou saw the window-leaves partially turn. Billot's head was thrust through the opening ; and for an instant he remained still, as if, amidst the darkness, he doubted the testimony of his eyes ; but as the sheep-dogs, having run towards the flitting shadow, returned to their keeper after a few yelps, Billot no longer doubted that the shadow was Catherine's self. The dogs had recognized her, and therefore instantly ceased barking.

All this translated itself to Pitou, as clearly as if he had been notified in advance of the various incidents of the drama. He waited, therefore, to see Billot shut his chamber window, and open the outside door.

Indeed, after a few seconds, the door did open, just as Catherine reached the edge of the wood ; and Billot, with his gun on his shoulder, crossed the threshold of the big vestibule, and marched with long strides towards the forest, following the Boursounes road, towards the point where it must meet, an eighth of a league away, the path followed by Catherine.

There was not an instant to lose, for in ten minutes the girl would be face to face with her father.

All this Pitou well understood. He sprang up, bounded through the forest like a startled deer, cutting across the woods diagonally, reversing his former course, and reached the edge of the pathway, just as the hurried steps and hasty breathing of the girl were drawing near.

Pitou stopped, and hid behind the trunk of an old oak. In ten seconds Catherine passed within two steps of the tree.

Then Pitou came forth, barring the girl's way, and at the same time calling her by name. This triple unity of action he judged best, in order not to frighten Catherine the more.

As it was, she uttered a feeble cry, and paused, trembling, — less with present than with past emotion, however, — as she said : “ You, Monsieur Pitou, here ! What do you want with me ? ”

“ In the name of Heaven, not a step further, Mademoiselle,” said he, clasping his hands.

“ And why not ? ”

“ Because your father knows you are out ! Because he has taken the road to Boursounes, with his gun !

Because he's waiting for you at the Bourg-Fontaine Crossroads."

"But *he*, HE!" cried Catherine, almost overcome. "Must *he* not be warned?" and she made a movement, as if to continue her journey.

"Your attempt will do *him* no good, so long as your father bars your progress."

"What is to be done?"

"Return, Mademoiselle, return at once to your chamber. I will put myself into ambuscade near your window, and when I see Monsieur Isidore, I will warn him."

"You will do this, dear Monsieur Pitou?"

"For you I would do anything, Mademoiselle Catherine! Ah, how much I love you!"

Catherine pressed his hands, and said, after a brief consideration: "Yes, you are right! Take me home."

As her legs began to fail her, she put her arm under Pitou's, who sustained her, half walking, half running, all the way back to the farm.

In ten minutes more she re-entered her own room, without having been seen; and she closed the window behind her, as Pitou pointed out the group of willows, in which he intended to watch and wait.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WATCH FOR THE WOLF.

THE willows, twenty or twenty-five paces from Catherine's window, were on a slight elevation, overlooking a ditch through which ran a small stream of water, seven or eight feet below the top of the ground.

This stream, which followed the winding of the roadway, was shaded here and there by other willows, similar to those forming the group whereof we speak, — that is, trees which resembled dwarfs, especially in the night, — dwarfs with small bodies, and big heads of spiky and tangled hair.

It was in the last of these trees, hollowed by time, that Pitou had deposited Catherine's letters, morning after morning; and thither Catherine had gone after them, when she saw her father leave the house, and disappear in the opposite direction.

Pitou had taken so much precaution on his side, and Catherine on hers, that it was not from this quarter the blaze had been fanned. It had been started by an untoward accident, which that morning placed the head shepherd in Isidore's way. Without attaching to it any special importance, the shepherd mentioned, to the farmer, the news that the Viscount had returned. This unannounced return, at five o'clock in the morning, appeared more than suspicious to Billot. Ever since his own return from Paris, and Catherine's illness, — especially since Doctor Raynal advised him not to enter her sick-chamber

during her delirium, — Billot had been convinced that young Charny was his daughter's lover ; and as the farmer could see only disgrace as the result of this entanglement, — for Isidore could hardly marry Catherine, — the farmer had resolved to wipe away this dishonor, by bringing it to a bloody termination.

All the details we have recounted, though insignificant to one not informed as to the underlying causes, had a terrible significance in Catherine's eyes, — and in Pitou's also, after Catherine gave him the clew.

Divining her father's intention, Catherine's sole opposing attempt was to warn Isidore, — an undertaking which Pitou luckily checkmated ; for otherwise, she would have encountered her father on the road, in place of Isidore.

She knew the farmer's fierce character too well, to expect anything from him by prayers and supplications. They would only hasten the storm, and provoke the catastrophe, instead of turning it away. To prevent a collision between her sweetheart and her father, was her sole ambition.

She had believed herself dying, because of Isidore's absence ; but now she ardently wished his absence had been prolonged. How she could bless the voice which said to her, "He is gone," even though it added, "gone forever."

Pitou understood this just as well as Catherine, and that was why he offered to act as a go-between for the girl. Whether the Viscount came afoot or on horseback, Pitou expected to hear him or see him, in season to get in front of him, and speak two words, which would inform him as to the turn of affairs, and so persuade him to get away from that neighborhood, with the understanding that Pitou would bring him intelligence of Catherine the next day.

Pitou stuck to his willow, as if he were a part of the vegetable family in whose midst he found himself, and devoted all his senses — which were so accustomed to the darkness, the fields, and the woods — to seeing if he could detect a shadow or hear a sound.

Suddenly it seemed as if he could hear behind him, coming from the direction of the forest, the noise of an irregular step, like that of a man stumbling over the furrows. As this step was too heavy to belong to the young and elegant Viscount, Pitou turned slowly and quietly around in his willow, and perceived the farmer only thirty paces off, with his gun on his shoulder.

As Pitou at once surmised, Billot had waited awhile at the Borough Spring; but seeing nobody emerge from the footpath which he supposed Catherine had taken, he believed himself in error, and decided that he would go back, and put himself in ambush opposite Catherine's window, feeling sure that it was through this window the Viscount would try to visit his *inamorata*.

By an unlucky chance, what should Billot do, but choose for his ambush the very cluster of willows where Pitou was trying to hide.

Guessing the farmer's intention, and having no disposition to contend for the place, Pitou let himself roll gently down the declivity, till he disappeared in the ditch, where his head was concealed among the projecting roots of the very willow against which Billot presently leaned.

Happily the wind blew with some violence, or Billot would have heard the throbbing of Pitou's heart; but it must be said, to the honor of our hero's admirable nature, that the sense of personal danger troubled him far less than anxiety lest he should break his word to Catherine.

If Monsieur de Charny should come, and some misfortune should befall her lover, would Catherine think, that perhaps Pitou had betrayed them?

Pitou would prefer to die, rather than have Catherine so misjudge him ; yet there was nothing to be done but to remain where he was, and keep perfectly still, as the least movement would betray Pitou as a second watcher.

A quarter-hour passed without anything breaking the silence of the night. Pitou cherished a last hope,— that if by some accident the Viscount should be late, Billot would get tired of waiting, would doubt if Charny was coming at all, and go into the house.

Pitou's position was such, that his ear came naturally against the earth, and suddenly he thought he heard a horse's gallop. This horse, if it was a horse, must be coming by way of the footpath leading from the woods.

Very soon there was no room for doubt that it was a horse, for he crossed the road, hardly sixty paces from the willows, and they heard his tread on the broken stones, one of which gave forth sparks of fire, when smitten by the animal's shoe.

Above his head Pitou could see the farmer bending over, and trying to see into the obscurity ; but the night was so dark that Pitou's own eyes, accustomed as he was to seeing in the gloom, could only discern a sort of spectre, which bounded across the roadway, and disappeared along the walls of the enclosure.

Pitou did not doubt for an instant that the spectre was Isidore, but he hoped the Viscount had some other access to the farmhouse besides the window. Billot feared the same thing, and muttered something like blasphemy.

Then there were ten minutes of painful silence. At the end of these ten minutes, thanks to his acute vision, Pitou distinguished a human form at the extremity of the wall.

The rider had tied his horse to some tree beyond, and was now returning on foot.

The night was so dark that Pitou hoped Billot might not see this sort of a spectre, or see it too late.

He was mistaken. Billot saw ; and twice Pitou heard, above his own head, the click made by the farmer, in setting the triggers of his gun.

The man who was gliding along by the walls heard the same noise, to which the ear of a sportsman is seldom deaf, for he stopped, and tried to pierce the obscurity with his gaze ; but it was impossible for him to see anything definite.

During this halt of a second, Pitou cast his eyes upward, and saw the gun-barrel raised above the ditch ; but the farmer was either doubtful of his aim at that distance, or feared making some mistake, for the barrel, so rapidly raised, was as slowly lowered again.

The shadow once more began to move onward, stealing along against the wall. Evidently it was approaching Catherine's window.

This time it was the farmer's heart-beats which might be heard by Pitou, who was asking himself what he could do, — by what outcry he could warn the unfortunate young man, by what means he could save him. Nothing occurred to his mind, and he despairingly buried his hands in his hair.

Again Pitou saw the gun-barrel rise, but a second time it was lowered. The victim was too far away.

A half-minute hardly elapsed before the young lover crossed the remaining twenty steps, which still separated him from the window, on which he thrice rapped softly, at equal intervals.

There was no longer a shadow of doubt. The intruder was a lover, and he came after Catherine.

A third time the gun-barrel was raised, just as Catherine, recognizing the customary signal, half opened her casement.

Pitou panted, as he almost felt the spring of the trigger overhead. The noise of the flint made itself heard, as it struck the steel, a lightning gleam flashed across the road ; but no explosion followed the glare, for the priming alone had been burned. It was a flash in the pan.

The young gentleman now saw the danger into which he had run, and made a movement to rush towards the fire ; but Catherine grasped his arm, and drew him towards herself, saying, in a low voice : "It's my father ! He knows all ! Come !"

With force almost superhuman she aided him to clamber up and through the window, closing the flap behind him.

There remained a second shot in the farmer's gun, but the two young people were so entwined at that moment, that if he fired on Isidore, he feared he should kill the girl ; so he muttered to himself : "He will have to go away ; and when he goes, I won't miss him the second time !"

Meanwhile, with the priming wire from his cartridge-box, he cleaned out the vent-hole of his gun, and filled it with fresh powder, in order not to renew the miracle of failure, to which Isidore owed his life.

During the next five minutes no noise was heard. Even Pitou's breathing was nearly suspended, as well as the farmer's, and the throbbing of their hearts was inaudible.

Suddenly, amidst the silence, was heard the barking of the dogs, confined in the courtyard on the farther side.

Billot stamped his foot, listened an instant, and then

stamped again, saying : " Ah, she is sending him away through the orchard, and the dogs are barking at him."

Bounding across the ditch, over Pitou's invisible head, the farmer slipped on the other side ; but in spite of the darkness, thanks to his acquaintance with the locality, he disappeared around the angle of the wall, quick as lightning, hoping to reach the other side of the farm enclosure as soon as Isidore.

Pitou saw through this manœuvre. With the alertness of a man of his nature, he clambered out of the ditch, went straight across the road to Catherine's window, pulled open the outside shutter, which was unfastened, pushed open the casement, climbed into the empty room, passed through into the lamp-lighted kitchen, entered the courtyard, and ran along the alley-way leading into orchard, where — thanks to his power of seeing in the the darkness, like an owl — he could discern two shadows, one bestriding the high wall, the other at its foot, standing upright, with extended arms.

Before throwing himself down on the other side of the wall, her lover turned to Catherine for the last time, saying : " We shall meet again ! Do not forget, thou art mine !"

" Yes, yes, yes !" said the girl, " but go, go !"

" Yes, — go, go, Monsieur Isidore !" cried Pitou.

They could hear the noise made by the young nobleman, as he struck the earth on the other side of the wall, and then they heard the neigh of recognition from his horse. Presently they heard also the animal's rapid gallop, then one gunshot, and then another.

At the first shot Catherine uttered a cry, and made a motion as if she would rush to Isidore's assistance. At the second she groaned, and fell nerveless upon Pitou's arm.

He listened, with extended neck, to see if the horse continued his course with the same rapidity as before the shots were fired. Hearing the uninterrupted gallop of the animal, as it receded farther and farther away, Pitou said sententiously : " Good ! There 's some hope. One can't see by night as well as by day, and the hand is not so sure when it draws on a man, as when it draws on a wolf or a boar."

Lifting Catherine, he intended carrying her in his arms ; but by a powerful effort of will she rallied all her strength, slid to the ground, and asked Pitou, holding him by the arm : " Where art thou taking me ? "

" Why, to your chamber, Mademoiselle," said the astonished Pitou.

" Pitou," she demanded, " is there any place where I can hide ? "

" Oh yes, Mademoiselle ; or if not, I can find one," said Pitou.

" Then take me there ! "

" But the farmhouse — ? "

" In five minutes I hope to leave it, never to return."

" But your father — ? "

" All is broken between me and the man who wishes to kill my lover."

" But, nevertheless, Mademoiselle, — " Pitou ventured to say.

" Thou refusest to accompany me, Pitou ? " asked the girl, abandoning his arm.

" No, Mademoiselle Catherine, God forbid ! "

" Then follow me ! "

Walking ahead, Catherine went through the orchard, into the kitchen-garden. At the other end of the kitchen-garden was a small door, opening towards the Nove Fields.

Catherine opened it without hesitation, took out the key, shut the door, double locked it behind her, and threw the key into a cistern near the wall.

With a firm step she walked over the uneven earth, leaning on Pitou's arm, and the two soon vanished into the valley, extending from the village of Pisseleu to the Noue Fields.

Nobody saw them go; and God alone knew where Catherine found the refuge which Pitou had promised her.

CHAPTER XV.

AFTER THE STORM.

It is with human storms as with meteorological hurricanes. The sky is shrouded, the lightning flashes, the thunder rumbles, the earth seems quivering on its axis. There is a moment of paroxysm, when we may well believe men and things to be alike on the verge of annihilation, when we tremble, moan, and lift our hands to our Lord, as the One good and merciful.

Little by little calmness supervenes. Night flees and day reappears. The sun revives. The flowers reopen their petals. The trees straighten themselves. Men return to their business, their pleasures, their passions. Life laughs and sings, along the highways and in the doorways, and nobody worries about the partial desert left in the track of the storm, or where the lightning had fallen.

Thus it was at the farm. All night long there was a terrible tempest in the heart of that man, resolved upon a vengeful project, which he had partially carried out.

When he discovered his daughter's flight, when he searched vainly in the darkness for some trace of her footsteps, when he called her name, — first in anger, then in supplication, and finally in despair, and no response came to these passionate moods, — he was smitten in some vital part of his powerful organization ; but at last, when the silence of exhaustion succeeded the lightning and thunder, as after an atmospheric storm ; when the dogs,

having nothing more to disturb them, ceased their barking; when rain, mixed with hail, effaced the traces of blood, which, like a half-loosed belt, encircled one side of the farm; when the village clock, that mute witness of whatever had taken place, sounded out on the air, with its vibratory wings of bronze, the last hours of the night, — then, at last, things resumed their usual course at Pisseleu.

The big courtyard door creaked on its rusty hinges. The laborers again went forth, some to sow seed, some to ply the harrow, others to harness the wagons. Then Billot appeared in his turn, crossing the field, with all his senses level.

Finally, when it was full day, the rest of the village awoke, and some, who had not slept so soundly as the others, said, with an air half inquisitive and half careless: “Father Billot’s dogs howled tremendously last night, and two gunshots were heard in the neighborhood of the farmhouse.”

This was all! Ah, so we deceive ourselves.

When Father Billot returned to the house at nine o’clock, for his breakfast, as was his custom, his wife asked: “Say, my goodman, where’s Catherine? Dost know?”

“Catherine?” answered the farmer, with an effort. “The air of the farm does n’t agree with her, and she has started for Sologne, to visit her aunt.”

“Ah!” said Mother Billot, “will she stay long at her aunt’s?”

“As long as she’s no better,” replied the farmer.

Mother Billot sighed, and pushed away her cup of coffee and milk.

On his side the farmer made an effort to eat; but at the third mouthful his food choked him. He lifted a

bottle of burgundy by the neck, emptied it at a draught, and then said, with a hoarse voice : "They have n't unsaddled my horse, I hope?"

"No, Monsieur Billot," replied the timid voice of a child, who every morning came to the farm after some breakfast.

"Good!" said the farmer, as he brusquely shoved the little fellow aside, mounted his horse, and pushed his way into the fields; while his wife, drying a couple of tears, retreated to her usual corner, under the huge chimney-piece.

Minus the singing bird, minus the smiling flower, — which the young girl resembled, in those traits which cheered and perfumed the old walls, — the farm took up its wonted course, and went on the next day as it had gone on the day before.

As for Pitou, he saw the daybreak from his own home in Haramont; and those who were there at six o'clock found his place lighted by a candle, which had apparently been burning a long time, if one could judge by the slanting wick, which needed snuffing; for Pitou was preparing to send to Gilbert, with all the receipts, an account of the use he had made of the twenty-five louis which the Doctor had donated for the clothing and equipment of the Haramont National Guards.

It is true that a woodcutter declared he had seen Pitou about midnight, going down the steep declivity leading to the hermitage of Father Clouis, and carrying on his arm something heavy, which looked like a woman; but this report was hardly credible, inasmuch as Father Lajeunesse pretended to have seen Pitou running, with all his legs, along the road to Boursonnes, at one o'clock in the morning; whereas Maniquet, who lived at the extremity of the town, on the Longpré side, asserted

that at two, or half-past, he saw Pitou pass by his door, and called out, "Good-evening, Pitou!" a courtesy to which Pitou had responded by saying: "Good-evening, Maniquet."

There was therefore no reason whatever for doubting that Maniquet saw Pitou at two o'clock, or thereabouts; but whether the woodcutter did or did not see Pitou at midnight, in the neighborhood of Clouïse Rock, carrying a heavy object resembling a woman; whether Father Lajeunesse did or did not see Pitou running, with all his legs, at about one o'clock, along the Boursonnes road; whether Maniquet did or did not say Good-evening to Pitou, who was passing by Maniquet's house about two or half-past, — this is certain: that if Pitou, — of whom we lost sight, along with Catherine, about half-past ten or eleven in the evening, in the valley which divides Pisseleu from the Noue Fields, — if Pitou did go from there to Clouïse Rock, a league and a half; if he went from Clouïse Rock to Boursonnes, two leagues farther; if from Boursonnes he returned to Clouïse Rock; if, finally, he returned from Clouïse Rock to his own home, — if Pitou did these things, we say, it may be well conjectured that first, he put Catherine into a place of safety; then, went to Boursonnes after news of the Viscount; next, returned to Catherine, with intelligence concerning the Viscount; and that he covered all this ground, eight or nine leagues, between eleven o'clock in the evening and two or two and a half in the morning, — a supposition hardly admissible, even for one of those royal couriers, who, as some people assert, could formerly break all present records; but this effort need not astonish those who have heretofore learned to appreciate Pitou's locomotive faculties.

Nevertheless, as Pitou revealed to nobody the secrets

of that night, when he was apparently endowed with the gift of ubiquity, the result was, — with the exception of Désiré Maniquet, to whose Good-evening he had responded, — that nobody, not even Father Lajeunesse or the woodcutter, dared affirm on oath, that it was indeed Pitou, who was seen in these other places, — at the declivity of Clouïse Rock or on the Boursonnes Road, — and not a spectre or phantom, taking on some resemblance to Pitou.

At about six o'clock the next morning, as Billot was mounting his horse to ride afield, Pitou was seen, without any appearance of fatigue or excitement, making up Tailor Dulauroy's accounts, to which he added, as vouchers, the receipts of each of the thirty-three soldiers.

There is one other person of our acquaintance who slept badly that night. This was Doctor Raynal.

At one o'clock he was roused by the Viscount's lackey, who rang the bell as if he would pull it off.

The Doctor, as was his custom when the night-bell sounded, opened the door himself. The Viscount's lackey had come for him, because of a serious accident to his master; and he led a second horse, ready saddled, so that Doctor Raynal need not be delayed a single instant.

The Doctor dressed himself in a turn of his hand, straddled the horse, and started at a gallop, preceded by the lackey, as if he were a courier.

What was the accident? He would be informed at the château; only he had better bring his case of surgical instruments.

The accident proved to be a wound in the left side and a scratch on the right shoulder, made by two balls, which appeared to be of the same calibre, that is, twenty-four; but as to the details of the occurrence, the Viscount would say nothing.

One of the two wounds, the one in the side, was serious, but not dangerous, as the ball passed through the flesh, without touching any important organ.

As to the other wound, it was not worth talking about.

When the injuries were dressed, the young man gave the Doctor twenty-five louis to maintain silence.

“If you wish me to keep silence, you must pay me only my ordinary fee, that is, one pistole, or ten francs,” responded the brave physician; and taking only one louis (twenty-four francs) from the pile, he gave fourteen francs in change to the Viscount, who in vain urged him to accept more.

This the Doctor would not do; but he announced that he thought three visits would be necessary, and that he would therefore return the next day, on the day after that, and again on the day following.

At the second visit the Doctor found his patient up. By the aid of a band, which held the plaster in its place against the wound, Isidore was able the next day to mount his horse, as if nothing had happened to him; so that nobody in the household knew anything of his accident, except his confidential servant.

At the third visit Doctor Raynal found his patient had gone out; and therefore he would only accept a half-pistole, or five francs, for his visit.

The Doctor was one of those rare physicians who are worthy to have in their offices a certain famous engraving, which represents Hippocrates refusing the gifts of Artaxerxes.

CHAPTER XVI.

MIRABEAU'S GREAT TREASON.

MIRABEAU'S last words to the Queen are not forgotten, — the words which he spoke just before leaving the pavilion at Saint Cloud, when she gave him her hand to kiss : “Madame, through this kiss the monarchy is saved.”

This promise, made by Prometheus to Juno, on the eve of her dethronement, Mirabeau endeavored to make good.

He began the struggle, confident of his own strength, not dreaming that — by reason of so many royal imprudences, and three abortive conspiracies — he was bidden to wage a losing fight.

Perhaps if Mirabeau had been able to work longer under the shelter of a mask, anonymously, — and this would certainly have been more prudent, — he could have fought to better advantage ; but one day, not many weeks after his interview with the Queen, as he was on his way to the Assembly, he saw groups of men standing here and there, and heard various outcries.

He approached one of these groups, to ascertain the cause of the commotion.

Leaflets were being handed about. From time to time a voice cried out : “The Great Treason of Monsieur de Mirabeau ! The Great Treason of Monsieur de Mirabeau !”

“Ah ha,” said he, drawing a piece of money from his pocket, “I fancy this concerns me !— My friend,” he continued, — addressing the man who was distributing

the pamphlets, and who had several thousand of them in the panniers placidly borne by a donkey, whithersoever his master wished his stock to be transported, — “My friend, how much for Mirabeau’s Great Treason?”

The distributor looked Mirabeau straight in the face and said: “Count de Mirabeau, I give it away for nothing;” adding in a lower voice: “And a hundred thousand copies have been printed.”

Mirabeau thoughtfully passed along. That leaflet, which was given away! That colporter, who recognized him! Doubtless this was one of those stupid or malicious publications, which appeared by millions at that epoch. Undue malice or foolishness would rob it of all mischief, and deprive it of all value.

Mirabeau threw his eyes over the first page, and grew pale. This first page contained a list of Mirabeau’s debts, and — strangely enough! — the list was exact: two hundred and eight thousand francs!

Below this list was the precise date on which this sum was to be paid to Mirabeau’s different creditors, by the Queen’s treasurer, Monsieur de Fontanges.

Then came an estimate of the sum paid him monthly by the Court, — six thousand francs.

Finally, there was a full account of his recent interview with the Queen.

What Mirabeau could not understand was this, — the anonymous pamphleteer was not wrong in a single cipher, and had hardly misstated a single word.

What enemy pursued him thus, — terrible, mysterious, full of dangerous secrets? or rather, what enemy thus pursued the monarchy, through him?

The colporter to whom he had spoken, who had recognized him, who had called him by name, — it seemed to Mirabeau the man’s face was not strange to him.

He retraced his steps. The donkey was still there, with his panniers three-quarters empty; but the first distributor had disappeared, and another had taken his place. The new man was entirely unknown to Mirabeau; but he did not carry on the distribution with less alacrity than his predecessor.

It chanced at this moment that Doctor Gilbert — who was present nearly every day at the Assembly debates, especially when those debates were important — passed by the place where the colporter was stationed.

Absorbed in meditation, his attention would perhaps not have been drawn, either towards the groups of people or their exclamations, if Mirabeau, with his customary audacity, had not walked up to Gilbert's right side, taken him by the arm, and led him straight to the leaflet-distributor, who said to Gilbert, as he said to everybody else, stretching out his hand: "Citizen, here's Mirabeau's Great Treason!" but at the sight of Gilbert his tongue and arm were checked as if by paralysis.

Gilbert in turn looked at the fellow, dropped the pamphlet in disgust, and went away, saying: "This is a rascally business you are up to, Monsieur Beausire!" and taking Mirabeau's arm he continued his way towards the Assembly, which, as we have said before, had forsaken the Archbishop's Palace for the Riding School.

"Do you know that man?" asked Mirabeau of Gilbert.

"I know him as one often knows such fellows," said Gilbert. "He is a discharged soldier, a gambler, a shark. For want of something better to do, he has evidently turned slanderer."

"Ah, if it *was* slander!" murmured Mirabeau, putting his hand on the place where his heart had been, — a place now occupied by a wallet containing money from the palace; and then he walked sadly along.

“Are you so little of a philosopher that you will let yourself be flooded by such an attack as this?” asked Gilbert.

“I?” cried Mirabeau. “Ah, you don’t know me, Doctor. — They say I’m *sold*, when they should say I’m merely paid! Well, to-morrow I’ll buy a mansion; to-morrow I’ll set up a carriage, horses, servants; to-morrow I’ll have a cook, and keep open house. Flooded? I? After all, what matters the popularity of yesterday and the unpopularity of to-day? Have I no future before me? — No, Doctor, what kills me is this, that the promise I made I shall not probably be able to keep. This comes from the error — I might say, the treachery — of the Court towards me. I saw the Queen, did I not? Well, she appeared to put entire trust in me. For an instant I dreamed — an insensate dream, with such a woman! — well, for an instant I dreamed, not merely of being Prime Minister for the King, like Richelieu, but the minister — or, let us rather say, the lover — of a Queen, as was Mazarin of Anne of Austria; and the world of politics was no worse off on that account. Very well, what did *she* do? The very same day, after she left me, she wrote to her agent in Germany, Herr Flaehslauden: ‘Tell my brother Leopold that I am of his mind; that I make use of Mirabeau, but there is nothing serious in my relations with him.’ — I have proof of this!”

“You are sure of that?” asked Gilbert.

“Sure, — practically sure. — That is n’t all! You know what question is before the Assembly to-day?”

“I know it’s some question of war, but I am not well posted as to the cause of that war.”

“Oh Lord, it’s very simple,” said Mirabeau. “Europe is divided between two parties, Austria and Russia on

one side, England and Prussia on the other side ; yet both are moved by the same sentiment, hatred of our Revolution. For Russia and Austria, a manifestation of this dislike is not difficult, for it is their natural bias ; but as for liberal England and philosophical Prussia, it takes some time for them to decide to change from one pole to its opposite, — to abjure what they have been, and swear allegiance to what they have not appeared to be, and so avow themselves, what they really are, the enemies of liberty.”

Gilbert listened eagerly as Mirabeau went on : “ England, on her part, sees Brabant extending her hand to France for help ; and this has hastened England’s decision. Our Revolution, my dear Doctor, is alive ; it is contagious. That Irishman, Edmund Burke, a pupil of the Saint Omer Jesuits, and the sworn enemy of Pitt, has just launched a manifesto against France, for which he is paid in good yellow gold by Mr. Pitt. England does not declare war against France ; no, she dares not do so, as yet ; but she abandons Belgium to the Emperor Leopold, and she will go to the end of the world to pick a quarrel with Spain, our ally.”

Coming from things foreign to those with which Gilbert was more familiar, Mirabeau continued : “ Well, yesterday, Louis Sixteenth informed the Assembly that he had put fourteen ships on a war footing. Thereupon will arise the great discussion in to-day’s session. This is the question : To which department of Government belongs the right to declare war ? Already the King has lost the right of administering Interior Affairs, of levying taxes, and so on. He has also lost control over the department of Law and the Courts. If he loses the administration of the War Department, what is there left for him ? ”

As Gilbert made no reply, Mirabeau began to talk

very confidentially: "On the other side, — as friends, my dear Doctor, let us frankly grapple with questions which cannot be wisely touched in the Assembly, — on the other side, the King is distrusted. The Revolution is not yet completed, — though I flatter myself that I have done more to help it than anybody else, — and it will not be completed, without breaking the sword in the King's hands. Of all his privileges, the most dangerous to leave in his hands is the power of waging war."

"And what then will you do, Count?"

"Oh well, faithful to my plighted word, I shall demand that this power be left in the King's hands; though I risk my popularity, and perhaps my life, in maintaining this demand. I shall propose to the Assembly a decree which will render the King victorious, triumphant. Now what is that King doing, at this very hour? He is having the Keeper of the Seals search the old Parliamentary records, for certain ancient formulas of protestation against the States General, in order to draw up a new and secret protest against the Assembly."

"Is it possible?"

"Ah, there's the pity of it, my dear Gilbert! There is too much of this secret business, and not enough frankness, — not enough publicity! And that's why I wish — I, Mirabeau, do you hear? — that's why I wish that everybody should know that I'm on the royal side, since so I am. You think that this slander, directed against myself, must trouble me? Not so, Doctor, it will help me. To bring me out, I require what a storm requires for its outburst, — dark clouds and contrary winds. — Come in, Doctor, come in, — and you'll see a great session, I answer for it."

Mirabeau was not mistaken. As soon as he entered the Riding School he had a chance to prove his courage.

Everybody cried *Treason*, under his nose; while one showed him a cord and another a pistol.

Mirabeau shrugged his shoulders, and walked on like Jean Bart, elbowing aside those who were in his way.

The outcries followed him inside the hall, and seemed to evoke new cries therein. Hardly did he appear than a hundred voices shouted: "There he is! The traitor! The renegade orator! The man with a price!"

Barnave was on the rostrum, speaking against Mirabeau. Mirabeau looked at him pointedly.

"Well, yes," said Barnave, "it is thyself who is called a traitor, and against whom I am speaking."

"Then if it's against me thou art talking, I will take a turn in the Tuileries. I shall have time to get back before thy peroration."

Sure enough, with head erect and threatening eye, he went out, — amidst hisses, imprecations, menaces, — took the Feuillant Terrace (so called, because an order of Cistercian monks once had a convent on this site) and thence descended towards the Gardens of the Tuileries.

Half way down the Grand Avenue was a young woman, holding in her hand a spray of verbena, whereof she was inhaling the perfume, while a circle of listeners gathered about her.

On her left was a vacant place, to which Mirabeau drew a chair, and sat down by her side.

Half of those who sat near them rose and walked away. Mirabeau smiled, as he saw them go. The young woman offered him her hand.

"Ah, Baroness," he said, "have you no fear of catching the pest?"

"My dear Count," responded the young woman, "they say you are leaning towards our side, and I would draw you still nearer to us."

Mirabeau smiled, and for three-quarters of an hour he chatted with this young woman, — none other than Anne Louise Germaine Necker, Baroness de Staël.

At the end of three-quarters of an hour, looking at his watch, he said : “ Ah, Baroness, I ask you to excuse me. Barnave is making a speech against me. He had been talking an hour when I came away from the Assembly. I have had the happiness of chatting with you three-quarters of an hour. That makes two hours that my accuser has been on the rostrum. His speech must be near its end, and it is necessary for me to answer him.”

“ Go ! ” said the Baroness, “ speak, and be of good cheer.”

“ Give me that branch of verbena, Baroness,” said Mirabeau, “ and it will serve me as a talisman.”

“ This verbena ? Have a care, my dear Count ! Verbena is the herb for funeral libations.”

“ Give it me, all the same. It is well to be crowned as a martyr, when one descends to fight brutes in the amphitheatre.”

“ The truth is,” said Madame de Staël, “ it is difficult to be more brutish than yesterday’s session of the National Assembly.”

“ Ah, Baroness,” responded Mirabeau, “ why limit the date to yesterday.”

Taking from her hands the sprig of verbena which she offered him, partly in recompense for his jest, Mirabeau saluted her gallantly, went up the steps which led to the Feuillant Terrace, and re-entered the Assembly.

Barnave descended from the tribune, amidst the acclamations of the whole assemblage, having pronounced one of those high-sounding discourses which go well with all parties.

Hardly was Mirabeau seen on the tribune than a storm

of cries and curses uprose against him. Lifting his powerful hand, he waited. Profiting by one of those intervals of silence, which always come amid storms or riots, he presently exclaimed: "I well know that it was not far from the Roman Capitol to the Tarpeian Rock."

Such is the majesty of genius, that this bright saying silenced the most angry listeners. When Mirabeau had thus compelled silence, the victory was half gained.

He demanded that to the King should be given the right to declare war. This demand was too great, and it was refused. Then began a struggle over the amendments. The principal attack having been repulsed, it was necessary to gain the day by partial onslaughts; and five times Mirabeau mounted the tribune.

Barnave had spoken two hours. During three hours, at different times, Mirabeau spoke; and this is what he obtained: That the King should have the right of making warlike preparations, and directing the forces as he wished; that he might propose a declaration of war to the Assembly; and that the Assembly should decide nothing warlike, unless sanctioned by the King.

What might Mirabeau not have obtained, but for that leaflet, gratuitously distributed, at first by some colporter unknown, and afterwards by Beausire, and which was entitled, as we have said, Mirabeau's Great Treason?

At the close of the session Mirabeau was fortunately not chopped into mincemeat.

On the other hand, Barnave was carried away in triumph by the people.

Poor Barnave! The day was not far distant when, in his turn, he would hear a cry: "The Great Treason of Monsieur Barnave."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ELIXIR OF LIFE.

MIRABEAU went away from the Assembly with a proud eye and high head. So long as he was in the presence of danger, he considered only the task, and not his own strength.

In this respect he was like Marshal Saxe, at the battle of Fontenoy. Enfeebled, ill, Saxe remained all day on horseback, firmer than the most valiant soldier in his army ; but when the English ranks were broken, when the last smoke of the last cannon-shot saluted the rout of the English, he fell dying on the field of battle he had won.

It was the same with Mirabcau. One day, when he returned home, he threw himself down on a pile of cushions, in the midst of a profusion of flowers.

Two passions had Mirabeau, women and flowers.

Since the organization of the Assembly, his health had visibly altered. Notwithstanding his vigorous temperament, he had suffered much, both physically and mentally, from persecution and imprisonment ; so that he was never in a state of perfect health.

So long as a man is young, and all his organs are submissive to his will, ready to obey the first commands communicated to them from the brain, they work together simultaneously, and fulfil, without opposition, every desire of his heart ; but as a man advances in years, every organ (if it may be so expressed) begins to argue, — like some old servant, who still obeys, but has been spoiled by long

service ; and it is not without patience and effort that these faculties are brought to reason.

Mirabeau was at this stage of life. To make his physical organs continue to serve him with their wonted alacrity, he had to rouse them ; and anger alone would stimulate these aching and exhausted servants to action.

This time he felt that his condition was more critical than ever ; and he offered but faint resistance to his lackey, who was urging the necessity of sending for a physician, when Doctor Gilbert rang, and was immediately ushered into the room.

Mirabeau offered his hand, and drew the Doctor down upon the cushions, where he was reclining, amidst leaves and flowers.

“ Well, my dear Count,” said Gilbert, “ I could not go home without congratulating you. You promised me another victory to-day ; but you have done better than that, for you have wrought a triumph.”

“ Yes ! but this sort of a victory is like one achieved by the great Pyrrhus, — won by awful losses. One more such triumph, and I am done for.”

Gilbert looked at Mirabeau, and said : “ In fact, you are sick ! ”

Mirabeau shrugged his shoulders, and replied : “ At my rate of living, anybody else would have died a hundred times. I have two secretaries ; they are both up to their eyes in work, and under the weather. Pellinc, especially, has been sick abed three days. It is his business to copy the loose sheets, covered with my abominable handwriting ; and I can't get along without him, because he alone can decipher and understand me. Doctor, point out something, I don't say by which I may live, but which will give me force while I live.”

“ What can you expect ? ” said Gilbert, after having

felt the sick man's pulse. "There is no advice to be given to an organization like yours. Why counsel repose, to a man who finds all his strength in activity? Why advise temperance, to a genius who flourishes in the midst of excess? If I advise the removal from your rooms of all these flowers, which send forth their oxygen by day and their carbonic acid by night, — why, flowers have become a necessity with you, and you suffer more by their absence than by their presence. If I warn you to treat the ladies like the flowers, and keep them at a distance, especially overnight, you may say you would rather die. Live, then, my dear Count, according to the conditions of your life; but have about you only scentless flowers and platonic affections."

"As to the last requirement, my dear Doctor, you are well served. Passionate love has been too poor a success, for me to recommence it. Three years in prison, one death-sentence, the suicide of the woman whom I loved, — killing herself for another man, — these occurrences have cured me of that sort of passion. For an instant, as I told you, I dreamed of something great! I dreamed of an alliance like that between Elizabeth and Essex, between Anne of Austria and Mazarin, between Catherine the Second and Potemkin; but it was only a dream. That woman, in whose behalf I have contended, I have not seen since that interview; and probably I never shall see her again."

Gilbert mournfully contemplated the great statesman, as he continued: "See here, Gilbert, there is no torture so great as the feeling that one carries in his brain immense projects, — the prosperity of a kingdom, the triumph of his friends, the annihilation of his enemies, — and that all these plans elude him, by a wrong throw of the dice, by some caprice of fatality. Oh, the follies

of my youth! How they make me atone for them! How they avenge themselves!”

He paused a moment, and then went on: “Why do the royal family mistrust me? Except on two or three occasions, when I was pressed to the wall, and when I had no choice but to strike back, in order to show them the strength of my blows, — except on those occasions, have I not belonged completely to the royal side, from beginning to end? Did I not contend for the King’s right to an absolute Veto, when Monsieur Necker was contented with a provisional Veto, which might be overruled by the Assembly? Did I not oppose the proceedings of the night of the Fourth of August, when the nobility were despoiled of their privileges? Did I not protest against the promulgation, by the Assembly, of the Declaration of the Rights of Humanity, — not that I wished to destroy it, but because I believed the day for its proclamation had not yet come? To-day, — yes, even to-day, — have I not served royalty beyond its hopes? Have I not obtained what nobody else could have obtained, — whether cabinet-minister or prince, — and have I not done this at the expense of my honor, my popularity, my life? Reflect well on what I am telling you, you great philosopher, for perhaps the downfall of the monarchy lies in these simple facts. Perhaps I ought to regard it as a great favor, but only once have I been allowed to speak to the Queen! Yet when I think of it, if my father had not died so short a time before the Bastille was destroyed, and if decency had not prevented me from appearing in public on the second day after his death, — the day when Lafayette was appointed General of the National Guard, and Bailly was appointed Mayor of Paris, — I should undoubtedly have been chosen Mayor in place of Bailly. How

things would have been changed! The King would have then seen the necessity of being in harmony with me. I should have inspired him with different ideas from those which he now cherishes, towards a city which encloses the Revolution within its walls. I should have won his confidence. I should have led him, before the evil was too deeply seated, into decisive and preventive measures. Instead of that, I am merely an Assembly Deputy, a man suspected, feared, hated, envied, kept away from the King, and slandered to the Queen. Can you believe this, Doctor, that when she saw me at Saint Cloud, she grew pallid? The explanation is very easy. Has she not been led to believe that I brought about the horrors of the Fifth and Sixth of October? Well, during the past year I have tried to do all that I was urged to do; but to-day, — ah, to-day! — both for the safety of the monarchy and myself, — I fear it is too late.”

With an expression of pain over his whole physiognomy, Mirabeau grasped the flesh on his chest, just over his stomach.

“You are suffering, Count?” said Gilbert.

“Like the damned! There are some days, on my honor, when I could believe my enemies to be torturing my body with arsenic, as they torture my mind with slander. Do you believe in the Borgia poisons, the *aqua tofana* of Pérouse, the *poudre de succession* of Lavoisin?” asked Mirabeau, smiling.

“No; but I believe in that fiery steel which wears out its scabbard, in that lamp whose dilated flame shatters its globe.”

Gilbert drew from his pocket a small crystal vial, containing two thimblefuls of greenish liquor.

“Here, Count,” he said, “we’re now going to try an experiment.”

“What is it?” asked Mirabeau, regarding the vial with curiosity.

“One of my friends, who I wish might be one of yours also, — a man thoroughly instructed in all natural sciences, and in occult science also, as he pretends, — has given me a recipe for this decoction, as a sovereign antidote, as a universal panacea, — almost an elixir of life. Often, when I have been afflicted with those gloomy thoughts which lead our English neighbors to melancholy, spleen, and even death, I have taken several drops of that liquor; and I must say that the effect has always been salutary and prompt. Will you try it?”

“From your hand, dear Doctor, I would drink anything, even hemlock, — and certainly, the elixir of life. Does it require some preparation, or do you take it clear?”

“No, this liquor is very powerful. Tell your servant to bring a few drops of brandy, or spirits of wine, in a spoon.”

“The Devil! Brandy, spirits of wine, to soften your beverage? Then it must be liquid fire! I did n't suppose anybody had drunk such a beverage since Prometheus poured it out for the great ancestor of the human race. However, I warn you that my lackey may not be able to find six drops of brandy in the house. I'm not like Pitt, and don't draw my eloquence from that fountain.”

However, the lackey returned a few seconds later, bringing a spoon containing five or six drops of brandy.

To this Gilbert added an equal quantity of the liquid contained in the vial. As soon as the two liquors met, they assumed the color of absinthe. Seizing the spoon, Mirabeau hastily swallowed its contents.

“Morbleu, Doctor,” he cried to Gilbert, “you did well to warn me this drug was so vigorous. It seems as if I had swallowed lightning.”

Gilbert smiled, and appeared entirely confident of the result.

Mirabeau looked for an instant as if he were being consumed by those drops of fire ; his head hung down upon his bosom, and his hand was pressed against his stomach. Suddenly he raised his head, and said : “ Ah, Doctor, that is truly an elixir of life, which you made me drink ! ”

Then he rose and said, with his forehead elevated, his breathing buoyant, and his arms extended : “ Even though the monarchy totters, I have strength enough to sustain it.”

Gilbert smiled and asked : “ You feel better, then ? ”

“ Doctor, tell me where they sell this decoction ! I tell you, I ’d have that flaming liquid, although I had to pay, for every drop of it, a diamond of equal size, and renounce every other luxury in life ; for I should then feel myself invincible.”

“ Count, give me your promise not to take this medicine more than twice a week, and to apply to no one except myself for a renewal of the prescription, and this little bottle is yours.”

“ Give it me, and I ’ll promise anything you wish.”

“ Good ! ” said Gilbert, “ but that is n’t all. You mean to buy a carriage and horses, you told me.”

“ Yes.”

“ Well, then, live in the country. These flowers, which vitiate the air of your rooms, would purify the air of your garden. The drives which you would have to take every day, to and from Paris, would be very healthful. If possible, select a residence on high ground, amidst

trees, or near a river, — say at Bellevue, Saint Germain, or Argenteuil.”

“At Argenteuil!” replied Mirabeau. “That’s just the thing! I sent my man to look up a country-house. Teisch, did n’t you tell me you had found something that would just suit me?”

“Yes, Monsieur,” responded the man who had been assisting the Doctor, “yes, a charming house, about which a compatriot of mine, one Fritz, spoke to me. It appears that he once lived there, with his master, who is a foreign banker. It is vacant, and Monsieur can take it, if he will.”

“Where is the place?”

“Just outside of Argenteuil. It is called the Château Marais,” (a name which might be rendered, Swamp Castle).

“Oh, I know it very well,” said Mirabeau. “When my father drove me away from home, with his curse, and several whacks of his cane, — you know, Doctor, my father lived at Argenteuil —?”

“Yes.”

“Well, as I was saying, when he drove me away from home, it often happened that I promenaded up and down outside the walls of that same beautiful house, and exclaimed with Horace, — I ask pardon, if the quotation is wrong, — *O rus quando te aspiciam?* — Oh villa, when shall I behold thee?”

“Then, my dear Count, the time has come for realizing your dream. Go at once. Visit the Château Marais, and take your household with you, — the sooner the better.”

Mirabeau reflected, and then turned to Gilbert. “It’s your duty to watch over the invalid whom you have restored to life. It’s now only five o’clock. The days are

at their longest. It's fine weather. Let us take a carriage, and go to Argenteuil."

"So be it," said Gilbert, "let us go to Argenteuil. When one undertakes the care of health so precious as yours, my dear Count, everything should be considered. Let us go and examine your villa."

CHAPTER XVIII.

NO KINSHIP BEYOND THE FOURTH GRADE.

MIRABEAU had as yet no well-appointed establishment, and consequently no carriage of his own. The servant was therefore sent after a hack.

At that epoch it was almost a journey to Argenteuil, which one can now reach in eleven minutes, and which one may reach in eleven seconds, ten years hence.

Why did Mirabeau choose Argenteuil? Because of the life-long remembrances, as he told the Doctor, which bound him to the little town; for this man was so convinced of the need of doubling the short period of existence left to him, that he was glad to lay hold upon the past, in order to avoid being drawn too swiftly into the future.

It was at Argenteuil, on July 11, 1789, that his father, the Marquis de Mirabeau, died, — like a true gentleman, who would not aid in the capture of the Bastille.

At the end of Argenteuil Bridge Mirabeau ordered the carriage to stop.

“Are we there?” asked the Doctor.

“Yes and no! We have not yet reached the Château Marais, which is situated a quarter-league the other side of Argenteuil; but what we are making to-day, dear Doctor, — I forgot to tell you, — is not merely a visit, but a pilgrimage, — such as devotees make in their devotions, — a pilgrimage with three stations.”

“A pilgrimage?” said Gilbert, smiling; “and to what saint?”

“To Saint Riquetti, my dear Doctor, — a saint whom you do not recognize, but a saint whom men have canonized. In truth, I greatly misdoubt if God — supposing he pays any attention to the foolery of this stupid world — has ratified this canonization. None the less a fact is it, that here died Riquetti, Marquis de Mirabeau, — the Friend of Mankind, as men called him, — martyred by the extravagance and debauchery of his unworthy son, Honoré Gabriel Victor Riquetti, Comte de Mirabeau.”

“True!” said the Doctor. “Your father *did* die at Argenteuil. Pardon me for having forgotten it, my dear Count. My excuse is this, — that I arrived from America in the early days of July, and was arrested on the way from Havre to Paris. When your father died, I was imprisoned in the Bastille. On the Fourteenth of July I was released, with seven other prisoners. Important as was this personal occurrence, it was nevertheless forgotten, — to say nothing of lesser details, — in the tremendous events which came to light before the month was over. — Where did your father live?”

At the moment when Gilbert asked this question, Mirabeau stopped — for they had left the carriage, and were on foot — in front of the gateway of a mansion situated on the pier, facing the river, from which it was separated by a lawn of three hundred paces and by a row of trees.

Seeing a man stop in front of the gate, an enormous dog — of the race found in the Pyrenees — sprang forward, growling, and thrust his head between the bars of the gate, trying to grab a mouthful of Mirabeau’s flesh, or else a fragment of his coat.

“Pardieu, Doctor!” said Mirabeau, recoiling a step,

in order to escape from the fierce white teeth of this Thracian watchdog, "pardieu, nothing is changed! I'm received just as if my father were alive."

Thereupon a young man appeared on the porch, and advanced towards the strangers, after silencing the dog, and calling him back.

"Your pardon, gentlemen," said the young man. "His masters have no share in the reception accorded you by their dog. Many wayfarers stop in front of this house, which was once occupied by the Marquis de Mirabeau, and as our poor Cartouche cannot comprehend the historic interest connected with the abode of his humbler masters, he growls eternally. — To your kennel, Cartouche!"

The young man made a threatening gesture, and the dog went growling to his kennel; but on his fore paws, which protruded through the opening, he laid his head, with its sharp teeth, red tongue, and fiery eyes. Meanwhile Gilbert and Mirabeau exchanged glances.

"Gentlemen," continued the young man, "there is now within this gate only a host, ready to open it and welcome you, if your curiosity is not limited to the outside."

Gilbert touched Mirabeau with his elbow, as a sign that he would be glad to see the inside of the mansion. Mirabeau understood. Besides, his wishes accorded with Gilbert's, and so he replied to the young man: "You have read our thoughts, Monsieur. Aware that this house was formerly occupied by the Friend of Mankind, we are curious to visit it."

"And it will increase your interest to know, gentlemen," said the young man, "that while the father lived here, the house was twice or thrice honored by visits from his illustrious son, who — if one may judge from hearsay — was not always received as his merits warranted, — as we would receive him, if he should ever have the

fancy which you have, gentlemen, and which I hasten to gratify."

Bowing, the young man admitted the two visitors, and preceded them towards the house ; but Cartouche did not seem disposed to let them enjoy the proffered hospitality, for he darted out of his kennel, barking frightfully.

The young man threw himself between the dog and the one visitor against whom Cartouche seemed particularly enraged ; but Mirabeau gently pushed the young man aside with his hand, saying : " Monsieur, dogs and men always bark at me like this. Moreover, men have bitten me, but dogs, never ! It is said that the human gaze is all-powerful over animals. So please you, let me make an experiment."

" Monsieur," said the youth, quickly, " I warn you that Cartouche is ugly."

" Let me alone, Monsieur, let me alone," replied Mirabeau, " I have business, every day, with uglier beasts than he. Yes, this very day I had to do with just such a whipper-in, — a hound, a pack of hounds."

" Oh yes, but you could talk to those hounds," said Gilbert, " and nobody can doubt the power of your tongue."

" Doctor," said Mirabeau, " I believe you are an adept in magnetism ?"

" Undoubtedly ! What then ?"

" In that case, you ought to recognize the power of the human gaze. Let me magnetize Cartouche."

Mirabeau spoke in that venturesome mood, so well understood by superior minds.

" Try it !" said Gilbert.

" Oh Monsieur," repeated the youth, " don't expose yourself !"

" By your leave ?" said Mirabeau.

The young man bowed his consent ; and he retired to the left, while Gilbert stepped to the right, as if they were witnesses at a duel, where the adversary was to fire on their friend.

The young man also went up two or three steps towards the porch, so that he could stop Cartouche, if the words or looks of the unknown gentleman should not suffice.

The dog turned his head right and left, as if to see if the enemy, against whom he had apparently vowed eternal hatred, was really cut off from all help. Seeing the man alone and unarmed, he crawled slowly out of his kennel, more like a serpent than a quadruped, and then suddenly leaped forward, clearing at the first bound a third of the distance between the kennel and his antagonist.

Mirabeau crossed his arms, and with that tremendous look which made him the *Jupiter Tonans* (the Thunderer) of the rostrum, he fixed his eyes on the animal. At the same time, all the electricity which his powerful body could contain seemed to concentrate itself in his countenance. His hair bristled like a lion's mane ; and if it had been in the first hours of the night, — instead of an hour of the day when it was still quite light, though the sun was setting, — one would undoubtedly have seen every hair sparkling with electric fire.

The dog stopped short, and looked at him. Mirabeau stooped, snatched up a handful of gravel, and threw it in the dog's face.

The dog howled, and made another leap, which brought him within three or four feet of his adversary ; but now it was the man who advanced upon the dog.

For an instant the animal remained immovable, like the granite dog of Cephalus the Hunter, in the classic

fable. Disquieted by Mirabeau's steady approach, he appeared to hesitate between anger and fear, still threatening with his eyes and teeth, yet crouching on his hind legs. At last Mirabeau lifted his arm, with a commanding gesture,—such as he often used on the tribune, when he hurled sarcasm, irony, and insult at his enemies; whereupon the conquered dog retreated, trembling in every limb. Glancing backward, to see if the way was still open, he finally turned tail, and rushed precipitately into his kennel.

Mirabeau lifted his head, as proud and joyous as any victor in the Isthmian Games of ancient Greece. “Ah, Doctor,” he said, “the elder Mirabeau had good reason to call dogs the types of humanity. You shall see this blatant coward become as servile as any man!”

With a tone of command he then said, letting his hand fall by his side: “Here, Cartouche, here!”

The dog hesitated; but as the man made an impatient gesture, he crawled again out of his kennel, his eyes fixed on Mirabeau's, and crossed the intervening space till he reached the feet of his conqueror, the ends of whose fingers he lapped with the tip of his palpitating tongue, after slowly and timidly raising his head.

“That's right!” said Mirabeau. “Now go back to your house!” and, at a sign, the dog went back, and lay down on his straw.

While the youth remained on the steps of the porch, cold with fear and mute with wonder, Mirabeau turned to Gilbert, and said: “Do you know what I was thinking of, when engaged in the bit of folly you have just witnessed?”

“No; but tell me, for you have not acted from simple bravado, I take it.”

“I was thinking of that famous night of the Fifth and

Sixth of October. Doctor, Doctor, I would give half the remainder of my life, to have had King Louis the Sixteenth see that dog spring at me, retreat to his niche, and return to lick my hand." Then he said to the young man: "You will pardon me, doubtless, for having humiliated Cartonche? Now we will see the Friend of Mankind's house, whenever you will allow us to do so."

The youth stepped aside to let Mirabeau enter, who indeed seemed to need no guide, but to know the house as well as if he had been there before.

Without pausing on the ground-floor, he rapidly mounted the stairs, ornamented with an artistically wrought iron balustrade, saying: "This way, Doctor; this way!"

Indeed, with the leadership habitual to him, — arising from that domination which belonged to his temperament, — Mirabeau at once ceased to be a spectator, and became an actor, seeming to be the master of the house, rather than a mere visitor.

Gilbert followed. Meanwhile the youth summoned his father, a man of fifty or fifty-five, and also two sisters, girls from fifteen to eighteen years old, in order to tell them what a singular guest had come thither.

While the young man was telling them the story of Cartouche's defeat, Mirabeau showed Gilbert the former Marquis's study, bedroom, and parlor; and as each corner roused some remembrance, Mirabeau recounted anecdote after anecdote, with that charm of narration which was one of his characteristics.

While this cicerone told them the story of their own house, the proprietor and his family listened, — hearing and looking with open ears and big eyes.

The upper apartments having been inspected, and seven o'clock sounding from the Argenteuil church,

Mirabeau feared they should be too late if they remained any longer, and urged Gilbert to descend, setting him the example by striding at a leap down the first four steps, to the turn of the staircase.

“Monsieur,” then said the owner of the house, “you seem to know very much about the history of the Marquis de Mirabeau and his illustrious son; and it seems to me that you could, if you would, tell us the story of these four stairs, — an account — from what I hear — which would be no less entertaining than your others.”

Mirabeau stopped and smiled, saying: “Very true, but I meant to pass this by in silence.”

“Why so, Count?” asked the Doctor.

“Faith, you shall judge! In leaving his dungeon at Vincennes, where he had been eighteen months, Mirabeau — being double the age of the Prodigal Son in the parable, and not perceiving any preparation for killing the fatted calf in joy over his return — took a fancy to come hither, and reclaim his legitimate rights. There were two reasons why Mirabeau was badly received in the paternal mansion. In the first place, he had come away from Vincennes against the old Marquis’s will. In the second place, he came home to ask for money. The consequence was that the Marquis, who was busy putting the last touch to a philanthropic disquisition, arose when he saw his son, grasped his cane when the boy began to speak, and sprang upon him as soon as the word *money* was mentioned. The young Count well knew his father, yet had hoped his thirty-seven years might save the son from the punishment wherewith he was menaced; but he saw his error when he felt a shower of blows on his shoulders, dealt with the cane.”

“How? Blows with a cane?” said Gilbert.

“Yes, and good cuts, too, — not such as they get at the Comédie Française, in Molière’s plays, but real blows, enough to split one’s head and break one’s arms.”

“And what did the son do?” asked Gilbert.

“Gracious! He did what Horace did, at his first fight, — he ran away! Unfortunately he had no buckler, such as Horace wore; or he might have used it to parry his father’s attack, instead of throwing it away, as did the Lydian songster; so, having no shield, he flung himself down these four steps, to the turn of the staircase, — as I did just now. At this point the son faced about. Lifting a cane, in his turn, he cried to his father: ‘Hold on, Monsieur! There is no kinship beyond the fourth grade.’ It was a wretched pun, — comparing the gradation of a stairway to the grades, or degrees, of family relationship; but all the same it checked the good man, when fair reasoning would have failed; for he said: ‘What a pity the Bailiff is dead, or I would have written that out for him;’ — referring of course to his brother, who was known as the Bailiff.”

The narrator continued: “Mirabeau was too good a strategist not to profit by the chance thus offered for beating a retreat. He descended the rest of the flight, almost as quickly as he had the first few steps; and, to his great sorrow, he never entered the house again. He was a great *knave*, that Comte de Mirabeau, was n’t he, Doctor?”

“Oh Monsieur,” said the young man, approaching Mirabeau with clasped hands, — as if he asked pardon of his guest for entertaining a contrary opinion, “I would rather call him *a great man!*”

Mirabeau looked into the youth’s face, and said: “Ah ha! Are there really some people who think well of Mirabeau?”

“Yes, Monsieur,” said the young man; “and at the risk of displeasing you, I think so, first of all.”

“So?” replied Mirabeau, laughing. “Well, it won’t do to say that too loud in this house, young man, or the walls may tumble about your ears.”

Saluting the old man respectfully, and the young ladies courteously, Mirabeau crossed the garden, making a sign of good-will to Cartouche, who responded by a sort of growl, — the remnant of his protest against absolute submission.

Gilbert followed Mirabeau, who ordered the coachman to drive into the village, and as far as the church; but at the corner of the first street he stopped the carriage, took a card from his pocket, and said to his servant: “Teisch, take this card back to that young man who does not agree with me about Monsieur de Mirabeau.” Then he added, with a sigh: “Ah, Doctor, — there is somebody who has not yet read about Mirabeau’s Great Treason.”

Teisch returned, followed by the youth.

“Oh Monsieur de Mirabeau,” he said, with an accent of admiration which it was impossible to mistake, “grant me the same privilege accorded to Cartouche, — the honor of kissing your hand.”

Mirabeau opened both arms, and pressed the youngster to his heart.

“Comnt,” he said, “my name is Mornais. If ever you need the help of one who is ready to die for you, remember me!”

Mirabeau’s eyes were suffused with tears, as he said: “Doctor, these are the men who will succeed us. Upon my word, I believe they will be worth more than we are.”

CHAPTER XIX.

A WOMAN RESEMBLING THE QUEEN.

THE hack stopped at the door of the Argenteuil church.

“I told you I had never set foot in Argenteuil, since my father turned me violently out of doors. I forgot! I did come back one day, when I escorted his body to this church.”

Mirabeau left the carriage and doffed his hat. With uncovered head, with slow and solemn step, he entered the sacred edifice.

There were in that singular man such contradictory sentiments, that sometimes he clung to the common-places of religion, in an epoch when everybody talked of philosophy, which many pushed into the extreme of absolute atheism.

Gilbert followed, a few steps behind. He saw Mirabeau walk the whole length of the church, and lean against a massive pillar, which stood near the altar consecrated to the Madonna, — a pillar whose Roman capital evidently belonged to the Twelfth Century.

With bowed head he gazed steadfastly at a black slab, forming the centre of the small chapel before that altar.

The Doctor tried to see what could so absorb Mirabeau's attention; and as his eyes followed his friend's, they were arrested by the following inscription:

Here reposes

FRANÇOISE DE CASTELLANE, MARQUISE DE MIRABEAU,
a model of piety and virtue, a happy wife and mother.

Born in Dauphiny, 1685 ; died in Paris, 1769 :

She was first interred in Saint Sulpice, Paris ;
then brought here, to be reunited in the same tomb
with her worthy son

VICTOR DE RIQUETTI, MARQUIS DE MIRABEAU,
surnamed the FRIEND OF MANKIND :

Born at Pertuis, in Provence, October 4, 1715 ;

died at Argenteuil, July 11, 1789.

Pray for their Souls.

The religious instinct is so powerful in connection with death, that Doctor Gilbert lowered his head, and tried to find a prayer remaining in his memory, that he might obey the invitation which the sepulchral stone addressed to all Christians who chanced to cast their eyes upon it ; but if ever in his infancy, which is doubtful, Gilbert had learned the language of humility and faith, skepticism, that gangrene of the last century, had effaced it, to the last line in that living book, and philosophy had inscribed sophisms and paradoxes in the place of religion.

Finding his heart and tongue alike mute, Gilbert lifted his eyes, and saw a few tears roll down Mirabeau's strong face, seamed by passion, as the slopes of a volcano are scored by fiery lava.

Those tears moved Gilbert so strangely, that he went to Mirabeau and took him by the hand. Mirabeau understood him.

Tears shed in memory of such a father, who had imprisoned, tortured, martyred his son, seemed so utterly incomprehensible and perfunctory, that Mirabeau hastened to show Gilbert the true cause of this sensibility.

“She was a worthy woman, this Françoise de Castellane, my father’s mother. When all the world found me hideous, she found me only plain. When everybody else hated me, she almost loved me. But most of all, she loved her son. As you see, my dear Gilbert, I have reunited them; but who can reunite me to them? Whose bones will lie next to mine? I have not even a dog to love me!” and he laughed gloomily.

“Monsieur,” said an authoritative voice, with the rasping tone, full of reproach, which belongs to devotees, “Monsieur, people do not laugh in church!”

Mirabeau turned his tear-stained face towards the side whence the voice sounded, and saw a priest.

“Are you the priest in charge of this chapel?” he mildly asked.

“Yes. What do you wish?”

“Have you many poor folks in your parish?”

“More poor folks, than rich folks disposed to relieve them.”

“You have however some charitable hearts, some philanthropic souls —?”

The priest began to laugh.

“Monsieur,” said Mirabeau, “you did me the honor just now to remark that people do not laugh in church!”

“Monsieur,” said the priest, a little touched, “do you pretend to lecture me —?”

“No, Monsieur, but to show you that people who feel it their duty to come to the relief of their fellow-men are not so rare as you suppose. In all probability, Monsieur, I am going to live in the Château du Marais. Well, every

laborer out of work may find employment there, at good wages. Every hungry old man may come there for bread. Every invalid may find help there, whatever his religious or political opinions. Beginning with to-day, Monsieur Curate, I offer you, to that end, a credit of a thousand francs a month."

Tearing a leaf from his tablet he wrote on it, with a pencil, as follows :

Good for the sum of twelve thousand (12,000) francs, which M. the Curate of Argenteuil may expend for me, at the rate of one thousand (1000) francs per month, to be employed by him for charitable purposes, beginning with the day of my residence in the Château du Marais.

Done at the Argenteuil church, and signed on the altar of the Virgin.

MIRABEAU.

Mirabeau indeed wrote and signed this promise on the altar dedicated to the Madonna. When it was done he gave the note to the curate, who was stupefied when he read the signature, and more so when he read the agreement.

Then Mirabeau left the church, beckoning Gilbert to follow, and they re-entered the carriage.

As short a time as Mirabeau had been in Argenteuil, he had already left behind him two souvenirs which would endear him to posterity.

It is the faculty of some organizations to make something eventful spring up wherever they touch their feet ; as Cadmus raised soldiers from the soil of Thebes, as Hercules wrought his twelve famous labors in the face of the world ; and so to-day, though Mirabeau has been dead over sixty years,¹ you may find at Argenteuil, in

¹ This was written by Dumas nearly forty years ago, and Mirabeau has now, in 1890, been dead nearly a century.

the same place where Mirabeau found them, both the stations which Mirabeau selected for his pilgrimage; and unless the mansion is uninhabited, or the church abandoned, you will also find there somebody to confirm these details, as if they were events of yesterday.

The carriage followed the main street to the very end. Then they branched away from Argenteuil, and rolled along the road towards Besons. They had not gone a hundred rods in this direction, before Mirabeau saw, at his right hand, groups of tufted trees, cloven by the slated roofs of the château and its outbuildings. This was the Château du Marais.

At the right of the road, before reaching the avenue which led up to the gate of the château, there was a poor little cottage. In the doorway was seated a woman on a wooden stool, holding in her arms a haggard child, emaciated by fever. As she rocked her half-dead little one, she raised her eyes to Heaven and wept, addressing herself to that power to which we all appeal, when there is no help to be obtained from a human source.

From afar Mirabeau noted this sorrowful scene, and said to Gilbert: "Doctor, I am as superstitious as any old woman. If that child dies, I won't take the Château Marais. See what is before you!"

He stopped the carriage opposite the hut, and added: "Doctor, as I have only twenty minutes more of daylight, in which to inspect the château, I will leave you here. You can rejoin me presently, and tell me if you hope to save the child."

Then he said to the mother: "Good woman, here is a gentleman who is a great physician. Thank Providence which has sent him to you. He will try to heal your babe."

The woman doubted if this was not a dream. She

rose, holding her child still in her arms, and stammered her thanks.

Gilbert left the carriage, which continued its journey. Five minutes afterwards Teisch rang the bell at the gate of the château. They waited some time without seeing anybody, but at last a man came to open the gate, whose costume made it easy to recognize him as the gardener.

Mirabeau first inquired about the condition of the building. The château was in good order, — at least, the gardener said so; and certainly it so appeared, at first sight.

The place had formed part of the estate of the Abbey Saint Denis, and been the headquarters of the Argenteuil Priory, and was now for sale, on account of the decrees which deprived the clergy of their landed property.

As we have said, Mirabeau knew the place already; but he never before had the opportunity of examining it so attentively as he could under present circumstances.

Passing the gateway he found himself in the first courtyard, which was nearly square. At the right was a pavilion, or small house, occupied by the gardener. At the left was another pavilion; but by the style of its decorations, even on the outside, one might well doubt, for an instant, if it was meant to be the twin brother of the one opposite.

The two pavilions were mates, however; but its setting made one of these plebeian edifices almost aristocratic. Gigantic rose-trees, in full bloom, formed an open-work robe, which was girded with a belt of vines, like a green border. Every window was shielded by a curtain of carnations, heliotropes, fuchsias, whose thick branches, embossed with flowers, kept both the sun and the eye from penetrating within. In front of this little house was a little garden, filled with the lily, the cactus, the

narcissus, — a veritable carpet of flowers, such as might have been embroidered by the hand of Penelope; and this garden extended all the way along the first courtyard, making a beautiful contrast to a gigantic weeping willow and some magnificent elms, growing on the other side.

We have already spoken of Mirabeau's passion for flowers. At the sight of this charming garden, and this pavilion buried among its roses, which seemed like a little Mansion of Flowers, he uttered a cry of joy, and said to the gardener: "Is this pavilion for sale or to let, my friend?"

"Certainly, Monsieur, as it belongs to the château, and the château is to be let or sold. Just now the pavilion is occupied; but there is no lease, and if Monsieur takes the château, the tenant of the pavilion can be sent away."

"Ah! And who is this tenant?"

"A lady."

"Young?"

"Thirty or thirty-five."

"Handsome?"

"Very handsome!"

"Well," said Mirabeau, "we will see. A beautiful neighbor is n't a bad idea! Show me the château, my friend."

The gardener walked on ahead, from the first courtyard into the second, from which it was separated by a bridge, beneath which was a rivulet.

There the gardener paused, and said: "If Monsieur does not wish to disturb the lady in the pavilion, the matter may be easily adjusted; for this little stream completely isolates the rest of the garden from that portion of the grounds belonging to her residence.

She would be by herself, and Monsieur could be by himself."

"Good, very good! Now show me the château," said Mirabeau, as he briskly sprang up the five steps of the porch.

The gardener opened the principal door, which led into a vestibule, finished in stucco, with niches containing statues, and columns supporting vases, in the fashion of that era.

A doorway at the other end of the hallway, opposite the main entrance, afforded an exit into the large garden beyond.

On the right of the hallway were a billiard-room and dining-room, and on the left were two parlors, one large and one small.

This arrangement pleased Mirabeau well enough, who, however, appeared absent-minded and impatient.

They went upstairs to the main story of the mansion. This story was composed of a large drawing-room, marvellously well fitted for an office or study, and three or four bedrooms, for the master of the house.

The windows were closed in the drawing-room and bedrooms. Mirabeau went himself to open one of the windows; and the gardener was about to open the others, when Mirabeau made a sign for him not to do so, and the gardener obeyed.

Just beneath the window which Mirabeau opened, at the foot of the big weeping willow, a woman was reclining and reading; while a few steps away was a little child, five or six years old, playing on the grass and among the flower-beds.

Mirabeau understood at once that this was the lady of the pavilion.

It was impossible to appear more gracefully or more

elegantly arrayed than was this woman. She wore a loose muslin morning gown, trimmed with lace, over a white taffeta bodice, ornamented with red and white ribbons. Her skirt was also of white muslin, with quilled flounces of red and white, like the bodice. On her rose-colored taffeta corsage were knots of the same color. Her hood was bordered with lace, which fell down like a veil; and through this, as through a mist, one could see her face.

Her hands were beautiful, and her fingers tapering, with aristocratic nails. Her infantile feet played in and out of loose slippers, made of white taffeta, with red knots, completing a harmonious and seductive vision.

The child was clad in a suit of white satin. He wore a little Henry the Fourth hat and — a singular combination, not unusual at that epoch — a tricolored belt, called the National. What was more surprising, his dress resembled the costume worn by the young Dauphin, the last time he appeared on the balcony at the Tuileries, with his mother.

The sign made by Mirabeau to the gardener was to prevent him from disturbing the beautiful reader. She was indeed the lady of the floral pavilion, the queen of this garden of the lily, cactus, and narcissus, such a neighbor as Mirabeau — a man whose senses always inclined him towards the voluptuous — would have chosen, if chance had not led him into her neighborhood.

For a while he devoured with his eyes this charming creature, immovable as a statue, ignorant of the ardent gaze which enveloped her; but, either by chance, or drawn by a magnetic current, her eyes suddenly detached themselves from the book, and turned towards the window.

She saw Mirabeau, uttered a little cry of surprise, arose, called her child, and went away, holding him by

the hand, — not, however, without two or three times turning her head. She disappeared among the trees, in the midst of which Mirabeau could see her striking dress here and there reappearing, as its whiteness struggled with the first shadows of night.

To the cry of surprise uttered by the unknown lady, Mirabeau responded with a cry of wonder. Not only had this lady the royal bearing, but her face — so far as the lace veil, which half covered it, would permit a judgment — wore the features of Marie Antoinette.

The child added to the resemblance. He was exactly the age of the Queen's second son, the Dauphin, — of that Queen whose walk, whose face, whose every movement had so steadfastly remained, not merely in the memory, but in the heart of Mirabeau, ever since the interview at Saint Cloud, that he could recognize her wherever he might see her, even were she enwrapt in a divine cloud, like that in which Virgil declares Venus was encompassed, when she appeared to her son on the outskirts of Carthage.

What marvel had led this mysterious woman into the park of the mansion which Mirabeau was about to hire, — a woman who, if not the Queen, was her living portrait?

At that instant Mirabeau felt a hand on his shoulder.

CHAPTER XX.

WHEREIN THE INFLUENCE OF THE UNKNOWN LADY BEGINS
TO MAKE ITSELF FELT.

MIRABEAU turned with a start. It was Doctor Gilbert who had touched his shoulder.

"Ah, it's you, Doctor! Well?"

"Well," said Gilbert, "I've seen the child."

"And you hope to save it?"

"A physician should never lose hope, even in the face of death itself."

"The Devil! That's as much as to say the malady is serious."

"More than serious, my dear Count; it is mortal."

"What's the trouble?"

"I ask nothing better than to enter into the details of this subject, inasmuch as these details will not be devoid of interest to a man who has made up his mind to live in this château, without knowing to what he is exposing himself."

"What? Do you mean to tell me that they run the risk of the plague here?"

"No; but I will tell you how this poor child caught the fever, of which it will probably die in a week. Its mother was helping the gardener cut the grass hereabouts. In order to work more freely, she laid the child down by itself, in a place which happened to be only a few steps from one of those ditches of stagnant water which encircle the park. The good woman, having no

idea of the duplex movement of the earth, laid the little thing in the shade, without thinking that in an hour the shadow would give place to the sun. When she came after her infant, attracted by its cries, she found it doubly injured, — injured by prolonged exposure to the sun, which had brought a sunstroke to its young brain, and injured by absorption of the marshy effluvia, which brings on a species of poisoning called malaria.”

“Excuse me, Doctor,” said Mirabeau, “but I do not understand you very well.”

“Have you not heard more or less about the fevers which come from the Pontine Marshes, outside the city of Rome? Are you not acquainted, at least by reputation, with the deleterious miasma which exhales from the Tuscan swamps? Have you not read the Florentine poet’s story of the death of Pia dei Tolomei?”

“Oh yes, Doctor, I know all that; but as a man of the world, as a poet, not as a chemist or a physician. Cabanis told me something like this, the last time I saw him, in reference to the Assembly Hall, at the Riding School, where we are so badly off. He even pretends, if I don’t go out three times during every session, and breathe the air of the Tuileries Gardens, that I shall die of poison.”

“And Cabanis is right.”

“Will you not explain this, Doctor? It will give me great pleasure.”

“Seriously?”

“Yes. I know my Greek and Latin well enough. During my four or five years spent in prison, at different periods, — thanks to the social irritability of my father, — I have had a good chance to study antiquity. I even wrote, in some odd moments, an obscene book, on the morals and manners of the aforesaid antiquity, — a

book which is not destitute of a certain kind of science ; but I am completely ignorant how one can be poisoned in our National Assembly Hall, — at least, unless he is bitten by Abbé Maury, or reads Marat's daily sheet."

"Then I will tell you. Perhaps the explanation may be obscure, for a man who modestly avows his ignorance of chemistry and his small knowledge of medicine. However, I'll try to make it as clear as possible."

"Speak on, Doctor. You will never find an auditor more willing to learn."

"The architect who constructed the Riding School, — and, unfortunately, most architects, like yourself, are very bad chemists, — the architect who built that hall had no idea of so arranging the chimneys as to carry off the bad air, nor of having a secondary system of pipes, for the admission of fresh air. The result is that eleven hundred months, shut up within that hall, exhaust the oxygen, and leave carbonized vapor in its place. Consequently, at the end of an hour's session, — especially in winter, when the windows are shut and the stoves heated, — the air is not fit to breathe."

"That's just the sort of thing I should like to understand, if only to pitch into Bailly about it."

"Nothing is simpler than the true explanation. Pure air, the air designed for absorption through our lungs, the air which is breathed in a dwelling-house half-turned towards sunrise, with running water in the neighborhood, — that is, in the best conditions under which air can possibly be breathed, — is composed of seventy-seven parts of oxygen, twenty-one parts of nitrogen, and two parts of what is called watery vapor."

"Very well ! So much I can understand, and I note your figures."

“Well, now listen to this. The venous blood, black and full of carbon, is carried into the lungs, where it should be revived and cleansed by contact with the outside air, — that is, by the oxygen which the act of breathing borrows from the free air. Here a double phenomenon is produced, which we designate by the name of *hematosis*. The oxygen, brought into contact with the blood, so combines with it as to change the color from black to red; and also imparts the element of vitality which is needed throughout the system. At the same time the carbon, which combines with part of the oxygen, is transformed into carbonic acid, or oxide of carbon, and is exhaled from the lungs, being mixed with a certain quantity of watery vapor, in the act of expiration. Well, this pure air, absorbed by inspiration, is vitiated by expiration, and forms, in a close room, an atmosphere which not only ceases to be in a proper condition for breathing, but may reach a point where it acts as a genuine poison.”

“According to your theory, Doctor, I am already half poisoned.”

“Precisely. Your intestinal discomforts arise from no other cause; but you will understand that the poison you now breathe, in the present Assembly Hall, follows and augments the poison you breathed in the Archbishopal Palace, in the dungeon at Vincennes, in the fortress at Joux, and in the Château d’If. Do you not recollect what Madame Bellegarde said, that there was, in Vincennes Castle, one chamber worth its weight in arsenic?”

“So, dear Doctor, that poor infant is wholly what I am partially, — that is, poisoned!”

“Yes, dear Count; and the poisoning has brought with it a pernicious fever, whose seat is in the brain, or in the coatings of the brain. This fever has brought on

another malady, commonly called cerebral fever, but which I would baptize with a new name. It might be called, if you please, a hydrocephalic ague. From this malady come convulsions, a pimply face, purple lips, lock-jaw, a displacement of the eyeballs, labored respiration, a pulse which trembles instead of beating regularly, and finally a viscous sweat over the whole body."

"My dear Doctor! Do you know that it gives me the shivers, this enumeration of yours? Indeed, when I hear a physician discourse in such technical words, it is much the same as if I were reading a paper crammed with astrological terms; and it always seems as if the pleasantest thing awaiting me was death.— But what have you ordered for the poor little thing?"

"The most energetic treatment; and I ought to say that one or two louis, wrapt in the prescription paper, will enable the mother to follow it. I have ordered cooling applications on the head, irritants on the extremities, emetics, and a decoction of that invaluable tonic, known as Peruvian Bark."

In 1790 the sulphate of quinine was unknown, and it was not yet the custom to apply leeches behind the ears. Doctor Gilbert's directions were as complete as the medical progress of the Eighteenth Century permitted.

"Indeed! And will all that do no good?" asked Mirabeau.

"All that will do no great things, without the aid of nature; but to satisfy my conscience, I have prescribed this treatment. Its good angel, if the little one has a good angel, must do the rest."

"Hum!"

"You understand, do you not?" said Gilbert.

"Your theory of poisoning by the oxide of carbon? Partly!"

“ No, not that. I want to know if you understand that the air of this Château du Marais will not suit you.”

“ You think so, Doctor ? ”

“ I ’m sure of it.”

“ That ’s very unlucky, for the château suits me to a charm.”

“ There you are, your own eternal enemy ! I advise high ground ; you select a flat locality. I suggest running water ; you choose a stagnant pool.”

“ But what a park ! Just look at yonder fine trees, Doctor ! ”

“ Sleep a single night here with open windows, or walk about in the shade of those beautiful trees, — well, you may tell me the news the next day ! ”

“ Which is to say, that in place of being half poisoned, as I am already, I shall be poisoned outright ? ”

“ Have n’t you asked for the truth ? ”

“ Yes ; and you are telling it, are you not ? ”

“ Oh yes, in all its baldness. I know you, my dear Count. You come here to escape the world. The world will come and find you. Every man drags his own chain after him, whether it be of iron, gold, or flowers. Your chain is made up of pleasures by night and study by day. As long as you were young, voluptuousness afforded you relief from work ; but now you are used up with your days of work, and weary with your nights of passion. You once told me, in your own language, — so expressive and picturesque, — that you felt as if you had passed from summer into autumn. Well, my dear Count, if, following this excess of pleasure by night and this excess of work by day, I should be obliged to bleed you, after such a multiplied loss of force, you would be more apt than ever to absorb this air, vitiated at night by the great trees in the park, and vitiated during the day by

the malarial miasma from the standing water. What will happen? There will be two against me, both stronger than I, — you and nature. I might as well give up.”

“So you believe, Doctor, it is through the intestines I must perish. The Devil! You pain me when you say that. Long and unbearable are these intestinal maladies. I should prefer a good rousing fit of apoplexy, or even heart-enlargement. Can't you arrange one of them for me?”

“My dear Count,” said Gilbert, “don't ask me for anything of that sort! What you desire is as good as done. In my judgment, your entrails are only secondary; it is your heart which plays, and will play, the chief rôle. Unhappily, heart-diseases are numerous and various, with men of your age, and do not always lead to instant death. As a general rule, my dear Count, — listen well to this; it is nowhere written down, but I state it, more as a philosophic observer than as a physician! — as a general rule, acute distempers in mankind follow an absolute order. In infancy it is the brain which is attacked; in youth, it is the chest; in maturity, it is the bowels; in age, either the brain or the heart, — that is, the parts which have respectively been used most and suffered most. When science speaks its last word, when the whole universe, at man's interrogation, delivers up its last secret, when every malady finds its cure, when men — with few exceptions — die only from old age, like the animals around them, then the only two attackable organs will be the brain and the heart; and even then, brain-disease will have its seat in heart-disease.”

“Mordieu, my dear Doctor! You have no idea how this interests me. Look here! One would think my heart knew what you're talking about. See how it beats.”

Mirabeau took Gilbert's hand, and placed it against his heart.

“There!” said the Doctor, “there comes an illustration of what I have been explaining. How can you suppose that an organ which shares all your emotions, which increases or decreases its pulsations in following a simple pathological conversation, how can you think that such an organ — above all, yours — should not be affected? By the heart you have conquered; by the heart you will be conquered. Understand this: there is not a mental or moral emotion, not an acute physical sensation, which does not give a man a sort of fever. There is no fever, without greater or less acceleration of heart-beats. Well, in painful and tiresome work, especially in that which is accomplished outside the normal order of things, the heart exhausts itself and undergoes some change. With old folks this change leads to hypertrophy of the heart, — that is, its too great development, — or to aneurism, a diminution of the heart. Aneurism leads to laceration of the heart, the only death which is instantaneous. Hypertrophy leads to apoplexy of the brain, and a slower death. Therein intelligence is destroyed, and, consequently, genuine pain no longer exists; because there is no suffering, without the feeling which judges and measures that suffering.”

Mirabeau listened in wonder to Gilbert's exposition.

The Doctor continued: “Well, consider within yourself that you have loved, that you have been happy, that you have suffered, that you have had joyful and happy hours, such as nobody else ever had; that you have attained unheard-of triumphs, that you have descended to unknown deceptions; and that for forty years your heart has been precipitating the blood in boiling cataracts from the centre to the extremities of your body, while you

have thought, worked, and talked the livelong day, while you have drunk, laughed, and indulged in pleasures the livelong night ; and all this time your heart, though you have used and abused it, has not once failed in a single beat. Yet, my dear friend, the heart is like a purse. However well lined it may be, if we go to it often enough, it runs dry. In showing you the worse side of your condition, let me also speak of the better. The heart must have time wherein to do its work. Do not tax your heart more than it can endure. Do not ask of it more work than it is able to perform. Give it no more excitement than it can bear. Try and maintain the conditions which do not lead to grave disorders in the three chief functions of life, — respiration, which has its seat in the lungs, circulation, the seat whereof is in the heart, digestion, whose seat is in the intestines, — and you may live twenty or thirty years longer, and die of old age. On the contrary, if you wish to commit suicide, — my God, nothing is easier than for you to voluntarily hasten or retard your own death. Imagine that you are driving a pair of fiery steeds, who drag you along, — you, their guide. Constrain them to trot moderately, and they will last a long time and make a long journey. Let them gallop, and, like the fabled Horses of the Sun, they will make the everlasting circuit of the sky, doing a year's work in a single day and night."

"Yes," replied Mirabeau, "but during that day they lighten and warm the world, which is a good thing. — Come, Doctor, it is growing late. I'll think about all this !"

"Reflect upon it as much as you please," said Gilbert, following Mirabeau ; "but begin by obeying the orders of the Faculty. Promise me, first of all, not to hire this château. You will find, in the neighborhood of Paris,

ten, twenty, fifty, which will offer you the same advantages as this."

Perhaps Mirabeau, yielding to the voice of reason, would have made this promise; but suddenly, amid the first shadows of evening, it seemed to him that he saw, behind a curtain of flowers, the head of the woman wearing the skirt of white taffeta, with rosy flowers. This woman smiled, — at least, Mirabeau so believed; but there was no time to make sure of it, for in an instant, guessing that something new had come across his patient's mind, Gilbert looked in the same direction, in order to account to himself for the nervous tremor of the arm on which the Doctor was leaning. The woman's head was speedily withdrawn, and one could see nothing, at the pavilion window, except the slightly agitated branches of roses, heliotropes, and pinks.

"You do not answer," said Gilbert.

"My dear Doctor, you recollect what I told you I said to the Queen, when she gave me her hand to kiss, as she left me: *Madame, through this kiss the monarchy is saved!*"

"Yes!"

"Well, I took upon myself a heavy load, Doctor, — especially if they abandon me, as heretofore they have done. However, I must not fail in this undertaking. Don't misjudge the suicide of which you spoke, Doctor. Suicide may perhaps be the only honorable way out of this affair."

Two days later, by a lease of the ground rental, Mirabeau had bought the Château du Marais.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CHAMP DE MARS.

WE have already tried to make our readers understand into what an indissoluble knot of union all France was about to bind herself, and what effect this national federation, anticipatory of a more general federation, produced in Europe.

Europe began to understand that some day, though the dawning of this day was hidden in the clouds of the great future, — Europe, we repeat, began to understand that some day she must become an immense federation of citizens, a colossal society of brothers.

Mirabeau urged the grand gathering of the French people, which was about to take place. To the fears expressed to him by the King he responded, that if there was any salvation for royalty in France, it must be sought, not in Paris, but in the provinces.

Moreover, he saw one great advantage in such a reunion of men, from every corner of France, — that the King would see his people, and the people would see their King. When the whole population of France, represented by three hundred thousand delegates, — tradesmen, magistrates, soldiers, — should shout “Long live the Nation,” and strike hands over the ruins of the Bastille, certain purblind courtiers, or courtiers interested to blindfold the King, could no longer insist that Paris, led by a handful of factious agitators, demanded

a measure of liberty which the rest of France was far from claiming.

Mirabeau counted on the good sense of the King. He relied upon the spirit of loyalty still surviving, at that date, in the hearts of the French. He argued for this unusual, unheard-of, novel contact of the monarch with his subjects, and believed it would result in a sacred alliance, which no intrigue could thereafter break.

Men of genius are sometimes possessed with such sublime follies, which furnish the political blackguards of the future with a chance to laugh their memories to scorn.

Already one preparatory federation, so to speak, had been held on the plains of Lyons. France was instinctively marching towards unity, and believed the definite watchword of that unity might be found in the valley of the Rhone; but it soon became obvious, that while Lyons might betroth France to the Genius of Liberty, the marriage must be solemnized and consummated in Paris.

When this proposition for a general convention was brought before the Assembly by the Mayor and Council of Paris, who could not resist the impulsion of other cities, there was a great commotion in the audience. This reunion, which would bring innumerable men to Paris, — that eternal centre of agitation, — was disapproved by each of the two parties which divided the Chamber, the Royalists and the Jacobins.

The Royalists declared that to invite such a gathering would be to risk another gigantic Fourteenth of July, not against the Bastille this time, but against royalty itself. What would happen to the King, amidst such a frightful medley of opposing passions, such an inevitable conflict of differing opinions?

On the other side, the Jacobins, who were not ignorant what a hold Louis the Sixteenth still had upon the masses, liked this project of a convention no better than did their political opponents. In the eyes of the Jacobins, such a reunion would deaden the public spirit, lull mistrust to sleep, awaken the old idolatry, — in a word, *royalize* France.

There was no way, however, of paralyzing this movement, which was without a parallel since the Eleventh Century, when all Europe was roused to recapture the Holy Sepulchre of Jesus at Jerusalem; and these two movements were not as foreign to each other as might at first be supposed, inasmuch as the first tree of liberty was planted on Calvary.

The Assembly tried, however, to make the reunion less formidable than was expected. The members dragged out the discussion; so it came to pass, for those who travelled from the ends of the kingdom, — what had happened likewise to the delegates from Corsica to the Lyons Federation, — that they did not arrive till the last gun-fire, — and scarcely before the day after the wedding.

Besides, the expenses were to be charged to the different sections; and, as the opponents of the convention very well knew, there were provinces so poor as to be able to raise, even with their strongest efforts, only enough money to defray half the expenses of their deputies, or even a quarter-part of the cost of travel; and that consequently these deputies would not be able to reach Paris, to say nothing of getting home again.

These enemies had reckoned, however, without their host, without the popular enthusiasm. They had not taken into consideration the spirit of co-operation, whereby the rich give twice, — once for themselves, and once for

their poorer neighbors. They had not counted on that hospitality which exclaimed, all along the roads: "Ye French, open your doors! Here are your brothers, who come to you from the ends of France!" — a cry which did not find a deaf ear or a rebellious door.

There were no longer strangers or foreigners, but everywhere Frenchmen, relations, brothers. Unseen voices cried: "Come, ye pilgrims, to the grand festival! Come ye National Guards! Come soldiers! Come mariners! Come among us! You will find fathers and mothers and wives, whose sons and husbands are elsewhere, in other generous homes, enjoying the same hospitality we offer you."

If one could have been transported, as the Christ was, not indeed to the summit of the highest mountain on earth, but simply to the highest peak in France, he might have seen a splendid spectacle, — three hundred thousand citizens marching towards Paris, all the rays of the star converging into a common centre.

And by whom were they guided, these Pilgrims of Liberty? By aged men; by soldiers of the Seven Years War; by subordinate officers who had fought at Fontenoy; by volunteers, for whom it had required all the labor, courage, and devotion of a lifetime to reach the two epaulets of a captain or the one epaulet of a lieutenant; by poor miners, compelled to bear on their foreheads the sign of the granite rule of ancient France; by sailors, who had conquered the Indies under Bussy and Dupleix, and lost their prize under Lally Tolendal, — living ruins, broken down by cannon on fields of battle, or worn out by the ebb and flow of the sea.

During the last days, veterans of fourscore made long journeys, of ten or a dozen leagues at a stretch, in order to arrive in time; and they *were* in time. At the moment

when they were about to lie down forever, and sleep the slumber of eternity, the force of their youth was renewed, and they mounted on wings of eagles.

Their country had made them a sign, beckoning them with one hand, while with the other she pointed to the future of their children. Before them was the banner of Hope.

They chanted one unique song, these pilgrims, coming from the north, the south, the east, the west, from Alsace, Brittany, Provence, Normandy. Who taught them this song, clumsily and heavily rhymed, like the ancient canticles which guided the Crusaders across the seas of the Grecian Archipelago and the plains of Asia Minor? No one knows! The angel of the Revolution, perchance, scattering music from his passing wings, as he soared over beautiful France.

This song was the famous *Ça ira*, — not the Terror Song of 1793; for in '93 everything was inverted, hope was changed into tearful laughter, and France "sweat, as it were, great drops of blood."

As all France was leaving home, to bear to Paris the universal oath, she sang no words of threat. She had not yet learned to sing the *Ça ira* of later days; which ran thus:

Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
 Les aristocrates à la lanterne;
 Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
 Les aristocrates, on les pendra!

This quatrain may be translated as follows:

Ah, go ahead, go ahead, go ahead!
 Aristocrats straight to the rope!
 Ah, go ahead, go ahead, go ahead!
 The Royalists, let them all hang!

No ! The song was not then a death-chant, but a life-giving melody, not a hymn of despair, but a canticle of hope ; for to another air they chanted the following verses :

Le peuple en ce jour sans cesse répète :
 Ah ! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira !
 Suivant les maximes de l'Évangile.
 Ah ! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira !
 Du législateur tout s'accomplira :
 Celui qui s'élève, on l'abaissera ;
 Celui qui s'abaisse, on l'élèvera !

These lines may be rendered thus :

The people this day without ceasing, repeat,
 Go ahead, go ahead, go ahead !
 The plain Gospel precepts are guiding their feet :
 Go ahead, go ahead, go ahead !
 The Lawgiver's word is fulfilled in all ways :
 Whoever is lofty shall soon be abased ;
 Whoever is humble, the same shall be raised.

To receive five hundred thousand souls, from Paris and the provinces, there was needed a monstrous arena, — besides a colossal amphitheatre, capable of accommodating a million spectators.

For the arena, the Champ de Mars (Field of Mars) was selected ; for the amphitheatre, the heights of Passy and Chaillot.

As the Champ de Mars presented a flat surface, it was necessary to turn it into a vast basin, by digging out the earth in some places, and piling it up in others.

Fifteen thousand laborers — men of the sort who eternally complain aloud of their fruitless search for work, while, with bated breath, they pray God not to let them find it — fifteen thousand such laborers were set to work,

with spades, pickaxes, and hoes, by the city of Paris, in order to transform this plain into a valley, flanked by a large amphitheatre. Only three weeks remained for these fifteen thousand men to accomplish this Titanic work; yet at the end of two days it was evident these men would not get through in three months.

Besides, they were being paid more for doing nothing, than they could have earned at their regular trade, — if they had any.

Then there occurred a species of miracle, whereby one may measure the enthusiasm of the Parisians. That immense labor, which thousands of lazy workmen could not or would not accomplish, was undertaken by the entire population. On the very day when it was noised abroad that the Champ de Mars would not be ready for the festival of the Fourteenth of July, a hundred thousand men rose up and said, with that assurance which belongs to the popular will, as it does to the will of God: "It shall be done!"

Deputies went to the Mayor of Paris, in the name of these hundred thousand laborers, and it was agreed that the volunteers should work by night, in order not to interfere with those who worked by daylight.

The same evening, at seven o'clock, a cannon-shot announced that the task of the day was finished, and that the night's work would begin. At this sound the Champ de Mars was invaded from its four sides, — from the side of Grenelle, of the river Seine, of Gros Caillou, and of Paris.

Each workman bore some implement, — a hoe, shovel, wheelbarrow, or pickaxe.

Others rolled along casks of wine, to the accompaniment of violins, guitars, drums, and fifes.

All ages, both sexes, and all sorts and conditions of

men mingled in the crowd, — citizens, soldiers, curates, monks, actresses, fine ladies, Dames from the Market-place, Sisters of Charity, together with many others who could handle a pickaxe, trundle a barrow, or drive a wagon. Children marched ahead, bearing torches. Bands followed, playing on all sorts of instruments; and sounding above all this noise, all this hubbub, all these instruments, might be heard the *Ça ira*, chanted by an immense choir of a hundred thousand voices, to which responded three hundred thousand voices, coming from all parts of France.

Among the most earnest workers two were noticeable, who arrived first, and wore their uniforms, as deputies to the great Federation.

One was a man forty years old, of robust and muscular proportions, but gloomy face. He sang not, and hardly talked.

The other was a young fellow of twenty, with a frank and smiling countenance, big blue eyes, white teeth, blond locks, standing square on his great feet and straightening his broad knees. With his large hands he lifted enormous weights. He constantly pushed wagons and handcarts, always singing, and without once stopping to rest. He watched his companion, out of the corner of one eye, and occasionally addressed a few words to him, which the older man did not answer. He brought him a glass of wine, but it was thrust aside; and so the younger man returned to his own place, shrugged his shoulders, and again put himself to work like ten men, while he sang like twenty.

These two men were two deputies from the new department of Aisne, only some ten leagues from Paris. Hearing that strong arms were needed, they hastened to offer their services, — one for silent work, the other for brisk and

joyous co-operation. These two men were Billot and Pitou.

Let us see what was taking place at Villers Cotterets during the third night after the arrival of these two men at Paris, — that is, on the night of the Fifth and Sixth of July, at the very time when they were doing their best in the midst of so many laborers.

CHAPTER XXII.

WHEREIN ONE SEES WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO CATHERINE,
BUT NOT WHAT WILL BECOME OF HER.

DURING that night, of the Fifth and Sixth of July, about eleven o'clock, Raynal, who had gone to bed, in the hope of sleeping the livelong night, — a hope often deceptive with physicians and surgeons, — Doctor Raynal, we say, was awakened by three vigorous blows at his door.

As we know, it was the Doctor's custom, when anybody rapped or rung for him in the night, to go to the door himself, in order to come into quicker contact with whoever demanded his services.

This time, as always, he jumped out of bed, slipped on his dressing-gown, put on his slippers, and descended the narrow stairway as rapidly as possible.

However diligent the Doctor's movements, they doubtless appeared very slow to the nocturnal visitor; for this visitor began to rap again, and this time his blows were without number or limit, when suddenly the door opened.

The Doctor recognized the lackey, who had come on a certain previous night to take him to Isidore de Charny's, and exclaimed: "Oh ho! Are you here, my friend? I do not say it by way of reproach, you understand, but if your master is wounded again, he will have to be very careful. It is not well for him to go into neighborhoods where it rains bullets."

“No, Monsieur, it is not for my master, nor even for a wound, but for something very different, and not less pressing. Finish your toilet. Here is a horse, and you are waited for.”

The Doctor never wanted more than five minutes for his toilet. This time—judging by the tone of the lackey’s voice, and particularly by the way in which he had knocked, that a physician’s presence was urgent—he was dressed in four minutes.

“Here I am!” he said, reappearing almost as soon as he had disappeared.

Without dismounting, the lackey offered the bridle of the extra horse to Doctor Raynal, who climbed at once into the saddle; but instead of turning to the left from the house, as on the former occasion, he turned to the right, following the lackey, who pointed out the road, which was in the direction exactly opposite to that which led to Boursonnes.

They crossed the park and entered the forest, leaving Haramont on the left, and soon found themselves in a very uneven part of the woods, where it was difficult to proceed on horseback.

All at once a man sprang from behind a tree. “Is it you, Doctor?” he asked.

The Doctor reined in his horse, ignorant of the newcomer’s intentions; but at these words he recognized the Viscount, and replied: “Yes, it’s I. Where the Devil are you taking me to, Monsieur?”

“You’ll see,” said Isidore. “I beg you to dismount and follow me.”

The Doctor dismounted, and said, as he began to understand the situation: “Ah ha, it’s a case of confinement, I see!”

Isidore grasped his hand. “Yes, Doctor; and you

will positively promise me to keep silence, will you not ?”

The Doctor shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say : “ Oh Lord, be easy ! I ’ve been there before ! ”

“ Then come this way,” said Isidore, replying to the Doctor’s unspoken words.

Amidst the holly-bushes, treading on the dry and rustling leaves, the travellers were soon lost in obscurity, under gigantic beeches, through whose tremulous leafage they from time to time perceived the scintillation of a star ; and thus the two men descended into the depths of the forest, where, as we have said, horses could not penetrate.

Presently the Doctor could see the height of Clouise Rock, and exclaimed : “ Oh ho ! Is it to Goodman Clouis’s hut we are bound ? ”

“ Not exactly, but very near it.”

Walking around the immense rock, he led the way to the door of a little brick building, a sort of lean-to against the old gamekeeper’s hut, so built that an observer might well believe, — as was generally believed in the neighborhood, — that the good man, for his own convenience, had added an annex to his lodge.

Apart from the fact that Catherine was lying prostrate on a bed, any observer would have been undeceived at the first glance into the interior of that little chamber.

A pretty paper covered the walls, and the woollen window-curtains were similar in pattern to the paper. Between the two windows was a handsome mirror, beneath which was a dressing-table, furnished with all sorts of toilet utensils, in porcelain. There were two chairs, two armchairs, a small sofa, and a diminutive bookcase. Such was the interior, — pretty comfortable, as one would say, even to-day, — which disclosed itself to view, as one

entered the little room ; but the good Doctor's glance did not rest on all this. He saw the woman on the bed, and went straightway to her relief.

Perceiving the Doctor, Catherine hid her face in her hands ; but she could not repress her sobs or conceal her tears.

Isidore approached, and called her by name. She threw herself into his arms.

“ Doctor,” said the young man, “ to you I confide the honor and life of one who is to-day my mistress, but who, I hope, will some day be my wife.”

“ Oh, thou art good, my dear Isidore, to say such things to me ; but thou knowest well how impossible it is, for a poor girl like me ever to be the Viscountess. None the less I thank thee. Thou knowest I shall need strength, and it is thy wish to give it me. Be calm ! I shall have courage ; and the first manifestation of it, — the greatest I can display, — is to show you my uncovered face, dear Doctor, and offer you my hand ;” and she at once extended her hand to Doctor Raynal.

A pain, more violent than any she had before felt, made Catherine clench her hand the instant it touched the Doctor's ; and he made a sign to Isidore, who understood that the decisive moment had come.

The young man knelt by Catherine's bedside, and said : “ My darling child, perhaps I ought to remain here, to sustain and encourage thee, though I fear my strength would fail ; but if thou desirest — ”

Catherine put her arm about Isidore's neck, saying : “ Go, go ! I thank thee for loving me so much, that thou canst not bear to see me suffer.”

Isidore pressed his lips lovingly to hers, shook the Doctor's hand, and hurried out of the room.

For two hours he wandered, like the ghosts of whom

Dante speaks, who could not stop for a single instant's repose ; or, if they did pause, were at once spurred into motion, by a demon with an iron trident. After taking a circuit, more or less extended, he invariably returned to that door, behind which the sorrowful mystery of childbirth was taking place ; but whenever Catherine uttered a cry loud enough for him to hear, it pierced him like the demon's iron prongs, and forced him to resume his errant course, going once more to the same point, from which he inevitably returned again.

In the midst of the darkness he heard himself called by the Doctor, and also by a voice more sweet and feeble. In two bounds he was at the door, which was open this time ; and on the threshold of which the Doctor stood, holding an infant in his arms.

“Alas, alas, Isidore !” said Catherine. “Now I am doubly thine, — as thy mistress, and also as the mother of thy babe.”

A week later, at the same hour, on the night of July 13, that door again opened. Two men came out, bearing a woman and child in a litter, escorted by a young man on horseback, who urged the bearers to the greatest precautions. On reaching the highway, between Haramont and Villers Cotterets, they found there a berlin, drawn by three horses, in which they placed the mother and babe.

The young man dismounted, threw the bridle to the domestic, to whom he also gave some orders, and entered the vehicle, which, without stopping at Villers Cotterets, or even passing through it, drove along by the park, as far as the Pheasantry, at the end of the Rue Lagny, whence it started at a round trot for Paris.

Before their departure, however, the young man had left a purse of gold at the disposal of Father Clouïs,

and the young woman had left a letter, addressed to Pitou.

Doctor Raynal had decided, in view of the rapid convalescence of the mother, and the good constitution of the infant, which was a boy, that the journey, from Villers Cotterets to Paris, might be made without detriment, in a comfortable carriage. It was in virtue of this assurance that Isidore decided upon the trip, which was, moreover, rendered imperative by the speedy return of Billot and Pitou.

God — who, up to a certain moment, watches over those whom he afterward seems to abandon — had permitted her confinement to take place in the absence both of Billot, still ignorant of his daughter's retreat, and of Pitou, innocently unsuspecting of Catherine's maternal condition.

Towards five o'clock in the morning, the vehicle arrived at the Porte Saint Denis, but could not cross the boulevard, because of the blockade occasioned by the holiday.

Catherine ventured to thrust her head outside the curtain ; but she instantly withdrew it, uttering a cry, and hid her face in Isidore's bosom.

The first two persons whom she saw, among the federal delegates, were Billot and Pitou.

CHAPTER XXIII.

JULY 14, 1790.

THE work necessary to convert an immense plain into an immense valley, between two hills, was completed, thanks to the co-operation of all Paris, on the eve of the Thirteenth of July.

Many of the laborers, in order to secure places for the next day, slept there over night, like victors couching on the battlefield.

Billot and Pitou joined the federal delegates, and took their places in the midst of their brethren on the boulevard. As we have seen, chance assigned these deputies from the Aisne Department a position opposite the point where the carriage halted, which was bringing Catherine and her babe to Paris.

This line, composed wholly of federal delegates, reached from the Bastille to the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle.

All did their best to receive these welcome guests. When it was known that the Bretons, those eldest sons of liberty, had arrived, the vanquishers of the Bastille marched in front of them, as far as Saint Cyr, and constituted themselves their entertainers.

There was a singular glow of disinterestedness and patriotism.

The innkeepers came together, and with one accord agreed to lower their prices, instead of raising them. So much for disinterestedness!

The journalists, those tournament-fighters of these latter days, who constantly embitter, instead of allay, the general spirit of hatred, — these journalists — two of them, at least, Loustalot and Camille Desmoulins — proposed a federal compact between the scribblers. They renounced all competition, all jealousy. They promised, in future, only to cultivate that emulation which is for the public good. So much for patriotism! Unhappily this proposition found no echo in the press; and it remained for that time, as for the future, a sublimely Utopian suggestion and a dead letter.

On its side, the Assembly imbibed a portion of that electric concussion, which shook France like an earthquake. Several days before the festival, under the lead of Montmorency and Lafayette, the Assembly abolished hereditary titles of nobility, which were defended by the Abbé Maury, the son of a village cobbler.

As long ago as the month of February, the Assembly had begun by abolishing hereditary responsibility for crime, or bills of attainder. As a result of the hanging of the brothers Agasse, condemned for forging bills of commerce, it was decided that the scaffold should not cast a blight over either the children or other relatives of criminals.

On the same day when the Assembly abolished the hereditary transmission of privileges, as it had already abolished transmitted criminal responsibility, a German from the borders of the Rhine, — a Prussian baron, born at Clèves, a man who had exchanged his baptismal names, John Baptist, for Anacharsis, Anacharsis Clootz, — presented himself at the bar of the Assembly, as a Deputy from the Human Race. He was the leader of a score of men, — all political exiles, dressed in their respective national costumes, — who came to demand,

in the name of all races of people, — the only legitimate sovereigns, — a place in the great federation. A place was duly assigned to the Orator and Delegates of the Human Race.

The influence of Mirabeau made itself felt in these days. Thanks to this powerful champion, the Court gained many adherents, not only in the ranks of the right, but also in the left benches of the Assembly, — not only among Royalists, but among the Jacobins; for the King had been growing unpopular with both parties. The Assembly voted him — we might almost say, with enthusiasm — a civil list, or income, of twenty-five million francs, and also a dower of four millions for the Queen.

This liberality recompensed them for the two hundred and eight thousand francs wherewith they had paid all the debts of their eloquent defender, Mirabeau, and the six thousand francs salary which he was to receive from the Crown every month.

It appeared that Mirabeau was not deceived as to the spirit abroad in the provinces. Those federal delegates, who were received by Louis Sixteenth, brought to Paris their enthusiasm for the National Assembly; but their feeling towards the Crown was a religion. They lifted their hats to Monsieur Bailly, and cried, “Long live the Nation!” but they bent the knee before Louis, and laid their swords at his feet, crying, “Long live the King!”

Unhappily the King, not very poetic or chivalrous, responded clumsily to this hearty enthusiasm.

Unhappily the Queen was too haughty, — too Lorraineish, so to speak, — to rightly estimate these testimonials, coming straight from the soul. Besides, poor woman, she had a great sorrow in the depths of her

heart, like one of those dark spots which speck the sun.

This spot, this ulcer which gnawed into her heart, was the absence of Charny, who certainly was able to return, but chose to remain with the Marquis de Bouillé, at Metz; though she knew not his whereabouts.

For a moment, when she met Mirabeau, she had an idea of seeking distraction, by coquetting with him. His powerful genius flattered her self-respect, both royal and feminine, by bending at her feet; but after all, what is genius to the heart? Of what value, to the passions, are the triumphs of self-respect, the victories of pride?

After all, the Queen could only see Mirabeau with a woman's eyes, could see in him but the material man,—the man with unwholesome corpulence, his cheeks furrowed, creased, torn, and distorted with the smallpox, his eyes red and his neck swollen.

She immediately compared him with Charny,—Charny, the elegant gentleman, in the flower of his age, the maturity of his beauty. Charny, in his brilliant uniform, was like a prince of battles; whereas Mirabeau, in whatever costume, except when genius animated his powerful figure, looked like some sensual monk in disguise.

She shrugged her shoulders. With eyes red with tears and sleeplessness, she sighed deeply. She tried to pierce the distance, and with a mournful voice, full of sobs, she murmured, "Charny, Charny!"

At such moments what mattered, to this woman, the assembled population at her feet? What mattered the great waves of men, driven, like the sea, by the four winds of heaven, beating against the steps of the throne, and murmuring, "Long live the King! Long live the Queen!"

If a familiar voice could but have murmured in her ear:

“ Marie, nothing is changed with me ! Antoinette, I love thee ! ” this voice would have made her forget that anything was different around her, and would have contributed more to her heart’s delight, and the serenity of her countenance, than all these shouts, all these promises, all these oaths.

The Fourteenth of July crept along imperceptibly, bringing with it events, great and little, which make up the history of both the humble and the exalted, of kings and common folks.

As if this disdainful Fourteenth of July did not know it was to witness an unprecedented, novel, and splendid spectacle, it came on with a face veiled with clouds, the wind sougning and the rain falling ; but one quality of the French people is to laugh at everything on feast-days, — even at the storm.

As early as five in the morning the boulevards were crowded with Parisian National Guards and federal delegates, soaked with rain and dying with hunger, but laughing and singing.

Though they could not save these gallant fellows from the rain, the Parisians caught the idea of at least curing their hunger. From the windows, bottles of wine, loaves of bread, and hams were lowered by cords. In all the streets through which they marched it was the same.

While the procession was in progress, a hundred and fifty thousand persons took their places on the hillocks in the Champ de Mars, and a hundred and fifty thousand more stood behind them.

As to the amphitheatres of Chaillot and Passy, they were crowded with spectators, whom no man could number.

Magnificent field, gigantic amphitheatre, splendid arena, where was symbolized the Federation of France, and

where the Federation of the World will take place some day. Whether we see that day or not, what matters it? Our sons will see it! The world will see it!

One great human error is the notion that the whole world is for our short lives; whereas times and seasons are composed of a chain of human lives, each link infinitely short, ephemeral, almost invisible, — except to the divine eye, which embraces the period, longer or shorter, during which Providence (that four-breasted Isis who watches over the nations) disentangles the mysterious web and evolves the incessant genesis.

Certainly those who were there expected to detain, by her two wings, the fugitive goddess, whom we call Liberty, — a goddess who escapes and disappears, only to reappear, each time more proud and brilliant; but they deceived themselves, — as their sons deceive themselves, if they believe Liberty lost forever.

What joy, what confidence possessed that waiting crowd, seated or standing, as well as the long procession which, crossing the river, over the wooden bridge built in front of Chaillot, invaded the Champ de Mars, through a triumphal arch.

When the federal battalions entered, they uttered great cries of enthusiasm, and perhaps also of admiration at the picture which met their eyes, — cries which escaped from the heart through the lips.

Indeed, no such spectacle had ever before greeted the human gaze.

In half a month the Champ de Mars had been transformed, as if by enchantment, from a plain into a valley, which measured a league in circumference.

On the quadrangular sides of this valley were standing or sitting three hundred thousand persons.

In the middle was the Patriot Altar, the Altar of our

Country, accessible by four stairways, corresponding to the four faces of the obelisk which surmounted the altar.

At each angle of this monument was an immense censer filled with incense, which the National Assembly had decreed should henceforth burn for God alone.

On the four faces of the monument were inscriptions, announcing that the French people were free, and invoking other nations to share this freedom.

Oh, the great joy of our fathers at this sight, — which was so living, so profound, so real, that its echoes survive to our own day!

And yet the heavens were discoursing like Sinai's ancient oracles.

At each instant there were heavy sheets of rain, gusts of wind, black clouds, — prophetic of 1793, 1814, 1815. Then there were occasional sunbursts in the midst of the gloom, symbols of 1830 and 1848.

If a prophet had appeared, to reveal the future to this million souls, how would he have been received? As Calchas was received by the Greeks, and Cassandra by the Trojans; for on that day but two voices were heard, the voice of Hope, antiphonally responding to the call of Faith: "Lift up your hearts!" — "We lift them up unto Jehovah!"

In front of the buildings belonging to the Military School, at the farther end, galleries had been erected. These balconies, covered with drapery, and canopied with tricolored flags, were reserved for the Queen, the Court, and the National Assembly.

Two twin thrones, three feet apart, were designed for the King and for the President of the Assembly.

The King, appointed to be the supreme and absolute head of the French National Guard, *for that day only*,

transferred his command to Lafayette; and Lafayette was therefore, on that day, the Generalissimo and Constable of six millions of armed men. His fortunes had reached their culmination. Greater than himself, their decline and extinction could not be retarded. On that day he was at his zenith. Like those fantastic nocturnal apparitions, projected upon the sky, which surpass all human proportions, he had grown disproportionately, only to dissolve into vapor, vanish, and disappear; but during that federative festival, everything was real, or had the power of reality.

There were personages present who would soon go into disgrace, the King whose head would soon fall from his shoulders, the Generalissimo, whose white horse's four feet would soon bear him into exile.

In this wintry rain, amidst these tempestuous squalls, beneath occasional rays of daylight, — hardly of the sun, — filtering through the sombre vault of the clouds, the procession of federal delegates marched into this immense arena, through the three openings of the triumphal arch. Behind this advance guard, so to speak, of some twenty-five thousand men, — who separated into two circular lines, to embrace the circuit of the arena, — behind them came the electors of Paris, the city officers, and finally the National Assembly. For all these bodies places had been reserved in the galleries, built up in front of the Military School, towards which these men marched in a straight line, opening only to flow around the Patriot Altar, like waves around a rock, reuniting again on the farther side; till at last the head of the procession reached the galleries, while its undulating body, like that of a huge serpent, extended back to the entrance.

Behind the electors, the city representatives, and the National Assembly, came the rest of the procession, —

more delegates, military deputations, and local militia companies.

Each department bore its distinctive banner; but these local banners were united, enveloped, nationalized, by that grand girdle of tricolored banners, which spoke two words to the eyes and hearts of the people, *Country* and *Unity*,—words with which God's workers can do so much.

At the moment when the President of the Assembly ascended to his armchair, the King ascended to his also, and the Queen took her place in the tribune.

Alas, poor Queen! Her retinue was shabby enough. Her nearest friends had quitted her, through cowardice. Perhaps if they had known, thanks to Mirabeau, that the King had obtained twenty-five millions for his civil list, and the Queen a dower of four millions, some of these Royalist fugitives would have returned!

As for the one person whom her eyes vainly sought, Marie Antoinette knew that neither gold nor power could again draw him to her side. In his absence, her eyes longed at least to rest on the face of some devoted friend.

She asked for his brother Isidore, and wondered why the defenders of the Crown were not at their posts, near the King or at the feet of the Queen, inasmuch as royalty had so few partisans amidst that great crowd.

Nobody knew anything about Isidore de Charny; and if anybody had said, that just then he was conducting a little peasant-girl, his mistress, to a modest house on the declivity of the hill at Bellevue, every shoulder would have shrugged with pity, unless some heart had been pierced by jealousy.

Who knows, indeed, if this heiress of the Cæsars would not have given her throne and crown, would not have

consented to be an obscure peasant, — the daughter of an obscure farmer, — to be once more loved by Oliver, as Catherine was loved by his brother Isidore?

These were the thoughts revolving in her mind, when Mirabeau, catching one of her dubious looks, — half like a ray from heaven, and half like a flash from a storm-cloud, — could not refrain from exclaiming aloud: “What can that lovely magician be thinking about?”

If Cagliostro had heard these words he might have responded: “She is thinking of that fatal machine which I caused her to see in a decanter, at the Château de Taverny, and which she recognized one evening at the Tuileries, under the pen of Dr. Gilbert!” but he would have been mistaken, — this great seer, who so rarely blundered; for she was thinking of the absent Charny and his extinguished love.

Amidst the noise of five hundred drums, and two thousand other musical instruments, were heard shouts of “Long live the King! Long live the Laws! Long live the Nation!”

Suddenly there was a great silence. The King, like the President of the National Assembly, sat down.

Two hundred priests, clad in white albs, advanced towards the altar, preceded by the Bishop of Autun, Talleyrand, the patron saint of all oath-brokers, past, present, and future. On his lame foot he mounted the staircase leading to the altar, — a Mephistopheles, awaiting the Faust who was to appear on the Thirteenth Vendémiaire. A Mass, recited by the Bishop of Autun! Among so many bad omens, we have forgotten that one.

At that moment the storm redoubled its fury. One might imagine Heaven was protesting against the false priest who was about to profane the holy Sacrifice of the

Mass, and to offer, as a tabernacle for the Lord Christ, a breast prophetically soiled with future perjuries.

The department banners and the tricolored flags drew nearer the altar, forming a breezy circle, whose thousand colors were violently agitated by a southeast wind.

When Mass was over, Talleyrand descended a few steps, and blessed the national standard, and the flags from the eighty-three departments.

Then began the sacred ceremony of taking the national oath. First, Lafayette took the oath, in the name of the National Guards throughout the kingdom. Second, the President of the Assembly swore, in the name of France. Lastly, the King swore, in his own name.

Lafayette dismounted from his horse, crossed the intervening space between him and the altar, ascended the steps to the altar, drew his sword, touched with its point the Book of the Gospels, and said, in a firm, decided voice : " We swear to be ever faithful to the Nation, the Laws, the King ; to maintain, with all our might, the Constitution, decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by the King ; to protect, in conformity with the laws, the safety of persons and property, the circulation of grain, and other articles of food, in the interior of the kingdom, the receipt of the public revenues, in whatever form they exist ; to live united with all the French people, in the indissoluble bonds of fraternity."

There was a great silence during this oath. Hardly was it taken, when a hundred cannon thundered the signal to the neighboring departments.

The whole fortified city was ablaze with an immense flash, followed by the menacing thunder of human invention, — a thunder far superior to heaven's, if measured by its devastation, which long ago distanced the mischief caused by natural storms.

As the circles produced by a stone, thrown into the midst of a lake, grow larger and larger, till they are lost on its banks, so each circle of flame, each growl of thunder, enlarged itself, going from centre to circumference, from Paris to the frontiers, from the heart of France to foreign lands.

Then the President of the National Assembly arose in his turn, and all the members stood around him, while he said: "I swear to be faithful to the Nation, the Laws, the King, and to maintain, with all my might, the Constitution, decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by the King."

Hardly had he completed his oath, than again the flame broke forth, again the volleys thundered, and echoes upon echoes rolled to the farthest boundaries of France.

Then came the King's turn. He arose. Silence! Listen, all, to the voice in which he takes the national oath, — which he betrays in his heart, even while he is uttering it.

Have a care, Sire! The cloud breaks, the sky clears, the sun shines. The sun is God's eye! God sees you!

"I, King of the French, swear to use all the power delegated to me, by the State Constitutional Laws, in maintaining the Constitution, decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by myself, and to see the laws properly executed."

Oh Sire, Sire! Why, even on this occasion, did you prefer not to swear on the altar?

The Twenty-first of June might respond to the Fourteenth of July; Varennes might explain the riddle of the Champ de Mars.

False or genuine, however, this oath roused no less flame and thunder than the other two. The hundred cannon blazed, as they had for both Lafayette and the

President of the Assembly. A third time the artillery of France bore this threatening notice to the kings of Europe: "Have a care! France is afoot! Have a care, for France means to be free! Like the Roman ambassador, who carried in a fold of his cloak both peace and war, France is ready to spread her cloak over the world!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

DANCING HERE.

It was an hour of great joy with the multitude. For an instant Mirabeau forgot the Queen, and Billot forgot Catherine.

The King withdrew, amidst universal acclamations. The members of the Assembly returned to their hall, accompanied by the same escort which had graced their arrival at the arena.

As to the flag, given by Paris to the veterans of the army, it was decreed — so says the History of the Revolution, by Two Friends of Liberty — that the flag should be suspended on the walls of the Assembly Hall, as a symbol, to coming legislatures, of the happy epoch just celebrated, and as a reminder to the troops, that they should be submissive to those two conjoint higher powers, the Crown and the Assembly, without whose concurrence the military strength must not be employed.

Did Chapelier, in making this proposition, anticipate the Twenty-seventh of July, the Twenty-fourth of February, and the Second of December?

Night came on. The festival of the morning had been at the Champ de Mars. The evening festival was at the Bastille.

Eighty-three trees, covered with foliage, — as many as there were departments in the kingdom, — stood in

place of the eight towers of the prison, on the foundations whereof they were planted. Rows of lights were hung from tree to tree. In the middle rose a gigantic mast, bearing a flag, on which was the word LIBERTY. Near the ditches, in a tomb purposely left open, were interred the chains, instruments, and gates of the Bastille, together with that famous bas-relief from the old clock, representing enchained slaves. Moreover, there had been left yawning, and lighted in a lugubrious fashion, those basement dungeons, which had absorbed so many tears and stifled so many groans. If, finally, attracted by the music which sounded from amidst the trees, one found his way as far as the spot formerly occupied by the interior courtyard, there he found a ballroom, brilliantly lighted, above whose entrance were these words, which were but the fulfilment of Cagliostro's prediction :

DANCING HERE.

At one of the thousand tables set up in the vicinity, under the improvised forest, — which represented the ancient fortress almost as well as the little stones carved by Architect Palloy, — two men were recruiting their strength, exhausted by a whole day of marching, countermarching, and manœuvring. Before them were two bottles of wine, a four-pound loaf, and an enormous sausage. The youngest of the two wore the uniform of a captain in the National Guards; while the other, twice his age, wore the uniform of a federal delegate.

“By my faith,” said the younger, emptying his glass at a single draught, “it is a good thing to eat when one's hungry, and to drink when one's thirsty.” After a pause he asked : “Are you neither hungry nor thirsty, Father Billot ?”

“I have drunk and I have eaten,” was the reply, “and I now hunger and thirst for only one thing.”

“And what is that?”

“I’ll tell thee, friend Pitou, when the hour comes for my banquet.”

Pitou saw no malice in Billot’s response. However, Billot had eaten and drunk very sparingly that day, as Pitou said, despite the fatigue of the festival, and the hunger which beset him. In fact, ever since his departure from Villers Cotterets, — notwithstanding his five days, or rather five nights, of labor in the Champ de Mars, — Billot had drunk and eaten very little.

Pitou knew that certain diseases, without being otherwise serious, temporarily deprive the most robust men of their appetites; and every time he noticed how little Billot ate, the lad asked him the reason, as he did now. Billot always answered that he was not hungry, an answer which satisfied Pitou.

There was one thing, however, which perplexed Pitou. This was not Billot’s physical abstinence, for everybody is at liberty to eat or not to eat. Besides, the less Billot ate, the more remained for Pitou. What perplexed him was, the farmer’s abstinence from speech.

When Pitou ate in company, he liked to chat. He had noticed that conversation is an aid to digestion, not a hindrance; and this fact had taken such a deep root in his mind, that when Pitou ate all alone, he aided his digestion by a song.

Pitou was not melancholy. He had no motive for being sad, but quite the contrary.

For a considerable time his life at Haramont had become very agreeable. As we know, Pitou loved Catherine, or rather he *adored* her; and I ask the reader to take this word literally. How is it with the Italian or the

Spaniard, who adores the Madonna? To see Mary, to kneel before her, to pray to her, — that is his need.

What had Pitou been doing for six months? When night came, he went to Clouïse Rock. There he saw Catherine, kneeled to Catherine, prayed to Catherine; and the girl, recognizing the service he had rendered her, allowed this to go on, although her gaze was always higher and farther away.

Sometimes there was a slight feeling of jealousy in the brave boy, when he brought Catherine Isidore's letters from the post, and carried back one of hers, directed to Isidore; but, take it for all in all, his situation was incomparably better than when he returned to the farm, after his first visit to Paris, and Catherine — seeing in him only a demagogue, an enemy of nobles and aristocrats — had shown him the door, telling him there was no work on the farm for such as he.

Blind to Catherine's maternal condition, Pitou had no misgivings lest their mutual relations should not last forever.

He therefore left Haramont with the greatest regret, though forced to go away by his superior grade, which bound him to set a zealous example; so he took leave of Catherine, recommending her to Father Clouï, and promising to return as soon as possible.

Pitou therefore left nothing behind to make him sorrowful; nor had he run against anything in Paris, to rouse this sentiment in his heart.

He found Doctor Gilbert, to whom he rendered an account of the use made of his twenty-five louis, and reported the vows and thanks of the thirty-three National Guardsmen, who had been clothed with the aid of those twenty-five louis; and Doctor Gilbert gave him twenty-five louis more, to be applied, not to the exclusive use

of the Haramont National Guard, but to Pitou's own needs.

Pitou accepted these twenty-five louis simply and ingenuously. Whatsoever Monsieur Gilbert — who was a god in Pitou's eyes — saw fit to give, it could not be wrong to accept.

When God sent rain or sunshine, it never occurred to him to hold up an umbrella or a parasol, and repel the divine gifts. No, Pitou accepted both, and like the flowers, the plants, the trees, he found every gift profitable.

At this visit, after thinking an instant, Gilbert raised his handsome and thoughtful head, and said to Pitou: "I believe, my dear Pitou, that Billot has many things to tell me. Wouldst thou like, while I am talking with Billot, to visit Sebastien?"

"Yes, indeed, Monsieur Gilbert," cried Pitou, clapping his hands like a child, "I wish it awfully, but have n't dared to ask permission."

Gilbert reflected an instant. Then he took a quill, wrote a few words, sealed the letter, addressed it to his son, and said to Pitou: "Take a hack, and go after Sebastien. After what I have written, he will probably wish to make a visit. Thou wilt take him whither he wishes to go, wilt thou not, dear Pitou? Thou wilt wait at the door. He may make thee wait an hour, perhaps more, but I know thy good-nature; and, knowing thou doest me a service, thou wilt not be weary."

"Be easy," said Pitou. "I am never bored, Monsieur Gilbert. Besides, on the way I will get a morsel of bread, and if I am tired of waiting in the carriage, I can eat."

"A good idea!" smilingly responded Gilbert. "Only, hygiene says, it is not good to live by dry bread alone, but to drink while we eat."

“Then I will buy, besides the bread, a junk of hogs-head cheese and a bottle of wine.”

“Bravo!” said Gilbert.

Thus encouraged, Pitou went down and hired a cab, and was driven to College Louis le Grand, where he inquired for Sebastien, who was promenading in the private garden. Pitou lifted the boy in his arms, as Hercules did Telephus. Having embraced him at his leisure, and set him down again, Pitou gave the boy his father’s letter.

Sebastien kissed the letter, with that tender and respectful love which he cherished for his father, and then said: “Pitou, did my father tell thee that I was to go somewhere with thee?”

“Is it agreeable to thee to go with me?”

“Yes, yes,” said the boy, quickly, “yes, indeed, it is agreeable, and thou wilt tell my father how eagerly I accepted.”

“Good!” said Pitou. “It appears that this is a place where thou wilt be amused.”

“It is a place where I have been only once, Pitou, but one to which I shall gladly return.”

“In that case,” said Pitou, “it’s only necessary to notify Abbé Bérardier of thy going out, as the cab’s at the door.”

“In order to lose no time, dear Pitou,” said the youth, “go thyself to the abbé, with my father’s message. I will make my toilet, and rejoin thee in the courtyard.”

Pitou carried the message to the principal, received a permit for Sebastien, and then went down into the courtyard.

The interview with Abbé Bérardier gave great satisfaction to Pitou’s self-respect. For the first time the principal saw him, a poor peasant, sporting a helmet and

armed with a sabre, and no longer wearing the breeches, which, on the day when the Bastille was captured, a year before, had made him the cause of such commotion in the school, as well by the clothing which he lacked, as by the arms which he bore.

To-day he wore a three-cornered hat, a blue coat with white lappels, short breeches, and had the epaulets of a captain on his shoulders. To-day he bore himself with the confidence derived from the respect of one's townsmen. To-day he presented himself as a federal delegate, with a right to proper deference; and Abbé Bérardier treated him accordingly.

By the time Pitou came down the stairs from the director's office, Sebastien, who had a private chamber, came down the staircase leading to it.

Sebastien was no longer a child, but a charming lad of sixteen or seventeen, whose face was framed in chestnut hair, and whose blue eyes shot forth their juvenile flame, bright as the golden rays of dawning day.

"Here I am!" he joyously said to Pitou; "so let's go."

Pitou looked at him with such great pleasure, mingled with astonishment, that Sebastien was obliged to repeat the invitation; but at the second call, he followed the youth.

At the gate he said to Sebastien: "Hold on! Thou must be told that I don't know whither we're bound. It's for thee to give the address."

"Be easy!" said Sebastien; while to the coachman he added: "Rue Coq Heron, number nine, the first coachway from the Rue Plâtrière."

This address meant absolutely nothing to Pitou; but he entered the cab after Sebastien, without any remarks.

“My dear Pitou,” said the lad, “if the person upon whom I am going to call is at home, I may remain an hour, or even more.”

“That’s all right,” said Pitou, opening his big mouth, and laughing merrily. “That calamity was foreseen. — Here, coachy! Hold on!”

They were just passing a bakery. The hack stopped. Pitou got out, bought a two-pound loaf, and returned to the cab.

A little farther on, Pitou stopped the carriage again, before a wineshop. He went in, purchased a bottle, and returned to Sebastien once more.

Presently he stopped the carriage for the third time, in front of a pork-shop, where he bought a quarter-pound of hogshead cheese.

“There!” he said to the driver, “now go to the Rue Coq Héron as fast as you please. I’ve got all I want.”

“Good!” said Sebastien. “I see through thy plans now, and shall be easy on thy account.”

The hack trundled along the Rue Coq Héron, not stopping till it reached number nine.

As they approached the house, Sebastien manifested a feverish and increasing agitation. He stood up in the carriage, put his head out of the window, and called out to the driver, “Go ahead, coachman! hurry up!” though it must be admitted, to the credit of the driver and his two plugs, that this adjuration did not quicken their pace a bit.

However, as everything reaches its end, — the streamlet flowing into the brook, the brook into the river, the river into the ocean, — the cab reached Rue Coq Héron, as we said before, and stopped at number nine.

Without waiting for the coachman, Sebastien opened

the door, embraced Pitou for the last time, jumped to the ground, rang sharply at the door, which was opened, asked the porter for Madame de Charny, and, before the porter could answer, rushed towards the little pavilion.

The porter, seeing him to be so handsome and well-dressed a youth, did not try to stop him; but, as the Countess was at home, he contented himself with fastening the gate, after assuring himself that nobody was following the boy, and wished to come in with him.

At the expiration of five minutes, — during which Pitou attacked the lump of head-cheese with his knife, held his uncorked bottle between his knees, and crunched, with his fine teeth, the soft bread and its crispy crust — the porter opened the carriage-door, hat in hand, and addressed these words to Pitou, which he had to repeat twice: “The Countess de Charny begs Captain Pitou to do her the honor of coming in, instead of waiting for Monsieur Sebastien in the cab.”

Pitou, as we have said, had to hear the words twice; but at the second hearing he had no reason for misapprehending them, and so he was compelled, with a sigh, to swallow his mouthful, to restore — to the paper in which it had been wrapped — that part of the hogshead cheese which had been already cut off, and prop up his bottle in an angle of the cushions, in order that the wine should not be spilled.

Then, quite dumfounded by this adventure, he followed the porter; but his surprise was great when he saw Sebastien in the antechamber, in company with a beautiful woman, who pressed him to her side, as she extended the other hand to Pitou, and said: “Monsieur Pitou, you give me such great and unexpected joy, in bringing Sebastien to me, that I wish to thank you for it in person.”

Pitou stared, Pitou stammered; but Pitou did not take the hand extended to him by the beautiful and unknown lady.

“Take her hand, and kiss it!” said Sebastien. “My *mother* permits it.”

“Thy mother?” said Pitou; and Sebastien nodded affirmatively.

“Yes, his mother,” said Andrée, her looks radiant with delight, — “his mother, to whom you have brought her boy, after nine months’ absence, his mother, who never saw him but once before, and who, in the hope that you will bring him here again, will not keep her secret from you, although this secret would make a great deal of trouble, if it were known.”

When anybody appealed to Pitou’s affections or loyalty, the brave fellow could always answer without trouble or hesitation. “Oh, Madame!” he cried, seizing her hand and kissing it, “be tranquil! Your secret is here!” and drawing himself up, he laid his hand on his heart, with a certain air of dignity.

“Meanwhile, Monsieur Pitou,” pursued the Countess, “my son says you have not lunched. Go into the dining-room; and while I talk alone with Sebastien, — you will accord me that happiness, will you not? — you shall be served, and make up for lost time”

Saluting Pitou, with such a look as she had never once bestowed upon the richest noblemen of the Courts of Louis the Fifteenth and Louis the Sixteenth, she drew Sebastien across the parlor and into her bedroom, leaving Pitou, already quite stunned, to await, in the eating-room, the fulfilment of the promise she had made him.

In a few minutes this promise was indeed fulfilled. Two cutlets, a cold fowl, and a pot of preserves were placed on the table, near a bottle of bordeaux, a Venetian goblet,

—its glass as fine as lace,—and a pile of porcelain China plates.

Despite the elegance of the service, we dare not say that Pitou did not regret his two-pound loaf, his head-cheese, and his bottle of wine with the green seal.

As he was cutting up the pullet, after having absorbed the two cutlets, the door of the dining-room opened, and a young man appeared, as if about to go through it, into the parlor.

Pitou raised his head, and the young gentleman looked down, each recognizing the other, and uttering a slight sound. “Ange Pitou!” said one. “Monsieur Isidore!” said the other.

Pitou rose, his heart beating violently. The sight of this young gentleman recalled the saddest emotions Pitou had ever experienced.

As for Isidore, the sight of Pitou recalled to his mind nothing except the obligations which Catherine had told him she owed the brave fellow. Of the love which Pitou cherished towards Catherine, Isidore had not the faintest idea,—a love which Pitou had been strong enough to transform into devotion. Consequently, Isidore came straight to Pitou, in whom, in spite of his double epaulets and his uniform, Isidore could only see (such is the force of habit) the peasant from Haramont, the poacher of the Bruyère-aux-Loups, the farm-boy at Pisseleu.

“Ah, Monsieur Pitou, is it you?” he said. “I am enchanted to meet you, and offer you my thanks for the services you have rendered me.”

“Monsieur,” said Pitou, with a firm voice, although he felt a shiver through his body, “I rendered those services to Mademoiselle Catherine, and to her alone.”

“Yes, up to the moment when you knew that I loved her; but from that moment I claimed part of your help.

As in transmitting our letters, and building that little house at Clouïse Rock, you must have expended something—" and Isidore carried his hand to his pocket, as if thus to question Pitou's conscience; but Pitou checked him.

"Monsieur," said he, with that dignity which one was occasionally astonished to observe in him, "I give my services when I please, but I do not ask pay for them. I repeat to you, those services were rendered to Mademoiselle Catherine. She is my friend. If she believes that she owes me anything, she will arrange the debt with me; but you, Monsieur, *you* owe me nothing, for whatsoever I did was for Mademoiselle Catherine, and not for you. You need offer me nothing."

These words, and especially the tone in which they were spoken, impressed Isidore, who then noted, perhaps for the first time, that the man who spoke wore a captain's uniform and epaulets.

"Indeed, Monsieur Pitou," he insisted, bowing slightly, "I do owe you something, and I have something to offer you. I owe you my thanks, and I offer you my hand. I hope you will do me the favor to accept my thanks and to grasp my hand."

Isidore's reply was so high-toned, and the gesture which accompanied it so lofty, that Pitou was conquered, and extended his hand. The ends of his fingers touched Isidore's, just as the Countess appeared on the threshold of the door leading into the parlor.

"Monsieur Isidore," she said, "you asked for me, and here I am."

Isidore bowed to Pitou, and accepted the Countess's invitation to enter the parlor. As he was about to close the door, doubtless in order to be alone with the Countess, Andrée took hold of the door, which thus remained half-

open. This was evidently her intention. Pitou could therefore hear whatever was said in the parlor. He noticed that the door at the opposite end of the parlor, leading into the bedroom, was also open ; so that Sebastian, although invisible to Pitou, could hear, as well as Pitou himself, what took place between the Countess and the Viscount.

“You asked for me, Monsieur ?” said the Countess to her brother-in-law. “May I learn to what I owe the honor of this visit ?”

“Madame, I yesterday received news of Olivier. As in the other letters which I have received from him, he charged me to lay his remembrances at your feet. He does not yet know when he will return, but he would be glad to hear of your welfare, — whether you wish to send a letter through me, or simply to charge me with your compliments.”

“Monsieur, I have not been able, until now, to answer the letter written me by Monsieur de Charny when he went away, because I do not know where he is ; but I will gladly profit by your good-will, to send him my compliments, as a respectful and submissive wife. To-morrow, if you will take a letter to Monsieur de Charny, I will hold that letter ready for your convenience.”

“By all means, write your letter, Madame,” said Isidore ; “only, instead of coming for it to-morrow, I will do so in five or six days. I have to make a journey, which is absolutely necessary. How long it will last, I do not know ; but as soon as I return, I will call upon you with my respects, and receive your commissions.”

Isidore bowed to the Countess, who returned the salutation, and doubtless showed him another way out ; for in retiring he did not pass through the eating-room, where Pitou, having brought the pullet to reason, as he had

previously done with the two cutlets, began to attack the pot of sweetmeats.

This jar had been long ago conquered, and left as dry as the bottle, from which Pitou had squeezed the last drops of bordeaux, before the Countess reappeared, leading Sebastien.

It would have been difficult to recognize the prim Mademoiselle de Taverney, or the grave Countess de Charny, in the young mother, — her eyes sparkling with joy, her mouth lighted with an ineffable smile, — who stood leaning on her boy. Under the tears of a happiness hitherto unknown, her pale cheeks had taken on a rosy hue, which surprised Andrée herself; for maternal love, which is half a woman's existence, had re-entered her heart during the two hours passed with her child.

Once more she covered Sebastien's face with kisses. Then she restored him to Pitou, pressing the rough fist of the brave fellow between her white hands, which seemed like marble, softened and warmed.

On his side, Sebastien embraced Andrée with that ardor which he put into everything he did; and which had cooled only for an instant towards his mother, by reason of that imprudent exclamation, which Andrée could not keep back, when he talked to her about Gilbert, nearly a year before.

During his solitude, in College Louis le Grand, during his long walks in the private gardens, the sweet maternal phantom had often reappeared, and love had returned little by little to the child's heart; so that when Gilbert's letter reached him, permitting him to go to his mother for an hour or two, under Pitou's guidance, that letter gratified the most tender and secret desires of his heart.

It was Gilbert's delicacy which had retarded this interview. If he conducted Sebastien to her himself, he knew his presence would deprive her of half the happiness of seeing her son; and if he intrusted the matter to anybody but Pitou, — that good heart and innocent soul, — Gilbert knew he should compromise a secret not wholly his own.

Pitou took leave of the Countess without asking any questions, without even looking inquisitively about. Leading Sebastien, who half turned back, to exchange kisses with his mother, they regained the cab, where Pitou found his head-cheese safely wrapped in its paper, and his bottle of wine still ensconced in its corner.

In this experience, as in the journey from Villers Cotterets, nothing had happened to sadden Pitou.

In the evening Pitou worked in the Champ de Mars, where he went also the next day, and again on the days following. He received compliments from Monsieur Maillard, who recognized him, and from Monsieur Bailly, to whom he made himself known. He again met Élie and Hullin, two conquerors of the Bastille, like himself; and he saw, without envy, the medals they wore in their buttonholes, to which he and Billot had as much right as anybody in the world.

At last, when the famous day arrived, he took his place in the ranks with Billot, at the Porte Saint Denis, in the morning. From the ends of three different strings, hanging from hospitable windows, Pitou detached a ham, a loaf, and a bottle of wine.

He went near the high Altar of Patriotism, where he danced the farandole, holding an actress from the opera with one hand, and a Bernardine nun with the other. When the King entered, Pitou returned to his place; and he had the satisfaction of seeing himself represented by

Lafayette in the oath-taking, which Pitou felt to be a great honor.

When the oaths were all taken, the guns fired, the flourish of trumpets over, and Lafayette, on his white horse, passed along the line of his dear comrades, Pitou had the great satisfaction of being recognized by his General, and getting one shake of the hand, out of the thirty or forty thousand which Lafayette distributed along his way.

After this, Pitou left the Champ de Mars with Billot. They stopped to see the games, illuminations, and fireworks on the Champs Élysées. They walked along the boulevards; and then, in order not to lose any of the diversions of the great day, instead of going to bed, as anybody else would have done, — whose legs would have fairly doubled up with weariness, — Pitou, who never knew what it was to be weary, came to the Bastille, where he found an unoccupied table in one corner, upon which he had ordered two loaves of bread, two bottles of wine, and a sausage.

He did not know, when Isidore announced an absence of several days, that Isidore would pass this time in Villers Cotterets. He did not know that, six days later, Catherine was brought to bed with a boy, that she left Clouise Rock in the night; that she arrived in Paris with Isidore on that feast-day morning, that she uttered a terrified cry, when she saw Pitou and Billot from her carriage window, at the Porte Saint Denis.

Not knowing these things, he had nothing to make him sad. On the contrary, he found delight in his labor at the Champ de Mars; in his meeting with Maillard, Bailly, Élie, and Hullin; in the farandole, where he danced with a figurante and a Bernardine sister; in his kind recognition by Lafayette, and the squeeze of the

hand he had the honor of receiving from the General ; and finally in the fireworks, the illuminations, the Bastille display, and this table spread with bread, sausage, and two bottles of wine.

The one thing which saddened Pitou was the sadness of Billot.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

As we have seen, at the commencement of the preceding chapter, Pitou was resolved to be as gay as possible himself, and dissipate Billot's sadness ; so, as we have said, Pitou was determined to talk to Billot.

After a moment of silence, during which he appeared to be laying in a supply of words, — as a rifleman, before beginning to shoot, provides himself with a store of cartridges, — Pitou broke the ice : “ Tell me, Father Billot, who the Devil would have guessed, only a year and two days ago, when Mademoiselle Catherine gave me a louis, and cut the cords which bound my hands, — with this very knife, — hold on, here it is ! — who would have expected, I say, that in only one year and two days so many events would turn up ? ”

“ Nobody ! ” answered Billot, but without our Pitou's noticing what a terrible look shot from the farmer's eyes, when Catherine's name was mentioned.

Pitou waited, to see if Billot would not add a few syllables more, to the one solitary word wherewith he responded to the lad's long paragraph, which seemed to Pitou to be passably well turned.

Seeing that Billot maintained his silence, Pitou, like the rifleman already mentioned, reloaded his piece, and fired a second time.

“ Say now, Father Billot, who would have said, when you ran after me over Ermenonville Plain ; when you

almost broke Cadet all up, and made me do so too, as you overtook me, called my name, and compelled me to mount your crupper; when you changed horses at Dammartin, in order to get the quicker to Paris; when we reached Paris in time to see the barriers afire; when we were hustled in the Faubourg Vilette, by the German fellers; when we met a procession shouting long life to Necker and Orleans; when you had the honor of carrying one staff of a platform, on which were the busts of those two great men, while I was trying to save Margot's life; when the Royal German Regiment fired upon us in the Place Vendôme, and the bust of Monsieur Necker tumbled on your head; when we escaped down the Rue Saint Honoré, calling, 'To arms! They are assassinating our brothers;' — who, I say, would then have supposed that we should capture the Bastille?"

"Nobody!" replied the old farmer, as laconically as before.

"The Devil!" said Pitou to himself, after waiting an instant. "It appears that this is all on one side. — Well, here goes for a third volley!"

Then he went on aloud: "Say, Father Billot, who would have believed, when we took the Bastille, that a year and a day afterwards I should be captain, and you a federal delegate; and that we should be supping together, the two of us, — me, especially, — under this Bastille of leaves, planted just here, where the old Bastille stood? Hey? Who would have believed it?"

"Nobody!" repeated Billot, with a more melancholy air than ever.

Pitou saw there was no way of making the farmer talk; but he consoled himself with the thought that he had not parted with the right to talk himself. He

therefore kept on, leaving Billot the right to respond whenever it pleased him.

“When I remember, it is just a year since we entered the Hôtel de Ville ; that you took Monsieur de Flesselles, — poor Flesselles, where is he now, and where is the Bastille ? — that you took him by the collar ; that you made him furnish you with powder, while I mounted guard at the door, — and, besides the powder, a note to Monsieur Delaunay ; that after the powder was distributed, we quitted Monsieur Marat, who went to the Hôtel des Invalides, while we two came to the Bastille ; that at the Bastille we found Monsieur Gonchon, — the Mirabeau of the People, as they called him — Do you know what has become of Monsieur Gonchon, Father Billot ? Hey ? Don’t you know what has become of him ?”

Billot this time contented himself with a negative shake of the head.

“You don’t know ?” continued Pitou. “Neither do I. Perhaps there has happened to him, what has happened to the Bastille, what has happened to Monsieur de Flesselles, — what will happen to us all,” philosophically added Pitou : “*Pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris*, — Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return ! — It was through the gateway which stood right there, but is there no longer, that you entered the Bastille, after making Monsieur Maillard write the famous billet, which I was to read to the people, if you did not reappear. There, where those old chains and handcuffs are, in that great hole which resembles a ditch, — that is where you met Monsieur Delaunay. Poor man, I can see him now, in his coat of unbleached linen, his three-cornered hat, with his red ribbon and his sword-cane ! There is another, who has gone to find Flesselles !”

As Billot still maintained silence, Pitou kept on :

“ Think of it ! Why, Monsieur Delaunay showed you the old Bastille from bottom to top, while you studied it and measured it, — those walls, thirty feet thick at the base, and fifteen at the summit. Why, you climbed up one of the towers with him, and threatened to jump off with him, if he was n’t very careful. To think, when you came down, that he showed you that piece of artillery, which, ten minutes afterward, would have sent me where Flesselles now is, — and poor Delaunay himself, — if I had n’t found an angle of protection. Well, at last, after seeing all this, you said, — as if it were a matter of scaling a hayloft, a dovecote, or a windmill : ‘ Friends, let us take the Bastille ! ’ And we did take it, that famous old Bastille, — took it so thoroughly, that to-day there is not one stone left on another ; and here we are, sitting in the very place where it once stood, eating sausage and drinking burgundy, — sitting on the very spot where stood the tower called the Third Berthaudière, where Doctor Gilbert was shut up.”

Still the farmer was silent, but Pitou continued his reflections : “ What a singular affair it was ! When I recall all that piece of work, all those shouts, those rumors, the noise — Hold on ! Talking of noise, what’s going on over there ? Say, Father Billot, something’s up ! Somebody’s going by. Everybody’s up ! Everybody’s running ! Come and see, with the rest of the world ! Come, Father Billot, come on ! ”

Pitou passed his hand under Billot’s arm, and started him up ; and both went to the side whence the noise proceeded, — Pitou with curiosity, and Billot with complete indifference.

The noise was occasioned by one man, who had the rare faculty of raising a furor wherever he went.

In the midst of the noise was heard the cry, “ Long

live Mirabeau!" from a thousand vigorous throats, — the throats of men who are the last to change their opinions about leaders whom they have once fairly adopted.

It was indeed Mirabeau, who, with a woman on his arm, had come to visit the new Bastille. He was recognized, and this raised all the coil. The woman was veiled.

Anybody except Mirabeau would have been frightened at having such a crowd at his heels, especially as, amidst the glorifying voices, were heard some dull yet threatening cries, — such as followed the chariot of the Roman conqueror, when some one called out to him: "Cæsar, forget not thou art mortal."

Like a bird in the tempest, this man of storms seemed to belong in the midst of thunder and lightning. He walked through the tumult with a smiling face, with a calm eye and masterful gesture, still holding on his arm the unknown woman, who shivered before the breath of this terrible popularity. Doubtless, like Semele, the foolish creature had wished to see Jupiter; and here was his thunder, ready to consume her.

"Ah, Monsieur de Mirabeau!" said Pitou. "Here, it's the Mirabeau of the Nobility. You recollect, Father Billot, it was just here that we saw Gonchon, the Mirabeau of the People, and I told you I didn't know how it was with the Mirabeau of the Nobility, but I found the Mirabeau of the People homely enough. Well, do you know, now that I've seen both, I find one as ugly as the other? but this don't prevent me from showing my respect for so great a man."

Pitou stepped upon a chair, and from the chair to the table, hoisted his three-cornered hat on the point of his sword, and shouted: "Long live Mirabeau!"

Billot did not utter a sign of sympathy or antipathy.

He simply crossed his arms over his brawny breast, and murmured, in a melancholy tone : “ They say he betrays the people ! ”

“ Bah ! ” said Pitou. “ They said as much of all the great men of antiquity, from Aristides to Cicero ; ” and with a full voice, more sonorous than before, he cheered for Mirabeau, till the illustrious orator disappeared, amidst a vortex of men, cries, and turmoil.

“ That ’s all right ! ” said Pitou, jumping down from his table. “ I ’m very glad I ’ve seen Monsieur de Mirabeau. — Now let ’s go and finish our second bottle, and get the better of our sausage ! ” and he led the farmer back to the table, where the remains of the repast, almost absorbed by Pitou alone, still awaited them. They found a third chair drawn up to their table ; and a man was sitting in it, who appeared to be waiting for them.

Pitou looked at Billot, who looked at the Unknown.

True, this was a day of fraternization. Consequently, some familiarity was allowable among fellow-citizens ; but in the opinion of Pitou, who had not yet finished the second bottle or devoured the whole sausage, this was a liberty almost as great as that taken with the Chevalier de Grammont, by an unknown gamester ; only that person, whom Anthony Hamilton, the Count de Grammont’s brother-in-law, called the Little Pumpkin, asked pardon of Grammont, for his great familiarity ; whereas this Unknown asked pardon neither of Pitou nor Billot, but looked at them, on the contrary, with a humorous expression which seemed natural to him.

Billot was evidently in no mood to bear this look without explanation, for he walked quickly up to the Unknown ; but before the farmer had time to open his mouth or make a gesture, the Unknown gave a Masonic sign, to which Billot at once responded.

The two men were not acquainted, it is true, but they were brothers. Besides, the Unknown, like Billot, wore the costume of a federal delegate ; although, by certain peculiarities in that costume, Billot remembered that the man wearing it had been one of the group of strangers who came with Anacharsis Clootz, when they appeared at the festival, as deputies from the Human Race.

At this sign, made by the Unknown and recognized by Billot, the farmer and Pitou resumed their places. Billot even bowed his head, by way of salutation, while Pitou smiled graciously. As both seemed to question the Unknown by their looks, he was the first to speak.

“Brothers, you do not know me ; but as for me, I know both of you.”

Billot looked steadfastly at the Unknown ; but the more outspoken Pitou said : “Bah ! Do you then really know us ?”

“I know thee, Captain Pitou ; and I know thee, Farmer Billot.”

“You ‘ve hit it !” said Pitou.

“Why this gloomy air, Billot ?” asked the stranger. “Is it because, having been a conqueror of the Bastille, and the first to pass through its portals, they have forgotten to hang a Fourteenth-of-July medal in thy button-hole, and render thee such honors as have been this day paid to Maillard, Élie, and Hullin ?”

Billot smiled, like a man misunderstood, and said : “Brother, if thou knowest me, thou must know that such a disappointment as that would not break *my* heart.”

“Is it because, in the generosity of thy heart, thou didst try in vain to oppose the murder of Delaunay, Foulon, and Berthier ?”

“I did what I could, and according to my strength, to

prevent these crimes," said Billot. "More than once have I seen those victims in my dreams, but neither of them ever accused me of the crime of their taking-off."

"Is it because, on returning to thy farm, soon after the Fifth of October, thy granaries were found empty and thy fields fallow?"

"I'm rich," said Billot. "What matters the loss of a single harvest?"

The Unknown looked Billot full in the face, and asked: "Is it because thy daughter Catherine —?"

"Silence!" said the farmer, grasping the Unknown's arm. "Don't talk about it!"

"Why not, — if I speak to thee in order to aid thy revenge?"

"That's a different matter!" said Billot, smiling and growing pale simultaneously.

Pitou forgot to eat and drink. He looked at this man, as one might gaze at a magician.

"Thy vengeance? How dost thou hope to accomplish it?" smilingly asked the Unknown. "Tell me! Is it by meanly killing one individual, as thou hast wished to do?"

Billot became livid, and Pitou felt a shiver run down his back.

"Or is it by pursuing his whole caste?"

"By pursuing them all," said Billot, "for the crime of one is the crime of all. As Monsieur Gilbert said to me, when I complained to him: 'Poor Billot! What has come to thee has already happened to a hundred thousand fathers! What would these young noblemen do, if they could n't lead astray the daughters of common folks, — or the old ones, if they could n't eat at the King's expense.' Doctor Gilbert is wise!"

"He told thee so, Gilbert?"

“Thou knowest him?”

The Unknown laughed and said: “I know everybody, as I do thee, — thee, Billot, the farmer of Pisseleu; as I know Pitou, captain of the Haramont National Guards; as I know the Vicomte de Charny, Lord of Boursonnes; as I know Catherine.”

“I have already bidden thee not pronounce that name, brother!”

“And why so?”

“Because there is no longer any Catherine.”

“What has become of her?”

“She’s dead!”

“No, she’s not dead, Father Billot,” cried Pitou, “for —”

Doubtless he would have added, “for I know where she is, and I see her every day;” but Billot repeated, in a voice which admitted no rejoinder: “She’s dead!”

Pitou bowed. He understood. For others, Catherine might be alive; but to her father, she was dead.

“Ah!” said the Unknown, “if I were Diogenes, I should extinguish my lantern, for I believe I have found one *man*.” Then he rose, and offered his hand to Billot, saying: “Brother, while this good fellow drinks his bottle and eats his sausage, come and take a turn with me.”

“Willingly, for I begin to comprehend thy proposal.”

Taking the arm of the Unknown, Billot added to Pitou: “Wait for me here! I’ll come back!”

“Say, Father Billot,” said Pitou, “if you’re long away, I shall be bored; for I have only a half-bottle of wine left, a fragment of bread, and a bit of their famous sausage.”

“All right, my brave Pitou,” said the Unknown. “They know the measure of thy appetite, and they

will bring something more, to make thee a patient waiter."

Sure enough. Hardly had the Unknown and Billot disappeared behind one of the walls of verdure, than another sausage, a second loaf, and a third bottle graced Pitou's table.

Though he did not understand what was going on, Pitou was anxious and surprised; but astonishment and anxiety, like every other emotion, made Pitou's stomach feel very hollow. He therefore felt, despite his astonishment and anxiety, an irresistible desire to do honor to the provisions brought him; and he was yielding to this desire with his accustomed ardor, when Billot returned quietly and alone, but with a joyful light in his face, and resumed his place at the table, opposite Pitou.

"Well now, what's the news?" he asked of the farmer.

"That thou wilt depart for home alone on the morrow, my boy."

"And you?"

"I? I shall remain here," said Billot.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LODGE IN RUE PLÂTRIÈRE.

IF our readers wish, — a week having rolled away since the events just recorded, — if our readers wish, we say, to again meet some of the chief personages of our narrative, — personages who have not only played important rôles in the past, but will play these rôles in the future, — then our readers must place themselves with us, near the fountain in the Rue Plâtrière, wherein we used to see Gilbert, when he was a lodger at Rousseau's house, come and wet his dry bread.

Once near this fountain, let us watch and follow a man who will soon pass by, and whom we may recognize, not indeed any longer by his federal delegate's costume, — a costume which, after the departure from Paris of the hundred thousand provincial delegates, could not be worn without attracting greater attention to the wearer than our friend would desire, — but by the simpler costume, although quite as well known, of a well-to-do farmer, from the environs of the city.

Needless to tell the reader that this personage is no other than Billot, whom we may follow along the Rue Saint Honoré, past the gates of the Palais Royal, — which has resumed its nocturnal splendor since the return of Orleans, after his eight months' exile in London, — till the farmer takes the Rue Grenelle at his left, and turns unhesitatingly into the Rue Plâtrière.

As he reaches the fountain, where we are waiting for him, he pauses, hesitates; not that his heart fails him, — for those acquainted with the courageous farmer know perfectly well, that if he made up his mind to go to hell, he would go without a tremor, — but evidently because his information is imperfect.

Indeed, it is not difficult to see, — especially for us, who act as spies over his footsteps, — that he examines attentively every door, like a man who is bound to make no mistake.

Notwithstanding this careful examination, he goes nearly two-thirds the length of the street, without finding what he seeks. At that point the way is interrupted by wayfarers, gathered about a group of street musicians, one of whom sings, in a loud voice, a topical song on the events of the day, — a song which would not probably rouse any great interest, if one or two couplets, in each stanza, did not relieve the other verses, by their personal hits.

Among others was one song, called “The Riding School,” which raised great merriment in the crowd. As the National Assembly occupied the building formerly used as a riding-school, not only were the different parties in the Assembly compared with the colors of the equine race, — whites and blacks, chestnuts and bays, — but different members of the Assembly were designated by epithets applicable to horses. Mirabeau was called the Petulant; Count Clermont Tonnerre was called the Skittish; Abbé Maury, the Balky; Thouret, the Bolter; Bailly, the Lucky.

Billot stopped an instant to listen to these attacks, more tart than witty, and then glided to the right, towards the houses, till he disappeared among the crowd.

He had possibly found what he sought, while amidst

the crowd, for after thus leaving one side of the street he did not return to the other.

Following Billot's footsteps, let us also see what the presence of the crowd now hides from us.

There is a low door, surmounted by three initials traced in red chalk, which are doubtless the symbols of reunion for that night, and to be rubbed out to-morrow morning. These three letters are an L, a P, and a D.

This deep-set door seems like the entrance of a cave from which you descend several steps into a gloomy lobby.

Doubtless the second direction confirmed the first; for after regarding these three letters with attention, — a sign insufficient for Billot, who could not read, it will be remembered, — the farmer went down the steps, counting them one by one as he did so, and boldly entered the passage-way at the bottom.

At the end of this passage a pale light trembled. In front of this light was seated a man, reading, or pretending to read, a newspaper.

At the noise of Billot's steps this man arose, placed one finger against his breast, and awaited the farmer's arrival.

Billot held out the corresponding finger, by way of reply, and then pressed it on his lips, like a padlock.

This was probably the countersign expected by the mysterious doorkeeper, for he pushed open a door with his right hand, a door entirely invisible when it was shut, and allowed Billot to see a steep and narrow staircase, which apparently plunged into the very earth.

Billot entered. Silently and swiftly the door closed behind him.

This time the farmer counted seventeen steps; and in spite of the dumbness to which he was apparently

condemned, he said, in a low voice: "Good! Her am!"

A curtain hung before a doorway, a few paces in front of him. Passing to the right of this curtain he lifted it and found himself in a large, circular, subterranean hall where some fifty persons were already assembled.

Into this hall our readers descended fifteen or sixty years ago, under the lead of Rousseau.

As in Rousseau's days, the walls were hung with red and white tapestry, into which were woven the compass, square, and level.

A single lamp, hanging from the vaulted ceiling, threw a feeble light over the middle of the circle, and gave a certain brightness; but this was insufficient to reach those who remained outside its circumference, not wishing to be recognized, perhaps.

A platform, accessible by four steps, was provided for speakers and candidates; and on this platform, in the part nearest the wall, was a solitary desk, and also an empty armchair, for the president.

In a few minutes the hall was so full, that it was almost impossible to move about. There were all sorts of conditions of men present, from the peasant to the prince. Each came in alone, as Billot had done. If they did not recognize the others, or were not recognized by them, the new-comers took their places as chance or convenience directed.

Each of these men wore, under his coat or over his coat, the Masonic apron, if he were simply a Mason; or the scarf of the *Illuminés*, if he belonged to one of the bodies,—that is, had been initiated into the high mysteries.

Only three men were without the latter insignia, and wore simply the Masonic apron. One of these

Billot. Another was a young man about twenty-two years old. The third was a man of forty-two, whose manners indicated him as belonging to the highest classes of society.

A few seconds after the last man had arrived, and without more ceremony than attended the entrance of the subordinate members of the association, a secret door opened, and the president appeared, wearing the insignia of the Grand Orient and of the Sublime Kophtha.

Billot uttered a feeble cry of astonishment. This president, before whom all heads bowed, was no other than the federal delegate Billot had encountered at the Bastille.

The president slowly ascended the platform, and said turning towards the assemblage: "Brothers, there are two things to be done to-day. I have to receive three new candidates. I have also to give an account of my work, from the day when I undertook it, until now; for this work becomes hourly more difficult, and it is your right to learn if I continue worthy of your confidence and mine to learn if I still receive it. It is by receiving light from you, and imparting it to you in return, that I am able to march along in the gloomy and terrible world in which I am engaged. Now, let the chiefs of the order alone remain in the hall, while we proceed to the reception or rejection of the three applicants who come before us. When these three applicants have been either accepted or rejected, all the members may return to the meeting, from the first to the last; for it is in the presence of all, and not merely of the Supreme Circle, that I wish to report my conduct, and receive blame or praise."

At these words another door was opened, opposite the one which had already been disclosed. Through this

THE LODGE IN RUE PLÂTRIÈRE.

second door could be seen extensive vaulted cellars, similar to the crypts of an ancient basilica. Like a procession of spectres, the crowd silently retreated beneath these arches, lighted here and there by copper lanterns whose light was just sufficient to "render darkness visible," — as the poet expresses it.

Three men only remained, — the three candidates who, as it chanced, were leaning against the wall, at equal distances from one another. All three looked at each other in astonishment; for then only did they learn who were to be the three heroes of the occasion.

At that moment the door by which the president entered was again opened. Six masked men came and stood near the armchair, three on the right and three on the left.

"Numbers Two and Three will withdraw awhile," said the chairman. "Only the Supreme Chiefs are allowed to know the secrets which attend the acceptance or rejection of a brother Mason, who wishes to enter the higher order of the *Illuminés*."

The young man and the aristocratic-looking man retired to the corridor by which they first came in. Billot remained alone.

"Approach!" said the chairman, after an instant's silence, whose only purpose was to allow the two candidates time to withdraw.

"What is thy name among the profane?" asked the president.

"François Billot."

"What is thy name among the elect?"

"Force."

"Where didst thou first see the light?"

"In the Friends of Truth Lodge, at Soissons."

"How old art thou?"

“Seven years ;” and Billot made a sign indicating that he had been advanced to the grade of Master in the Masonic Order.

“Why dost thou desire to take a higher degree, and be received among us ?”

“Because I have been told that this degree is one step nearer the universal light.”

“Hast thou godparents ?”

“Only the man who is now in front of me, who himself was the first to suggest my application ;” and Billot looked straight at the presiding officer.

“What sentiments lead thee to desire to walk in the way which may be opened to thee ?”

“Hatred of the mighty and love of equality.”

“What will vouch for thy love of equality and hatred of the mighty ?”

“The word of a man who has never broken that word.”

“What has inspired in thee this love of equality ?”

“The inferior condition in which I was born.”

“What has led to this hatred of the mighty ?”

“That is my secret, — a secret known to thee. Why dost thou wish me to repeat aloud, what I hesitate to say to myself ?”

“Wilt thou walk, and wilt thou promise to persuade others to walk, in this way of equality, according to thy strength and ability ?”

“Yes.”

“According to thy strength and ability, wilt thou overturn every obstacle to the liberty of France and the emancipation of the world ?”

“Yes.”

“Art thou freed from prior engagements ; or, if any engagements have been entered into, art thou ready to

break them, if they involve aught contrary to the promise now made?"

"Yes."

The president turned towards the six masked men, and said: "Brothers, this is a true man. I, myself, invite him to become one of us. A great sorrow binds him to our cause, by the brotherhood of hate. He has already done much for the Revolution, and can do yet more. I can gladly vouch for him, for his past, his present, and his future."

"Let him be received!" said the six consulting voices unanimously.

"Thou hearest?" said the president. "Art thou ready to take the oath?"

"Dictate the oath, and I will repeat it!" said Billot.

The chairman raised his hand, and slowly and solemnly said: "In the name of the crucified Son, swear to break all fleshly ties which now bind thee to father, mother, brothers, sisters, wife, kindred, friends, sweetheart, king, benefactors, or any other being or beings to whom thou mayest have pledged, or shalt hereafter pledge, thy faith, obedience, gratitude, or service."

Billot repeated, with a voice as firm as the chairman's, the words which the latter had spoken.

"Now," said the president, "from this hour thou art freed from any so-called oath, made to the country and its laws. Swear also to reveal to the new chief, when thou hast acknowledged, whatever thou hast seen or done, read or heard, learned or guessed, or shalt see, or hear, read, learn, or guess, and to search out, as a spy, what is not apparent to the eye."

"I swear it!" repeated Billot.

"Swear to honor and respect poison, sword, and fire, as the promptest agents, sure and necessary, for purging

the globe of all who try to debase truth, or snatch it from our hands."

"I swear it!"

"Swear to avoid Naples, Rome, Spain, and every country under the curse. Swear to flee from the temptation to reveal anything of what thou shalt see or hear in our meetings; for the lightning is not swifter to strike than will be the invisible knife to find the traitor, wherever he may be hidden."

"I swear!"

"And now be thou Enlightened, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost!"

A brother concealed in the shadow opened the door of the crypt, where the inferior members of the order were promenading, waiting for the triple reception to be over. The president made a sign to Billot, who went to join those with whom he was now affiliated, by the terrible oath he had taken.

"Number Two," said the chairman, in a loud voice, as soon as the door closed behind the new disciple.

The tapestry covering the lobby door was slowly pushed aside, and there entered the young man dressed in black. He let the tapestry fall behind him, and stopped on the threshold, waiting for the word which was to be spoken.

"Approach!" said the president, and the young man did so.

As we have already said, he was a young man of twenty or twenty-two years, who might have passed for a woman, so white and fine was his skin. His enormous and close-fitting cravat, which he alone wore at that epoch, might have suggested that the lightness and transparency of his skin was not principally caused by the nobility of his blood, but, on the contrary, that this whiteness arose from

some unknown disease ; for despite the great height of his cravat, his neck appeared relatively small. His forehead was low, and the top of his head appeared depressed. His hair, without being longer in front than it was the fashion to wear it, almost reached his eyes ; and behind it descended almost to his shoulders. There was a automatic rigidity about him, which made this young man, on the very threshold of life, appear like an envoy from the other world or a candidate for the tomb.

The president regarded him with some attention, before beginning the interrogation ; but this look, of mixed astonishment and curiosity, did not make the young man lower his steady gaze. He waited.

“ What is thy name among the profane ? ”

“ Antoine Saint-Just.”

“ What is thy name among the elect ? ”

“ Humility.”

“ Where didst thou first see the light ? ”

“ In the lodge called Humanitarian, at Laon.”

“ What is thy age ? ”

“ Five years ; ” and the candidate made a sign to show that he had reached the degree of Fellow Craft in Freemasonry.

“ Why dost thou wish to take a step higher, and be received among us ? ”

“ Because it is the instinct of man to aspire to the highest, and on the heights the air is purer and the light more brilliant.”

“ Hast thou some pattern before thy mind ? ”

“ The Genevan Philosopher, the Man of Nature, the immortal Rousseau.”

“ Hast thou sponsors ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ How many ? ”

“Two.”

“Who are they?”

“Robespierre the elder and Robespierre the younger.

“With what sentiment seekest thou to enter the world which may open before thee?”

“With faith.”

“Whither ought that way to lead France and the world?”

“France into greater liberty, and the whole world into enfranchisement.”

“What wouldst thou give to lead France and the world to this end?”

“My life, which is all I own, having already given it in property.”

“Wilt thou walk, and persuade others about thee to walk, in this way of liberty and enfranchisement, according to the measure of thy strength and ability?”

“I will both walk in this way, and compel others to do so.”

“According to thy strength and ability, wilt thou overturn every obstacle encountered on the road?”

“I will!”

“Art thou free from all entanglements; and if thou art under any engagements, contrary to the vows just made, wilt thou break those engagements?”

“I am free.”

The chairman turned to the six masked men, saying, “Brothers, you have heard?”

“Yes,” responded the six members of the Supreme Circle, all at once.

“Has he spoken the truth?”

“Yes,” they again responded.

“Is it your opinion that he should be received?”

“Yes,” they responded, for the last time.

“Art thou ready to take the oath?” demanded the chairman, of the candidate.

“I am ready,” answered Saint-Just.

Word for word the president repeated the triple oath, which he had previously administered to Billot; and at each pause Saint-Just answered, with a firm and strident voice, “I swear!”

The oath taken, the same door opened, under the hand of an invisible brother, and Saint-Just retired, with the same stiff demeanor which characterized his entrance, leaving behind him not a tinge of doubt or regret.

The president waited till there was time to close the door of the crypt, and then called for Number Three.

A second time the tapestry was lifted, and the third applicant appeared.

As we said before, this was a man forty or forty-two years old, with a high color, a face almost pimpled, but breathing — despite these signs of vulgarity — an aristocratic air, mingled with a whiff of Anglomania, visible at first acquaintance.

His costume, although elegant, displayed something of the severity which was becoming fashionable in France, and the true source whereof was in the relations we had begun to have with America.

His step, without being really vacillating, was neither so firm as Billot’s nor so stiff as Saint-Just’s.

“Approach!”

The candidate obeyed.

“What is thy name among the profane?”

“Louis Philippe Joseph, Duc d’Orléans.”

“What is thy name among the elect?”

“Égalité.”

“Where didst thou first see the light?”

“In Free Men’s Lodge, Paris.”

“What age art thou?”

“I have no longer any age,” and the Duke made Masonic sign, to show that he had been elevated to dignity of the Croix Rose, or Rosy Cross.

“Why dost thou desire to be received among us?”

“Having lived always among the great, I desire to live among *men*. Having lived always among enemies I wish now to live among brethren.”

“Hast thou sponsors?”

“I have two.”

“How are they named?”

“Disgust and Hate!”

“With what special desire dost thou wish to enter way which opens before thee?”

“The desire for vengeance.”

“On whom?”

“On a man who has misunderstood me, a woman who has humiliated me.”

“What art thou willing to give, in order to reach the end?”

“My fortune; more than my fortune, my life; more than my life, my honor.”

“Art thou free from all other engagements; or thou hast made any pledge, contrary to the promise now made, wilt thou break it?”

“Since yesterday, every other bond is broken.”

“Do you hear, brothers?” said the chairman, again turning towards his masked associates.

“Yes.”

“You know this man, who offers himself as a warrior with us?”

“Yes.”

“Knowing him, is it your mind that he be received into our ranks?”

“Yes, but he must take the oath.”

“Knowest thou the oath which remains for thee to pronounce?” said the chairman to the Prince.

“No; but propose it to me, and I will take it, whatsoever it be.”

“It is terrible, especially for *thee*.”

“Not more terrible than the outrages I have received.”

“So terrible, that, after having heard it, we declare thee free to depart, if thou doubtest, even at the last moment, thine ability to keep it, in all its rigor.”

“Pronounce it!”

The president fixed his eyes on the candidate with a piercing look. As if to prepare the Duke gradually for the sanguinary pledge, he inverted the usual order of the paragraphs, beginning with the second instead of the first.

“Swear to honor steel, fire, and poison, as the surest agents, prompt and necessary, for purging the globe, by the death of those who seek to debase truth, and snatch it from us.”

“I swear,” said the Prince, in a firm voice.

“Swear to break all fleshly ties, which still bind thee to father, mother, brothers, sisters, wife, mistress, kindred, friends, kings, benefactors, or any other human being to whom thou mayest promise faith, obedience, gratitude, or service.”

The Duke stood silent a moment, and cold sweat could be seen standing in pearls on his forehead.

“I have pronounced the oath to thee,” said the president.

Instead of answering simply “I swear!” as he had done after the preceding paragraph, the Duke, as if to do away with any excuse for thereafter retracing his steps, repeated the whole oath, in a gloomy tone: “I swear to break all fleshly ties, which bind me to father, mother,

brothers, sisters, wife, mistress, kindred, friends, king, benefactors, and any other human being to whom I have promised, or may ever promise, faith, obedience, gratitude or service."

After the third item of the oath, the president turned again to the masked men, who had been exchanging glances among themselves, so that their eyes could be seen, flashing through the openings in their masks.

Turning finally to the Prince he said : " Louis Philip Joseph, from this hour thou art free from oaths made to country or law. Only, do not forget, if thou betrayest us, the lightning is not more sure in its blow, than will be the invisible and inevitable knife to find thy head wheresoever thou mayest be hidden. — Now, be thou Enlightened, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost ! "

With his hand the chairman indicated the door in the crypt, which opened before the Duke.

Like a man relieved of a burden greater than he could bear, he passed his hand over his brow, breathed hard and made an effort to move from his position.

" Ah," he cried, as he went into the crypt, " I shall last be avenged."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ACCOUNT RENDERED.

LEFT by themselves, the chairman and the six masked men exchanged a few words in low tones.

Then Cagliostro called aloud : "Let all the brethren enter. I am ready to give the report I promised."

The door immediately opened, and the members of the association — who had been in the crypt, chatting in groups, or promenading in pairs — were admitted, and again filled their customary hall.

Hardly had the door closed behind the last member than Cagliostro — like a man who knows the value of time, and is not willing to lose a second — held out his hand, and said in a loud voice : "Brothers, perhaps some of you assisted at the reunion which took place precisely twenty years ago, five miles from the borders of the Rhine, about two miles from the village of Danenfels in one of the grottos of Mont Tonnerre. If any of you were there present, will those venerable upholders of our great cause raise their hands, and say so."

Five or six hands were raised above the heads of the crowd, and five or six voices exclaimed, as the president had requested "I was there!"

"That is as it should be," said the speaker. "The others are dead, or dispersed over the face of the globe doing the work of our brotherhood, — that holy work which is for all humanity.

“Twenty years ago this work, which we are now to consider in its various episodes, had hardly begun. The day, which is now so bright, hardly reddened the east. The strongest gaze could not see the future, except through clouds, which the eyes of the elect alone could pierce.

“At that reunion I explained the miracle by which death — which is nothing, for any man, but forgetfulness of time’s revolutions and passing events — exists not for me; for during the past twenty centuries I have been thirty-two times laid in the tomb, in the different bodily and transitory forms which my immortal soul has inherited, without that soul’s losing consciousness, or reaching that state of forgetfulness which, as I have told you is the only real death. Through all these ages I have followed the development of the Word of Jesus the Christ the Anointed One, and seen nations pass slowly but surely from slavery to serfdom, and from servitude to that ambition which precedes liberty.

“As the stars of night begin to shine in the sky before the sun has fully set, so we have successively seen various European communities strive for liberty, — such communities as Rome, Venice, Florence, Switzerland, Genoa, Pisa, Lucca, Arezzo. Those cities of sunshine, where flowers open so quickly, where fruits ripen so early, have made, one after the other, a series of republican experiments, whereof only two or three survive to our day, and still brave the league of kings.

“But all these republics have been tainted with some innate sin. Some were aristocratic, some oligarchical, some despotic. Genoa, for example, one of the few which at present survive, is given over to the aristocratic idea. Within her own walls, her subjects are indeed equal citizens; but they consider themselves noblemen every

where else. The Swiss have democratic institutions ; but their small cantons, hidden among their mountains, can offer neither precedent nor aid to the human race.

“The great need is this, — a great country, which shall not merely receive the free impulsion, but impart it to others, — an immense machine, which shall entangle all Europe, — a flaming planet, which shall enlighten the world.”

An approbative murmur ran through the assemblage and Cagliostro continued, like one inspired : “I interrogate God, the creator of all things, the source of all progress and I see his finger pointing me to France. France has been Catholic since the Second Century, national since the Eleventh, and a unit since the Sixteenth. The Lord himself, through his successors in the papal chair, has called France his eldest daughter, — undoubtedly indicating her right, in supreme moments of devotion, to offer herself on the cross of humanity, as did the Christ himself. Having tried all forms of despotic government — feudal, lordly, monarchical, aristocratic, — France long ago appeared the most ripe for submission to our influences ; and so we decided, — guided by a celestial ray as the Israelites were led by a column of fire, — that France should first be liberated.

“Cast your eyes over the France of twenty years ago and you will see that there was great audacity, or else sublime faith, in such an undertaking. Twenty years ago France, in the debilitated hands of Louis Fifteenth was still the France of Louis Fourteenth, — that is, a great aristocratic kingdom, where all rights belonged to the nobles, and all privileges to the rich. At the head of the state was a man who represented at once the highest and lowest elements, the greatest and the smallest, God and the people. With a word this man could

raise men to wealth or reduce them to poverty, could make them happy or miserable, could release them or imprison them, sentence them to life or death. The man, Louis Fifteenth, had three grandsons, three little princes, to inherit his throne.

“Fate so willed it that his successor, Louis Sixteenth was not only designed by primogeniture for this position but by the public voice also, — so far as there was an public voice at that time. He was said to be good, just, honest, unselfish, well educated, — almost a philosopher. In order to put an end forever to the disastrous war which had been lighted in Europe, by the fatal succession of Charles the Second, the wife chosen for this man was the daughter of Maria Theresa. The two great nations which were then the counterweights of Europe, — France on the shores of the Atlantic, and Austria, on the shores of the Black Sea, — would thus be indissolubly united. This was well calculated by Maria Theresa, the brainiest political head in Europe.

“At that time, leaning on Austria, Italy, and Spain France was about entering upon an untried but desirable reign; and that was the time we selected, not to make France the first kingdom among many, but to make the French people the first among many nations.

“The sole question was, who would enter this lion den? What Christian Theseus, guided by the torch of faith, would find his way through the twistings and turnings of this great labyrinth, and confront the royal Minotaur. Upon whom should this task devolve? *Up to me*, I answered. As some ardent spirits, with restless organizations, wished to know how long a time it would take for me to accomplish the first part of my work, which I divided into three periods, I demanded twenty years. They exclaimed at this. Do you understand

For twenty centuries these men had been slaves or serfs, and they cried out in dismay when I asked for twenty years in which to make them free men!"

Cagliostro looked around upon his auditors, among whom his last words had provoked some ironical smiles.

Then he went on: "Finally the brethren granted me the twenty years asked for. I then gave them our notable device, *Lilia pedibus destrue*, and set to work, inviting all others to help me."

The *Illuminés*, even if they did not all understand Latin, knew that this motto referred to the *fleur-de-lis*, the royal lilies of France, always to be found on the banners, shields, and arms of the Bourbon dynasty; and that the words might be translated thus: "Trample the lilies under foot!" or, more figuratively, thus: "Pluck up the lilies by their roots!" The idea involved was the destruction of French royalty; and for that end this secret order existed, with its awful annihilistic oaths.

Cagliostro went on: "I came to France amidst the shadows of triumphal arches. From Strasbourg to Paris, laurels and roses made a pathway of flowers and foliage. Everybody was shouting for long life to the Dauphiness, the future Queen of France. The hopes of the kingdom hung upon the fruitfulness of this saving marriage.

"Well, I do not arrogate to myself the glory of initiating all the stirring events which have since transpired, or the merit of their results. God was with me, and he permitted me to see his hand divine, holding the reins of his flaming chariot. God be praised! Some stones I have removed from the road. Rivers I have bridged, precipices I have levelled; and the holy chariot rolls over them, — that is all.

"Now, brethren, see what has been accomplished in twenty years.

“The Parliaments have been broken up.

“Louis Fifteenth, called the Well Beloved, died in the midst of general mistrust.

“The Queen, after being seven years barren, brought into the world children, whose legitimacy is disputed. At the time of the Dauphin’s birth, her character was openly assailed ; and as a wife, she was dishonored by the affair of the Diamond Necklace.

“The present King, bearing the sacred title of Louis the Long Desired, having the kingdom to sustain, but being as impotent in politics as in love, rushed from one Utopian scheme into another, till he reached bankruptcy, and changed from minister to minister, till he reached Monsieur de Calonne.

“The Assembly of Notables convened, and decreed the recognition of the States General, — the rank and file of the community. The States General, elected by universal suffrage, transformed themselves into the National Assembly. The Nobility and the Clergy were overborne therein by the Third Estate.

“The Bastille was captured. The foreign, hireling troops were driven from Paris to Versailles.

“The night of the Fourth of August showed the Aristocrats the end of their Old Nobility. The Fifth and Sixth of October showed to King and Queen the end of their Ancient Royalty. The Fourteenth of July, of the next year, displayed to the world the Unity of France.

“The other Royal Princes have lost their popularity, by emigration ; and *Monsieur* has lost his, by the trial and condemnation of Favras.

“Finally, the Constitution has been adopted by oath, on the Altar of Patriotism, the President of the National Assembly occupying a throne equal to the King’s, — the

Law and the Nation being seated side by side. Listening Europe, silent and attentive, bends toward us. They tremble, who do not applaud.

“Brothers, has France become what I predicted, a mill to feed Europe, a sun to illumine the world?”

“Yes, yes, yes!” cried every voice.

“Now then, brothers,” continued Cagliostro, “do you believe the work so far advanced that it can be left to itself? The Constitution is sacredly accepted; but do you believe we can trust the royal oath?”

“No, no!” shouted everybody.

“Then we must enter upon the second Revolutionary period of the great democratic work we have all undertaken.

“In your eyes, as in mine, — so I joyfully perceive, — the Federation of 1790 was not the end, but only a breathing-place on the road. Very well! A halt has been called, rest has been enjoyed; but the Court has set itself to work, to bring about a counter-revolution. Let *our* loins be girded about also, and let our lights be burning for the journey.

“Undoubtedly, for timid hearts, there will be anxious hours, moments of misgiving. Often the ray which lights our path will seem ready to die out altogether. The guiding Hand will seem to forsake us. More than once, in the long lane still before us, our party will seem compromised, — almost lost, — through some unforeseen accident, some fortuitous occurrence. Everything will seem to put us in the wrong, — unfavorable circumstances, the victory of our enemies, the ingratitude of our fellow-citizens. Many will ask themselves, — and those the most conscientious of our number, — after so much real effort, and so little apparent effect, if they are not on the wrong road, and engaged in a bad scheme.

“No, brethren, no! At this very hour, I tell you, *no*; and I would my word might sound eternally in your ears, — as a trumpet-blast in times of triumph, as a tocsin of alarm in the midst of defeat. No! I say.

“Popular leaders have a holy mission, which they must accomplish, providentially or fatally. The Lord who guides them has his own mysterious ways, not revealed to our eyes, save in the splendor of their accomplishment. Often clouds and darkness are round about him, and hide him from our eyes, and we believe him absent. Often a principle recoils, and seems beaten backward; when, on the contrary, it is like some old knight, in a tournament of the Middle Ages, who takes a step rearward, till he can put his lance in rest, and then rushes more fiercely upon his adversary.

“Brothers, brothers! The end we seek is a beacon on a high mountain. A score of times, along the road, earthly catastrophes will cause us to lose sight of the beacon, and believe it extinguished. Then the weak will murmur, complain, pause, and say: ‘We have no guide. We are marching in the night. Let us stay where we are. Why are we so misguided?’ The strong will continue in the way, smiling and confident. Soon the beacon-light will reappear, only to vanish and reappear again, — each time more clearly defined and brilliant, as we near the goal.

“Thus fighting, persevering, believing, the world’s chosen ones will at last arrive at the saving lighthouse, whose brightness must one day enlighten, not merely France, but all races.

“Let us swear, brethren, for ourselves and our descendants, — for perchance the eternal principle may require the service of several generations, — let us swear, for ourselves and for them, not to stop until we establish,

in all the earth, the Christ's holy motto, of which a third only has been partly won : Liberty, Equality, Fraternity."

Cagliostro's words were followed by a burst of applause ; but, in the midst of bravos and cheers, a few words were heard, from a sharp and cutting voice, which fell upon the general enthusiasm like drops of icy water, from the side of a wet rock, falling upon a feverish forehead.

"Yes, we will swear," said the strident voice ; "but first explain what these three words mean to thee, that we, thy plain apostles, may be able to explain them in the same way."

Cagliostro's piercing glance alighted, like the reflection from a mirror, on the pale face of the Deputy from Arras, — Robespierre.

"So be it !" said Cagliostro. "Listen, Maximilian !"

Then, raising voice and hand at the same time, so as to be heard by the crowd, he added : "Listen, all of you !"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LIBERTY ! EQUALITY ! FRATERNITY !

THERE came over the assemblage a solemn silence, which measured the importance attached to what was to be said.

“ Yes, you have the right to demand of me a definition of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, and I will give it.

“ Let us begin with Liberty. First of all, brethren, do not confound Liberty with Independence, for they are not two sisters, resembling each other, but two rivals who hate each other. Nearly all races living among the mountains are independent ; but I do not know of one nation, except the Swiss, which is truly free. Nobody will deny that the Calabrians, the Corsicans, the Scotch are independent ; but no one dare call them free. If the Calabrian’s whims are interfered with, or the Corsican’s honor, or the Scot’s interests, then the Calabrian, as he can have no recourse to law, — because there is no real law among an oppressed people, — the Calabrian appeals to his poniard, the Corsican to his stiletto, the Scotchman to his dirk. He strikes, his enemy falls, and the assassin is avenged. The mountain is there, to offer him an asylum ; and in default of that liberty, vainly invoked by the dwellers in cities, he finds independence in deep caverns, dense forests, high cliffs, — that is, the independence of the fox, the antelope, and the eagle ; but the eagle, antelope, and fox — unmoved, indifferent, unchangeable spectators of the great human drama, unrolling itself

before their eyes, — are animals dependent upon instinct and destined for solitude.

“The early civilizations, antique and (we might say) maternal, the civilizations of India, Egypt, Etruria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Latium, uniting their science, religion, art, and poetry into one cluster of lights, which they held aloft, over the world, in order to illuminate its cradle, and be a beacon-light for the development of modern civilization, — these ancient civilizations, I say, still left the foxes in their holes, the antelopes on their cliffs, the eagles in their eyries.

“For these creatures also time passed, but they took no note of it. The sciences flourished, but with the eagle there was no progressive step. Nations rose, matured, and declined, but the fox knew nothing of these changes. Why? Because Providence has limited the circle of the faculties of these creatures to the instinct of self-preservation ; whereas God has given to man the knowledge of good and evil, an appreciation of justice and injustice, a horror of isolation, and a fondness for society.

“This is why mankind — created as solitary as the fox, as wild as the antelope, as isolated as the eagle — soon united into families, which were afterwards welded into tribes, till the tribes became nations. As I tell you, brethren, the individual who isolates himself, acquires only the right of Independence ; while men, who unite together, have a right to Liberty.”

Cagliostro then took up, one after the other, the three watchwords of the *Illuminés*.

LIBERTY.

“Liberty is not a primitive substance, like gold. It is a flower, a fruit, an art, — yes, a product. It needs cultivation for its unfolding and growth.

“Liberty is the right of every one to work for his own benefit, his own interest, his own satisfaction, his own well-being, his own glory, his own amusement, so long as he does not wound the interests of others. Liberty involves a partial relinquishment of individual independence, for the increase of the general fund of liberty, which each may equally share in turn.

“Liberty is even more than all this. It involves an obligation, taken before the world, not to confine the accumulated enlightenment, progress, privileges, — already won, — to the selfish circle of one community, one nation, one race, but, on the contrary, to cast the same abroad with full hands, whether as individuals or as a society, whenever a poor individual or an indigent community asks the privilege of sharing these treasures. Do not fear the exhaustion of this treasure, for Liberty has the divine privilege of multiplying by its very prodigality, like that fountain of great waters which supplies the earth, and whose fulness at its source is in proportion to the abundance of its discharge.

“Thus you see what Liberty is, — celestial manna, which every one has an equal right, and which the chosen people, for whom it falls, should share with all others who ask for their part of it. Such is Liberty, as you understand it.”

Without deigning a direct reply to the man who had questioned him, Cagliostro added: “Now let us pass to Equality.”

A great murmur of approbation rose to the vaulted ceiling, embracing the orator with the caress of popularity, — a caress very sweet to the pride of man, if not to his heart; but like one accustomed to such ovations he hastily raised his hand to restore silence.

“Brothers,” said he, “the hour passes; time is passing.”

cious. Any minute of lost time may accrue to the profit of the enemies of our holy cause, to dig a pit beneath our feet, or to place some obstacle in our path.

“ Let me now define Equality, as I have already defined Liberty.”

At these words there were loud cries of *hush!* followed by a profound silence, in the midst whereof Cagliostro's voice rose clear, sonorous, and distinct, as he went on with his exposition.

“ Brethren, I will not do you the injustice to suppose that a single one among you is misled by that seductive word, even for an instant, into a belief in an equality of matter or intelligence. No, you know very well that any such equality is repugnant to true philosophy, and that Nature herself cuts short this question, by placing the hyssop beside the oak, the valley beside the mountain, the rivulet beside the river, the lake beside the ocean, stupidity beside genius. All the decrees in the world cannot lower, by a single cubit, Chimborazo, the Himalayas, or Mont Blanc. No decree of any human assembly can put out the light which burns on the forehead of Homer, Dante, or Shakespeare. No one can rationally cherish the idea that the equality sanctioned by law can be material and personal, — that from the moment when such an edict was inscribed on the tables of the Constitution, the generations would possess the proportions of Goliath, the valor of the Cid, or the genius of Voltaire. No, both individually and collectively, we perfectly understand that the question which we agitate is, purely and simply, social and political Equality. Now, brothers, what is this Equality?”

The speaker then proceeded to define the second most important principle.

EQUALITY !

“Equality is the abolition of all transmitted privilege save as they are transmitted through natural aptitude and ability. It involves free access to all employments, all grades, all ranks. It means that the recompense should be according to merit, genius, virtue, and not awarded as the perquisite of caste, family, or race.

“Thus the throne, supposing there should still be a throne, will be only an exalted position, accessible to the most worthy ; while those of lesser worth will occupy secondary positions, but still according to merit ; and their present acquirements are adequate, whether they are kings, ministers, councillors, generals, judges, nobles, will care from what point they started. Thus royalty or magistracy, the monarch’s throne or the president’s chair, will no longer be the hereditary perquisite of family, but come by *election*. For council, for war, for judicial offices, there will be no longer any question of class privilege, but of *aptitude*. In the arts, in sciences, in letters, rank will no longer be determined by favour, partiality, and patronage, but by *general agreement and generous rivalry*. This is true social Equality.

“In proportion to the increase of education, — as education should not only be gratuitous, and brought to everybody’s door, but enforced upon all, — ideas would grow, and equality would rise with them. Instead of staying with its feet in the mud, Equality should soar to the highest summits. A great nation, like France, ought to recognize only the equality which raises, and not that which abases. Equality which abases is not that of a Titan, but of a bandit. It is no longer the Caucasus couch of Prometheus, but the narrow bed of Procrustes — There you have the true Equality.”

Such a definition could not fail to command full assent, in an association of men possessing exalted minds and ambitious hearts, each of whom — apart from a few rare and modest exceptions — naturally looked upon his neighbor as a convenient step in his own future elevation. The cheers, plaudits, and stamping testified that all present at that moment accepted Equality — in theory, at any rate — as it was understood by the puissant genius of the singular chief whom they had chosen ; albeit there were some in that assemblage, who were ready to show, as soon as they could do so practically, that they adopted Equality in a fashion quite different from that held and taught by Cagliostro.

Cagliostro, becoming more glowing and more ecstatic, as the subject grew upon him, again commanded silence, as he had done before, and continued his speech, in a voice wherein it was impossible to observe the least weariness or detect the slightest hesitation.

“Brothers, we come now to the third word in our motto, a word which men will be a long time in understanding, and which, for that very reason, the highest civilization places last. Brethren, that word is Fraternity.”

Then he entered upon his third division.

FRATERNITY !

“Fraternity ! A grand word, if properly understood ! A sublime word, if rightly explained ! God forbid my declaring that he must have a bad heart, who, having imperfectly measured the height of this word, accepts it in any narrow way, and applies it only to the inhabitants of a single village, the citizens of one town, or the subjects of one kingdom. No, brethren, such an one is only poor in intelligence. Let us pity such ignorant minds, and teach them to shake off their leaden sandals of

mediocrity, plume their wings, and rise far above all low ideas.

“When Satan wished to tempt Jesus, he transported him to the highest mountain in the world, — from whose summit the Tempter could show the Redeemer all the kingdoms of the earth, — not to a tower in Nazareth whence he could see only a few poor Galilean villages: Brothers, it is not one city, it is not even one kingdom to which Fraternity must be applied. The world must learn it.

“Brothers, the time will come when this word which we now consider sacred, — the word *country*, — and the other word which appears holy to us, — *nationality*, — will vanish like some theatric scenes, which are only lowered provisionally, while the scene-shifters and machinists behind are preparing their infinite distances their immeasurable horizons. Brethren, the day will come when those who have conquered earth and sea will conquer fire and air. The flaming coursers of the sky will be harnessed, not only to thought but to matter and the winds, which are to-day but the undisciplined couriers of the tempest, will become the intelligent and docile messengers of civilization.

“Brothers, a day will finally come, when all nations — thanks to terrestrial and aerial intercommunication before which kings will be powerless — will understand that they are bound together, each to the others, by the solidarity of past trials, — when the people will understand that kings who have put weapons into their hands wherewith to destroy each other, were urging them or not to glory, as they pretended, but to fratricide, and that a full account must be rendered to posterity, for every drop of blood drawn from the least member of the great human family.

“ Then, brethren, you will see a magnificent panorama, unrolled before the face of the Lord. Every imaginary frontier will disappear. Every artificial boundary will be laid low. Rivers will be no hindrance, mountains no obstacle. People will clasp hands across the rivers ; and on the highest peak will be erected an altar, the altar of Fraternity.

“ Brothers, brothers, brothers ! Therein, I tell you, lies the true apostolic brotherhood. The Christ did not die for the rescue of Jews alone, but to redeem all the nations of the earth. ‘ Go and teach all nations ! ’ was his command. Do not make these three words, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, the motto of France alone. Inscribe them on the banner of humanity, as the motto for the world.

“ And now go forth, brethren. Your task is great, — so grand, through whatever valley of blood and tears you may pass, that your descendants will envy the holy mission which you accomplish. Be like the Crusaders, who were always most numerous in roads leading to saintly places, and did not pause, even when they saw, along the route, the whitening bones of their fathers.

“ Courage, then, ye apostles ! Courage, ye pilgrims ! Courage, ye soldiers ! Apostles, convert all men ! Pilgrims, march on ! Soldiers, fight the good fight ! ”

Cagliostro paused, but he had barely ceased speaking when he was interrupted by applause and enthusiastic cries. Thrice the plaudits were hushed, and three times were they renewed, echoing through the crypt like a subterranean storm.

The six masked men bowed before him, one after the other, kissing his hand, and then retired.

Then each brother, bowing in turn before the platform, — from which, like another Peter the Hermit, this new

apostle had preached the Crusade of Liberty, — passed out, repeating the fatal motto: *Lilia pedibus destrue*.

With the last brother's departure the lamp went out.

Cagliostro remained alone, buried in the bowels of the earth, lost in silence and darkness, — like those gods of India, into whose mysteries he professed to have been initiated two thousand years before.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WOMEN AND FLOWERS.

SEVERAL months after the events just recounted, towards the end of March, 1791, a carriage, going rapidly along the road from Argenteuil to Besons, made a detour a half-league from the city, drove towards the Château du Marais, through the gate which opened before it, and stopped in the inner courtyard, near the lower steps of the piazza.

The clock on the front of the building indicated eight o'clock in the morning.

An old servant, who seemed to be impatiently awaiting the arrival of the carriage, hurried towards it, and opened the door for a man clad entirely in black, who rushed up the steps of the house.

"Ah, Monsieur Gilbert," said the valet, "you are here at last."

"What is the matter with him, my poor Teisch?" asked the Doctor.

"Alas, Monsieur, you will see," said the servant.

Going before the Doctor, he led the way across the billiard-room, where the lamps, probably lighted at a late hour of the night, were still burning, and then through the dining-room, where the table, covered with flowers, empty bottles, fruits, and pastry, gave evidence of a supper prolonged far beyond the usual hours.

Gilbert glanced sorrowfully over this scene of disorder, which proved how badly his own prescriptions had been

followed. Then shrugging his shoulders with a sigh, he ascended the staircase which led to Mirabeau's chamber, situated up one flight, on the main story.

"Monsieur, here is Doctor Gilbert," said the domestic, taking a step into the room.

"How, the Doctor?" said Mirabeau. "No need to send after him, for such a piece of foolishness as this."

"Foolishness?" murmured poor Teisch. "Judge for yourself, Monsieur."

"Oh Doctor," said Mirabeau, raising himself up in his bed, "believe me, I regret that they should trouble you without consulting me."

"First of all, it is never a trouble for me to have an excuse for seeing you. You know I only practise medicine for my friends, and that I belong entirely to them. Let us see what has happened, — and, above all, no secrets from the Faculty! — Teisch, draw the curtains and open the windows."

This order being obeyed, daylight flooded Mirabeau's chamber, even reaching its corners, and the Doctor could see the change which had come over the whole appearance of the celebrated orator, since he examined him a month or two previous.

"Ah —!" said Gilbert, in spite of himself.

"Yes," said Mirabeau, "I *am* changed, am I not? I'll tell you how it happens."

Gilbert smiled sadly; but as an intelligent physician, he always learned what he could from his patients, and let it pass, even if he knew they were telling him lies.

"You know," continued Mirabeau, "what question was debated yesterday?"

"Yes, something about mines."

"That's a question not yet well understood or weighed. The interests of the proprietors and the Government are

not sufficiently distinct. Besides, my intimate friend De la Marck is much interested in the question. Half his fortune depends upon it. His purse, dear Doctor, has always been mine, and I am bound to him in gratitude. I have spoken, — or, rather, I have assailed the outposts, — five times. At the last attack I put my enemies to rout, though I remained nearly on my back. On returning home, therefore, I wished to celebrate the victory, so I had a few friends to supper. We laughed and joked till three this morning, and then went to bed. At five o'clock I was taken with horrible pains inside, and cried like a fool. Teisch was frightened, like a poltroon, and sent after you. Well, you're wiser than I. There's my pulse, and there's my tongue. I suffer like the damned. Pull me through, if you can. As for me, — well, I promise you I won't meddle with such matters any more."

Gilbert was too skilful a physician not to see, without consulting tongue or pulse, the gravity of Mirabeau's situation. The sick man was at the point of suffocation, hardly able to breathe. His face was swollen by the stagnation of blood in the lungs. He complained of cold feet and hands, and from time to time the violence of his pain drew from him a moan or a groan.

The Doctor wished, however, to confirm his opinion, already well defined, by an examination of the pulse. The pulse was convulsive and intermittent.

"Well, my dear Count, we shall not say Good-bye to you this heat, but I am barely in time ;" and he drew his instrument-case from his pocket, with that calm rapidity which belongs to true genius.

"Ah, you're going to bleed me?"

"At once."

"In the right arm, or left?"

"Neither. Your lungs are already engorged. I shall

bleed your foot, while Teisch must go to Argenteuil Village for mustard and cantharides, so that we can apply poultices. — Take my cab, Teisch."

"The Devil," said Mirabeau. "At that rate, I should say it *was* time."

Without answering, Gilbert proceeded at once to the operation, and very soon some thick, black blood, which seemed to hesitate for an instant, oozed from the sufferer's foot. The relief was instantaneous.

"Morbleu!" said Mirabeau, breathing more easily. "Certainly, Doctor, you 're a great man."

"And you're a great fool, Count, to risk a life, so precious to France and your friends, for a few hours of false pleasure."

Mirabeau smiled sadly, almost ironically. "Bah! my dear Doctor. You exaggerate the feeling of France and my friends towards myself."

"On my honor," smilingly said Gilbert, "great men always complain of the ingratitude of other men, when, in reality, they themselves are the ingrates. Be seriously ill, and to-morrow you will have all Paris at your windows. Die to-morrow, and you will have all France for your pall-bearers."

"Do you know that's very consoling?" laughingly responded Mirabeau.

"It is precisely because you can see the gratitude, without risking your life, that I say to you, seriously, — you need a great demonstration to reinvigorate you, morally and mentally. In two hours let me take you back to Paris. Then let me tell a commissioner, at the first street corner, and you'll see."

"You believe that I'm strong enough to be transported to Paris?"

"This very day, — yes! — How do you feel?"

"I breathe better, my head is clearer, and the mist before my eyes has disappeared; but I suffer internally all the time."

"Oh, that's an affair for the plasters, my dear Count. The bleeding has done its work. Now the plasters must do theirs. — Hold on! Here's Teisch."

Teisch brought with him the ingredients demanded. In another quarter-hour relief came, as predicted by the Doctor.

"Now I'll give you an hour to rest, and then take you away."

"Doctor," said Mirabeau, smiling, "will you not permit me to stay here till evening, and to appoint a rendezvous with you, at my mansion in Rue Chaussée d'Antin, at eleven o'clock?"

Gilbert looked at Mirabeau. The sick man could see that the physician clearly divined the cause of this postponement.

"What else can I do," said Mirabeau, "when I have a visit to receive?"

"My dear Count, I saw the flowers on the table in your dining-room. It was not merely a friendly supper which you gave yesterday!"

"You know I can't get on without flowers. That's my folly!"

"Yes, but the flowers were not alone."

"Oh, Lord! If flowers are a necessity with me, why, I must abide by the fatal consequences of that beautiful necessity."

"Count, Count, you are killing yourself!" said Gilbert.

"Acknowledge, Doctor, that this will at least be a charming suicide."

"Count, I sha'n't quit you all day long!"

“ Doctor, I have given my word. Would you make me break it ? ”

“ You will be in Paris to-night ? ”

“ I tell you that I will expect you at eleven, in my little mansion on the Rue Chaussée d’Antin. — Have you seen it ? ”

“ Not yet ! ”

“ It’s a purchase I made from Julie, Talma’s wife. — Indeed, I begin to feel well, Doctor.”

“ That is to say, you want me to be off ! ”

“ Oh, — as to that — ”

“ Well, you’re doing very well. This is my quarter at the Tuileries, remember.”

“ Ah, so ! You’ll see the Queen,” said Mirabeau, his face darkening.

“ Probably ! Have you any message for her ? ”

Mirabeau smiled bitterly. “ I should not take such a liberty, Doctor. Don’t even tell her you’ve seen me.”

“ Why so ? ”

“ Because she’ll ask you if I’ve saved the monarchy, as I promised ; and you’ll have to say *no*. Besides,” added Mirabeau, with a nervous smile, “ it’s as much her fault as mine.”

“ You do not wish me to tell her how you have overworked, and how your struggle in the Assembly is killing you ? ”

Mirabeau reflected. “ Yes, tell her that ! Make me out more sick than I am, if you please.”

“ Why so ? ”

“ Oh, nothing, — say for curiosity’s sake, — so that you’ll have something to tell me.”

“ All right ! ”

“ You promise me, Doctor ? ”

“ I promise you ! ”

“ And you'll repeat to me what she says ? ”

“ Her very words ! ”

“ Well, good-by, Doctor. A thousand thanks ! ” and he extended his hand to Gilbert, whose searching look seemed to embarrass him.

“ By the way,” said the invalid, “ won't you prescribe for me before you go ? ”

“ Oh yes,” said Gilbert, “ I'll prescribe some hot drinks, — well diluted, — of chiccory or borage, a simple diet, and above all — ”

“ Well, above all — ? ”

“ No nurses, at least not one under fifty ! You understand, Count ? ”

“ Doctor,” said Mirabeau, laughing, “ rather than fail in following your prescription, I'll take two nurses, each twenty-five years old.”

At the door Gilbert met Teisch. The poor fellow had tears in his eyes, as he said : “ Oh, Monsieur, why do you go away ? ”

“ I go away because I'm driven,” said Gilbert, smiling.

“ And all on account of that woman ! ” murmured the old man, “ all on account of that woman, who looks like the Queen. A man who has so much genius, as they say ! My God, how can he be such an ass ! ”

Thus concluding, he opened the door for Gilbert, who, with a preoccupied mind, entered his cab, saying to himself : “ What did he mean, about a woman who looks like the Queen ? ”

He grasped Teisch's arm, as if to question him ; but only said, in a low tone : “ What am I doing ? This is Mirabeau's secret, not mine. — To Paris, coachman ! ”

CHAPTER XXX.

WHAT THE KING SAID ; WHAT THE QUEEN SAID.

GILBERT scrupulously fulfilled the double promise made to Mirabeau. On his return to Paris the Doctor met Camille Desmoulins, — the living newspaper, the incarnate gazette of the times. To him Gilbert announced the illness of Mirabeau, which he intentionally represented as graver than it was at the moment, but not more so than it would become, if Mirabeau indulged in any fresh imprudence.

Then Gilbert went to the Tuileries, and communicated the news to the King. The King only said : “ Ah, poor Count ! Has he lost his appetite ? ”

“ Yes, Sire,” responded Gilbert.

“ Then it’s a grave case ! ” said the King ; and straightway he began to talk of other matters.

Leaving the King, Gilbert went to see the Queen, and repeated to her what he had told the King.

The daughter of Maria Theresa knitted her high forehead, and she said : “ Why did n’t this malady overtake him on the morning of the day when he made his fine speech on the tricolored flag ? ”

Then she added, as if repentant for letting such an expression of hatred for the sign of French nationality escape her in Gilbert’s presence : “ Never mind that ! It would be a great misfortune for France, and for ourselves, if this indisposition should increase.”

“ I believe I have already had the honor of telling the Queen that it is more than an indisposition, — that it is a malady.”

“ Of which you will make yourself master ? ” said the Queen.

“ I shall do my best, Madame, but I cannot answer for it.”

“ Doctor, I shall count on you, — you understand that ? — to bring me the news about Monsieur de Mirabeau ; ” and then she also talked of other matters.

That evening, at the appointed hour, Gilbert ascended the stairs in Mirabeau’s small city mansion.

Mirabeau was lying on an extension chair, and expecting him ; but as he had been kept waiting several minutes in the parlor, under the pretext of notifying the Count of his presence, the Doctor glanced about him as he entered the bedroom, and his eyes were attracted by a cashmere scarf, carelessly left on an armchair.

To turn Gilbert’s attention, or else because he attached great importance to the first words exchanged with the Doctor, Mirabeau said : “ Ah, it’s you ! I have found out that part of your promise is already fulfilled. All Paris knows that I’m ill ; and for two hours poor Teisch has n’t rested ten minutes from telling the news to my friends, who have come to inquire if I am any better. So much for your first promise ! Have you been as faithful with the second ? ”

“ What do you mean ? ” smilingly asked Gilbert.

“ You know well enough ! ”

Gilbert shrugged his shoulders, as a sign of negation.

“ Have you been to the Tuileries ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Did you see the King ? ”

“ Yes.”

“Did you see the Queen?”

“Yes.”

“And you told them they would n't be bothered with me much longer?”

“I told them how ill you were.”

“And what did they say?”

“The King asked if you had lost your appetite.”

“And when you answered affirmatively —?”

“He pitied you very sincerely.”

“Oh that good King! On the day of his death he said to his friends, as did Leouidas of old: ‘I sup with Pluto to-night!’ — But the Queen?”

“The Queen pitied you, and inquired about your interest.”

“In what terms, Doctor?” asked Mirabeau, who evidently attached a very great value to Doctor Gilbert's next response.

“Oh, in kind terms!”

“You gave me your word of honor that you would repeat to me exactly what she told you.”

“Oh, I can't recall it, word for word.”

“Doctor, you have n't forgotten a syllable!”

“I swear to you —”

“Doctor, I have your word! Do you wish me to regard you as faithless?”

“You are importunate, Count.”

“I'm precisely that!”

“You wish me absolutely to repeat the Queen's words?”

“Word for word.”

“Well, she said this malady ought to have taken hold of you the morning before you appeared on the tribune to defend the national tricolor.”

Gilbert wished to see what influence the Queen had

over Mirabeau. The latter bounded from his chair, as if he had been brought into contact with a voltaic pile.

“Oh, the ingratitude of crowned heads!” he murmured. “That one speech, then, was sufficient to make them forget a civil list of twenty-five millions for the King, and her own dower of four millions. She does n’t know, that woman, — that Queen can’t see, — that by one such move I regained the popularity I had lost on her account. A fault! She forgets, moreover, that I proposed the adjournment of the reunion of Avignon with France, to satisfy the King’s religious scruples. A fault! She forgets, during my presidency of the Jacobin Club, — a presidency of thrèe months, which used up ten years of my life, — that I defended the law which confined membership in the National Guard to actual citizens. A fault! She forgets that in the Assembly’s discussion over the law as to priestly oaths, I demanded that this law should not apply to oaths connected with the confessional. A fault!”

Gilbert listened with some surprise, as Mirabeau went on: “Oh, these faults, these faults! I’ve paid in full for them all. However, it was n’t my faults which upset me; for there are some epochs, singular and abnormal, when men do not fall by the errors they commit. One day, — for *them* also, — I supported a question of justice, of humanity. There was an attack made upon the King’s aunts, because they had emigrated, and a law against emigration was proposed, and I said: ‘If you make a law against emigration, I swear I’ll never obey it;’ and this project was rejected unanimously. Well, what my defeats never could effect, my victory has accomplished. They called me Dictator. They made me go upon the rostrum in anger, — the worst thing an orator can do. I triumphed a second time, but it was in attacking the

Jacobins. Then the Jacobins swore my death, — t'fools! Duport, Lameth, Barnave, — none of them could see, that in killing me, they gave the dictatorship their clique to Robespierre. Me, whom they should have guarded as the apple of their eye, they voted down by a stupid majority. They have made me sweat great drops of blood. They have made me drink the bitter cup to its dregs. They have crowned me with thorns, put a reed in my hands, — yes, crucified me! Happy is he who submits to this Passion, the Christ did, for humanity's sake!"

With increasing admiration for the man before him Gilbert listened.

"The tricolored flag! Can't they see it is their only refuge, — that if they can loyally and publicly seat themselves in its shadow, that shadow may yet save them. But the Queen does not care to be saved. She wants to be avenged; and therefore she indulges in no reasonable ideas. The means which I propose as being the most efficacious ones, she most repulses, — namely, moderation, fairness, feasibility, which are always right. I wished to save two things at once, royalty and liberty. It was a thankless combat, in which I fought single-handed, when I was abandoned, — and against what? If against me that would be nothing; if against tigers, that would be nothing; if against lions, it would be nothing; but to fight against an element, against the powers of nature, — against the sea, against the mounting waves, against the inflowing tide! Yesterday the water came up to my ankles. To-day it reaches my knees. To-morrow it will be up to my waist, and the next day it will be over my head."

Turning towards the Doctor he added: "Doctor, you must be frank with me. Chagrin first seized me, and

then disgust. I dreamed of being an arbitrator between the Revolution and the monarchy. I believed I could gain the ascendancy, as a man, over the Queen; and, as a man, if some fine day she should venture imprudently into the stream, and lose her footing, I thought I could throw myself into the water, and rescue her. But no! she did not seriously wish my help. She wished to compromise me, make me unpopular, ruin me, annihilate me, — render me powerless for either good or evil. — So, Doctor, what I had better do, as I've already suggested, is to die in season, — to lie down artistically, like a classic athlete, gracefully yielding my throat to the knife, giving up the ghost in good form."

Then Mirabeau fell back upon his great chair exhausted, and bit his pillow with all his might.

Gilbert now knew what he wished, — namely, wherein lay the life or death of Mirabeau.

"Count," he asked, "what should you say, if to-morrow the King should send to inquire after you?"

The invalid made a movement of his shoulders, as much as to say, "That would be all one to me."

"The King, — or the Queen?"

"What?" said Mirabeau, half rising.

"I said, the King or Queen," repeated Gilbert.

Mirabeau raised himself on his two fists, like a crouching lion, saying, as he tried to read Gilbert's heart: "She won't do it!"

"But if she should?"

"You believe she would so far condescend?"

"I believe nothing; I only suppose, I presume."

"So be it," said Mirabeau. "I'll wait till to-morrow night."

"What do you mean?"

"Take my words in their plain sense, Doctor, and

don't see in them anything else: I'll wait till to-morrow night."

"And to-morrow night?"

"Well, by to-morrow night, if she sends to inquire, — if, for instance, Weber comes, then I'm in the wrong but if, on the contrary, he comes not, — oh! well, then — why, you're in the wrong, Doctor, and I'm in the right."

"So be it, — to-morrow night. Till then, my dear Demosthenes, take plenty of rest, calmness, and tranquillity.

"I will not quit my long chair."

"And that scarf?" Gilbert pointed to the object which met his eyes on first entering the chamber.

Mirabeau smiled, and said: "Word of honor!"

"Good!" said Gilbert, as he left the room. "Try to pass a peaceable night, and I'll answer for the rest."

Teisch was waiting at the door.

"Well, my brave Teisch," said the Doctor, "thy master is going to get better."

The old servant shook his head sorrowfully.

"How? Thou doubttest my word?"

"I doubt everything, Monsieur Doctor, so long as his evil genius is near him," said Teisch, heaving a sigh, and letting Gilbert pass down the narrow staircase.

In the corner of one of the landing-places Gilbert saw a veiled figure waiting, and asked: "Who is the woman?"

"It is *she*," responded Teisch.

"Who is *she*?"

"The woman who looks like the Queen."

For the second time Gilbert was struck with the same idea, in hearing the same phrase. He took two steps, as if to follow the phantom, but paused, saying to himself "Impossible!" and continued on his way, leaving th

old servant wondering that such a learned man as the Doctor should not undertake to conjure away the demon, who, in Teisch's profound conviction, was an envoy straight from Hell.

Mirabeau passed a comfortable night. The next day, at an early hour, he summoned Teisch, and made him open the windows, in order to breathe the morning air. The only thing which troubled the old servant, was the feverish impatience to which the invalid was evidently a prey.

When, being interrogated by his master, Teisch had replied that it was hardly eight o'clock, Mirabeau would not believe it, and made Teisch bring his watch, so that he could see for himself. Then he laid the watch on the table beside his couch.

Presently he said to the old man: "Teisch, you will take your station below, in Jean's place, who will attend to me to-day."

"Oh, my God, have I been so unfortunate as to displease Monsieur?"

"On the contrary, my good Teisch," kindly said Mirabeau, "it is because I can confide only in thee, that to-day I want thee at the door. To every comer thou wilt say that I'm better, but yet not able to see people. Only, if anybody comes on the part of the —" Mirabeau paused, and then resumed: "Only if anybody comes from the palace, if they should send from the Tuileries, thou wilt have the messenger come up, — understand me! — no matter what the pretext, the messenger must not go away, without my talking with him. Thou seest, my good Teisch, that in sending thee farther away, I am raising thee to the post of my confidant."

Teisch kissed Mirabeau's hand, saying: "Oh Monsieur, if you would only *will* to live!" and then went out.

“Parbleu!” said Mirabeau, as he watched the servant withdraw, “that’s just the difficulty.”

At ten o’clock Mirabeau rose, and dressed himself with unwonted care. Jean shaved him and dressed his hair and then pushed his armchair up to the window, from which he could see into the street.

At each blow on the knocker, at each vibration of the bell, his anxious face might have been seen, by anybody in front of the house, peering from behind the lifted curtain, and looking searchingly along the street. Then the curtain would fall, to be raised again at the next ring of the bell or blow of the knocker,—and so on, over and over again.

At two Teisch came up, followed by a lackey. Mirabeau’s heart beat violently. The lackey wore no livery. Mirabeau’s first idea was that this fellow out of livery came from the Queen, but was so dressed, in order not to compromise the woman who sent him; but Mirabeau was mistaken.

“From Doctor Gilbert,” said Teisch.

“Ah!” said Mirabeau, paling as if he were twenty-five, — when he waited for a message from Madame de Monnier, and saw instead a courier from his ucle, the bailiff.

“Monsieur,” said Teisch, “as the boy comes from Doctor Gilbert, and is the bearer of a letter for you, I thought it right to make him an exception to your orders.”

“And thou hast done well,” said the Count. Then he said to the lackey, “The letter!”

Teisch took it in his hand, and presented it to the Count.

Opening it, Mirabeau found it contained only these few words:

Let me know how you are. I shall be with you by eleven to-night. I hope your first word will be that I was right, and that you were wrong.

GILBERT.

“Tell your master that you found me up,” said Mirabeau to the lackey, “and that I expect him to-night.” Then he added, to Teisch: “See that this boy goes away satisfied!”

Teisch made a sign that he understood, and took the messenger away.

One hour followed another. The bell seldom ceased to vibrate or the hammer to sound. All Paris called on Mirabeau. In the street were groups of men, who, hearing news which did not quite correspond with the statements in the papers, were incredulous as to Teisch's reassuring bulletins, and compelled carriages to turn off to the right or left, through the side streets, so that the noise of the wheels might not disturb the illustrious invalid.

Towards five o'clock Teisch judged it proper once more to make his appearance in Mirabeau's chamber, in order to tell him this fact

“Ah, my poor Teisch,” said Mirabeau, “the sight of thee made me believe there was something better for me to hear.”

“What better news?” asked the surprised Teisch. “I did not suppose I could announce anything better than such a proof of love.”

“Thou art right!” said Mirabeau, “and I spoke ungratefully.”

As soon as Teisch had closed the door, Mirabeau opened his window, stepped out upon the balcony, and made a sign of thanks to the brave fellows who had constituted themselves the guardians of his repose.

They recognized him, and shouts of "Long live Mirabeau" could be heard from one end of Rue Chaussée d'Antin to the other.

Of what did Mirabeau think at this unexpected homage, which, under other circumstances, would have made his heart bound with joy? He thought of that haughty woman, who did not disquiet herself about him, and his eye searched beyond the groups pressing about the mansion, to see if he could not discern some lackey in blue livery, coming from the boulevards; but he re-entered his chamber with a wounded heart. The shadows began to fall, and he had seen nothing.

The evening passed along like the day. Mirabeau's impatience was changed to bitter despondency. His heart no longer beat with hope, when he heard the bell or the knocker.

At eleven the door opened, and Teisch announced Doctor Gilbert, who entered smiling, but was alarmed at the expression in Mirabeau's face. That face was a faithful mirror of the upheavals of the heart.

Gilbert's mind misgave him. "Has no one come?" he asked.

"From where?" said Mirabeau.

"You know very well what I mean."

"Me? No, on my honor!"

"From the palace, — from *her*, — in the Queen's name?"

"Nobody in the world, my dear Doctor. Nobody has come!"

"Impossible!" said Gilbert.

Mirabeau shrugged his shoulders. "Oh you innocent man!" he said. Then he asked, seizing Gilbert's hand with a convulsive movement: "Do you wish me to tell you what you have been doing to-day, Doctor?"

“I? I’ve done pretty much what I do every day.”

“No, for every day you do not go to the palace, and to-day you have been there. Every day you do not see the Queen, but to-day you have seen her. Every day you do not allow yourself to advise her, but to-day you have done so.”

“Well, go on!” said Gilbert.

“Oh Doctor, I can see what took place, — and hear, as well as if I had been there.”

“Well, Monsieur Second Sight, what did happen, and what was said?”

“You presented yourself at the Tuileries to-day, at one o’clock. You asked to speak with the Queen, and you did speak with her. You told her that my condition grew rather worse, and suggested to her that it would be kind in her as Queen, kind in her as a woman, to send and inquire for me, if not because she was solicitous about my welfare, at least for policy’s sake. She discussed the matter with you, appeared convinced by your reasoning, and dismissed you, saying that she would send and inquire. Happy and satisfied you came away, depending on the royal word; while she remained haughty and bitter, smiling at your credulity, which forgets that a royal word pledges nothing. — On the faith of an honorable man, Doctor,” and Mirabeau looked Gilbert full in the face, “is n’t this about so?”

“Truly, if you had been there, my dear Count, you could scarcely have seen and heard better.”

“Blunderers!” said Mirabeau, bitterly. “As I’ve told you, they never know enough to do the proper thing. The royal livery, entering my mansion to-day, in the midst of that crowd before my door and under my windows, shouting long life to me, would have redounded to the royal interest, with a whole year of popularity.”

Shaking his head, Mirabeau put his hand quickly to his eyes, and Gilbert was surprised to see him wipe away a tear.

“What’s the matter, Count?”

“With me? Nothing. Is there any news from the National Assembly, from the Cordelier or the Jacobin clubs? Has Robespierre drizzled out a new speech, or has Marat vomited a new pamphlet?”

“How long is it since you ate anything?” asked Gilbert.

“Not since two o’clock in the afternoon.”

“In that case you had better take a bath, my dear Count.”

“That’s an excellent idea of yours, Doctor. — Jean, a bath!”

“Here, Monsieur?”

“No, no, — one side, in my toilet-room.”

Ten minutes later Mirabeau was having his bath, and, as usual, Teisch was showing Gilbert out.

Mirabeau raised himself in his tub, in order to follow Gilbert with his eyes. When he was out of sight Mirabeau bent his ear, to hear the sound of his steps. He remained quiet till he heard the house door open and shut, and then rang violently.

“Jean, set the table in my room, and ask Olivia if she will do me the favor to sup with me.” As the lackey was going out to obey, Mirabeau cried: “Some flowers, — above all, some flowers. I adore flowers.”

At four in the morning Doctor Gilbert was awakened by a violent pull at the bell. “Ah,” he said, jumping out of bed, “I’m sure Mirabeau’s worse!”

He was not mistaken. After Mirabeau’s supper had been served, and his table covered with flowers, he ordered Teisch to go to bed, and also sent Jean away.

Then he had all the doors fastened, except one leading into the room of that unknown woman, whom Teisch called Mirabeau's evil genius.

Neither of the two servants went to bed, although the younger, Jean, fell asleep in his armchair in the ante-chamber. Teisch was on the alert.

At quarter of four a loud blow was heard on the small table bell. Both servants hurried to the chamber, but the doors were locked.

Then they bethought themselves to go to the unknown woman's apartment, and reach their master's chamber through her bedroom.

Lying backward, and half fainting, Mirabeau was holding this woman in his arms, to prevent her from summoning help; while she, in fright, was ringing the little bell on the table, not being able to reach the bellrope hanging by the chimney. Seeing the servants, she begged them to help both herself and Mirabeau, who was suffocating her in his convulsive writhing, and looked like Death in disguise, dragging her to the tomb.

Thanks to the united efforts of the servants, the arms of the deathstruck man were unclasped. She retreated, weeping, to her own room, while Mirabeau fell back on his extension chair.

Jean ran to find Doctor Gilbert, while Teisch gave all his attention to the master.

Gilbert took neither the time to have his horse harnessed, nor to call a cab. As Rue Saint Honoré is not far from the Rue Chaussée d'Antin, he followed Jean, and in ten minutes they were at Mirabeau's house.

Teisch was waiting below, in the vestibule.

"What is it this time, my friend?" asked Gilbert.

"Ah Monsieur," said the old servant, "that woman,—

always that woman, — and those cursed flowers. Go and see, Monsieur, go and see !”

At that instant something like a sob was heard. Gilbert sprang upstairs. On the last steps a door next to Mirabeau's opened, and a woman, clad in a white chamber-gown, suddenly appeared, falling at the Doctor's feet.

“Oh Gilbert, Gilbert,” she said, clasping her hands across her breast, “in the name of Heaven, save him !”

“Nicole !” cried Gilbert, “Nicole ! You wretch, it's you, is it ?”

“Save him ! Save him !” cried Nicole.

Gilbert paused an instant, engrossed with a terrible idea.

“Oh !” he murmured. “Beausire distributing pamphlets against him, and Nicole his mistress ! He is indeed lost, for beneath all this is Cagliostro !” and he rushed into Mirabeau's apartment, knowing there was not an instant to lose.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LONG LIVE MIRABEAU!

MIRABEAU was on his bed. He had regained consciousness. The fragments of his supper, the dishes, the flowers were there, accusing witnesses, like the dregs of poison, found in the bottom of a goblet, beside a suicide's deathbed.

Gilbert advanced quickly towards him, and breathed more freely as he said: "Ah, it's not so bad as I feared!"

Mirabeau smiled. "You think so, Doctor?" he said, shaking his head, like a man who thinks he knows his own condition quite as well as his physician knows it, who often tries to deceive himself, in order the better to deceive others.

This time Gilbert did not content himself with an external diagnosis. He tested the pulse; the pulse was lively and high. He inspected the tongue; the tongue was coated and bilious. He inquired into the condition of the head; the head was heavy and aching. A chill pervaded the lower extremities.

All at once the spasms, experienced by the sick man two days previous, reappeared, reaching in turn the shoulder-blade, the collar-bone, and the diaphragm. The pulse, which, as we said, had been lively and high, now became intermittent and spasmodic.

Gilbert ordered the same remedies which had produced the previous convalescence.

Unfortunately, at the end of fifteen minutes, — either because he had not strength to bear such powerful remedies, or because he did not wish to be cured, — the invalid complained of so much suffering in the poultice regions, that it became necessary to remove the mustard plasters. The improvement, which had been evident while the poultices were at work, immediately ceased.

It is not our intention to follow the phases of this terrible illness in all their details; only, a rumor that morning ran throughout the city, that the sick man was in a more serious condition than on the evening before. There had been a relapse, it was said; and a relapse meant death.

Then it was really possible to judge what a gigantic place one man could occupy in the heart of a nation. All Paris was moved, as in times when a general calamity menaces both the whole community and individuals. All day long, as had been the case the evening before, the street was barred and guarded by men of the people, in order that the noise of passing vehicles might not disturb the sick man. Hour after hour the groups, assembled beneath the windows, asked for news. Bulletins were sent out, which in an instant circulated from Rue Chaussée d'Antin to the ends of Paris. The door was besieged by a crowd of citizens of all conditions and opinions, as if each party, however opposed to the others, would lose something in losing Mirabeau. During this time the friends, relatives, and particular acquaintances of the great orator filled the courtyard, vestibule, and lower rooms, without having the least idea that they were in the way.

Meanwhile very few words were exchanged between Mirabeau and Doctor Gilbert.

“Decidedly, you mean to die,” said the Doctor.

“What 's the good of living?” answered Mirabeau.

Recalling the engagements Mirabeau had entered into with the Queen, and her ingratitude, Gilbert insisted no longer, promising himself to do his duty as a physician to the very end, but knowing that he was no deity, to struggle against the inevitable.

On the evening of the first day after the relapse, the Jacobins sent for information as to the health of their ex-president, and Barnave headed the deputation. It had been proposed to send the two Lameths with Barnave, but they declined the appointment.

When Mirabeau was informed of this circumstance, he said : " Oh well, I knew they were cowards, but I did n't suppose they were idiots."

For twenty-four hours Doctor Gilbert did not quit Mirabeau an instant. On Wednesday evening, towards eleven o'clock, the invalid was so comfortable that Gilbert consented to go into the next chamber, and take a few hours of rest. Before doing so he ordered that he should be called at the slightest appearance of any bad symptoms.

At daybreak he awoke. Nobody had roused him from sleep, yet he arose anxiously. It seemed to him impossible that there should have been so sustained an improvement without one drawback.

In fact, when the Doctor came down, Teisch told him, with eyes and voice full of tears, that Mirabeau was very ill, but had forbidden them, whatever his sufferings might be, to rouse his physician.

Sure enough, the sick man had suffered cruelly. His pulse was in an alarming condition. The pains had become ferocious. Both his suffocation and convulsions had returned.

Several times, — and this Teisch had attributed to the beginning of delirium, — the sick man had pronounced the Queen's name. " Ingrates ! " he had said. " They

have n't once sent to inquire after me!" Then, as talking to himself, he had added: "I wonder what *she* say, when she learns that I'm dead, — to-morrow or ne day."

Gilbert thought everything depended upon the impening crisis. He proposed to fight the malady vigorously and ordered an application of leeches to the breast; but as if they had been accomplices of the dying man, the leeches took hold badly, and the Doctor had to resort to musk pills and a second bleeding in the foot.

This attack lasted eight hours. During this eight hours Gilbert fought with death, — like an expert duellist so to speak, parrying each thrust, repaying each attack with others, but sometimes getting touched himself. At the expiration of eight hours the fever abated, and death beat a retreat; but the enemy left the imprint of his claw on the invalid's visage, like a tiger who flees, only to return.

Gilbert stood beside the bed, with his arms crossed while this terrible struggle took place. He was too far advanced in the secrets of his art to cherish any hope, even to entertain a doubt as to the result. Mirabeau was doomed. In the body lying before Gilbert's eyes, despite a remnant of life, it was impossible to see the living Mirabeau.

From that moment, by a strange coincidence, yet with one accord, as if struck by the same idea, Gilbert and Mirabeau began to talk about the latter as one who *had* been, but had ceased to be.

From that moment also Mirabeau's physiognomy took on a solemn character, which belongs peculiarly to the agony of great men. His voice became slow, grave almost prophetic. There was something purer, profounder, broader in his words; while in his sentiments

there was something more affecting, more unselfish, more sublime.

It was announced to him that a young man, who had never seen him but once, and would not explain who he was, insisted upon coming in. Mirabeau turned towards Gilbert, as if to ask permission to receive this young man.

Gilbert understood. "Let him come in!" he said to Teisch.

Teisch opened the door. A young man of nineteen or twenty appeared on the threshold, entered slowly, kneeled before Mirabeau's bed, took his hand, and kissed it with sobs.

Mirabeau seemed to search his memory for some vague remembrance of the young man. "Ah," he said suddenly, "I recognize you! You are the young man from Argenteuil."

"God be praised!" said the youth; "that is all I could ask;" and, rising, he withdrew, with both hands pressed over his eyes.

Several seconds later Teisch came in with a note, which the youth had written in the ante-chamber. It contained these simple words:

When I kissed the hand of M. de Mirabeau at Argenteuil, I told him that I was ready to die for him.

I wish to keep my word.

Yesterday I read, in an English paper, that the transfusion of blood proved successful in London, in a case similar to that of our illustrious invalid.

If a transfusion of blood should be thought useful, in order to save M. de Mirabeau, I offer mine, which is young and pure.

MORNAIS.

In reading these lines, Mirabeau could not keep back his tears. He ordered them to bring back the youth;

but, as if wishing to escape the gratitude he so well merited, Mornais had gone away, leaving his double address, both in Paris and at Argenteuil.

A few minutes later, Mirabeau consented to receive everybody : his friends, Monsieur de la Marck and Monsieur Frochet ; his sister, Madame du Saillant ; his niece, Madame d'Aragon.

He however refused to see any physician except Gilbe and said, when the latter insisted : "No, Doctor. You have had all the annoyances of my malady. If you help me, you shall have all the credit of the cure."

From time to time he wished to know who had inquired for news of his condition ; and though he did not ask outright, "Has the Queen sent anybody from the palace ?" Gilbert divined, by the dying man's sigh, — when the end of the list was reached, — that the one name he wished to find therein was the very one he could not find.

Then, without speaking about the King or Queen, Mirabeau was not yet near enough to death to do that — he began to discourse with wonderful eloquence about general politics, and to talk particularly of the course he should pursue towards England, if he were prime minister. It was especially with Pitt he would like to contend, man to man.

"Oh, that Pitt!" he cried. "He's a great man in his *preparations*. He governs rather by what he threatens than by what he performs. If I had lived, I should have taken him down with mortification!"

Sometimes a clamor rose to the windows, — a sorrowful cry of "Long life to Mirabeau," sent up by the populace, a cry which resembled a prayer, — wailing rather than hopeful.

Then Mirabeau listened, and had the window opened

that this compensating sound might reach him, and partly repay him for his sufferings. For several seconds he remained with hands and ears bent forward, drinking in and absorbing each sound. Then he murmured: "Oh, the good people, — calumniated, injured, misunderstood, like myself, — it would be more just if it were *they* who forgot me, and *she* who rewarded me."

Night came. Gilbert would not quit his patient, but had the extension chair pushed near the bed, and lay down at its foot.

Mirabeau did not object to this. Now that he was sure of death, he no longer seemed afraid of his physician.

As soon as daylight appeared he bade them open the windows.

"My dear Doctor," said the sick man to Gilbert, "to-day I shall die. When one has reached my condition, he has only to perfume himself, and be crowned with flowers, in order to fall, agreeably as possible, into that sleep which knows no waking. Have I your permission to do as I wish?"

Gilbert made a sign to indicate that Mirabeau was entirely his own master. Then the Count called his servants:

"Jean," said he, "get me the finest flowers you can find, while Teisch will take pains to make me look as handsome as possible."

Before going out Jean seemed to wait for permission from Gilbert, who nodded his head in the affirmative.

As to Teisch, who had himself been ill the night before, he began to shave his master and dress his hair.

"By the way, thou wast ill thyself yesterday, my poor Teisch," said Mirabeau. "How is it to-day?"

"Oh, very well, my dear master," said the honest old servant, "and I wish *you* were in my place!"

Mirabeau laughed. "As for me," he said, "as worthless as thy life seems to *thee*, I do not wish thee to be in *my* place."

At this moment a cannon-shot was heard. Whence came it? Nobody knew.

Mirabeau started. "Oh!" said he, sitting up, "have they already begun the obsequies of Achilles?"

Hardly had Jean told the crowd around the mansion — when they rushed up to him for news about the illustrious invalid, — that he was in search of flowers than men ran up the street crying out, "Flowers for Mirabeau." All doors opened, and all offered what they could, whether from their apartments or their conservatories, so that in less than fifteen minutes the house was filled with flowers most rare.

By nine o'clock Mirabeau's chamber was transformed into a veritable garden. At that moment Teisch finished his master's toilet.

"My dear Doctor," said Mirabeau, "I ask for a single quarter-hour, in order to make my adieux to some one who must quit the house before me. If anybody wishes to insult that person, I commend her to your protection."

Gilbert understood. "Well, I will leave you alone," he said.

"Yes; but you will wait in the side room? When this person has gone away, you will not leave me again till I am dead?"

Gilbert nodded assent.

"Give me your word," said Mirabeau.

Gilbert stammered as he did so. This stoic was surprised to find himself in tears, for he believed that he had become immovable, through the force of his materialistic science and philosophy.

He went towards the door. Mirabeau stopped him.

"Before going," he said, "open my secretary, and bring me a small casket you will find there."

Gilbert did as Mirabeau desired. The casket was heavy. Gilbert surmised that it was full of gold. Mirabeau made a sign for him to put it on the table, and then extended his hand.

"You will have the goodness to send Jean to me," he said. — "Jean, you understand, not Teisch. It tires me to call or ring."

Gilbert withdrew. Jean was waiting in the next chamber; and as Gilbert came out, the servant went in. Behind Jean, Gilbert heard the door fastened with a bolt.

The next half-hour Gilbert employed in giving the news from the sick-room to the people thronging the lower part of the house. This news was disheartening, for he did not conceal from them the fact that Mirabeau would not probably live through the day.

A carriage stopped in front of the outer door. For an instant Gilbert had an idea it was a carriage from the Court, which, out of respect, had been allowed to drive up to the porch, despite the general prohibition.

He ran to the window. It would be such a consolation for the dying man to know that the Queen remembered him.

It was a simple hired carriage, however, for which Jean had been sent. The Doctor guessed what it meant. Indeed, five minutes afterward, Jean ushered out a lady, wrapped in a large mantle. This woman entered the cab. Before this cab, without asking who the woman was, the crowd respectfully divided.

Jean returned to the house. An instant later the door of Mirabeau's chamber re-opened, and the feeble voice of the invalid was heard asking for the Doctor. Gilbert ran to his side.

“Hold!” said Mirabeau. “Put this casket back in its place, my dear Doctor.” Then he added, as Gilbert appeared astonished at finding the casket as heavy as it had been before: “Yes, is n’t it odd? Where the Devil has all this disinterestedness been hiding itself so long?”

In returning to the bed Gilbert found on the floor an embroidered handkerchief, trimmed with lace. It was wet with tears.

“Ah!” he said to Mirabeau, “she took nothing away, but she has left something behind.”

Mirabeau took the handkerchief, and, noticing its dampness, pressed it to his brow.

“Oh,” murmured he, “it is only *she* who has no heart!”

He fell back on his bed, with his eyes closed; so that one might have supposed him dead or in a swoon, but for the rattle in his chest, which indicated that he was only on the road to death.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FLEE! FLEE! FLEE!

THEREAFTER the few hours remaining to Mirabeau were one prolonged agony. None the less Gilbert kept his promise, and remained at his bedside till the last sigh.

However painful, there is always much instruction, for the physician and philosopher, in the spectacle of that last struggle between matter and spirit. The greater the genius, the more interesting is it to study the combat of that genius with death, though it must end in death's victory.

Moreover, in the sight of this great man dying, the Doctor found another cause for sombre reflections. Why should Mirabeau die, this man of athletic temperament and Herculean constitution?

Was it not because he had put forth his hand to sustain a crumbling monarchy? Was it not because he had for an instant pressed the hand of that unfortunate woman, Marie Antoinette?

Had not Cagliostro predicted such a death as lying in wait for Mirabeau? Those two singular beings whom Gilbert had encountered, — one killing the reputation, and the other the health of the great orator of France, after he became the main support of the monarchy, — were they not new proofs that every obstacle was to be crushed, even the Bastille itself, if it came in Cagliostro's way, — or rather, in the way of the ideas he represented?

While Gilbert was plunged in such speculations, Mirabeau made a movement and opened his eyes. He was returning to life, through the gateway of pain.

He tried to speak, but the effort was futile. Far from appearing greatly affected by this new incident, as soon as he was sure that his tongue was mute, he smiled, and tried to express through the eyes his sentiment of obligation towards Gilbert, and towards all others whose care kept him company in that supreme and last stage of the journey whose end was death.

Then a solitary idea seemed to fill his mind. Gilbert alone could guess what it was, and did so.

The sick man could not understand how long the state of unconsciousness had lasted, out of which he had now emerged. Had it lasted an hour? Had it lasted a day? During that hour, or day, had the Queen sent for news of his condition?

The registry was brought up from the door, in which every caller had inscribed his name, whether sent as messenger, or coming on his own account.

No name, known as being in the circle of royal intimacy denoted even a disguised solicitude in that quarter. Jean and Teisch were summoned and questioned; but neither valet nor usher had come from the royal household, or even from the Tuileries.

It was evident that Mirabeau was making a supreme effort to speak a few words, — an effort like that ascribed to Cræsus's son, who, seeing his father menaced with death, was able to break the bonds which chained his tongue, and cry out: "Soldier, slay not Cræsus!"

Mirabeau succeeded. "Oh!" he cried, "do they not know that when I am dead *they* will be lost? I bear with me the monarchy's mourning, and on my tomb the factions will share its tatters."

Gilbert darted to the invalid's bedside. Like a skilful physician he cherished hope so long as there was life. Besides, he would use all the resources of his art, if only to persuade those eloquent lips to speak a few more words.

He took a spoon, and poured into it a few drops of that greenish liquid, a vial of which he had once given Mirabeau, — only this time he did not dilute it with brandy, — and placed it at the mouth of the sick man, who said, smiling: “Oh, dear Doctor, if you want that life-giving liquor to have any effect on me, give me a spoonful, if not all there is in the vial.”

“How so?” asked Gilbert, looking inquiringly at Mirabeau.

“Did you believe that I, the pre-eminent abuser of every good gift, could have such a treasure in my hands without abusing it? Not I! I had that liquid analyzed, my dear Æsculapins. I learned that it contained the root of Indian hemp; and then I took it, not only by drops, but by the spoonful, — not for the sake of life, but for the sake of the visions it brought me.”

“Unhappy man!” whispered Gilbert. “I little thought I was furnishing you poison.”

“Sweet poison, Doctor, thanks to which I have doubled, quadrupled, the last hours of my life, — yes, multiplied them by the hundred. Thanks to that liquid, though I die at forty-two, I have lived a century, and have possessed in imagination, what evaded me in reality, — strength, riches, love. Oh Doctor, Doctor, don't repent this gift, but congratulate yourself over it. God only gave me actual existence, — a life sorrowful, poor, botched, wretched, worthless, — a loan, which man is expected to render up with usury. Doctor, I do not know that I owe God thanks for such a life; but I owe you thanks

for your poison. Fill up the spoon, Doctor, and give it me once more."

Gilbert did as Mirabeau demanded, and gave him the medicine, which he relished as something delicious.

After a few silent seconds he said, as if, at the approach of eternity, the dying man was permitted to lift the veil of futurity: "Ah Doctor, happy those who die in this year 1791. They have seen the Revolution, with its face serene and resplendent. Up to this day, no revolution so great has cost so little blood; because heretofore it has been a revolution of minds only; but the time is coming when it will take hold of facts and things. Perhaps you fancy they will regret me, down there at the Tuileries. No! My death will relieve them of an embarrassing bargain. With me, they would have been obliged to govern in a certain way, and I was therefore no longer a support, but an obstacle. *She* apologized to her brother on my account. She wrote that Mirabeau believed he was advising her, and did not see that she was amusing herself at his expense! Oh, that's why I wished that woman was my mistress, and not merely my Queen. What a splendid part to sustain in history! Doctor, — that of a man who sustained with one hand the aged monarchy, and youthful liberty with the other, and forced them to march with equal step towards the same end, the welfare of the people, and respect for royalty."

He paused, and then went on: "Perhaps this was a possibility, perhaps it was a vision; but I had a conviction that I alone could realize this vision. What pains me, Doctor, is not that I die, but that I die so incomplete having undertaken a work, but knowing I cannot carry out that work. Who will glorify my mission, if that mission is abortive, beheaded, maimed? What will be

known about me, Doctor, is exactly what were better not known, — that is, my unregulated, foolish, vagabond life. What will be read of my writings, except my ‘Letters to Sophia,’ my ‘Erotica Biblion,’ my ‘Prussian Monarchy,’ and other obscene books and pamphlets? I shall be reproached with having bargained with the Crown, — reproached because nothing came out of this compact, as it should. My work will be but an unformed fœtus, a monster without a head. Dying at forty-two, I shall be judged as if I had lived a whole human lifetime, as if I had not disappeared in the midst of a tempest, as if I had been marching over a good solid road, paved with laws, ordinances, and regulations, instead of stumbling ceaselessly in chaos, and over an abyss. Doctor, to whom can I bequeath, not my dilapidated fortune, — that matters little, since I have no children, — but to whom can I bequeath my calumniated memory, a memory which should one day be a heritage honorable to France, Europe, the world ?”

“Why then are you in such haste to die ?” sorrowfully responded Gilbert.

“Oh, there are moments when I ask that question of myself, — as you ask it. Listen to this ! I can do nothing without *her*, and she will have none of me. I pledged myself like a fool. I swore fidelity like an idiot, always submissive to those invisible wings in my brain which bore away my heart ; while *she* swore to nothing, promised nothing. So, Doctor, all is for the best ; and if you’ll promise me one thing, not a single regret will trouble me during the few hours I have to live.”

“In Heaven’s name, what can I promise you, my own dear friend ?”

“Well, promise me, if my exit from life is too hard, too painful, — promise me, not only as a physician, but also

as a man, and yet more as a philosopher, — promise to help me on the way.”

“Why do you ask me such a thing?”

“Ab, I’ll tell you. Though I feel that death is here, I also feel that life remains strong within me. I pass away, not as one dying, but I die alive, dear Doctor, and the last step will be hard to take.”

The Doctor bent his face near the invalid’s. “I have promised not to leave you, my friend. If God, — and I still hope this is not so, — if God has condemned you to death, — well, in that awful moment, leave it to my tender care to accomplish all I have to do. If death is here, I shall be here also.”

It was evident the invalid only waited for this promise. “I thank you!” he murmured, and then his head fell back on the pillow.

This time, despite that hopefulness which it is the duty of a physician to instil into the mind of a sick man, even to the last drop, Gilbert could no longer doubt the end. For a few minutes the strong dose of hasheesh, which Mirabeau had taken, — like the shocks of an electric battery, — had restored to the sick man, together with his speech, that play of the muscles, — that vitality of thought, so to speak, — which accompanies speech; but when he ceased to talk, the muscles drooped, that brain-life vanished, and the death-marks imprinted on his face ever since the last crisis, now appeared more deeply graven than ever.

For three hours his icy hand rested in Gilbert’s. During these three hours, — from four o’clock til seven, — his agony was quieted. He was so calm, that all the world might have been allowed to visit him. You might have believed him asleep.

Towards eight, however, Gilbert felt the cold hand

tremble in his own. This motion was so violent that it could not be mistaken. "Now comes the hour of struggle, now begins the last agony," said Gilbert to himself.

The forehead of the dying man was covered with perspiration. His eyes re-opened, and shone brightly. He made a motion, which indicated his wish to drink. They hastened to offer him water, wine, orangeade; but he shook his head. These were not what he wished.

Then he motioned for them to bring him a quill, ink, and paper. They obeyed him, in order that no thought of his might be lost, whether it was the sentiment of a great genius, or only the words of delirium.

He took the quill, and traced these words with a firm hand: *To die, to sleep*, — the words of Hamlet, in his great soliloquy upon life and death.

Gilbert seemed not to understand. Mirabeau dropped the quill, grasped his chest with both hands, as if he would tear it open, uttered a few inarticulate syllables, took up the quill again, and wrote, with a superhuman effort, as if commanding the pain to stand still an instant: "These pains have become grinding, insupportable. Must a man be left on the rack for hours, perhaps for days, when a few drops of opium will spare him this torture?"

The Doctor hesitated. Yes, as he had said to Mirabeau, — in this agonizing moment, he was there, face to face with death; but he was there to fight against death, not to be its second in the duel.

The distress became more and more violent. The sick man straightened himself out, distorted his hands, gnawed his pillow.

At last he broke the paralytic bonds, and suddenly exclaimed: "Oh, these doctors, these doctors! Gilbert, are you not my physician and my friend? Have n't you

promised to spare me the agony of such a death? W you make me regret having trusted you? Gilbert, I a peal to your friendship, I appeal to your honor!" and with a sigh, a groan, a scream of pain, he fell back on h pillow.

Gilbert sighed in his turn, and offered his hand Mirabeau. "You are right, my friend. You shall ha what you wish."

He took the quill to write a prescription, which w for a strong dose of the syrup of diacodium, in a gla of distilled water; but hardly had he written the la word, when Mirabeau raised himself on his bed, and p out his hand for the quill, which Gilbert hastened give him.

Then with a cramped hand, already clinched in deat he inscribed on the paper these words, in writing scarce legible, "Flee! Flee! Flee!"

He tried to sign it, but could hardly trace the first fo letters of his name, and extended his convulsive ar towards Gilbert. "For *her!*" he whispered; and aga fell on his pillow, — motionless, breathless, sightless.

He was dead!

Gilbert approached the bed, looked into the face, fe the pulse, placed his hand over the heart. Then, turnir to the spectators of this trying scene, he said: "Gentl men, Mirabeau no longer suffers."

Pressing a last kiss on the forehead of the dead ma he took the paper, whose destination he alone kne' folded it religiously, placed it in his breast-pocket, ar went out, thinking that he had no right to detain tl message an instant longer than the time required f conveying the advice of the illustrious dead from tl Chaussée d'Antin to the Tuileries.

A few seconds after the Doctor left the death-chambe

there arose a great clamor in the street. The rumor of Mirabeau's death had begun to spread.

Soon came a sculptor, sent by Gilbert, in order that an image of the great orator, at the very moment when he was vanquished by death, might be preserved for posterity.

A few minutes of eternity had already given back to the fleshly mask that serenity reflected on Mirabeau's features by a powerful soul, in quitting the body it had animated.

Mirabeau was not dead. He seemed asleep, and his slumber was full of life and smiling dreams.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE OBSEQUIES.

GRIEF was wide-spread, universal. In an instant it spread from centre to circumference, from Rue Chaussée d'Antin to the barriers of Paris.

The populace raised a tremendous clamor. Then they took it upon themselves to see that the city showed proper respect for the dead. They ran to the theatres, tore down the placards, and closed the doors. A ball was in progress that evening, in a mansion in Rue Chaussée d'Antin. The populace invaded the house, dispersed the dancers, and broke the musicians' instruments.

The bereavement was announced to the National Assembly by its President. Barrère immediately ascended the rostrum. He moved that, with the official proceedings of that sorrowful day, should be recorded testimonies of the Assembly's regret at the loss of such a great man; and insisted, in the name of the Nation, that an invitation be given to all the members of the Assembly to attend the funeral.

On the next day, April 3, the Department of Paris presented itself to the National Assembly, and demanded and obtained a vote that the Church of Saint Genevieve be constituted a Pantheon, consecrated to the sepulture of distinguished men, and that Mirabeau should be buried there first of all.

Here let us put on record the magnificent decree of the Assembly. Even in such books as this, — which

politicians esteem frivolous, because stories teach history in a form not quite so heavy as that employed by the historians,—it is well, we say, to meet such grand decrees as often as possible, no matter where we find them, provided they come within reach of the public eye,—decrees drawn out by the admiration or respect of a nation.

Here is the decree, as originally voted :

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DECREES :

Article First.

The new edifice of Saint Genevieve shall be set apart for the reception of the ashes of illustrious men, dating from the epoch of French liberty.

Article Second.

The Legislative Body alone shall decide upon whom this honor shall be bestowed.

Article Third.

Honoré Riquetti Mirabeau is judged worthy of this honor.

Article Fourth.

No Legislature shall hereafter award this honor to its own deceased members; but such propositions must be referred to the Legislature following.

Article Fifth.

Exceptions in favor of those great men who died before the Revolution can only be made by the Legislative Body.

Article Sixth.

The administration of the Department of Paris shall be charged with promptly putting the edifice of Saint Genevieve

into proper condition to fulfil its new destination, and on its front shall be graven these words :

TO HER GREAT MEN, BY A GRATEFUL NATION.

Article Seventh.

While the new Church of Saint Genevieve is being prepared for the purpose, the body of Riquetti Mirabeau shall be laid beside the remains of Descartes, in the basement of the Church of Saint Genevieve.

The Pantheon was subsequently made the object of several decrees, which are here cited side by side, — or rather one after the other, — but without comment.

A decree was passed February 20, 1806. In the First Section it is provided that the Church of Saint Denis shall be the burial-place of the emperors. In the Second Section are the following articles :

Article Seventh.

The Church of Saint Genevieve shall be completed and used for public worship, conformably to the intentions of its founder, under the invocation of Saint Genevieve, the Patron Saint of Paris.

Article Eighth.

It shall also continue to serve the purpose to which it was dedicated by the Assembly of 1791, and shall be consecrated to the burial of great dignitaries, distinguished officers of the Empire and the Crown, of Senators, of the chief officers of the Legion of Honor, and — by virtue of our special decrees — of other citizens, who by a career of arms, statesmanship, or literature, render eminent service to their country ; their bodies to be embalmed and buried in the church.

Article Ninth.

The slabs now kept in the Museum of French Monuments shall be transported to this church, and there be arranged in the order of their respective centuries.

Article Tenth.

The Metropolitan Chapter of the Church of Notre Dame, increased by six members, shall have charge of the services at the Church of Saint Genevieve. The guardianship of that church shall be specially confided to an archpriest (or dean), chosen by the canons.

Article Eleventh.

There shall be solemn official services on January 3, the Feast of Saint Genevieve ; on August 15, the Feast of Saint Napoleon, and the Anniversary of the conclusion of the Concordat (legally restoring public worship to France); on All Souls Day ; on the First Sunday in December, the anniversary of the Emperor's Coronation and of the Battle of Austerlitz ; and whenever there shall be burials, in pursuance of the present decree. No other public religious services shall be held in this church, except with our approbation.

Signed : NAPOLEON.

Countersigned : CHAMPAGNY.

On December 12, 1821, another order was issued :

LOUIS (THE EIGHTEENTH) BY THE GRACE OF GOD, KING OF FRANCE AND NAVARRE, TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN — GREETING :

The church which our grandfather, Louis the Fifteenth, began to build, under the invocation of Saint Genevieve, is happily finished. Though it has not yet received all the ornaments which will complete its splendor, it is nevertheless in a condition to permit the celebration of divine service. In order, therefore, not to longer retard the accomplishment of the founder's intentions, and to re-establish, conformably to

his views and our own, the worship of the Patron Saint, whose aid our good City of Paris has been accustomed to implore in all times of need ; and in accordance with the report of our Minister of Internal Affairs, we have ordained and do ordain as follows :

Article First.

The new church, founded by King Louis Fifteenth, in honor of Saint Genevieve, the Patron Saint of Paris, shall be forever consecrated to divine worship, under the invocation of that saint. To this end the church is placed at the disposition of the Archbishop of Paris, who will have it provisionally served by ecclesiastics whom he may appoint.

Article Second.

There shall be subsequent provisions in regard to regular and perpetual services in this church, and the nature of those services.

Signed : LOUIS.

Countersigned : SIMÉON.

On August 20, 1830, another ordinance was passed :

Considering that national justice and the honor of France require that illustrious men, who have deserved well of their country, — by contributing to its honor and glory, — should receive, after their death, open testimonials of public recognition and esteem ; considering also, for the attainment of this end, that the laws setting apart the Pantheon for such a purpose, should be vigorously renewed, — we have ordained, and do ordain, as follows :

Article First.

The Pantheon shall be restored to its former legalized uses. The remains of illustrious men, who have deserved well of their country, shall be buried in this church. The inscription shall be restored on its front, —

TO HER GREAT MEN, BY A GRATEFUL NATION.

Article Second.

Measures shall be taken to determine upon what conditions and in what form this testimonial of national gratitude shall be bestowed in the name of the country. A commission shall be immediately appointed, to prepare a draft of a law to this effect.

Article Third.

The decree of February 20, 1806, and the ordinance of December 12, 1821, are repealed.

Signed: LOUIS PHILIPPE.

Countersigned: GUIZOT.

On December 6, 1851, another decree was issued :

THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC,

in view of the law of April 4/10, 1791, of the decree of February 20, 1806, of the ordinance of December 12, 1821, of August 26, 1830, decrees as follows :

Article First.

The old Church of Saint Genevieve is restored to public worship, conformably to the intentions of its founder, under the invocation of Saint Genevieve, the Protectress of Paris. Measures shall ultimately be taken for regulating the permanent exercise of Catholic worship in this church.

Article Second.

The ordinance of August 26, 1830, is repealed.

Article Third.

The Minister of Public Instruction and Worship, and the Minister of Public Works, are entrusted, — so far as this duty comes under their respective jurisdictions, — with the execution of this decree, which shall be inserted in the Bulletin of Laws.

Signed: LOUIS NAPOLEON.

Countersigned: FORTOUL.

Returning to the thread of our narrative, on the next day, at four in the afternoon, the National Assembly left the Riding School, in a body, and proceeded to Mirabeau's mansion, where they were awaited by the director of the Department of Paris, by all the cabinet ministers, and by more than a hundred thousand other persons; but among these hundred thousand, not one specially represented the Queen.

The procession took up its line of march. At the head was Lafayette, as the general in command of the National Guard of the Kingdom.

Then came the President of the National Assembly, Tronchet, royally surrounded by a dozen ushers, wearing their insignia of office.

Next came the cabinet ministers; and next, the members of the Assembly, without distinction of party, Sieyès giving his arm to Charles de Lameth.

After the Assembly came the members of the Jacobin Club, like a second National Assembly. They were especially noticeable for their grief, which was probably quite as ostentatious as it was real. The Club had voted to wear mourning for eight days; and Robespierre, too poor to afford the expense of a new coat, wore a hired garment, as he had done when in mourning for Benjamin Franklin.

Following the Jacobins came the entire population of Paris, hedged in between two lines of National Guardsmen, amounting to over thirty thousand men.

Funeral music, in which were two instruments, until then unknown, — the trombone and the tamtam, — marked step for this immense crowd.

It was eight o'clock by the time the procession arrived at Saint Eustache. The funeral eulogy was pronounced by Cérutti. At his last word ten thousand National Guards, who were inside the church, discharged their

muskets at one instant. The populace, who had not expected this discharge, set up a great outcry. The commotion was so violent that not a tile remained unbroken. For an instant it seemed as if the arch of the temple was falling, and that the church would serve as a tomb for both the living and the dead.

The procession resumed its march, with torches. The night-shades had descended, and not only invaded the streets through which the mourners passed, but permeated most of the hearts passing through them.

The death of Mirabeau was indeed a political eclipse. Mirabeau dead, who knew into what path France might enter? The skilful tamer was no longer there to guide the mettlesome coursers called Ambition and Hate. It was felt that he carried away with him something which in future the Assembly would greatly miss, — the spirit of peace, watching in the midst of war, and goodness of heart, hidden beneath a fiery nature.

All the world was the loser by his death. The Royalists had no longer a spur, nor the Revolutionists a bridle. Henceforth the chariot would roll more rapidly, and the descent be sharper. Who could tell whither it was rolling, — towards victory or towards an abyss?

The Pantheon was not reached till midnight.

In that procession one man only was lacking, — Pétion. Why had Pétion remained away? He gave a reason to two of his friends, who next day reproached him for his absence. He said that he had read a plan for an Anti-Revolutionary conspiracy, written in Mirabeau's hand.

Three years afterward, on a gloomy autumn day, no longer in the hall at the Riding School, but in the hall of the Tuileries, the Convention, — after having killed the King, after having killed the Queen, after having killed the Girondists, after having killed the members of

the Cordelier Club, after having killed the Jacobins, after having killed the ultra Republicans, after having killed itself, — having nothing living left to kill, began to kill off the dead.

With savage joy the Convention declared that it had been deceived in the judgment given in Mirabeau's honor, as, in its eyes, his genius could not atone for his corruption. A new decree was therefore enacted, excluding Mirabeau from the Pantheon.

On the threshold of that temple an usher published the decree, which declared Mirabeau unfit to share the burial-place of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Descartes, and ordered the guardian of the church to deliver up the great orator's body.

Thus a voice, more terrible than the one to be heard in the Valley of Jehosaphat, cried out, before its time: "Pantheon, give up thy dead!"

The Pantheon obeyed. Mirabeau's corpse was delivered to the usher, who, as he himself declared, "removed the aforesaid coffin, and placed it in the common burial-place;" and this common burial-ground was Clamart, the cemetery for criminals.

Doubtless to render this punishment more terrible, — a punishment which pushed its inquisition beyond death's door, — this removal was accomplished by night, and without an escort; and the coffin was again buried, but this time in solitude, without any indication of the place of interment, — without cross, stone, or inscription.

Later, however, an old gravedigger, — questioned by one of those inquisitive spirits, who are anxious to know what others ignore, — led him, one evening, across the desolate graveyard, stopped at the centre of the enclosure, and said, stamping his foot, "It is here!"

Then he repeated, as the curious visitor asked for more

proof: "It is here! I can answer for it, for I helped lower it into the grave; and I nearly tumbled in after it, the confounded leaden coffin was so heavy."

This man was Nodier, — Charles Nodier. One day he conducted me also to Clamart, stamped his foot in the same place, and said to me, in my turn: "It is here!"

For more than fifty years have successive generations passed the unknown tomb of Mirabeau. Is this not a sufficiently long expiation for a contestable offence, which belonged rather to Mirabeau's enemies than to Mirabeau himself? Will it not be time, at the first opportunity, to dig up that impure soil, in which he rests, till we find this leaden coffin, which weighed down the poor gravedigger's arms so wofully, and which may be recognized as belonging to the man proscribed from the Pantheon?

Perhaps Mirabeau did not deserve the Pantheon; but this is sure, — many repose, and will repose, in Christian earth, who deserve, more than he, to be denied the rites of sepulture.

O France! either outside of consecrated ground, or in the Pantheon, let Mirabeau have a tomb! and let it have his name for its single epitaph, his bust for its only ornament, with the future for his sole judge.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MESSENGER.

ON the morning of April 2, an hour or so before Mirabeau breathed his last, a naval officer, wearing his uniform as captain of a ship, came along the Rue Saint Honoré, and turned towards the Tuileries, passing through Rue Saint Louis and Rue Échelle.

At the end of the Cour des Écuries he turned to the right, climbed over the chains which separated the stables from the interior courtyard, returned the salute of the sentinel who presented arms, and entered the Swiss Courtyard.

Like a man to whom the way is familiar, he then went up a small staircase, used by the servants, which, through a long and winding corridor, communicated with the King's private office.

On perceiving him the valet uttered a cry of surprise, almost of joy; but the new-comer placed his fingers on his lips, as he said. "Monsieur Hue, can the King receive me soon?"

"The King is with General Lafayette, to whom he is giving his orders for the day; but as soon as the General leaves —"

"You will announce me?"

"Oh, that's hardly necessary! His Majesty expects you, and yesterday evening gave orders for you to be admitted as soon as you arrived."

At that moment they heard the small bell jingle in the King's office.

"There!" said the valet. "Probably the King is ringing, in order to inquire about you."

"Go in, Monsieur Hue, and lose no time, — if, indeed, the King is free, and can see me."

The valet opened the door, and almost instantly announced the visitor, — a proof that the King was alone. Charny entered quickly, and with respectful earnestness approached the King, who was saying: "Let him come in! Let him come in! I have been waiting for him ever since yesterday."

"Sire," said the Count, "I am a few hours behind-hand, as it appears; but I hope your Majesty will pardon me, when you learn the reasons of my tardiness."

"Come, come, Monsieur de Charny. I was waiting impatiently for you, it is true; but to begin with, I agree with you, that only an important matter could make your journey less rapid than it might have been. You are here, and you are welcome!" and he offered the Count his hand, which the Count kissed respectfully.

"Sire," said Charny, as he observed the King's impatience, "I received your orders day before yesterday, in the night, and I started from Montmédy yesterday morning, at three o'clock."

"How did you travel?"

"By postchaise."

"That explains the few hours of delay," said the King, smiling.

"Sire, I came at full speed, — at such a rate that I should have been here by ten or eleven last night, and perhaps sooner, if I had taken the direct route; but I wished to inform myself as to the chances, good or bad, of the route chosen by your Majesty. I wanted to know

which posts were well furnished with horses, and the reverse. Above all, I wished to know how much time, to a minute, — or even a second, — would be required in travelling from Montmédy to Paris, and consequently from Paris to Montmédy. I noted every point, and am therefore, in a measure, able to answer for everything.”

“Bravo, Monsieur de Charny! You’re an admirable helper. However, let me begin by telling you how we are situated here. Then you can tell me how it is with you out there.”

“Oh, Sire, if I may judge by what I have heard, things here are going very badly.”

“They have reached such a point that I am a prisoner in the Tuileries, my dear Count! As I just now said to that dear Monsieur Lafayette, my jailer, I would rather be King of Metz than of France. — But happily, you’re here!”

“Your Majesty did me the honor of saying you would post me as to the run of affairs.”

“Yes, in two words. You have heard of the flight of my aunts?”

“As all the world has heard of it, Sire, but not the details.”

“Oh Lord, it’s very simple. You know the Assembly allows us only sworn priests, who have taken the oaths of allegiance to the Constitution. Well, those poor women were frightened at the approach of Easter. They believed it would be at the peril of their souls, if they should confess to a Constitutional priest; and by my advice — I acknowledge it — they went to Rome. There was no law to prevent the trip, and there was no reason to fear lest two poor old ladies should strengthen the party of absentees. Narbonne had entire charge of their departure, but I do not know how he managed. The

whole affair was discovered, however, and one night they had a visit, — of the same sort as ours, on that dreadful Fifth of October, — at Bellevue, on the very evening of their departure. Fortunately they went out by one door, just as the mob arrived at the other. You will understand, — there was not a carriage to be had. Three were to have been in waiting, according to agreement. They had to go afoot as far as Meudon. There, at last, they found carriages, and were soon on their journey. Three hours later there was a great rumpus throughout Paris. Those who intended to prevent their departure found the nest warm, but empty. The journals were all ablaze the next day. Marat declared they had carried off millions. Desmoulins said they had carried off the Dauphin. There was no truth in all this. The poor ladies had three or four hundred thousand francs in their purses, and they were bothered enough over that, without having charge of a child, whose presence would certainly have betrayed them; and the proof of this is, that they were themselves recognized, first at Moret, where they were allowed to pass on, and then at Arnay-le-Duc, where they were stopped. They made me write to the Assembly, asking permission for them to continue their journey. Despite that letter, the Assembly discussed the point all day. Finally my aunts were authorized to continue their journey, but on condition that the committee prepare a law against future emigration.”

“Yes,” said Charny, “but I believe, after Mirabeau’s magnificent speech, the Assembly rejected that law.”

“Undoubtedly it was rejected; but side by side with this petty triumph was a great humiliation. When they saw what a disturbance was created by the departure of these poor old ladies, some devoted friends, — and more such friends remain to me than I had supposed, — some

devoted friends, about fifty gentlemen, hurried to the Tuileries, to offer me their lives. It was immediately noised abroad that a conspiracy for carrying me away had been brought to light. Lafayette was hurried off to the Faubourg Saint Antoine, under the pretext that there was a row near the ruins of the Bastille. Furious at being duped, he returned to the Tuileries, which he entered sword in hand, with bayonets paraded in front of him, and arrested and disarmed our poor friends. Pistols and knives were found on some of them. Each had taken any weapon readiest to his hand. Good! That day will be entered in history under a new name. It will be called the Day of the Chevaliers du Poignard."

"Oh Sire, Sire, in what terrible times we live!" said Charny, shaking his head.

"But listen! — Every year we drive to Saint Cloud, — an agreeable as well as a customary diversion. Well, day before yesterday we ordered the carriages. When we went down to the courtyard, we found fifteen hundred people around those carriages. We took our seats in them, but it was impossible to drive on. The people grabbed the horses' bridles, and declared that I meant to run away, but should n't. After an hour of wasted effort, we had to come back. The Queen cried with vexation."

"But was n't Lafayette there to compel the populace to respect your Majesty?"

"Lafayette? Do you know what he did? He had them sound the tocsin on Saint Roch. He ran to the Hôtel de Ville, to ask for the red flag, in order to declare the country in danger. — The country in danger, because the King and Queen were going to Saint Cloud! — Do you know who refused him the red flag, and even snatched it from his hands, — for he already held it? Danton!

Then he pretended that Danton had sold himself to me, — that Danton received from me a hundred thousand francs a month. — That's where we stand, my dear Count, without counting Mirabeau, who is dying, — who is perhaps dead, at this very hour."

"All the more reason for making haste, Sire."

"That's what we're going to do. Tell me what you decided over there with Bouillé. Everything is strong there, I hope. That little affair at Nancy furnished an occasion for increasing his command, and putting fresh troops at his disposal."

"Yes, Sire; but unhappily the arrangements of the Minister of War ran counter to ours. He has withdrawn the regiment of Saxon hussars, and refuses to send the Swiss regiments. It was with great difficulty Bouillé retained the regiment of Bouillon infantry at the Montmédy fortress."

"The War Minister suspects, then?"

"No, Sire. It was only a coincidence; but no matter! In such enterprises, we must take the chances of fire and accident; but if an enterprise is well conducted, there are always ninety chances of success out of a hundred."

"Well then, as that is so, let us return to our own affairs."

"Sire, your Majesty is still determined to follow the route through Châlons, Sainte Menehould, Clermout, Varennes, and Stenay, — although that route is at least twenty leagues longer than the others, and there is no post-agency at Varennes?"

"I have already explained to Bouillé my motives for preferring that road."

"Yes, Sire, and he transmitted to us your Majesty's orders on this subject. It is in accordance with these orders that I have marked out the route, bush by bush,

stone by stone. The chart should be in your Majesty's hands."

"And it is a model of clearness, my dear Count. I know the route about as well as if I had taken the trip myself."

"Well, Sire, here is the information gained from my last journey, to be added to the rest."

"Speak, Monsieur de Charny, and I will listen; and for greater clearness, here is the map, prepared by yourself."

As he spoke, the King drew from a portfolio this map, which he spread on the table. This map was not engraved, but drawn by hand. As Charny had said, not a tree, not a rock was missing, and the map was the result of eight months' labor. Charny and the King bent over this chart.

"Sire," said Charny, "the real danger for your Majesty begins at Sainte Menehould, and ceases at Stenay. It is over those eighteen leagues that we should spread our detachments."

"Could they not come yet nearer to Paris, Monsieur de Charny, — as far as Châlons, for example?"

"Sire, it would be difficult. Châlons is too strong a town for anything efficacious to be accomplished there for your Majesty's safety, by forty, fifty, or even a hundred men, if that safety should be endangered. Besides, Bouillé can be responsible for nothing, after leaving Sainte Menehould. The best he can do — and he bade me discuss this with your Majesty — is to place his first detachment at Sommeville Bridge. — You see, Sire, here it is, on the map, — the first post-station beyond Châlons;" and Charny pointed out with his finger the place in question.

"So," said the King, "in ten or twelve hours we should be at Châlons. In how many hours did you make your whole ninety leagues?"

“Sire, in thirty-six hours.”

“But that was in a light vehicle, and you had with you only one servant.”

“Sire, I lost three hours on the journey, in examining the neighborhood of Varennes, to see where relays of horses had best be placed, — whether this side of the town, towards Sainte Menehould, or the other side, towards Dun. We will revert to that again presently. Those three lost hours will compensate for the weight of your coach. My opinion is, that the King could go from Paris to Montmédy in thirty-five or thirty-six hours.”

“And what did you decide about the relays at Varennes? That’s the important point. We must be sure not to miss our horses.”

“Yes, Sire; and my opinion is that the relays should be stationed beyond the town, on the side towards Dun.”

“On what do you base that opinion?”

“On the situation of the town, Sire.”

“Describe the locality, Count.”

“Sire, it is easily done. I have passed through Varennes five or six times, since I left Paris, and yesterday I remained there over noon, — three hours. Varennes is a small town of sixteen hundred inhabitants, divided into two distinct parts, called the Upper and Lower Villages, separated by the River Aire, and connected only by the bridge which spans the river. If your Majesty will follow me on the map — There, Sire, there it is, near the Argonne Forest, on the very edge of it! — See?”

“Yes, here I am,” said the King. “The highway makes a tremendous elbow, in the forest, so as to reach Clermont.”

“Even so, Sire.”

“But all this does not show me why you would place our relays beyond Varennes, rather than this side of it.”

“Wait, Sire. The bridge, which leads from one village to the other, is commanded by a high tower. This tower, the old tower of a tollhouse, is situated in a gloomy, dark, narrow place. The least obstacle would obstruct the way. As there is some risk to be run, better take the chances of getting over this bridge, with the horses and postilions from Clermont, rather than change horses five hundred paces this side of that bridge, which, if the King *should* be recognized, could be guarded and defended, — if a simple alarm was given, — by three or four men.”

“That is sensible,” said the King, “though in case of any difficulty, *you* will be there.”

“That will be at once my duty and honor, if the King judges me so worthy.”

The King again offered his hand to Charny, and said: “So Bouillé has already marked the sections, and chosen the men who are to dot the way.”

“With your approbation, — yes, Sire.”

“Has he given you a memorandum on this subject?”

Charny drew out a folded paper, and presented it respectfully to the King. The King unfolded it and read:

The opinion of the Marquis de Bouillé is, that the military detachments should not go beyond Saint Menehould, on the Paris side. If, however, the King insists that they should be sent as far as Sommeville Bridge, I would station, as follows, the forces destined to serve as his escort:

1. At Sommeville Bridge, forty hussars from the Lauzun Regiment, commanded by Choiseul, with Lieutenant Boudet under his orders.

2. At Sainte Menehould, thirty dragoons from the Royal Regiment, commanded by Captain Dandoins.

3. At Clermont, a hundred dragoons from *Monsieur's* Regiment, and forty from the Royal, commanded by Charles de Damas.

4. At Varennes, sixty hussars from Lanzun's Regiment, commanded by Rohrig, Jules (not Louis) de Bouillé, and Raigecourt.

5. At Dun, a hundred hussars from Lauzun's Regiment, commanded by Captain Deslon.

6. At Mouzay, fifty horsemen from the Royal German, commanded by Captain Guntzer.

7. Lastly, at Stenay, the Royal German Regiment, under its lieutenant-colonel, Baron de Mandell.

After reading this memorandum the King said: "This appears to me very well; but as these detachments must be stationed in the villages or cities two or three days beforehand, what pretext can be given for their presence?"

"Sire, the pretext is provided for. They will be ordered to act as escorts for messengers bringing a large sum of money, sent by the Minister of War to the army in the north."

"Then all is provided for," said the King, with evident satisfaction.

Charny bowed.

"And speaking of a remittance of money," said the King, "do you know whether Bouillé received the million I sent him?"

"Yes, Sire. Only, your Majesty knows this million was in *assignats*, and those bonds are now twenty per cent below par." These notes had just been placed in the financial market.

"And could you discount them at that rate?"

"Sire, a faithful subject of your Majesty was glad to be able to take them, for his own use, at a hundred thousand crowns, — that is, without discount."

The King looked at Charny. "And the rest, Count?"

"The rest were discounted for Louis de Bouillé, by his

father's banker, Monsieur Perregaux, who gave him the amount in letters of exchange on the Bethmanns of Frankfort, who have already accepted this credit. Money will be forthcoming, at the proper time."

"Thanks, Monsieur," said King Louis. "Meanwhile, you must tell me the name of this loyal servant, who has perhaps compromised his fortune, in order to furnish this hundred thousand crowns to Bouillé."

"Sire, this faithful servant is rich, and consequently claims no merit for what he has done."

"Never mind, Monsieur, the King wishes to know his name."

"Sire," responded Charny, "the sole condition he placed upon this service to your Majesty, was that he might remain unknown."

"Then you know him?"

"I know him, Sire."

"Monsieur de Charny," said the King, with that soulful dignity which he occasionally displayed, "here is a ring, which is very precious to me." He drew a plain gold ring from his finger. "I took this from the hand of my dying father, as I kissed that hand, cold in death. Therein lies its value, for it has no other; but to a heart able to understand me, this ring will become more precious than a diamond of the first water. Repeat to this faithful friend what I tell you, and give him this ring, in my name."

A couple of tears escaped from Charny's eyes. His breast swelled and palpitated. He knelt on one knee, to receive the ring from the King's hands.

At that moment the door was opened, without announcement. The King turned quickly, for this was an infraction of the royal etiquette, and was considered a great insult, if not excused by a great necessity.

It was the Queen. The Queen was pale, and held a paper in her hand; but at the sight of the kneeling Count, kissing the King's ring, and putting it on his own finger, she dropped the paper, and uttered a cry of astonishment.

Charny rose, and respectfully saluted the Queen, who stammered between her teeth: "Monsieur de Charny! — Monsieur de Charny! — here! — with the King! — at the Tuileries —?" and then she added to herself: "And I did not know it!"

There was such sorrow in the poor Queen's eyes, that Charny, who divined the end of her sentence, though he could not hear it, took two steps towards her.

"I have just arrived," he said, "and was about asking permission to present my homage to your Majesty."

The blood rose to the Queen's cheeks. It was a long time since she had heard Charny's voice, and longer still since she had heard, in that voice, the sweet intonation which he gave to these few words.

She extended both hands, as if to go to him; but almost instantly she recovered herself, and placed one hand on her heart, which was doubtless beating violently.

Charny saw all, understood all. Although it has required many lines, in which to describe and explain these sensations, they all developed themselves in the little time it took the King to pick up the paper which had escaped from the Queen's grasp, and which a current of air — caused by the opening of the door while the window also was open — had blown to the end of the room.

The King read what was written on the paper, but without understanding it; so he asked: "What do these three words mean, — *flee! flee! flee!* — and this fragment of a signature?"

“Sire,” responded the Queen, “they mean that Mirabeau died ten minutes ago, and sends us this dying counsel.”

“Madame,” said the King, “this counsel shall be followed, for it is good, and the time has now come for putting it into execution.”

Turning to Charny he continued: “You can follow the Queen to her apartments, and tell her all.”

The Queen raised herself, looked alternately at Charuy and the King, and then said: “Come with me, Monsieur.”

She went out precipitately; for she felt it would be impossible, if she remained an instant longer, to conceal the conflicting emotions within her heart.

Charny bowed again to the King, and followed Marie Antoinette.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PROMISE.

THE Queen regained her own apartments, and fell upon a sofa, making a sign for Charny to close the door behind him.

Fortunately the boudoir which they entered was deserted, Doctor Gilbert having requested the privilege of speaking to the Queen without witnesses, in order to tell her what had happened, and to give her Mirabeau's last words.

Hardly was she seated when her too full heart overflowed, and she sobbed pitifully.

These sobs were so genuine and so deep, that they went to the bottom of Charny's heart, and stirred up the remnants of his passion.

We say the remnants of his passion, because such a passion, as we have seen quicken and glow and burn in the heart of this man, is never wholly extinguished, unless there comes to it one of those terrible shocks which make love give place to hate.

Charny was in such a strange situation as only those can appreciate who have been in similar situations. He had an old and a new passion on his hands at the same time; and there is a certain English poet who says something about being "off with the old love, before we are on with the new."

He had learned to love Andrée with all the fire of his heart, yet he loved the Queen with all the pity of his soul.

At each laceration of her poor love, a laceration caused by egotism, — that is, by the excess of that love, — he had, so to speak, felt his heart bleed for the woman; and each time, understanding this egotism, like all to whom a past amour has become a burden, he was not strong enough to excuse it.

Whenever this genuine grief burst forth in his presence, without recriminations and reproaches, he measured the depth of the Queen's love. He recalled what human prejudices, what social duties, this woman had despised for his sake. Bending over this abyss, he could not prevent himself from dropping a regretful tear and a consoling word.

When, however, reproaches mingled with her sobs, and recriminations found expression on her lips, he immediately remembered the tyranny of her passion, her absolute will, — the royal despotism which was always mixed with her sentiments of tenderness and the outcome of her passion, — then Charny straightened himself against this tyranny, armed himself against this despotism, entered into combat with this will. He mentally compared Andrée's sweet and unalterable face with the Queen's; and he gave the preference to that statue, all ice as he believed it to be, rather than to this passionate image, always ready to launch the lightnings of her love, her jealousy, or her pride.

On this occasion the Queen wept without speaking. It was more than a year since she had seen Charny. Faithful to the promise he had made the King, during all this time the Count had concealed himself from nearly everybody.

For an unprecedented time, therefore, the Queen had remained in the densest ignorance concerning the welfare — yes, and the whereabouts — of one who had been so

closely allied to her, during the two or three years preceding, that she then fancied it quite impossible to separate one heart from the other, without breaking both.

Yet, as we know, Charny had left her, without even telling her his destination. There was this one consolation, however, — she knew him to be employed in the King's service, and in such a way that she could say to herself: "In working for the King, he works also for me; and so he is forced to think of me, even if he wishes to forget me."

It was a feeble consolation to know that his remembrance reached her on the rebound, when for a long time it had belonged to her directly and alone.

Meeting Charny again, at a moment when she least expected to see him, finding him with the King on his return, almost on the same spot where she saw him on the day of his sudden departure, all the sorrows which had stung her soul during the Count's long absence — all the thoughts which had tormented her heart, all the tears which had burned her eyes — rushed back upon her in one tumultuous flood, inundating her cheeks, and filling her bosom with all the anguish she fondly believed to be vanished, all the sorrows she had tried to relegate to the past.

She wept for the sake of weeping. Her tears must stifle her, if they could not find egress.

She wept without speaking a word. Was it from joy? Was it from sorrow? From both, perhaps; for every powerful emotion takes the form of tears.

Also without speaking, and therefore with more love than respect, Charny approached the Queen, drew from her face one of the hands which covered it, and pressed his lips to that hand.

"Madame, I am happy and proud to tell you there

has not been an hour, since the day when I took leave of you, when I was not busy in your behalf."

"Oh Charny, Charny, there was a time when you would have been less busy in my behalf, but would have thought of me much more."

"Madame, I was charged with a grave responsibility. This responsibility imposed upon me the most absolute silence, till my mission should be completed. This completion has been achieved only to-day. To-day I can see you again, I can talk with you; whereas, until to-day, I could not even write."

"You have given a beautiful example of loyalty, Olivier," dolefully said the Queen; "and I regret but one thing, — that you were only able to do this at the expense of another sentiment."

"Madame, permit me, since I have the King's permission, to inform you what has been done for your safety."

"Oh Charny, Charny, have you nothing more pressing to say to me?"

She pressed the Count's hand tenderly, and gave him such a look as would once have made him devote his life to her, — a life he was still ready to sacrifice for her, though not perhaps to consecrate it to her desires.

As she thus regarded him, she noticed that he was not a dusty traveller, just descended from a postchaise, but an elegant courtier, who shows his devotion by adherence to the rules of etiquette. His toilet was so complete, that even this fastidious *Queen* could find no fault; and yet the *woman* was evidently dissatisfied therewith.

"When did you arrive?" she asked.

"I have just arrived, Madame."

"And you come —?"

"From Montmédy."

“Then you have travelled over half the breadth of France?”

“I have travelled ninety leagues since yesterday morning.”

“On horseback, or by carriage?”

“By postchaise.”

“How is it, after so long a journey, — excuse my questions, Charny! — that you are as well brushed, polished, and combed, as one of Lafayette’s aides, coming from headquarters? Was the news you brought of so little importance?”

“Very important, on the contrary, Madame; but I thought if I came to the courtyard of the Tuileries in a postchaise, covered with mud or dust, I should arouse curiosity. The King has told me, within the hour, how narrowly you are all watched; and when I heard this, I congratulated myself on having taken the precaution to come afoot and in my uniform, like a simple officer returning to Court, after an absence of a week or two.”

The Queen squeezed Charny’s hand convulsively. One could see that a last question rankled in her mind, and that she had more difficulty in formulating that question, than was demanded by its apparent importance. She decided upon another form of interrogation, and said, with a stifled voice: “Ah, yes! I forgot you had a lodging-place in Paris!”

Charny started. Not until then did he see the object of all these questions.

“Me, a lodging in Paris? And where may it be, Madame?”

The Queen made an effort. “In the Rue Coq Heron. Isn’t that where the Countess lives?”

Charny was ready to kick, like a horse, who feels the spur in the living wound; but there was such hesitation

in the Queen's voice, such an expression of grief, that he pitied her sufferings, — she, so proud and self-controlled, — and would not let her discover the emotion which overcame him.

With an accent of profound sorrow, not entirely caused by the Queen's suffering, he said : “ I believe I had the honor of telling you, before my departure, that the mansion of Madame de Charny is not mine. I went to the rooms of my brother, Viscount Isidore, and there changed my clothes.”

The Queen uttered a joyful cry, and sank upon her knees, pressing her lips to Charny's hand. With equal rapidity he grasped her under the arms and raised her, crying, as he did so : “ Oh Madame, what are you doing ? ”

“ I thank you, Olivier,” she said, in so mild a voice that Charny felt the tears come into his own eyes.

“ Thank me ? My God, and for what ? ”

“ For what ? You ask me for what ? For giving me the one completely joyful moment I have had since your departure. My God ! I know this is insensate folly, — this jealousy, — but it is worthy of pity. You also were jealous at one time, Charny ; but you have forgotten it now. Oh, these men ! When they are jealous, they are happy, for they can fight with their rivals, — kill and be killed ; but women can only weep, even when they know how useless, how dangerous are their tears ; for we know very well that our tears, instead of attracting toward us those for whom they are shed, drive them farther away. This is the vertigo of love. It sees the abyss, and plunges into it, instead of drawing farther away. Thank you once more, Olivier. You see, I am joyous, and weep no longer.”

Indeed, the Queen tried to laugh ; but as if, through

her sorrows, she had forgotten how to be merry, her laughter had so doleful and grieved an accent that the Count was startled. "Oh my God," he murmured, "can it be that she has suffered so much?"

Marie Antoinette clasped her hands as she said: "Thanks be to thee, oh Lord! for in the day when he understands my sorrow, he will not have strength enough to wholly cease loving me."

Charny felt himself on a declivity, where he would soon find it impossible to maintain his equilibrium. He made an effort to sweep backwards, as skaters do, even at the risk of breaking the ice over which they glide.

"Madame," he said, "will you not allow me to harvest the fruit of this long absence, by explaining what I have been so happy in doing for you?"

"Ah Charny," responded the Queen, "I like better something else, as I told you just now; but you are right. The woman must not too long forget that she is a queen. Speak on, Monsieur Ambassador. The *woman* has already obtained all she had any right to expect, and the *Queen* listens."

Then Charny told her all: how he had been sent to Monsieur de Bouillé; how young Count Louis had last year come to Paris; how Charny himself had surveyed the route, bush by bush, by which the Queen was to flee; how, finally, he had come to tell the King there was no longer any material reason why the project should not be put into immediate execution.

The Queen heard Charny with great attention, and also with profound appreciation. It seemed impossible that simple devotion should go so far. Love, passionate and anxious love, alone could anticipate such obstacles, and invent the methods for surmounting them.

She therefore heard him through. When he had finished, she said, regarding him with an expression of supreme tenderness: "You will then be very happy in saving me?"

"What? Can you ask me that? Why, it is the dream of my ambition; and if I succeed, it will be the glory of my life!"

"I should be more pleased if it were simply the recompense of your love," said the Queen, sadly. "Never mind! You warmly desire that this great work of rescuing the King, the Queen, and the Dauphin of France should be accomplished by yourself, do you not?"

"I await but your assent, to devote my existence to this end!"

"Yes! and I understand, my friend, that this devotion ought to be free from all outside entanglements, all material affection. It is impossible that my husband and children should be rescued by a hand which dare not extend itself towards them, to sustain them, if they should slip on that road which we are to travel together. To you I commend their lives and mine, my brother; but in your turn, have pity on me, will you not?"

"Pity on you, Madame?" said Charny.

"Yes! In such moments, when I need all my strength, all my courage, all my presence of mind, you would not,—it is a foolish idea, perhaps, but how can I help it! for there are people who dare not venture forth in the night, for fear of spectres, which, when day comes, they know do not exist,—you would not wish me to be lost perhaps, for want of one promise, one little word? You would not—?"

Charny interrupted the Queen. "Madame, I desire

the safety of your Majesty. I desire the welfare of France. I desire to finish the task which I have begun. I acknowledge I should be in despair, if I could not make so feeble a sacrifice. I swear to you not to see Madame de Charny again, save by your Majesty's permission."

Saluting the Queen, coolly but respectfully, he withdrew; although the Queen, chilled by the tone in which he spoke these words, tried to detain him.

Hardly had Charny shut the door behind him, than she stretched out her arms and cried pitifully: "Oh, how glad I should be if it were myself he had sworn not to see, if he only loved me as he loves her!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SECOND SIGHT.

ON the following Nineteenth of June, about eight in the morning, Gilbert was walking with long steps to and fro in his lodgings in Rue Saint Honoré, and now and then going to the window, to lean out, like a man impatiently expecting somebody who does not come.

In his hand he held a paper, folded square, through which you could see the impression of the writing and seals on the other side. Doubtless this was a very important paper, for twice or thrice, during these anxious minutes, Gilbert unfolded it, read it, unfolded it anew, reperused it, and refolded it, only to reopen and refold it again.

At last the noise of a carriage was heard, stopping at the door, and he ran again to the window ; but he was too late. Whoever had come in the carriage, had already entered the passage-way.

Gilbert apparently had no doubt of the identity of this personage ; for, pushing open the door of the ante-chamber, he called out : “ Bastien, open the door for Count Charny, who is waiting.”

Again he unfolded the paper, which he had so often perused, when Bastien announced, not Count Charny, but “ M. le Comte de Cagliostro.”

This name was just then so far from Gilbert’s thoughts that he started, as if lightning had flashed before his eyes and heralded the thunder. Hastily he refolded the

paper, concealing it in his coat-pocket. "Cagliostro!" he repeated, astonished at the announcement.

"Oh Lord, yes, myself, my dear Gilbert," said the visitor. "It was n't I whom you expected, — I know that, very well, — it was Charny; but Charny is busy, — I will presently tell you about what, — so that he won't be here for half an hour. Knowing that, faith, I said to myself: 'Seeing I'm in his vicinity, I'll run in on Doctor Gilbert an instant.' Though unexpected, I hope I'm none the less welcome."

"Dear master, you know that at all hours, by day or night, two doors are always open to you here, — the door of the house and the door of the heart."

"Thanks, Gilbert. Some day I also may be able to prove how much I love *you*. When that day comes, the proof will not be wanting. Meanwhile, let us gossip."

"About what?" asked Gilbert, smiling, for the advent of Cagliostro always preluded some new and astounding development.

"About what? Why, the fashionable topic, — the King's near departure."

Gilbert felt himself shivering from head to foot, though the smile did not disappear from his lips for an instant; and, thanks to his will-power, if he could not prevent the sweat from rolling up to the roots of his hair, he could keep the pallor from his cheeks.

"As we shall have some time to talk the matter over, I'll sit down," said Cagliostro, suiting the action to the word.

The first feeling of terror being past, Gilbert reflected that very likely Cagliostro was there by accident, but that his coming was also providential. Having no secrets from Gilbert, undoubtedly Cagliostro would tell him

all he knew about the royal departure he had come to talk about.

“Well,” said Cagliostro, seeing Gilbert waiting, “it’s arranged for to-morrow, is it?”

“Dearest master,” said Gilbert, “you know I always let you talk on to the end. Even if you err, there is always something for me to learn, not only from your set speeches, but from your slightest word.”

“And in what have I been mistaken, up to date? Was I mistaken in predicting the death of Favras? Yet up to the decisive moment, I did all I could to prevent his death! Was I wrong in declaring the King was intriguing against Mirabeau, and that Mirabeau would not be appointed cabinet-minister? Was I mistaken in saying that Robespierre would rebuild the scaffold of Charles the First, and Bonaparte the throne of Charlemagne? As to this last point, you cannot yet accuse me of mistakes, since the times are not yet ripe; and part of these events belong to the end of this century, and part to the beginning of the next. Nevertheless, to-day, my dear Gilbert, when I tell you that the King proposes to flee to-morrow night, you know it is true, — you, better than anybody else, because you are one of the agents for this flight.”

“If that is so,” said Gilbert, “you hardly expect me to avow it, I suppose.”

“And what do I want of your avowal? You very well know that I’m not only the *living one*, but the *knowing one*.”

“If you are the *knowing one*,” said Gilbert, “you know the Queen yesterday said to Monsieur de Montmorin, in reference to the refusal of Madame Elizabeth to attend the festival on Corpus Christi Day, that she was much troubled because Madame Elizabeth would not go to

Saint Germain l'Auxerrois with them, and thought Elizabeth might sacrifice her opinions a little for the King's sake. Now if the Queen should go with the King to Saint Germain Church on that day, they cannot leave that night, — certainly not for a long journey."

"Yes! but I also know," responded Cagliostro, "that a great philosopher says that words are given men to conceal their thoughts. Now God is not so partial as to bestow a gift so precious upon men alone."

"My dear master," said Gilbert, trying to remain on the plane of pleasantry, "you know the story of the incredulous apostle, who —"

"Who began to believe, when the Messiah showed him his hands, his feet, and his side. Well, my dear Gilbert, the Queen is accustomed to all life's elegancies, and is not willing to be discommoded during her travels, which will last thirty-five or thirty-six hours, if Charny's calculation is accurate; so she has ordered from Desbrosses, — whose shop is on Rue Notre-Dame des Victoires, — a charming dressing-case, finished in silver-gilt and said to be destined for her sister, the Archduchess Christine, the governor's lady, in the Netherlands. This dressing-case, only completed yesterday morning, was carried home last night to the Tuileries. There! — so much for the hands! Next, they will go in a travelling coach, spacious and commodious, — one which will readily hold six persons. This was ordered of Louis, the nobby coachmaker, who lives on the Champs Élysées, by Charny, who is with him at this very moment, paying him one hundred and twenty-five louis, — half the sum agreed upon. The coach was tried for one drive, yesterday, with four horses, and worked perfectly well; so that Charny's report was most favorable. Well, there are the feet, you aoubting Thomas! Lastly, Montmorin, with-

out knowing what he was signing, signed a passport for the Baroness de Korff, her two children, her two chambermaids, her steward, and her three lackeys. Well, Madame de Korff is Madame de Tourzel, governess of the two royal children of France, — Madame Royale and my Lord the Dauphin. Her two *femmes de chambre* are the Queen and Madame Elizabeth. Her steward is the King. Her three lackeys, who will precede and accompany the carriage, dressed as couriers, are Isidore de Charny, Monsieur de Malden, and Monsieur de Valory. The passport is the paper which you were holding when I came in, and which you folded and hid in your pocket, when you saw me.” Then Cagliostro repeated, word for word, as if he had been reading it, the contents of this passport :

IN THE KING'S NAME :

You are commanded to pass the Baroness de Korff, with her two children, one woman, a valet, and three lackeys.

MONTMORIN,

Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Then Cagliostro smilingly added : “ There ! So much for the wounded side of the Messiah, you unbelieving disciple ! Am I well informed, my dear Gilbert ? ”

“ Yes, apart from a little contradiction between your former descriptive words and your version of the aforesaid passport.”

“ How so ? ”

“ You said that Madame Elizabeth and the Queen were to represent Madame de Korff's two *femmes de chambre*, but in the passport there appears to be only one such woman.”

“ So ? Well, this is how it is. On arriving at Bondy, Madame de Tourzel, who expects to go through to Mont-

médy, will be asked to leave the carriage. Charny, a devoted man, who can be depended upon, will take her place, so as to keep his nose at the carriage window, in case of need, and fire off the two pistols he has in his pocket, if necessary. Then the Queen will become Madame de Korff; and as there will be but one other woman in the coach, Madame Elizabeth, — except Madame Royale, who is reckoned, of course, as one of the children, — it would be useless to have two *femmes de chambre* on the passport. — Perhaps you would like other details. So be it! The details are at your service! The departure was to have been on the First of June. Monsieur de Bouillé fully expected it. On this subject he even wrote the King a curious letter, in which he invited him, — urged him, — to come at once, because the soldiers were being *corrupted* day by day; and if his soldiers were allowed to take the Constitutional oath, he would not answer for them. By this word *corrupted*, he meant,” added Cagliostro, in his jesting mood, “that the soldiers are beginning to understand that a choice is offered them between a monarchy, which has sacrificed the people to the nobility for three centuries, — the private to the officer, — and a Constitution, which proclaims equality before the law, and makes promotion the recompense of merit and courage; and that this ungrateful army has a sneaking fondness for the Constitution. Alas! Neither the coach nor the dressing-case was quite done, and so it was impossible to start on the First; which was a great misfortune, as, since the First, the army has been corrupted more and more, and the soldiers of the regular army have taken the oath to support the Constitution. Then the departure was set down for the Eighth; but Bouillé received the intimation of this date so tardily, that it was now his turn to reply that he was not ready.

Next, with one accord, the Twelfth was decided upon. They preferred the Eleventh; but a very Democratic woman — one, moreover, who is the sweetheart of Monsieur de Gouvion, one of Lafayette's aides, — Madame de Rochereul, if you wish to know her name, — was engaged in the household service, for the Dauphin; and they feared lest she should see something, and report (as poor Mirabeau once expressed it) some concealed pot kept a' boiling in some corner of the palace, after the fashion of kings. On the Twelfth the King bethought himself that it was only six days before he should touch another quarter's payment of his government income, — six millions. Peste! You will agree that this was worth waiting six days for, my dear Gilbert. Besides, Leopold, the grand temporizer, — the very Fabius of kings, — had promised that by the Fifteenth, fifteen thousand Austrians should occupy the approaches to Arlon. Heavens, you understand! It is n't the good-will of these good kings which fails them, but they have various little affairs of their own to arrange. Austria has just devoured Liege and Brabant, and is digesting both the city and province; and Austria is like a boa-constrictor, — while it digests, it sleeps. The Empress Catherine, of Russia, has been fighting that kinglet, Gustavus the Third, — to whom she has granted a truce, in order to give him time to receive the Queen of France, when she descends from her travelling carriage, at Aix, in Savoy. During this time Catherine is whetting her teeth on Turkey, and gnawing the bones of Poland; for she likes the lion's marrow, this worthy empress. Philosophic Prussia and philanthropic England are just changing their skins, so that the one seasonably ranges over the borders of the Rhine, and the other over the North Sea. Be easy! Having once tasted human flesh, like Diomed's horses,

these kings don't care to eat anything else, if we don't interrupt their delicate feasts. Briefly, this departure was fixed for Sunday the Nineteenth, at midnight. Then, on the Eighteenth, a new despatch was sent, postponing it till Monday, the Twentieth, at the same hour, — that is, to-morrow night, — an arrangement which may have its inconveniences, as Bouillé has already given orders to all his detachments, and has not countermanded them. — Be on your guard, my dear Gilbert, be on your guard! All this changing wearies the soldiers, and sets people a' thinking."

"Count," said Gilbert, "I will not dissemble with you. All you have said is true! And I dissemble the less, because it was not my private opinion that the King had better go away, — certainly not that he should quit France; but now acknowledge frankly, in view of his personal danger, in view of personal danger to the Queen and their children, if the King is not allowed to remain as a king, a man, a husband, a father, is he not authorized to flee?"

"Well, will you let me tell you something, my dear Gilbert? It is not as a father, not as a husband, not as a man, that Louis the Sixteenth flees from France. Neither is it because of the famous Fifth and Sixth of October. No! By his father, from whom he inherits everything, he is a Bourbon, and the Bourbons know how to face danger. He leaves France because of the Constitution, which is being modelled after that of the United States of America, by the National Assembly, without reflecting that such a model, shaped for a republic, but applied to a monarchy, does not leave the King enough breathable air. He quits France on account of the famous affair over the Chevaliers du Poignard, wherein your friend Lafayette dealt irreverently with royalty and

its faithful adherents. The King goes away because of that famous Saint Cloud affair, when he wished to assert his liberty, and the people meant to show him that he was a prisoner. Now Gilbert, *you* are honestly, frankly, loyally a Constitutional Royalist, and believe in that pleasant and consoling Utopia, a monarchy tempered by liberty; so you ought to know one thing, — namely, that kings, in imitation of God, whose representatives on earth they pretend to be, have one religion, the religion of Royalty. Not only are their persons sacred, having been rubbed down with holy oil at Rheims, but their dwellings are sacred, their servants are sacred. Their palace is a temple, whereinto one must enter only in prayer. Their servants are priests, to whom one should speak only on the knee. One must not touch a king, under pain of death. Their attendants must not be touched, under pain of excommunication. Now on the day when they prevented King Louis from going to Saint Cloud, somebody laid hands on his royal person. When the Chevaliers du Poignard were expelled from the Tuileries, the King's servants were profaned. This is what the King can't abide. This is his idea of the Abomination of Desolation, set up in the Most Holy Place, as predicted by Daniel the Prophet. That's why he recalled Charny from Montmédy. That's why the King, who refused to let himself be spirited away by Favras, or to escape with his aunts, consents to flee to-morrow, with Montmorin's passport, — who did not know for whom he signed that passport, — under the name of Durand, and in the dress of a servant; only, as kings are kings to the end of the chapter, he bade them not forget to pack in his trunks the red robe, embroidered with gold, which he wore at Cherbourg."

While Cagliostro was talking, Gilbert regarded him

earnestly, as if he would dive to the bottom of his thoughts.

This was useless. No human gaze could pierce the mask of raillery wherewith this disciple of Althotas always covered his face. Gilbert therefore decided to question him openly.

“Count, all that you have said is true. I repeat it! Nevertheless, why do you come to me with all this? In what capacity do you present yourself to me? Come you as an open enemy, to warn me of your opposition? Come you as a friend, to proffer help?”

“First, my dear Gilbert,” was the affectionate reply, “I come, as a teacher might come to a pupil, to warn him that he is espousing the wrong cause, in attaching himself to a falling ruin, to a crumbling edifice, to a dying principle called Monarchy. Such men are not men of the past, nor even of the present. They are men of the future. Abandon that in which thou believest not, for that in which we do believe. Do not leave the substance and follow the shadow. If not an active soldier in the Revolution, be a looker-on, and do not cumber the road. Mirabeau was a giant; but even Mirabeau had to go down before the great work.”

“Count,” said Gilbert, “I will reply to that appeal, whenever the King, who relies upon me, is in safety. Louis the Sixteenth has made me his confidant, his auxiliary, — his accomplice, if you will, — in the work he has undertaken. I have accepted the trust, and I will fulfil it to the end, with heart open and eyes shut. I am a physician, my dear Count. Before all else, I consider the physical health of my patient. Now then, you must answer in your turn. In your mysterious projects, in your shady combinations, is it necessary for this flight to succeed or fail? If you wish it to fail, it

is useless for us to contend. Bid us not to go, and we will remain, bow our heads, and await the stroke."

"Brother," said Cagliostro, "if, impelled by God, who has mapped out my way, I should find it necessary to smite those whom thy heart loves or thy genius protects, I should certainly remain in the shadow, and ask only one favor of the Superhuman Power whom I obey, — to leave thee in ignorance whence came the blow. No, if I do not come as a friend, — for I cannot be the friend of kings, I who have been their victim, — I do not come as an enemy. Nay, I come with the scales in hand, to tell thee I have weighed the last Bourbon in the balances, and found him wanting; but I have forecast his destiny, and do not believe his death will affect the health of our cause. Like Pythagoras, I scarcely recognize the right to dispose of the life, even of the last-created insect; and God forbid that I should thoughtlessly lay my hand on man, the king of creation. — I come here, not merely to say, however, that I will remain neutral, but to ask if my aid is needed, which hereby I proffer."

Once more Gilbert tried to read Cagliostro's heart.

"Good!" continued the Count, resuming his tone of raillery, "what a skeptic you are. See here now! As a man of letters, don't you know the story of the lance of Achilles, which could both wound and heal? That lance I possess. The woman who once passed for the Queen, in the thickets of Versailles, might she not also pass for the Queen in the apartments of the Tuileries, or on some road the opposite of that taken by the real fugitive? What I propose is not to be despised, my dear Gilbert."

"Be frank to the end, and tell me why you make us this offer?"

"Oh, it's very simple, my dear Doctor. In order that

the King may quit France, and leave us to proclaim a republic."

"A republic!" said the astonished Gilbert.

"Why not?"

"My dear Count, I look France all over, from south to north, from east to west, and I don't see a single Republican!"

"To begin with, you are mistaken, for I can see three, — Pétion, Camille Desmoulins, and your humble servant. Those you can see, as well as I can; but I can see many others, whom you do not see, but whom you will see, when it is time for them to appear. Then rely upon me to make a theatrical display that will astonish you. Only, I desire that the accompanying accidents in the transformation shall not be too grave; for accidents always recoil on the machinist."

Gilbert reflected an instant. Then he extended his hand to Cagliostro, and said: "Count, if it concerned only myself, if it concerned only my life, if it concerned only my honor, reputation, memory, I would at once accept your offer; but this matter concerns a kingdom, a king, a queen, a dynasty, a monarchy, and I cannot make any compact for them. Remain neutral, my dear Count! That's all I ask!"

Cagliostro smiled. "Yes, I understand, — I'm the Necklace Man! Well, my dear Gilbert, the despised Necklace Man is going to give you some exceedingly good counsel."

"Silence!" said Gilbert. "Somebody rings!"

"What matters it? You know very well who is ringing. It's Monsieur de Charny. The counsel I would give you, he also may hear with profit. Enter, Count, enter!"

Charny appeared at the door. Seeing a stranger, when

he expected to find Gilbert alone, he stopped hesitatingly and anxiously.

“This counsel,” continued Cagliostro, “is this: Distrust dressing-cases too rich, carriages too heavy, and likenesses too striking. Adieu, Gilbert! Adieu, Count! and — to employ the formula of those to whom I wish a prosperous journey, as I do to yourselves — God have you in his holy keeping!”

Saluting Gilbert amicably and the Count courteously, Cagliostro withdrew, followed by the anxious eye of his host, and the questioning glance of the visitor.

“Who is that man, Doctor?” asked Charny, when the noise of the retreating steps had died away on the staircase.

“One of my friends,” said Gilbert, “a man who knows all, but who came to give me his word not to betray us.”

“And you call him — ?”

“Baron Zannoue.”

“That’s queer,” replied Charny. “I don’t know that name, and yet I seem to know that face. — Have you the passport, Doctor?”

“Here it is, Count!”

Charny took the passport, unfolded it, and was so completely absorbed in attending to this important piece of paper, that he appeared to forget the Baron Zannoue, — at least, momentarily.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE EVENING OF THE TWENTIETH OF JUNE.

MEANWHILE, let us see what happened on the Twentieth of June, in the evening, from nine o'clock till midnight, in various parts of the capital.

Not without reason was Madame de Rochereul mistrusted. Although her duties ceased on the Eleventh, she contrived, being already suspicious, to find some excuse for returning to the palace; and she noticed, albeit the Queen's jewel-caskets were in their accustomed places, that her diamonds were there no longer. In fact, they had been confided, by Marie Antoinette, to her barber, Léonard, who was also to depart on the night of the Twentieth, a few hours in advance of his august mistress, with Monsieur de Choiseul, commanding the first detachment of soldiers, stationed at Sommeville Bridge. Choiseul was also to have charge of the relays for Varennes, consisting of six good horses, which were now at his residence in Rue Artois, where he awaited the last orders of the King and Queen.

It was perhaps a little indiscreet to embarrass Choiseul with Master Léonard, and a little imprudent for the Queen to take a hairdresser with her; but what artist, in a strange land, could undertake to build those admirable coiffures, which Léonard so jauntily reared for her? What would you have? When a barber is a man of genius, he is not to be dispensed with lightly.

The Dauphin's *femme de chambre* suspected that the departure was fixed for Monday, the Twentieth, at eleven in the evening, and she gave due notice thereof, not only to her lover, Monsieur de Gouvion, who was Lafayette's aide, but also to Bailly, the head of the city government.

After going to the King, for a free talk over this denunciation, Lafayette only shrugged his shoulders.

Bailly did better. While Lafayette became as blind as an astronomer, Bailly became as chivalrous as any knight, and even sent Madame de Rochereul's letter to the Queen.

Gouvion, being directly influenced by his sweetheart, alone retained his more intense suspicions. At her suggestion, under the pretext of a social military reunion, he brought together, at his lodgings, a dozen officers of the National Guard. Five or six of them he placed on the watch, at different entrances of the palace; while he charged himself, assisted by five battalion officers, with the oversight of the doors leading to the suite of rooms occupied by Monsieur de Villequier, to which his attention had been specially called.

About the same hour, at number nine in Rue Coq Héron, in a parlor with which we are familiar, — seated on a lounge where we have seen her before, — was a young woman, apparently calm as well as beautiful, but profoundly moved in the depths of her heart. She was conversing with a young man twenty-three or twenty-four years old, who was standing in front of her. He was armed with a hunting-knife, and wore a courier's suit, — a buff jacket, and pantaloons tight as his skin, terminating in a pair of boots turned down at the top. In his hand he held a round laced hat.

The young woman appeared to be insisting upon something to which the young man objected.

“Once more, Viscount,” she said, “why has he not been near me, during the two months and a half since his return to Paris?”

“Several times since his return, Madame, my brother has charged me to bring him news of yourself.”

“I know it, and I am duly grateful to him, — as to yourself, Viscount; but, on the eve of a new departure, it seems to me he might himself come and say farewell.”

“Undoubtedly this was not possible, for he entrusts me with this duty.”

“And this journey which you undertake, will it be long?”

“I do not know, Madame.”

“I say *you*, because, by your costume, I must think you also are to go.”

“In all probability, Madame, I shall be away from Paris by midnight.”

“Do you accompany your brother, or do you go in an opposite direction?”

“I believe, Madame, we are to follow the same road.”

“Will you tell him that you have seen me?”

“Yes, Madame; for — judging by the solicitude which he evinced in sending me to you, and his repeated instructions not to rejoin him till I had seen you — he would not pardon me, if I forgot his commission.”

The young woman brushed a tear from her eye, heaved a sigh, and said, after reflecting an instant: “Viscount, you are a gentleman, and will comprehend the import of the demand I make upon you. Answer me, as you would if I were truly your sister, — as you would answer before God. In this journey which he undertakes, will Monsieur de Charny incur serious danger?”

“Who can say, Madame,” replied Isidore, trying to evade the question, “where there is danger, and where

there is no danger, in the age in which we live? If on that Fifth of October, in the morning, our poor brother George had been asked if he thought there was any danger, he would have said No. The next day he was lying, pale and inanimate, across the Queen's doorway. Danger, Madame, in the age wherein we live, rises out of the earth, and one finds himself face to face with death, without knowing whence it comes or who has summoned it."

Andrée grew pale, as she said: "Then he runs the peril of death! Is it not so, Viscount?"

"I did not say so, Madame."

"No! but you thought so!"

"I think, Madame, if you have anything important to say to my brother, the enterprise upon which he is venturing — like myself — is sufficiently grave for you to entrust me, either in writing or by the living voice, with the transmission of your desires."

"Very well, Viscount, I will only ask for five minutes," said Andrée, rising.

With her customary slow and cool step the Countess entered her bedroom, shutting the door behind her.

As she left the parlor, the young man looked anxiously at his watch.

"Nine o'clock and a quarter," he said to himself, "and the King expects us at half-past. Fortunately, it's only a step from here to the Tuileries." The Countess did not even take as much time as she had named, and at the expiration of a few seconds she re-entered, holding in her hand a sealed letter. "Viscount," she said solemnly, "to your honor I confide this letter."

Isidore extended his hand to receive it. "Wait," said Andrée, "and understand well what I say to you. If your brother, if the Count, accomplishes his undertaking without accident, there is nothing different to say to

him from what I have already told you, — to give him my sympathy with his loyalty, my respect for his devotion, my admiration for his character. — If he should be wounded —” *Andrée’s* voice changed slightly. “If he is wounded grievously, you will ask him to accord me the privilege of going to him. If he should grant me that favor, you will send a messenger, who can tell me where I can surely find my husband, and I will go to him at once. — If he is wounded unto death,” — and here *Andrée’s* voice almost broke with emotion, — “you may give him this letter. If no longer able to read it himself, you may read it to him ; for before his death I wish him to know what this letter contains. On your faith as a gentleman, you will do what I desire, Viscount ?”

With equal emotion *Isidore* again extended his hand, as he said : “On my honor, *Madame*.”

“Then take this letter, and go, Viscount !”

Isidore took the letter, kissed the Countess’s hand, and went away.

“Oh !” cried *Andrée*, falling upon her sofa, “if he should die, I want him at least to know that I loved him.”

At the same moment when *Isidore* left the Countess, and placed the letter in his breast-pocket, beside another letter, — whose address he read by the light of the reflector which was lighted at the corner of *Rue Coquillière*, — two other men, clad exactly like himself, also approached a designated place of reunion, by different passages, — that is, the Queen’s boudoir, into which our readers have already been introduced. One of the two men followed the gallery of the Louvre, along the side of the river pier, — that gallery which is to-day a picture museum, — at the end whereof he found *Weber* waiting for him. The other ascended the narrow stair-

case, which we saw Charny use, on his first return from Montmédy. As this man's coadjutor had been waited for at the end of the Louvre, by Weber, the Queen's *valet de chambre*, so this second comer was waited for at the head of the staircase, by Françoise Hue, the King's *valet de chambre*. Both were introduced to the boudoir almost at the same time, but by different doors. The first comer was Monsieur de Valory. A few seconds after, a second door opened, and with astonishment Valory saw his own counterpart enter the room. Taking it for granted they were summoned for the same purpose, the two officers saluted each other, and drew nearer together.

At that moment a third door opened, and the Viscount appeared. He was the third courier, though as yet unacquainted with the other two.

Isidore was the only one of the three who knew why they were assembled, and what task lay before them. He would undoubtedly have been ready to answer any questions addressed to him by his two future comrades, when the door opened anew, and the King appeared.

"Gentlemen," said King Louis, addressing Malden and Valory, "pardon me for having disposed of you without your permission, but I hold you to be faithful servitors of royalty, since you both formerly belonged to my bodyguard. I asked you both to call on a tailor, whose address I gave you, in order that each should have a courier's suit made for him, and then to come to the Tuileries to-night, at half-past nine. Your presence proves that you are willing to accept the mission with which I may charge you, whatever it may be."

The two former guardsmen bowed, and Valory said:

“Sire, your Majesty well knows that he has no need to ask his gentlemen for permission to dispose of their devotion, their courage, and their lives.”

“Sire,” said Malden, “my colleague has responded for me, in responding for himself; and I presume he speaks for our third companion.”

“Your third companion, gentlemen, — whose acquaintance I commend to you, for it is a good acquaintance to make, — is Viscount Isidore de Charny, whose brother was killed at Versailles, in defending the Queen’s portal. We are accustomed to the devotion of the men of his family; but however familiar their sacrifices have become, we are nevertheless thoroughly grateful for them.”

“From what the King says, doubtless the Viscount knows the purpose of our meeting, although we are ignorant of it, and have hastened hither to learn it.”

“Gentlemen,” replied the King, “you are not ignorant that I am virtually a prisoner, — a prisoner of the Commander of the National Guard, a prisoner of the President of the Assembly, a prisoner of the Mayor of Paris, a prisoner of the populace, — in a word, everybody’s prisoner. Well, gentlemen, I have counted on you to aid me in shaking off this humiliation, and regaining my liberty. My fate, with that of the Queen and our children, is in your hands. All is ready for us to hasten our departure to-night; only you must help us to get away.”

“Sire, give your orders!” said the three young men.

“We cannot all go out together, — you can well understand that, gentlemen. Our rendezvous is to be at the corner of Rue Saint Nicaise, where the Comte de Charny will await us with a hired carriage. Viscount, you will take charge of the Queen, and answer to the name of Melchior. Malden, you will have the care of Madame Elizabeth and

Madame Royale, and will be called Jean. You, Valory, will take charge of Madame de Tourzel — or Korff, as she will be called — and the Dauphin, and your name will be François. Do not forget your new names, my friends, and remain here for further instructions.”

In turn the King offered his hand to each of the three young men, and went out, leaving three men all ready to die for him.

Meanwhile Choiseul, who had declared to the King, the night before, in Bouillé’s behalf, that it would be impossible to postpone the flight later than midnight of the Twentieth, — and that Bouillé would start by four o’clock on the morning of the Twenty-first, if he received no contrary advice. and take all his detachments to Dun, Stenay, and Montmédy, — Choiseul, as we have before said, was at his home in the Rue Artois, whither he had come to get the last orders from Court. As it was already nine o’clock, he began to despair, when the only servant whom he had retained, and who believed him on the point of departure for Metz, came to say that a man wanted to speak with him, in the Queen’s name.

Choiseul ordered him to be shown in. A man entered, wearing an enormous topcoat, and a round hat, slouched over his eyes.

“Ah, it’s you, Leonard! I have been waiting for you very impatiently.”

“If you have been kept waiting, it is n’t my fault, but the Queen’s, who told me only ten minutes ago, that I was to come here.”

“She told you nothing else?” asked the Duke.

“Yes, indeed, Monsieur. She entrusted me with all her diamonds, and told me to bring you this letter.”

“Hand it over, then!” said the Duke, with some impatience; for he was not altogether pleased with

the immense importance enjoyed by the pretentious personage who brought him the royal despatch.

The letter was long, and full of directions. It announced that they would leave at midnight, advised Choiseul to start at once, and renewedly begged him to take Léonard along, who had received orders, as the Queen added, to obey Choiseul as he would obey herself; and she underlined the following words: *I hereby renew this order!*

The Duke looked at Leonard, who was waiting with manifest anxiety. The barber looked very grotesque, under an enormous hat, and lost in an immense overcoat, with large capes.

“Now get your wits together,” said the Duke. “What did the Queen say to you?”

“I can repeat it, word for word, Monsieur.”

“Go on! I’m listening.”

“She sent for me three-quarters of an hour ago, Monsieur.”

“Good.”

“She said, in a low tone —”

“Her Majesty was not alone, then?”

“No, Monsieur. The King was talking with Madame Elizabeth, in the alcove of the window. Monsieur the Dauphin and Madame Royale were playing together. As to the Queen, she was leaning wearily against the mantel-piece.”

“Go on, Léonard, go on!”

“The Queen said to me, in a low voice: ‘Léonard, I can depend upon you?’ — Says I: ‘Ah Madame, dispose of me as you please. Your Majesty knows that I am devoted to her, body and soul.’ — ‘Take these diamonds,’ says she, ‘and bury them in your pockets. Take this letter, and carry it to Rue Artois, to the Duke de Choiseul,

and deliver it only to himself. If he is n't at home, you will find him with the Duchess de Grammont.' — Then, as I was coming away, to obey the Queen's orders, her Majesty called me back. 'Put on a broad-brimmed hat,' says she, 'and a big riding-coat, in order not to be recognized, my dear Léonard; and obey Monsieur de Choiseul as you would me.' — Then I returned to my lodgings, took a riding-coat and hat belonging to my brother, and here I am."

"So the Queen instructed you to obey me as you would herself?"

"Those were truly the august words of her Majesty, Monsieur."

"I am glad you recollect her verbal instructions. Anyway, here's the same order, in writing, and as I must burn the letter, read it first!" and Choiseul offered the paper to the barber, who read it aloud:

I have given orders to my hairdresser, Leonard, to obey you as he would myself. *I hereby renew this order!*

"You understand, do you not?" said the Duke.

"Yes, Monsieur! but you may well believe that her Majesty's spoken order would be sufficient."

"Never mind that!" said the Duke, as he burned the letter.

At that instant the Duke's servant returned to say that the carriage was ready.

"Come, my dear Léonard!" said the Duke.

"What? Am I to come? And the diamonds?"

"You'll take them with you."

"And where?"

"Where I take you."

"And where do you take me?"

“Some leagues away, and you have a special commission to fulfil.”

“Impossible, Monsieur !”

“Why impossible ? Did n't the Queen bid you obey me as herself ?”

“That's true ; but how can I do it ? I left the key in the door of our lodgings. When my brother goes home, he won't find his riding-coat or his hat. Not seeing me return, he won't know where I am. And then there's Madame de l'Aage, whose hair I've promised to dress, and who waits for me. As a proof of this, Monsieur, my cabriolet and my servant are in the courtyard of the Tuileries.”

“Come, come, my dear Léonard, what would you have ?” laughingly said Choiseul. “Your brother must buy another hat and another riding-coat. You must barber Madame de l'Aage some other day. Not seeing you return, your lackey will unharness your horse, and take him back to the stable. Meantime, *our* team is harnessed, and *we* must be off.”

Without paying further attention to Léonard's complaints and regrets, the Duke made the disconsolate barber get into the cabriolet, and then set off, at a fast trot, towards the Petite Villette Barrier.

The Duke had hardly passed the last houses of Petite Villette, when a group of five men, coming into Rue Saint Honoré from the Jacobin Club, directed their steps towards the Palais Royal, remarking, as they sauntered along, upon the deep tranquillity of the night.

These five persons were Danton, Fréron, Chénier, Legendre, and Desmoulins, who himself relates the incident.

As they reached the end of Rue de l'Échelle, Desmoulins said, glancing towards the Tuileries : “Faith, does n't it

seem to you to-night that Paris is as tranquil as if she were forsaken? During our whole walk, not a solitary patrol have we encountered."

"That's because measures have been taken to leave the road clear for the King," said Fréron.

"How, — the road clear for the King?" asked Danton.

"Undoubtedly," said Fréron, "he starts to-night."

"Go along with your joking!" said Legendre.

"It may be a joke," replied Fréron, "but I have been so notified in a letter."

"A letter announcing the flight of the King? A letter signed?"

"No, an anonymous letter. I have it with me. — Here, read!"

The five Patriots approached a hack, which was standing at the head of Rue Saint Nicaise, and by the light of its lantern they read the following lines :

Citizen Fréron is informed that to-night Monsieur Capet, the Austrian Woman, and their two whelps will quit Paris, to join General Bouillé, the slaughterer of Nancy, who awaits them on the frontier.

"Hold on!" said Desmoulins. "*Monsieur Capet!* That's a good name! Henceforth I'll call him *Monsieur Capet*, instead of Louis Sixteenth."

"And there will be only one fault to find," said Chénier, "that the family name of Louis Sixteenth is not *Capet*, but *Bourbon*."

"Bah! Who cares?" said Desmoulins. "Two or three pedants, like Chénier, perhaps! Is n't that so, Legendre, — is n't *Capet* a good name?"

"Meanwhile," said Danton, "what if the letter speaks the truth, and this is really the night when the whole royal gang is to decamp?"

“As we’re here, at the Tuileries, let us see about it!” and the five Patriots amused themselves by walking around the palace.

In returning towards Rue Saint Nicaise, they perceived Lafayette and his staff going into the Tuileries.

“Faith!” said Danton. “Why, there’s Blondinet, coming to help put the royal family to bed. Our duty is done, and his begins. Good-night, gentlemen! Who comes with me, towards Rue Paon?”

“I!” said Legendre.

The group separated into two parties. Danton and Legendre crossed the Place du Carrousel, while Chénier, Fréron, and Camille Desmoulins disappeared around the corner of Rue de Rohan, into Rue Saint Honoré.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE DEPARTURE.

AT eleven in the evening, at the very time when Madame Tourzel and Madame Brunier, after having undressed and put Madame Royale and the Dauphin to bed, woke them up again, and dressed them in their travelling clothes, — to the great mortification of the Dauphin, who wished to put on his usual masculine attire, and obstinately refused the girlish garments, — the Queen and Madame Elizabeth received Lafayette and his two aides, Gouvion and Romeuf.

This visit was specially disquieting, on account of their suspicions of Madame de Rochereul.

In the evening the Queen and Madame Elizabeth went out, for a promenade in the Bois de Boulogne, — the park beyond the termination of the Champs Élysées, the other side of the point where now stands the great Triumphal Arch erected by Napoleon. Lafayette asked the Queen if the drive had been pleasant; only he added that she was wrong to be out so late, as he feared the evening fogs might not be good for her.

“Fogs in a June evening?” said the Queen, smiling; “but truly, unless made purposely to conceal our flight, I don’t know where we should find them. I say, to conceal our flight; for I suppose the rumor still spreads that we are about running away.”

“The truth is, Madame,” said Lafayette, “there is more talk than ever about your departure, and I have been notified that it is to take place to-night.”

“Ah!” said the Queen, “I wager you learned that piece of news from Monsieur de Gouvion?”

“And why from me, your Majesty?” asked the young officer, blushing.

“Well, because I believe you have constant intercourse with the palace. Now here is Monsieur Romeuf, who has no such intercourse; and I’m sure he’ll be answerable for us.”

“And I should not deserve any great credit, Madame,” responded the young aide, “inasmuch as the King gave the Assembly his word of honor not to quit Paris.”

This time it was the Queen’s turn to blush, and they subsequently chatted about other matters. At half-past eleven Lafayette and his two aides took leave of the King and Queen.

Thereafter Gouvion, ill-satisfied, returned to his room in the palace, where he found his friends on the watch; but instead of relieving them from duty, he urged them to redouble their vigilance.

As to Lafayette, he went to the Hôtel de Ville, to tranquillize Bailly about the King’s intentions, if Bailly had any misgivings.

As soon as Lafayette had left them, the Queen and Madame Elizabeth called upon their attendants for the customary toilet services; after which, at the regular hour, everybody was dismissed.

Then the Queen and Madame Elizabeth helped each other to dress. Their gowns were extremely simple. Their bonnets were very large, with wide borders, which wholly hid their faces.

When they were dressed the King came in. He had a gray coat, and wore one of those bag (or pudding) peri-wigs, called wigs à la Jean Jacques Rousseau. He also wore short breeches, gray stockings, and buckled shoes.

Now and then, for a week, Hue, the King's valet, clothed in a costume exactly like the King's, had gone in and out the entrance of the apartments belonging to Monsieur de Villequier, — who had emigrated six months before, — and so into Place du Carrousel, the great courtyard of the Tuileries, and thence to the Rue Saint Nicaise, which was not far away. This precaution had been taken so that people should become accustomed to seeing a man, dressed in this fashion, going about the neighborhood, and not be specially attracted by the King's appearance, when his turn should come to pass that way.

The three couriers were brought from the Queen's boudoir, where they had waited for the hour to arrive, and taken into the parlor in the suite occupied by Madame Royale, where she and the Dauphin were.

In anticipation of the flight, this suite, adjoining Villequier's former apartments, had been thus occupied since the Eleventh of the month ; and on the Thirteenth the King took possession of the keys of the vacated rooms.

Once inside of Villequier's old apartments, there would be no great difficulty in getting outside the palace. These rooms were supposed to be deserted ; and as it was not known that the King had taken the keys, this point was ordinarily not guarded.

Moreover, after it struck eleven, the sentinels in the courtyards were accustomed to see a great many different people go out together. These were mostly royal attendants, who did not sleep in the palace, but returned to their own lodgings, when their duties for the day were over.

In Madame Royale's parlor the royal family completed their arrangements for the journey.

Isidore de Charny, who had surveyed the road with his brother, and knew all the difficult and dangerous places,

would ride ahead, and notify the postilions, so that changing horses might cause no needless delay.

Malden and Valory would be on the rear outside seat, and pay the postilions thirty sous apiece. The ordinary price was twenty-five, but five were to be added, on account of the weight of the carriage. If the postilions made good time, they would receive large gratuities for drink-money. No postilion would receive over forty sous from them, however, the King alone paying a crown.

M. le Comte de Charny would be inside the carriage, prepared for all emergencies. He would be well armed, as would be also the three couriers. For each of them there would be a brace of pistols in the carriage.

By paying the postilions extra, and driving moderately fast, it was calculated that in thirteen hours the party would be at Châlons.

All the arrangements had been agreed upon between the Comte de Charny and the Duc de Choiseul. They were repeated several times to the three young gentlemen, in order that each should become fully acquainted with his functions.

Viscount Isidore de Charny would ride on ahead, and order the horses. Malden and Valory, on the rear outside seat, would pay for them. If anything needed to be said, the Count would do the talking from his place inside, putting his head through the coach window. Each one promised to adhere to his part of the programme.

Then the candles were blown out, and the party cautiously went into the Villequier apartments. Midnight sounded, as they passed from Madame Royale's suite into the other. The Comte de Charny must have been at his post more than an hour already.

Feeling his way along, the King found the door leading into the corridor. He was about inserting the key, when the Queen checked him with a *hush!*

They listened. They could hear laughter and steps in the corridor outside. Something extraordinary was taking place out there. Madame de Tourzel, who lived constantly in the palace, and whose presence in the corridor, even at that hour, could surprise nobody, volunteered to go back and round the apartments to the other side, and ascertain the source of those chuckles and noisy steps.

They waited motionless, — almost breathless. The greater the silence, the easier it was to perceive the corridor was occupied by several persons.

Madame de Tourzel returned. She had recognized Gouvion, and noticed several uniforms.

It was obviously inexpedient to enter the corridor, and so leave the building, through the Villequier suite, unless there was some other outlet than the one already selected; only they had no light to aid their search.

A night-lamp was burning in Madame Royale's chamber, and Madame Elizabeth went there, to relight the candle which had been blown out. By the light of this candle the little band of fugitives tried to find some other place of egress from the Villequier rooms.

For some time their search was fruitless, and more than fifteen minutes were lost. At last they discovered a small staircase, which led to an isolated room in the lower story. This chamber had belonged to Monsieur de Villequier's servant, and had a door which connected it with the servants' entrance.

This door was locked. The King tried all the keys on his ring, but not one of them would fit. Isidore tried to push back the bolt with the point of his hunting-knife,

but the bolt resisted. To be sure they had found an outlet, yet they were shut in the great palace as tightly as ever.

The King took the candle from Madame Elizabeth's hands. Leaving the rest in obscurity, he went upstairs to his own bedroom, by the secret staircase, whence he could easily reach his workshop. There he took a bunch of picks of different forms, some of them quite odd, and then came down again.

Before rejoining the group, waiting for him with so much anxiety, he had decided which pick to try. This picklock easily entered into the keyhole, grated as it turned, caught the bolt, and twice let it slip; but the third time he pressed the pick so hard that the bolt flew back, after several seconds of careful effort. The latch yielded, the door opened, and everybody breathed more freely.

Louis turned to the Queen with a triumphant air. "Hey, Madame?" he said; "is n't this really worth knowing?"

"Yes, Monsieur," said the Queen, laughing; "and truly I never said it was bad to be a locksmith, only that it was better to be a king."

Meanwhile it was necessary to arrange the order of their departure. Madame Elizabeth went out first, conducting Madame Royale. At twenty paces distant they were followed by Madame de Tourzel, with the Dauphin. Between the two groups walked Monsieur de Malden, ready to give help to either party.

These first beads detached from the royal chaplet — these poor children, watched by love from behind, and depending upon that love which followed them with its keen eyes — went timidly out, on tiptoe, entered the circle of light formed by the street-lamp, shining above the

palace door which opened into the courtyard, and passed the sentinel quietly and unnoticed.

“Good!” said Madame Elizabeth, “there’s one bad place over!”

At the wicket which led into the Place du Carrousel, they met a sentinel, whose line of march directly crossed their path. Seeing them, he paused.

“Aunty,” said Madame Royale, pressing Madame Elizabeth’s hand, “we are lost! That man knows us!”

“Never mind, my child,” said Madame Elizabeth, “we shall certainly be lost if we hesitate!” and so they continued on their way.

When they were within four steps of the sentinel, he turned his back upon them, so they could pass by.

Did this man really know them? Did he know what illustrious fugitives he allowed to pass? The ladies were fully convinced that he did, and bestowed a thousand benedictions upon their unknown preserver, in the midst of their flight.

On the other side of the wicket they could see Charny’s anxious face. The Count was wrapped in a great box-coat, and wore a round oil-cloth hat. “Thank God,” he said, “you are here at last! But the King, the Queen!”

“They are following us,” replied Madame Elizabeth.

“Come on!” said Charny; and he rapidly led the way to a hired carriage, stationed on Rue Saint Nicaise.

Another carriage had taken its stand beside the first, as if to play the spy.

“Well, comrade,” said the driver of this second carriage, seeing Charny come along with this little party, “it seems there’s a fare!”

“Ay, ay, comrade!” replied Charny. Then he whispered to the bodyguard: “Malden, take that cab, and

go straight to the Porte Saint Martin. You'll have no difficulty in recognizing the coach which is there waiting for us."

Malden understood, and jumped into the carriage, while Charny said aloud to the strange hackman: "A load for thee also. To the Opera-house, — quick!"

The Opera-house evidently meant the Porte Saint Martin.

The coachman supposed Malden to be some footman, going to meet his master at the play, and drove away without any further observation, except a few words which related to his pecuniary interest in the price of the trip.

"You know it's past midnight, my friend!"

"Oh yes! Go ahead, and be easy!"

As at this period lackeys were often more generous than their masters, the coachman drove off with no further remarks.

Hardly had this carriage turned the corner into Rue de Rohan, than there came, at an ordinary gait, — through the same wicket which had given passage to Madame Royale and Madame Elizabeth, Madame de Tourzel and the Dauphin, — a man dressed like a clerk, leaving his office after a long and hard day's work. This good man wore a gray coat. His hat was tipped over his nose and he carried his hands in his pocket.

It was the King. He was followed by Valory. During his walk, one of the King's shoe-buckles became detached. He went on without noticing it, but Valory picked it up.

Charny came several steps towards them, having recognized Valory, — who followed the King, — but not the King himself.

Charny was one of those to whom a king is always the King. He heaved a sigh of sadness, almost of shame, as

he murmured : "This way, Sire!" adding, in a lower voice, to Valory : "And the Queen?"

"The Queen is following us, with your brother Isidore."

"Very well! Take the shortest cut, and wait for us at the Porte Saint Martin. I will take a longer way. The place of meeting is by the great coach which is waiting there for us."

Valory hurried from Rue Saint Nicaise to Rue Saint Honoré, then into Rue Richelieu, Place des Victoires, and Rue Bourbon Villeneuve, which led diagonally from this Square to the Porte Saint Martin.

Meantime the royal party waited for the Queen. A half-hour passed. We will not try to depict the anxiety of the fugitives.

Charny, upon whom rested the weight of responsibility, was almost crazy. He wished to return to the palace, and make inquiries; but the King held him back.

The little Dauphin wept, and cried aloud for his dear mamma. Neither his sister, his aunt, nor his governess could comfort him.

Their terror increased when they saw General Lafayette's carriage, accompanied by torchbearers, return that way, and drive into the Place du Carrousel.

This is what had happened. At the door of the courtyard the Viscount gave his arm to the Queen, and wished to turn to the left; but she stopped him.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"To the corner of Rue Saint Nicaise, where my brother expects us."

"Is it on the riverside?" asked her Majesty.

"No, Madame."

"Well, it's at the wicket on the riverside, opposite the quay, where your brother is to wait."

Isidore tried to insist ; but the Queen (who had been misled, perhaps, by the similarity of sound between the word *quay*¹ and the last syllable of *Nicaise*), appeared so sure of what she said, that he began to misdoubt his own memory.

“Before God, Madame,” he exclaimed, “be very careful. An error now would be fatal !”

“To the riverside !” repeated the Queen. “I certainly heard something said about the *quay*.”

“Then let us go to the riverside, Madame, for it is only on the other side of the palace ; but if we do not find the carriage there, we will at once go to Rue Saint Nicaise, shall we not ?”

“Yes, yes ; but let us keep on now !”

The Queen led her cavalier through the three courtyards, separated, at that time by thick walls, and opening from one to another through narrow passages, close to the palace buildings, each opening being protected with a chain and guarded by a sentinel.

One by one these openings were passed by Isidore and the Queen, who had to climb over the chains ; but not a sentinel offered to bar their progress. Why should anybody fancy that this young woman, dressed like an attendant in some respectable mansion, and leaning on the arm of a handsome young fellow, in the livery of the Prince de Condé, — and climbing with agility over those great chains, — was the Queen of France ?

They reached the waterside, and found the pier deserted.

“Then the carriage must be on the farther side of the river !” said the Queen.

¹ It will be remembered that though *quay* is sometimes pronounced like *key* in English, it is never so pronounced in French, but always has the long sound of *a*, — like *kay*.

Isidore wished to retrace their steps ; but she persisted, as if seized by a sort of hallucination : “ No, no ! This way ! ” and she urged Isidore to go farther on, towards Pont Royal.

They crossed this bridge, and found the quay and the other bank of the Seine, the left, just as deserted as the right bank, on the side of the Tuileries.

“ Let us look into yonder street ! ” said the Queen ; and she forced Isidore to try Rue Bac. At the end of a hundred steps she acknowledged to herself she must be mistaken, and stood still, panting for breath, for her strength began to give out.

“ Well, Madame, do you still insist ? ”

“ No ! It all depends upon you ! Take me where you will ! ”

“ In Heaven’s name, have courage ! ” said Isidore.

“ It’s not courage I lack, but strength,” said Marie Antoinette. Turning her steps backward she added : “ Oh Lord, oh Lord ! it seems to me I shall never recover my breath ! ”

Isidore knew that in such an emergency breath was as necessary to the Queen’s safety as it is to a fawn pursued by the hounds ; so he paused.

“ Breathe, Madame. We have time enough. I will answer for my brother. He’ll wait until daylight, if need be.”

“ You believe he loves me, then ? ” cried she, quickly and imprudently, pressing against her breast the young Viscount’s arm, upon which she leaned.

“ I believe that his life, like mine, belongs to you, Madame ; and the sentiment of love, which belongs to us both, amounts to adoration in him.”

“ Thanks ! ” said the Queen. “ You relieve me, and I breathe again. — Come, let us on ! ”

With feverish haste she resumed her walk. They re-crossed the bridge, and retraced the road already taken; only, in place of re-entering the other courtyards of the Tuileries, Isidore passed through the wicket of the Place du Carrousel, which they crossed. Until midnight this immense square was usually filled with hackney carriages, and movable stalls for the sale of small wares; but now it was almost deserted and correspondingly gloomy.

They could hear, however, a great noise of rolling wheels and clattering hoofs. When they reached the wicket opposite Rue de l'Échelle, it was evident that the horses and carriage whose hoofs and wheels they had heard were coming that way. A light was already visible, proceeding doubtless from the torches which kept the carriage company.

Isidore wished to go back, but the Queen insisted upon going forward. Isidore threw himself under the wicket, in order to protect her, just as the heads of the torch-bearers' horses appeared at the opposite entrance. He pushed her into the darkest recess along the wall, and stationed himself in front of her; but even this dark recess was instantly flooded with light from the torches.

In the midst of the cavalcade, half reclining in his carriage, wearing his elegant uniform as General of the National Guard, might be seen Lafayette.

At the moment when this carriage passed by, Isidore felt a strong arm — enforced with will-power, if not with physical strength — push him aside. This arm was the strong left arm of the Queen.

In her right hand she carried a small bamboo cane, with a gilt knob, such as women generally carried at that epoch. With this she rapped the carriage-wheels, saying: "Go thy way, jailer! I'm outside of thy prison!"

“What are you doing, Madame?” whispered Isidore.
“To what are you exposing yourself?”

“I am revenging myself!” responded Marie Antoinette.
“One would risk anything for *that!*”

As soon as the last torch had passed by them, she ran out of her retreat, as radiant as a goddess and joyful as a child.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A QUESTION OF ETIQUETTE.

THE Queen had not taken ten steps beyond the wicket, when a man wearing a huge boxcoat, his face hidden by an oil-cloth hat, grasped her peremptorily by the arm, and hurried her towards a hack, stationed at the corner of Rue Saint Nicaise.

This man was the Comte de Charny. The hack was one in which the rest of the royal family had been waiting half an hour. They expected to see the Queen perplexed, disheartened, hysterical, but here she came, laughing and joyous. The dangers she had run, the fatigue she had incurred, the errors she had committed, the time she had lost, the delay she had caused, — all these were forgotten, in the rap of the cane which she had given the wheels of Lafayette's carriage, and which seemed to her almost as if she had bestowed the blow upon himself.

Ten paces away from the hack, a servant was holding a horse by the bridle. Charny had no sooner pointed the animal out to Isidore than Isidore sprang upon his back, and was off at full speed. He was to ride in advance as far as Bondy, and see that relays of horses were in readiness.

Seeing him depart, the Queen threw after him several words of gratitude, which he could not hear.

"Come, Madame, come," said Charny, with that firmness, mingled with respect, which really strong men

know how to assume in great emergencies, "there is not a second to lose!"

The Queen entered the carriage, where were already the King, Madame Elizabeth, Madame Royale, the Dauphin, and Madame de Tourzel,—that is, five persons. She sat in the rear seat, and took the Dauphin on her knees. Next her sat the King. Madame Elizabeth, Madame Royale, and Madame de Tourzel sat facing them.

Charny closed the door, mounted to the driver's seat; and to put spies on the wrong scent, if any were lurking thereabouts, he turned the horses, drove up Rue Saint Honoré, entered the boulevards at the Madeleine Church, and followed the line of the boulevards around, till the curve brought them, in this roundabout way, to the Porte Saint Martin.

There, on a byroad outside the gate, leading to a place known as the Common Sewer, they found in waiting the unusually large coach, which had been built expressly for the royal flight.

The byway was deserted. Charny leaped to the ground and opened the door of the hack he had been driving. The door of the coach, which was to serve them for their journey, was already open. Malden and Valory, who had reached the place an hour or so earlier, stood by the steps, on either side.

In an instant the six persons who had come in the hack were standing in the road. Then Charny drove the hack, which was no longer needed, to the lower side of the way, managed to upset it into a ditch, and then returned to the large coach, to which he attached the extra horses.

First the King entered, then the Queen, then Madame Elizabeth. After their aunt, came the two children; and after them, Madame de Tourzel.

Malden mounted behind the coach, while Valory sat with Charny, on the driver's seat. The coach was now furnished with four horses. A *click* of the tongue made them start off at a trot, the director urging them to full speed. The quarter-hour after one rang from the Church of Saint Laurent.

It required an hour to go as far as Bondy. The fresh horses were waiting in the stable, with their harnesses on their backs, ready to be hitched to the coach. Isidore was on hand, near the horses.

On the other side of the road stood a hired cabriolet, attached to two posthorses. In this cabriolet were two chambermaids, belonging to the service of the Dauphin and Madame Royale. They had expected to find a livery hack at Bondy; but not finding one there, they arranged with the master of this cabriolet, who sold it to them for a thousand francs.

The master, well-pleased with his bargain, — and doubtless wishing to see who might be the persons who were such idiots as to give a thousand francs for such an old rattletrap, — was waiting and drinking in the posthouse. He saw the King's coach arrive, directed by Charny, who jumped down and approached the carriage window.

Under his coachman's coat he wore his uniform; and his hat was in the box, under the seat. It had been arranged between the King, Queen, and Charny, that the latter should take a seat inside the coach at Bondy, in place of Madame de Tourzel, who would return alone to Paris.

Unfortunately they had forgotten to consult Madame de Tourzel about this arrangement. The King submitted the question to her. Despite her heartfelt devotion to the royal family in other matters, Madame de Tourzel was a worthy disciple and appendage of old Madame de

Noailles on all questions of etiquette, — a perfect dragon on this subject.

She therefore replied : “Sire, my duty is to watch over the royal children of France, and not quit them for an instant. Unless I have an express order from your Majesty, — an order which would, however, be *unprecedented*, — I shall not leave them.”

The Queen shook with impatience. A double reason made her wish to have Charny in the coach. As Queen, she saw in him her protector. As a woman, she found in him her delight.

“Dear Madame de Tourzel,” said her Majesty, “we are as grateful to you as possible; but you are uncomfortable, and you have an exaggerated sense of your duty. Remain here at Bondy, for the present, and wherever we may be, you shall rejoin us later.”

“Madame,” responded Madame de Tourzel, “if the King so *orders*, I am ready to leave the carriage, and to remain in the middle of the highway, if necessary; but only an order from his Majesty will make me willing, not merely to fail in my duty, but to renounce my rights.”

“Sire,” said the Queen, “Sire!” but Louis dared not decide so grave a question. He sought for some expedient, some loophole of escape, some subterfuge.

“Monsieur de Charny,” he said, “can you not remain on the box?”

“I can do whatever the King wishes,” said Charny; “only, I must either wear my official uniform, — and during the past year I have been frequently seen on this route, wearing the same uniform, and everybody will recognize me; or else I must wear this boxcoat, and coachman’s oil-cloth hat; and the latter dress is a little too ordinary for so elegant a carriage.”

“Come inside, Monsieur de Charny, come in,” said the Queen. “I will take the Dauphin on my knees. Madame Elizabeth will take little Maria Theresa on hers, and we shall get along very well. We shall be somewhat crowded, that ’s all.”

Charny awaited the decision of the King, who said : “Impossible, my dear ! Think of it ! We have ninety leagues to travel !”

Madame de Tourzel stood up, ready to obey the King’s orders, and get out, if the King so decided ; but the King dared not give this order, — so important, among Court people, seem the most trifling prejudices.

“Charny,” said the King to the Count, “can’t you take your brother Isidore’s place, and travel in advance, to order the horses ?”

“As I have already assured your Majesty, I am ready to do anything ; only I beg your Majesty to remember, the posthorses are usually ordered by a courier, not by a naval captain. This novelty would astonish the postmasters at the stations, and might lead to serious difficulties.”

“That ’s true !” said the King.

“Oh my God, my God,” said the Queen, overflowing with impatience. Then she added, turning to Charny : “Arrange it as you please, Count, but I don’t wish you to leave us.”

“That is also my wish, Madame,” said Charny, “but I can see only one way of avoiding it.”

“Which way ? Speak quickly !” said the Queen.

“It is this, — that instead of entering the carriage, instead of mounting the box, instead of travelling as a courier, I should follow you along, in the plain dress of a man who travels by post. Go on, Madame, and before you have made ten leagues, I shall be not more than five hundred paces behind your carriage.”

“Then you will go back to Paris?”

“Undoubtedly, Madame; but as far as Châlons, your Majesty has nothing to fear, and before you reach Châlons, I’ll be with you again.”

“But how will you get back to Paris?”

“On the horse which my brother has been riding. The animal is an excellent roadster, and has had time to breathe. In less than half an hour I shall be in Paris.”

“And then?”

“Then, Madame, I shall put on suitable clothing, hire a posthorse, and ride with a free stirrup, until I overtake you.”

“Is there no other way?” said Marie Antoinette, in despair.

“Good Lord, I see no other!” said the King.

“Then no time is to be lost,” said Charny. “We’re ready. Here Jean, François,—to your places. Ride ahead, Melchior! Postilions, to your horses!”

Madame de Tourzel then reseated herself in triumph, and the coach started off at a gallop, followed by the cabriolet.

This all-important discussion made them forget to give Isidore, Valory, and Malden the loaded pistols, which were packed away in their case, inside the coach.

Meanwhile, how were things going in Paris, whither Charny was riding so fast?

A wigmaker named Buseby, living in Rue de Bourbon, had been passing the evening at the Tuileries, with a friend who was there on guard. This friend had heard the officers talking of the flight, which some people were so sure had been projected for that night. He told the wigmaker about it; and the wigmaker could not drive from his mind the notion that this project was real, and that the

royal flight, so long the subject of gossip, was to be put into execution that night.

Returning home, he told his wife what he had learned at the Tuileries; but she treated the whole affair as a dream. Her ridicule so quieted her husband's suspicions, that he finally undressed himself and went to bed.

Once in bed, however, his former convictions returned upon him, and before long became so strong that he could not resist them. He sprang out of bed, redressed himself, and visited the apartments of one of his friends, named Hucher, who was not only a baker, but also a sapper in the *Théatin* Battalion.

To him the wigmaker reported all he had heard at the Tuileries, and imparted his fears in such a lively fashion to the baker, — as to the flight of the royal family, — that the baker not only shared his neighbor's apprehensions, but grasped them more ardently. He even jumped out of bed, and, without taking time to put on anything but his drawers, went out into the street, rapped at the doors, and roused some thirty of his neighbors.

This was at fifteen minutes past midnight, and just after the Queen encountered Lafayette at the wicket of the Tuileries.

The citizens who were awakened by the wigmaker Buseby and the baker Hucher decided that they would put on their uniforms as members of the National Guard, and then call upon General Lafayette, to let him know what was going on.

This resolution was at once put into execution. Lafayette lived on Rue Saint Honoré, in the Noailles Mansion, near the Feuillant Terrace. The Patriots put themselves in motion, and were there by half-past twelve.

After assisting the King to retire, after notifying Bailly that the King was safe abed, after paying a visit to Mon-

sieur Emmery, a member of the National Assembly, — after doing all this, the General had come home, and was preparing to undress.

At that moment there was a loud knock at the door of the Noailles Mansion. Lafayette sent his valet to see what was the matter. The valet soon returned, saying that some twenty-five or thirty citizens wished to see the General instantly, in an affair of the utmost importance.

At that period the General was accustomed to hold a reception at any hour when it happened to be necessary. Moreover, an affair which had disturbed twenty-five or thirty citizens might turn out of some importance; so he ordered his nocturnal visitors to be introduced. The General had only to slip on his coat, which he had just thrown off, to be in proper reception costume.

Messieurs Buseby and Hucher, for themselves and in behalf of their companions, made known their fears; Buseby basing his apprehensions on what he had gleaned at the Tuileries, — the others, on what they had daily heard in all quarters.

The General could only laugh at their fears. As he was a good fellow and a great talker, he told them whence these rumors had come; how they had been spread abroad by Madame de Rochereul and Monsieur de Gouvion; how, to reassure himself, the General had seen the King go to bed, — as his visitors might see himself go to bed, if they would remain a few minutes longer. As this conversation failed to reassure them, Lafayette added that he would make his own head answerable for the King, and for all the royal family.

After this assurance it was impossible to show any suspicion; so the citizens contented themselves with asking Lafayette for the watchword, so that no one

could molest them on their way home. Lafayette could not refuse them this favor, and gave them the word accordingly.

Armed with this watchword they resolved to visit the Riding School, to learn if there was anything new in that quarter, and also the palace courtyards, to ascertain if anything extraordinary was happening there.

From this trip they returned along Rue Saint Honoré, and had reached Rue de l'Échelle, when a horseman, at full speed, suddenly rode into their midst. In such a night, everything was eventful; so they crossed their muskets, and called upon the cavalier to halt.

He did so, and asked: "What do you want?"

"We want to know where you're going," said the National Guardsmen.

"I'm going to the Tuileries."

"What are you going to do at the Tuileries?"

"Render my account to the King, of a commission he has given me."

"At this hour?"

"Certainly, at this very hour!"

One of these astute fellows made a sign to the others, to let him speak, and said: "But at this hour the King's abed and asleep."

"Yes," answered the rider, "but he can wake up."

"If you have business with the King, you must have the watchword," said the same man who had spoken before.

"That would be no reason, if I had come from the frontier, far away, instead of coming from a place only three leagues from here, and if I had parted from the King a month ago, instead of two hours."

"True," said the National Guardsmen.

"Then you saw the King two hours ago?" continued the first questioner.

“ Yes.”

“ You spoke with him ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ What was he doing two hours ago ? ”

“ He was only waiting for General Lafayette to go out, in order to go to sleep.”

“ Then of course you have the watchword ? ”

“ Certainly. The General, knowing that I must re-enter the Tuileries about one or two o'clock in the morning, gave me the watchword, so that I might not be delayed.”

“ And that watchword ? ”

“ Paris and Poitiers.”

“ That's all right,” said the guardsmen. “ Happy return, comrade. Tell the King you found us watching at his palace gate, so that he might not run away.”

They stood aside to let the cavalier pass, as he responded, “ I will not fail to do so ; ” and, pricking his horse with both spurs, he shot through the wicket of the Tuileries, where he disappeared from their sight.

“ Had we better wait till he comes out of the Tuileries, and so learn if he saw the King ? ” said one of the wise citizens.

“ If he lodges in the Tuileries, we shall have to wait till to-morrow ! ” said another.

“ True,” said the first ; “ and, my faith, if Lafayette's abed, and the King's abed, let's take our turn in going to bed ; and so, Hurrah for the Nation ! ”

The twenty-five or thirty Patriots repeated the cry in chorus : “ Hurrah for the Nation ! ” and then went home to their little beds, happy and proud at having heard, from Lafayette's own mouth, that he had no fear of the King's quitting Paris.

CHAPTER XL.

ON THE ROAD.

WE have seen the four horses start from Bondy at a vigorous trot, drawing the coach which bore the King and his family. Let us follow their journey in all its details, as we followed the details of their escape from Paris. The events were so important, and exercised so fatal an influence over the royal destiny, that the least accident on the route seems worthy of our curiosity or interest.

Day broke at about three in the morning. They changed horses at Meaux. The King was hungry, and began to break into their provisions. These provisions consisted of cold veal, which had been placed by Charny in the carriage wine-box, along with some bread, and four bottles of champagne, — not very sparkling.

As there were neither knives nor forks, the King summoned Jean. Jean, it will be remembered, was Monsieur de Malden's travelling name. Malden drew near.

"Jean," said the King, "lend me your hunting-knife, to cut this veal with."

Jean drew the knife from its sheath, and offered it to the King. During this transaction the Queen leaned out of the window and gazed backward, doubtless to see if Charny was not on the road.

"Won't you take something, Malden?" whispered the King.

“No, Sire,” responded Malden, in tones equally low, “I need nothing.”

“Don’t let yourself or your companions discommode themselves unnecessarily,” said the King. Then he added, speaking to the Queen, who was still looking out of the window: “A penny for your thoughts, Madame?”

“Mine? Oh, I was thinking of Lafayette,” said the Queen, trying to smile. “He is probably not very comfortable, about this time.” Then she said to Valory, who in his turn drew nearer the coach: “François, it seems to me that everything goes very well, and that we should be detained before this time, if we are likely to be detained at all. Our departure could not have been noticed.”

“That is more than probable, Madame,” responded Valory, “for I have observed no suspicious movements anywhere. Courage, Madame, all will yet be well.”

“All ready!” cried the postilions. Malden and Valory remounted their seats, and the carriage drove on.

Towards eight o’clock in the morning they reached the bottom of a long hill. On both sides of the road stretched a lovely wood, where the birds were singing. The trees were illuminated by the first rays of a rare June day, piercing the foliage like golden arrows.

The postilions checked their horses. The two footmen came down from their seats.

“Jean,” said the King, “stop the carriage, and open the door. I want to walk, and I believe the children and the Queen won’t be sorry for a little diversion afoot.”

Malden made a sign, and the postilions halted. The door was opened. The King, Queen, Madame Elizabeth, and the two children stepped out. Madame de Tourzel alone remained inside, being too ill to do otherwise.

In an instant the whole royal colony dispersed itself over the highway. The Dauphin began to chase butterflies, and Madame Royale to gather flowers. Madame Elizabeth took the King's arm, while the Queen walked on alone.

Seeing this family, thus scattered along the road,—the beautiful children running and playing; the sister smiling into the face of the brother, on whose arm she leaned; that beautiful and pensive woman, now and then looking backward; the whole scene lighted by the beautiful sun of a June morning, with the forest throwing its transparent shadows half across the road!— beholding this scene, one would have said this was a happy family, returning to their château, to resume the course of a peaceable and regular life, not a queen and king, fleeing from a throne, to which they would soon be restored, but only to be led thereafter to the scaffold.

It is true that an accident was soon to bring trouble into this serene picture, trouble arising from the different passions lying in the hearts of several personages of our narrative.

Suddenly the Queen stopped, as if her feet had taken root in the earth. A horseman appeared a quarter-league or so away, enveloped in a cloud of dust, raised by his horse's feet. Marie Antoinette dared not say, "There is Charny!" but a little cry escaped from her bosom, as she exclaimed: "Ah! News from Paris!"

Everybody turned, except the Dauphin. That happy child had just caught the butterfly he had been chasing, and cared little for the news from Paris.

The King, somewhat near-sighted, drew out a small lorgnette from his pocket, and said: "Hey? I do believe it's Charny!"

"Yes, Sire, it *is* he," said the Queen.

"Let us keep on," said the King. "He'll soon overtake us, and we've no time to waste."

The Queen dared not say that undoubtedly the news brought by the Count must be worth waiting for. However, it was a delay of only a few seconds, as the horseman was coming at full speed.

As he drew nearer, he regarded the scene with great attention, and appeared unable to understand why that gigantic vehicle had spilled its passengers all over the road. At last he reached them, just as the coach attained the summit of the hill, where it halted.

It was indeed Charny, as had been conjectured by the Queen's heart and the King's glass. He wore a close, green riding-coat, with a rolling collar, a hat with a broad band and steel buckle, a white vest, tight breeches, and large military boots, which came up to his knees.

His complexion, usually a dull white, was flushed by his ride, and the jets of heat which reddened his cheeks shone even in his eyeballs. There was something of the air of a conqueror in his powerful breathing and dilated nostrils. The Queen had never seen him so handsome, and she heaved a profound sigh. He dismounted, and bowed to the King. Then he turned and saluted the Queen.

The whole group gathered about him, except the two guards, who remained discreetly aloof. "Approach, gentlemen, approach," said the King. "Monsieur de Charny's tidings concern everybody."

"To begin with, Sire, all goes well," said Charny, "and at two this morning, nobody suspected your flight."

Everybody breathed more freely. Then the questions multiplied.

Charny related how he had returned to Paris; how he

had encountered, in Rue de l'Échelle, the patrol of Patriots; how they had catechised him; how he left them convinced that the King was abed and asleep.

Once inside the Tuileries, he had found everything as calm as on ordinary days. He went up to his room, changed his dress, came down again through the King's corridor, made sure that nobody suspected the escape of the royal family, — not even Monsieur Gouvion, who, finding that his sentinels, stationed in line around the royal apartments, were of no use, broke their ranks, and sent home the battalion officers.

Then Charny again mounted his horse, which had been held in the courtyard by one of the night watchmen. Thinking he should hardly be able to procure, at that hour, a nag at the posthouse in Paris, he set out for Bondy on the same horse he had so long been riding, whose feet were already used up; but he reached Bondy, and that was the one thing needful. There the Count had obtained a fresh horse, and continued his journey. Nothing disquieting had occurred on the road.

The Queen extended her hand to Charny. Such good news merited such a favor. He kissed that hand respectfully. Why did she grow pallid? Was it for joy, because Charny had pressed her hand?

They re-entered the carriage. The carriage started. Charny galloped beside the window.

At the next station they found the horses ready; only there was no saddle-horse for Charny. Isidore had not ordered a saddle-horse, not knowing that his brother would need one.

It was now arranged that Charny should not escort the royal coach, but simply follow it; although it was understood that he should keep near enough for the Queen to see him, if she put her head out of the window, and

so that he could exchange a few words with the illustrious travellers, whenever they changed horses.

Charny obtained a fresh horse at Montmirail. He believed the coach was fifteen minutes ahead of him, when suddenly, as he turned the corner of a street, his horse ran his nose against the coach, which was standing still, and against the guards, who were trying to mend a broken trace.

The Count dismounted, put his head into the carriage, to advise the King to keep out of sight, and the Queen not to be uneasy. Then he opened a box wherein had been placed all the implements and materials which accident might render necessary. He found a pair of traces, one of which he took to replace the one broken.

The two guards profited by this opportunity to ask for their pistols; but the King seriously opposed their request. To the suggestion that there might be some attempt to detain him, the King responded that under no circumstances could he allow blood to be shed for him.

At last the trace was replaced and the box closed. The guards returned to their seats and Charny to his saddle, and the coach set forward. They had lost a half-hour, however, and that, too, when the loss of a minute was irreparable.

In two hours they were at Châlons. "If we reach Châlons without being detained, all will go well." So the King had said. Here they were at Châlons. Their progress had not been checked, and they changed horses once more.

The King showed himself for an instant. Among the groups around the carriage were two men who looked at him steadfastly. Suddenly one of the two withdrew and disappeared. The other came nearer the carriage.

“Sire,” said he, in a low voice, “don’t let yourself be seen in this way, or you will be lost.” Then he called aloud to the postilions : “Hurry up, lazy bones ! Is this the way you serve smart travellers, who pay thirty sous a head ?” and he set himself to work, helping the postilions. This man was the superintendent of the post.

At last horses were harnessed, and the postilions were in their saddles. The first postilion tried to start up the horses, but they both fell down. Under the strokes of the whip, they struggled to their feet, and the carriage started, when the second postilion’s horses also fell, with him underneath.

Charny, who was silently waiting, pulled the postilion from under the horses, though the fellow’s boots were left behind.

“Oh Monsieur,” said Charny, addressing the superintendent, of whose devoted loyalty he knew nothing, “what sort of horses are you giving us ?”

“The best in the stable,” was the reply.

However, the horses were so tangled in their traces that the more the postilions tried to relieve them, the worse things became.

Charny took hold of the traces and exclaimed : “Here, let us unharness, and then begin again. We shall get through all the sooner.”

The superintendent again set himself to work, almost weeping with chagrin.

Meanwhile, the man who had disappeared from the stables ran to the Mayor’s residence, to announce that at that very moment the King, and the whole royal family, were getting a relay of horses at the post, and to beg the Mayor to order their detention.

Fortunately the Mayor was not much of a Republican, and did not care to take upon himself such a responsi-

bility. In place of promising to do what was demanded, he asked for all sorts of explanations, to see if the story was correct; and finally, when he could not help himself, he came to the posthouse, just as the coach was disappearing around the corner.

Nevertheless, twenty minutes had been sacrificed. There was some alarm in the royal carriage. Those horses, falling down one after the other, without apparent cause, recalled to the Queen's mind the four candles which went out, one after another, — without being touched by a human hand, — the first night she spent in the Tuileries, after the dreadful Sixth of October, nearly two years before.

However, as they drove through the gates of the town, the King, the Queen, and Madame Elizabeth exclaimed all together: "We are safe!" but a hundred paces farther on a man hurried up, put his head in at the window, and said to the illustrious travellers: "Your plans are badly arranged; you will be arrested."

The Queen screamed softly. The man threw himself to one side, and disappeared in a grove. Luckily it was not more than four leagues to Sommeville Bridge, where they were to find Choiseul and his forty hussars; but it was already three o'clock in the afternoon, and they were nearly four hours late.

CHAPTER XLI.

FATALITY !

It will be remembered that the Duc de Choiseul was riding by post, with Léonard the barber, who was in despair at leaving a chamber door unlocked, at carrying off his brother's riding-coat, and at breaking his promise to dress Madame de l'Aage's hair.

What consoled poor Léonard was Choiseul's positive promise that he was only taking him two or three leagues (six or nine miles) from home, in order to give the barber a special commission from the Queen, and that he would then be set at liberty.

At Bondy, when he felt the vehicle coming to a stop, Léonard felt relieved, and made himself ready to get out; but the Duke checked him, saying: "This is n't the place."

Horses had been ordered in advance. In a very few seconds they were harnessed, and the carriage was off like a dart.

"But, Monsieur," said poor Léonard, "where then are we going?"

"Provided you start back by to-morrow morning, what matters anything else?"

"That is, if I can only be at the Tuileries by ten, to dress the Queen's hair—"

"That's all you want?"

"Undoubtedly! Only, if I could be there sooner, it would n't be a bad idea, so that I could pacify my

brother, and explain to Madame de l'Aage that it was n't my fault, breaking my word."

"If that's all, be easy, my dear Léonard; all will be for the best," responded Choiseul.

Léonard therefore had no reason for believing that the Duke meant to abduct him altogether, and became tranquil, — at least for a while; but at Claye, seeing them put fresh horses to the carriage, while nothing was said about stopping, the unlucky fellow exclaimed: "Oh Monsieur, are we going to the end of the world?"

"Listen, Léonard!" then said the Duke, with a serious expression. "I am not taking you to some mansion in the neighborhood of Paris, but to the frontier."

Léonard uttered a groan, placed his hands on his knees, and looked at the Duke in alarm. "To the — the — frontier?" he stammered.

"Yes, my dear Léonard. I expect to find there, with my regiment, a letter of the highest importance for the Queen. Not being able to deliver it myself, it was necessary for me to have some one with me who would safely do so for me. I begged her to name somebody. She chose you, as being one whose devotion made him most worthy of such a trust."

"Oh Monsieur, surely, if I'm worthy of the Queen's confidence —! But how shall I get back to Paris. I'm in pumps, with white silk stockings and silk shortclothes. I have neither a change of linen, nor money."

The good fellow absolutely forgot that he had two millions' worth of the Queen's diamonds in his pocket.

"Don't be troubled, my dear friend," said the Duke. "I have in the carriage everything you need, — boots, clothing, linen, money, — and you will lack for nothing."

"Doubtless, Monsieur, with you I shall want for

nothing; but my poor brother, whose overcoat and hat I have taken! and that poor Madame de l'Aage, whose hair is never dressed by anybody except myself. My God! my God! How will all this come out?"

"For the best, my dear Léonard. At least, I hope so."

They sped along like the wind. Choiseul had ordered his courier to prepare two beds and a supper at Montmirail, where they were to pass the night; and on reaching that point they found the beds ready and supper served.

Aside from his brother's coat and hat, aside from compulsorily breaking his word with Madame de l'Aage, Léonard was partly consoled. Now and then he let an expression of contentment escape him, from which it was easy to see that his pride was flattered by his being selected as the commissioner for so important a despatch as this apparently was to be.

After supper the two travellers went to bed, the Duke having ordered the carriage to be in readiness at four o'clock. Fifteen minutes before that hour they were to knock at his door and rouse him, in case he was asleep.

At three Choiseul had hardly closed his eyes, when from his chamber, which was immediately above the entrance gate, he heard the rumble of a carriage, accompanied by those cracks of the whip wherewith the postilions announced the advent of fresh arrivals.

To jump from his bed and run to the window, was the work of an instant with Choiseul.

A cabriolet was at the door. Two men stepped out of it, clothed in the costume of the National Guard, and imperatively demanded horses. Who were these National Guardsmen? What were they after at three in the morning? Why were they so much in a hurry about their horses?

Choiseul called his servant, and ordered him to have their own horses harnessed. Then he roused Léonard. Both travellers had lain down with their clothes on, and were therefore ready in an instant. When they came down, both carriages were ready. Choiseul told the postilion to let the guardsmen's carriage go first; only he must follow after, so as not for a moment to lose sight of it.

Then Choiseul examined the pistols, which he had placed in the carriage pockets, and renewed the priming, thereby causing Léonard grave misgivings.

They travelled thus a league or a league and a half; but between Étoges and Chaintry the cabriolet took a crossroad, going in the direction of Jalons and Épernay. The two guardsmen were only two good citizens, who had come from La Ferté, and were returning homeward. With a more contented mind Choiseul pursued his journey. At ten they drove through Châlons. At eleven they reached Sommeville Bridge.

There Choiseul inquired for his hussars, but they had not arrived. Stopping at the posthouse, he asked for a chamber, and there put on his uniform. Léonard observed all these preparations with lively anxiety, and his sighing accompaniment touched the Duke's heart. At last he said to him: "Léonard, it is time to let you know the truth."

"What? The truth?" said Léonard, going from one surprise to another. "Don't I know the truth already?"

"You know part of it, and I'll tell you the rest."

Léonard clasped his hands and the Duke proceeded: "You are devoted to your employers, are n't you, my dear Léonard?"

"For life and death!"

“ Well, in two hours they will be here.”

“ My God ! Is it possible ? ” cried the poor fellow.

“ Yes, here, with the children and Madame Elizabeth. You know what dangers they have run ? ”

Léonard bowed his assent.

“ You know what perils they still run ? ”

Léonard lifted his eyes heavenward.

“ Well, in two hours they will be safe ! ”

Léonard could not answer. He shed hot tears. Then he began to stammer : “ In two hours ? — here ? — Are you sure of that ? ”

“ Yes, in two hours. They left the Tuileries at eleven o'clock last night, or soon after. At midday they were due at Châlons. Allowing them an hour and a half to do the remaining four leagues, they will be here two hours later. Let us order dinner. I expect here a detachment of hussars, commanded by Monsieur de Goguelat. We will make the dinner last as long as possible.”

“ Oh Monsieur,” interrupted Léonard, “ I am not hungry.”

“ Never mind that ! Make a valiant effort, and you can eat.”

“ Yes, Monsieur ! ”

“ We must spin out the dinner as long as we can, so as to have a pretext for remaining here. — Eh ! Hold on ! There's the trumpet of the hussars, now ! ”

Indeed, at that instant they could not only hear the trumpet, but the hoof-beats. Another moment, and Goguelat entered the chamber, and handed Choiseul a packet from Monsieur de Bouillé. This packet contained six blank orders, bearing each the royal signature, besides a duplicate of the King's formal order to all officers in the army, whatever their grade or priority of service, to obey the Duke for the present.

Choiseul had the horses picketed, distributed bread and wine to the hussars, and then sat down to dine.

The news brought by Goguelat was not good. Everywhere on his road he had found the people in an effervescent state. It was more than a year since a rumor of the King's intended departure had circulated, not only in Paris, but in the provinces, and the detachments of different military bodies, stationed at Sainte Menehould and Varennes, were infected with the suspicion. He had even heard the alarm-bell sounding in one village along his route.

All this was quite enough to cut off Choiseul's own appetite. After an hour passed at table, he rose, as the clock sounded the half-hour after noon; and, leaving the command of the detachment to Monsieur Boudet, he walked up the street, to a height near the entrance of Sommeville Bridge, whence he could have a good view over half a league of the road. He could see no sign of either courier or coach; but this was not surprising. Allowing for trifling detentions, he did not expect the courier before an hour or so later, and the King a half-hour after the courier.

Time rolled on, and still nothing was to be seen or heard on the road, — at least, nothing like what the Duke was looking for.

Every five minutes Choiseul drew out his watch; and each time he did so, Léonard said: "Oh, they're not coming. My poor mistress! my poor mistress! Some ill-luck has overtaken them!"

By his despair the poor fellow added to Choiseul's disquiet.

At half-past two, at three, at half-past three, — still no courier, no coach! It will be remembered, though Choiseul was not aware of it, that the King did not

really leave Châlons till three o'clock ; so it was no wonder he was not at Sommeville Bridge by four.

While Choiseul was thus watching and waiting at the turn of the road, Fatality was busy at that point, preparing an event which was to have great influence in the drama we are describing. Fatality — we repeat the word — had so willed it, that a few days earlier the peasantry on the ground belonging to Madame d'Elbœuf, ground situated near Sommeville Bridge, had refused payment of certain proprietary rights. Then they were threatened with military compulsion ; but the Federation at Paris had borne its fruits, and the peasants in the neighboring towns had promised to assist the Elbœuf peasants with arms, if these threats were put into execution.

Seeing these hussars arrive at the station, the peasantry imagined they had come with hostile intent. Messengers were at once sent from Sommeville Bridge to the neighboring villages, and by three o'clock the tocsin of alarm began to sound throughout that section of country.

Hearing the alarm, Choiseul returned to the posthouse. There he found Lieutenant Bondet, very uneasy. Deep threats had been uttered against the hussars, who belonged to one of the most detested corps in the army. The peasants defied them, and sang, under their very noses, this improvised ditty :

Les hussards sont des gueux ;
Mais nous nous moquons d'eux !

a couplet which may be thus translated :

The hussars are beggars tall ;
But we mock them, one and all !

Other people, better-informed or farther-sighted, began to whisper it about that the hussars were not there to

meddle with the Elbœuf farmers, but to meet the King and Queen.

Such was the outlook when four o'clock rung out, without bringing either courier or news.

Choiseul decided to wait for a while longer. However, he had the horses harnessed to his carriage, and took charge of Léonard's precious diamonds; but started Léonard himself towards Varennes, bidding him see Monsieur Dandoins at Sainte Menehould, Monsieur Damas at Clermont, and Jules de Bouillé (not Louis, his brother) at Varennes, and explain to them the whole situation.

In order to calm the furor which was increasing about him, Choiseul declared that the hussars were not there, as was supposed by many, to proceed against Madame Elbœuf's peasants, but to act as escort for a treasure, which the War Minister was sending to the army.

This word *treasure*, being susceptible of two meanings, while it calmed the irritability on one side, confirmed the suspicions on the other. The King and Queen were a treasure, and this was certainly the treasure expected by Choiseul and the hussars.

In the course of fifteen minutes, Choiseul and his soldiers were so crowded and pushed, that he knew he could not long hold the position without disturbance; and that if the royal travellers should unhappily come while things were at such a pass, he would be almost powerless to protect them, with only his forty hussars.

His orders were, to see that the King's coach was allowed to continue its journey without obstruction. Instead of such a protection, his presence would now become an obstacle. The best thing to be done, even in case of the King's arrival, was to take the soldiers away. In fact, their departure would leave the road clear. Only he must find a pretext for this departure.

The post-superintendent was in the midst of five or six hundred inquisitive people, who needed only an imprudent word to become the Duke's enemies. The superintendent was looking on, like the others, with his arms crossed ; only he stood very near the Duke, who said to him : " Monsieur, are you aware that about this time a large sum of money is on its way to Metz ? "

" This very morning," responded the superintendent, " the stage carried a hundred thousand crowns, escorted by two policemen."

" Indeed ? " said Choiseul, almost stunned by the partiality with which fate was serving him.

" Parbleu ! " said a gendarme, " that 's true, for I and Robin acted as guards."

Choiseul turned quietly to Goguelat and said : " Well, if the Minister of War prefers that method of convoy, there 's no reason for *our* staying here, and I think we had better retire. Hussars, bridle your horses ! "

The hussars, who were also anxious, asked nothing better than such an order. In an instant the horses were bridled, and the hussars in the saddle. They ranged themselves in line. Choiseul passed along the line, threw a glance towards the Châlons road, and said, with a sigh : " Forward, hussars. Break into fours, and move on ! "

They rode over the Sommeville Bridge, with their trumpets blowing, as the clock sounded half-past five.

Two hundred paces from the village, Choiseul took a crossroad, in order to avoid Sainte Menehould, where it was said there was much agitation.

At this moment Isidore de Charny, lashing and spurring a horse, which had already required two hours to ride four leagues, arrived at the posthouse. While changing horses he inquired if a detachment of hussars had been there, and learned that the detachment had ridden

away only a quarter-hour before, by the Sainte Menehould road. He ordered horses to be in readiness for the royal coach, and hoping to overtake Choiseul, and stop his retreat, galloped away on a fresh horse.

As we have seen, Choiseul left the direct road to Sainte Menehould, and took the crossroad, at the very instant when the Viscount rode up to the posthouse at Sommeville Bridge; and as the Viscount rode directly towards Sainte Menehould, he did not succeed in overtaking the Duke.

CHAPTER XLII.

FATALITY !!

TEN minutes after Isidore de Charny's departure, the royal coach arrived. As Choiseul had foreseen, the lookers-on had dispersed.

The Comte de Charny, knowing that the first detachment of troops was to be here, at Sommeville Bridge, had not supposed it might become necessary for him to remain behind. He galloped up to the carriage door, and urged on the postilions, who seemed to have received particular orders to drive at a slow trot.

When they reached Sommeville Bridge, seeing neither the expected hussars nor the Duke, the Kiug became anxious, and thrust his head out of the window.

"By your leave, Sire," said Charny, "don't let yourself be seen, and I'll go and get what information I can."

Then the Count went into the posthouse. Five minutes later he reappeared, having learned all, and repeated the whole story to the King, who at once surmised that it was for the express purpose of allaying public irritation, and leaving the road clear, that Choiseul had gone away, and taken the hussars with him.

The important thing now was to get once more under way, and push on to Sainte Menehould. Unquestionably Choiseul was bound for Sainte Menehould, and in that town they would find him, with his hussars re-enforced by the dragoons.

At the moment of departure Charny came to the window, and asked : "What are the Queen's orders? Shall I push on ahead, or shall I follow behind?"

"Don't forsake me," said the Queen.

Charny bowed in his saddle, and cantered near her window.

Meanwhile Isidore was riding in advance ; but he could not understand the solitude of the road, which was laid out in a line so straight, that from certain points he could see a league or a league and a half before him. He spurred his horse uneasily forward, thus getting farther and farther away from the coach ; for he feared lest the citizens at Sainte Menehould might take umbrage at the prolonged stay there of Dandoins's dragoons, as the Sommeville populace had at the detention of Choiseul's hussars.

Isidore was not mistaken. The first thing noticeable at Sainte Menehould was the great number of National Guardsmen walking about the streets, — the first he had encountered since leaving Paris. The whole town seemed to be in motion, and he could hear a drum beating on the farther side of the village.

The Viscount trotted coolly along the streets, without appearing disturbed, the least in the world, by the commotion about him. Crossing the Grand Square he drew rein at the posthouse. As he crossed the square, however, he noted a dozen dragoons seated on a bench, and wearing fatigue-caps. A few steps from them, at a window on the lower floor, he saw the Marquis Dandoins, also wearing a fatigue-cap, and holding his riding-whip in his hand.

Isidore passed by without a pause, as if he did not see Dandoins. He presumed that Dandoins, knowing that Isidore was to wear the costume of one of the royal

couriers, would recognize him, and that consequently no farther sign would be needful.

At the door of the posthouse was a young man about twenty-eight years old, clad in a dressing-gown, and wearing his hair cut after the fashion shown in the portrait of Titus, the Roman emperor, — as was the custom with the Revolutionist Patriots of that epoch, — and with whiskers encompassing his face and reaching his neck.

Isidore looked for somebody to whom he might speak. “What do you wish, Monsieur?” said the black-whiskered young man.

“To speak to the post-superintendent,” said Isidore.

“He is absent just now, Monsieur; but I am his son, Jean Baptiste Drouet. If I can fill his place, say what you wish.”

These three words, Jean Baptiste Drouet, the young man emphasized, as if he foresaw that these words, or rather these names, were destined to hold a fatally celebrated place in history.

“I wish for six posthorses, for two carriages which are coming after me.”

Drouet nodded, as much as to say the courier could have what he wished, and walked out of the house into the courtyard, calling out: “Halloo, postillions, — six horses for two carriages, and a nag for the courier!”

At that moment the Marquis Dandoins entered hurriedly. “Monsieur,” he said to Isidore, “you precede the royal coach, do you not?”

“Yes, Monsieur, and I'm greatly astonished at seeing you — you and your men — still wearing fatigue-caps.”

“We have not been forbidden to do so, Monsieur, nor forewarned of any approaching duty. Besides, there are threatening demonstrations all around us. They are trying to demoralize my men. What ought to be done?”

“As the King comes this way, watch the carriage, and take counsel of circumstances. Ride on a half-hour after the royal family has passed, and serve as rear guard.”

Interrupting himself suddenly, Isidore exclaimed: “Silence! Somebody is playing the spy! Perhaps we have been overheard. Go to your squadron, and use every effort to keep your men up to their duty.”

Drouet was indeed at the door of the kitchen, in which this conversation had taken place.

Dandoins withdrew. At the same moment the cracking of whips was heard. The royal coach crossed the square, and stopped in front of the posthouse. At this unusual noise the bystanders formed themselves into groups around the coach.

Dandoins, who had it in his heart to explain to the King why it was that he and his men were found at rest, instead of under arms, rushed up to the window, fatigue-cap in hand, and, with every possible mark of respect, offered his apologies to the royal family. In answering him, the King several times showed his head at the window.

Foot in stirrup, Isidore was standing near Drouet, who observed the carriage with deep attention. The summer before he had attended the great Federation at Paris. He had therefore seen the King, and now believed that he recognized him.

That morning Drouet had received a large sum in *assignats*, the paper money then issued by the Government. He had examined these bills, stamped with the King's likeness, one after the other, to see if any of them were counterfeit. The King's face therefore remained very distinct in Drouet's memory, and seemed to cry out: “This man before thee is the King!”

He drew an assignat from his pocket, and murmured: “Decidedly, it's his very self!”

Isidore rode around to the other side of the coach, where his brother was standing in front of the window, partly for the purpose of screening from observation the Queen, who was leaning against it. Isidore hastily whispered to his brother: "The King has been recognized. Hasten the departure of the coach, and take heed of that great brown fellow over there. He's the son of the post-superintendent. He it is who has recognized the King. His name is Jean Baptiste Drouet."

"All right," said Olivier de Charny, "I'll watch. Now, be off, my brother."

Isidore was off like a shot, to order the relay of horses at Clermont.

Hardly was he at the end of the village street, before the postilions — stimulated by the persistence of Malden and Valory, and the promise of an extra crown — had all in readiness, and departed at a round trot.

The Count did not lose sight of Drouet. Drouet had not budged; only, he had been speaking in a low tone to one of the hostlers.

Charny rode up to him and said: "Monsieur, was no horse ordered for me?"

"Oh yes," answered Drouet, "but there are no more horses."

"How? No more horses? What then about that horse they are saddling yonder in the courtyard?"

"That's mine!"

"Can't you let me have him? I'll pay whatever you say."

"Impossible, Monsieur. It's getting late, and there's a trip which must be made."

To insist would be to increase Drouet's suspicions. To attempt taking the horse by force, would be to compromise everything.

Moreover, Charny thought of a way out of the difficulty. He went to Monsieur Dandoins, who had been looking after the coach till it turned the street corner. Feeling a hand on his shoulder, Dandoins faced about.

“Hush!” said Olivier. “It’s I, Count de Charny. There is n’t a horse left for me at the posthouse. Dismount one of your dragoons, and let me have his horse. I must follow the King and the Queen. I alone know where to find Choiseul’s relays, and if I’m not on hand, the King will be bothered at Varennes.”

“Count,” responded Dandoins, “it is n’t one of my men’s horses that I’ll give you, but my own.”

“I accept the offer. The safety of the King, and the whole royal family, hangs upon the least accident. The better the horse, the better their chances.”

Both men walked through the streets, towards the Marquis’s lodgings; but before doing so, Charny charged a sergeant to watch Drouet.

Unfortunately the Marquis’s abiding-place was five hundred paces from the square. By the time the horses were saddled, fifteen minutes at least had been lost. We say the *horses*, because Dandoins meant to put himself also on horseback, in order to obey the royal wishes, by following after his Majesty, and constituting his men a rear guard.

Suddenly it seemed to Charny that he heard these words, mingled with other distant cries: “The King! The Queen!”

He hurried out of the house, requesting Dandoins to bring his horse to the square.

The whole village was in tumult. Hardly had Charny and Dandoins quitted the square, a few minutes earlier, when Drouet exclaimed, as if he had waited for that moment, in order to spread the news: “That coach,

which just went along, — that 's the King's. The King, the Queen, and the royal children of France are in that carriage."

Then Drouet threw himself on his horse. Several friends tried to stop him. "Where 's he going? What 's to be done? What 's his plan?"

To these questions he whisperingly replied: "The colonel of these dragoons is over there. There was no way of stopping the King here, without a collision which might turn out badly for us. What I can't do here, I can do at Clermont. Keep back the dragoons; that 's all I ask."

So saying, he galloped on after the King. Thus it was noised about that the King and Queen were in the coach which had just driven through the village; and the tumult spread so rapidly that it reached Charny's keen ears.

At these cries the Mayor and other municipal officers ran to the spot, and the Mayor ordered the dragoons to retire to their barracks till eight o'clock.

Charny learned all there was to know, — that the King had been recognized, and Drouet had ridden away. He stamped impatiently.

At that moment Dandoins rejoined him. As soon as he perceived him, Charny called out, from afar: "The horses, the horses!"

"They 're bringing them here now," said Dandoins.

"Have they put the pistols in my holsters?"

"Yes."

"Are they ready for use?"

"I attended to that myself."

"Good! Now all depends on the speed of your beast. I must overtake a man who is fifteen minutes ahead of me, and kill him!"

“What? You mean to kill him?”

“Yes! If I don’t kill him, all is lost!”

“Mordieu! Let us go ahead with the horses, then.”

“Don’t concern yourself about me. Attend to your dragoons, who are being demoralized to the point of revolt. See there! The Mayor is haranguing them! You also have no time to lose. Go! Go!”

At that instant the orderly came up with the two horses. Without stopping to notice which was which, Charny sprang upon the back of the horse nearest him, snatched the bridle from the orderly, gathered the reins into his hand, used his spurs on both sides, and was off at full gallop, in Drouet’s tracks, but without catching the last words which Dandoins hurled after him; albeit those last words, which the wind carried away, were of vast importance: “You have taken the horse I was to ride, instead of the one intended for you, and the pistols in the holsters are not loaded!”

CHAPTER XLIII.

FATALITY !!!

MEANWHILE the royal coach, preceded by Isidore, was flying along the road from Sainte Menehould to Clermont. Daylight was fading, as we have said. Eight o'clock had sounded, and the coach entered Argonne Forest, through which ran the highway.

The elder Charny had been unable to warn the Queen of the awkward circumstances which had held him back, inasmuch as the royal carriage drove away from Sainte Menehould before Drouet told Charny that he could not have a horse.

As they left the village the Queen noticed that her cavalier was no longer at the carriage window, but she had no excuse, either for retarding the journey or questioning the postilions. Once she thought she could see a horseman galloping a long way off; but this horseman was soon lost in the growing shadows of night.

During this time, — for, in order to make clear the events of this awful journey, we are obliged to go quickly from one actor therein to another, — during this time, while Isidore was riding a quarter-league ahead of the royal coach, while that coach was on the way from Sainte Menehould to Clermont, and entering the woods of Argonne, while Drouet was riding in hot haste after the coach, and while the elder Charny was rushing after Drouet, — while all these events were simultaneously moving on, the Marquis Dandoins rejoined his soldiers, after Charny's

departure, and sounded the call to saddle ; but when the soldiers tried to set out, all the people were crowding the streets, and the horses could not go a step forward.

Amidst that crowd were three hundred National Guardsmen, in their uniforms, with their muskets in hand. To risk a combat, — sure to be severe, — would be to ruin the King. Better to remain where they were, and, by so doing, keep all these people where they were.

Dandoins held a parley, and asked the ringleaders what they wanted, what they expected. He demanded the reason of these hostile menaces.

During this time the King reached Clermont, and there found Monsieur Damas, with his one hundred and forty dragoons.

If Dandoins had commanded a hundred and forty dragoons, like Damas, the Marquis might have been able to effect something ; but he had only thirty. What could thirty dragoons do, against three or four thousand men ? Talk, debate ! and this is precisely what Dandoins did.

At half-past nine the royal coach — which Isidore preceded only by a few hundred paces, so fast did the postilions ride — neared Clermont. It had only taken seventy-five minutes to traverse the four leagues which separate one village from the other.

Up to a certain point, this explained Charny's absence to the Queen. He would surely overtake them while they changed horses.

Before they entered the village, Damas lay in waiting for the royal coach, having been forewarned by Léonard. He recognized the courier's livery, and stopped Isidore.

“ Pardon, Monsieur, but are you not the forerunner of the King ? ”

“And you, Monsieur,” said Isidore, “are perhaps Charles de Damas?”

“Yes, Monsieur.”

“Very well, Monsieur, I am indeed the King’s fore-runner. Assemble your dragoons, and escort his Majesty’s coach.”

“Monsieur,” was the Count’s reply, “there is the breath of insurrection in the air, and I’m forced to owe that I can’t answer for my dragoons, if they recognize the King. All I can promise is, to close up the road behind him, after the royal coach goes by.”

“Do your best, Monsieur,” said Isidore. “Here *is* the King!” and he pointed to the oncoming coach amidst the darkness, its course being discernible by the sparks of fire which flew beneath the horses’ feet.

As for Isidore, it was his duty to hurry forward and order the relays. In five minutes he stopped at the posthouse. Damas arrived at almost the same moment, with five or six dragoons.

Next came the royal coach, which followed hard upon Isidore’s heels, before he had time to remount. This coach, without being a magnificent affair, was nevertheless remarkable, and many people began to assemble in front of the post-superintendent’s house. Damas stood before the carriage door, as if unacquainted with the illustrious travellers; but as neither King nor Queen could resist the desire to learn the latest intelligence, the King beckoned to Damas on one side; while on the other, the Queen beckoned to Isidore.

“It is you, Monsieur de Damas?” asked the King.

“Yes, Sire.”

“Why are not your dragoons here, under arms?”

“Sire, your Majesty is five hours behind time. My squadron was in saddle by four this afternoon. I held

the men in place as long as possible; but the whole village began to get into a turmoil. Even my dragoons began to be upset by conflicting conjectures. If a fermentation should occur before your Majesty's transit, the alarm-bell would be sounded, and your road barred. So I kept only a dozen men on horseback, and sent the others to their lodgings; but I kept the trumpeters with me, so as to be able to call the men to horse, at the first alarm. Your Majesty can see that my plan has worked well, for the way is comparatively clear."

"Very well, Monsieur," replied the King, "you have behaved like a prudent man. As soon as I am gone, let your men mount, and follow a quarter-league or so after the carriage."

"Sire," said the Queen, "hear what Monsieur Isidore has to say."

"What is it?" asked the King, with a certain display of impatience.

"He says that you were recognized by the post-superintendent's son, at Sainte Menehould; that he is sure of it; that he saw the young man with an assignat in hand, studying your engraved picture thereon, and comparing it with yourself; that his brother the Count, being informed of this by Isidore himself, remained behind; and that undoubtedly something serious is taking place at this very moment, as we have seen nothing of Count Oliver since then."

"If we have been recognized, the greater reason for haste, Madame. — Monsieur Isidore, hurry up the postilions, and then ride on ahead."

Isidore's horse being ready, he sprang into the saddle, and cried to the postilions: "The road to Varennes!"

The two bodyguards, Malden and Valory, repeated the order, as they climbed to their places: "To Varennes!"

Damas stepped backward, bowing respectfully to the King, and the postilions whipped up their horses. The coach was ready, and in the twinkling of an eye it was off, with the rapidity of lightning. As they left the village they met a sergeant of hussars, who was just entering it.

For an instant Damas thought of following the royal coach, with the few men who were then at his disposal ; but the King had given contrary orders, and he believed it his duty to obey those orders, — the more so, as the commotion began to spread through the town. The citizens were running from house to house. The windows were open, and one could see heads and lights moving about in the houses. Damas sought to prevent but one thing, the sounding of the alarm-bell ; so he ran to the church, to guard the door.

Besides, at any moment Dandoins might arrive, and re-enforce Damas with thirty men.

Presently things began to grow calmer ; so at the end of fifteen minutes Damas returned to the public square, where he found his chief of squadron, Monsieur de Noirville, to whom he gave instructions about the ride, commanding him to put the men under arms.

At that moment somebody came to notify Damas that a dragoon subaltern, sent by Dandoins, was waiting for Damas at his lodging.

This officer came to say that it would be better not to wait for either Dandoins or his dragoons, Dandoins being detained in their municipality by the inhabitants of Sainte Menehould ; and that besides this, — as Damas already knew, — Drouet had started, at full speed, to follow the royal coach, though he had not probably overtaken it, as he had not been seen at Clermont.

This was the condition of things, and Damas had

barely heard the report given by this subaltern, belonging to the Royal Regiment, when an orderly was announced from the other direction, — from the hussars belonging to the Lanzun Regiment.

This orderly had been sent by officers commanding the troops at Varennes, our friends Monsieur Jules de Bonillé and Monsieur de Raigecourt. Anxiously seeing the hours drag by, without the arrival of any one connected with the royal flight, these brave young gentlemen had at last determined to send this messenger to Damas, to ascertain if anything had been heard from the King.

Damas was glad to be able to ask the orderly this question: "In what condition did you leave affairs at Varennes?"

"Perfectly tranquil," said the orderly.

"Where are the hussars?"

"At their barracks, with their horses all saddled."

"Have you met no vehicles on your trip hither?"

"Oh yes, — one carriage with four horses, and one with two."

It will be remembered that the female attendants of the Queen rode in the second carriage; and though we have not always referred to their cabriolet, it was never far behind the royal coach.

Damas replied, therefore: "Those are the very carriages about which you have come to inquire. All then goes well."

Thereupon Damas returned to his station, and ordered the trumpets to sound the saddle-call. He meant to follow the King to Varennes, and give him armed assistance, if there was any need of it. In five minutes the trumpets sounded. All was going on very well, apart from the detention, at Sainte Menehould, of the thirty soldiers under the command of Dandoins; but having

already his one hundred and forty dragoons, Damas could manage very well without this increase of numbers.

Let us return to the King's coach, which, in driving from Clermont, took the road to the left, and was rolling away towards Varennes, instead of following the right-hand road, leading to Verdun.

We have already explained the topography of the town of Varennes, which is divided into the Upper and Lower Villages. We have stated that it had been decided to change horses at the farther end of the town, on the side towards Dun; and that in order to reach that point, it was necessary to leave the main road leading to the bridge, and reach this bridge by another route, cross the river under the old tower arch, and so join Choiseul's relays on the farther side, where they were to be in waiting under the direction of Jules de Bouillé and De Raigecourt. As to Rohrig, a young officer only twenty years old, entire confidence had not been placed in him, and he still believed the military had been sent thither to guard the army funds.

After their arrival at this difficult point, it will be recalled, Charny was to guide the royal coach through the labyrinth of byways. Charny had spent a fortnight in Varennes, carefully studying and mapping out the entire route. There was not a milestone he did not know, not a lane wherewith he was not familiar.

Unhappily Charny was not on hand. The Queen's anxiety was doubled. Under such circumstances, Charny's failure to rejoin the royal party must be due to some serious accident.

As they drew nearer to Varennes, the King also grew uneasy. Depending upon Charny, he had not brought with him his map of the town.

Then the night was absolutely dark, lighted by the

stars alone, — one of those nights when it is easy to go astray, even in well-known localities, — to say nothing of the blind roads in a strange village.

Isidore's orders, received directly from his brother, required him to stop at the entrance of the village. There the elder Charny would change horses, and resume the direction of the journey.

Like the Queen, — more so, perhaps, — Isidore was worried about his brother's absence. The one remaining hope was that either Jules de Bouillé or Raigecourt would grow impatient, come to meet the King, and wait for him on this side of the village. In the two or three days they had spent there, these young men must have become acquainted with the town, and could easily serve as guides.

On arriving at the bottom of the hill, and seeing two or three scattered lights which showed the village to be near, Isidore halted irresolutely, and looked about him, trying to see into the obscurity. He could discern nothing definite.

Then he called softly, and afterwards more loudly, the names of Bouillé and Raigecourt, in case they should be thereabouts. Nobody responded. He could hear the rumble of the coach, a quarter-league away, which sounded like distant thunder, coming nearer and nearer.

An idea came to Isidore. Perhaps those two gentlemen were lying concealed in the edge of the woods, which stretched along the left side of the highway; so he entered the forest, and looked about. Nobody was to be seen.

There was now nothing to do but wait, and he waited. In five minutes the royal coach reached the place where Isidore was watching. Both the King and Queen thrust their heads out at opposite sides of the carriage, and both

said, at the same time: "You have n't seen your brother, the Count?"

"Sire," answered Isidore, "I have n't seen him; and as he is not here, it must be that he has met with some serious accident, in his pursuit of that rascally Drouet."

The Queen groaned.

"What is to be done?" asked the King. Then he said to the two bodyguards, Malden and Valory, who had sprung to the ground: "Are you acquainted with the place, gentlemen?"

As nobody was acquainted with the place, the answer was in the negative.

"Sire," said Isidore, "all is silent, and consequently all is probably safe. If your Majesty will be pleased to wait here ten minutes, I will enter the city, and try to get some information about Bouillé and De Raigecourt, or at least about Monsieur de Choiseul's relays. Your Majesty cannot recall the name of the tavern where the horses were to be stationed?"

"Alas, no! I have known it, but I have forgotten it. Never mind! Go just the same. Meantime, we also will try to find out something or other."

Isidore galloped off towards the Lower Village, and soon disappeared behind the first houses.

CHAPTER XLIV.

JEAN BAPTISTE DROUET.

THE King's remark, about getting advice where they were, was explained by the presence of two or three houses, the advanced sentinels of the Upper Village, which were situated on the right side of the road.

In one of these houses, the nearest, somebody was on the alert, as could be seen by the light which fell athwart the half-open doorway.

The Queen left the carriage, took Malden's arm, and went towards this house. At their approach the door was shut, but not quick enough to prevent Malden, who perceived the intentions of the master of the house to be inhospitable, from springing forward and checking the door before the bolt had slipped into its socket. Under Malden's pressure the door reopened, although there was an attempt to close it tight.

Behind the door, trying hard to shut it, was a man fifty years old, with slippered feet and bare knees, and wearing a nightshirt. It was not without a natural surprise, as one may well understand, that the man in the nightshirt felt himself driven back into his own house, and saw his door pushed open by an unknown man, behind whom stood a woman.

The man in the nightshirt trembled, as he threw a rapid glance at the Queen, whose face was illuminated by the candle he held in his hand. "What do you wish, Monsieur?" he asked Malden.

“Monsieur,” responded the bodyguard, “we are unacquainted with Varennes, and beg you to point out the road to Stenay.”

“If I knew the way,” replied the unknown man, “and if I gave you the information, what if I were ruined for giving you the information?”

“Ah Monsieur,” said Malden, “even if you ran some risk in rendering us this service, you are too courteous not to oblige a woman, who finds herself in a perilous position.”

“Monsieur,” responded the man in the night-shirt, “the person behind you is no woman.” Then he whispered in Malden’s ear: “It’s the Queen.”

“Monsieur?”

“I recognize her.”

The Queen, who heard or guessed what was spoken, drew Monsieur de Malden backward, as she said: “Before going a step farther, notify the King that I am discovered.”

In another second Malden had obeyed this command. “Indeed?” said the King. “Then beg the man to come and speak to me.”

Malden returned to the house, and said, thinking dissimulation useless: “The King desires to confer with you, Monsieur.”

The man sighed, kicked off his slippers, and walked towards the carriage with naked feet, so as to make less noise.

“Your name, Monsieur?” asked the King, first of all.

“Préfontaine, Sire,” responded the man, hesitating.

“Who are you?”

“A Major in the cavalry, and a Knight of the Royal and Military Order of Saint Louis.”

“In your double quality of Major, and Knight of Saint

Louis, Monsieur, you have twice taken an oath of fidelity to me. It is therefore your bounden duty to aid me in my present embarrassment."

"Certainly," responded the Major; "but I beg your Majesty to make haste, lest I should be seen."

"Monsieur, if somebody sees you, so much the better!" said Malden. "You will never have a finer occasion to show your loyalty."

The Major, who was not apparently of the same mind, almost groaned. The Queen shrugged her shoulders contemptuously, and tapped her foot impatiently.

The King made her a sign, as he said to the Major: "Have you by any chance heard of some horses waiting for a carriage, and have you seen some hussars, who were to be stationed in your village yesterday?"

"Yes, Sire. Both horses and hussars are on the other side of the town, — the horses at the tavern called the Grand Monarch, the hussars at the barracks."

"Thanks, Monsieur. Now return to your house. Nobody has seen you, and nothing will happen to you."

"Sire — !"

Without listening longer, the King took the Queen's hand, to help her into the coach, and said to the bodyguards, who were waiting for orders: "Gentlemen, to your places, and drive to the Grand Monarch."

The two officers remounted their seats, and called out to the postilions: "To the Grand Monarch."

At that instant a spectral horse shot from the woods, and cut diagonally across the road, as his fantastical rider shouted: "Postilions, not another step!"

"Why not?" asked the astonished postilions.

"Because you are carrying the King, who is running away; but in the name of the Nation, I order you not to budge."

The postilions, who had already made a movement to drive on, at once paused, and murmured : “ The *King!* ”

Louis the Sixteenth saw that the crucial moment had come, and cried out : “ Who are you, Monsieur, to give such orders here ? ”

“ A simple citizen ! Only I represent the law, and I speak in the name of the Nation. — Postilions, for the second time I order you not to move ! You know me well enough ! I ’m Jean Baptiste Drouet, son of the post-superintendent at Sainte Menehould. ”

“ Oh, the wretch ! ” cried the two guards, springing from their seats, and drawing their hunting-knives. “ It ’s *he!* ” but before they had touched the ground, Drouet was riding rapidly along the streets towards the Lower Village.

“ Ah Charny, Charny, what has happened to you ? ” murmured the Queen ; and she fell back in the carriage, almost indifferent to what was taking place.

What had happened to Charny, and why had he allowed Drouet to escape him ? Fatality, — always Fatality !

Daudoins’s horse was a good roadster, but Drouet had an advantage of almost twenty minutes over the Count. This twenty minutes it was necessary to regain. Charny struck his spurs into his horse’s flanks, and away bounded the animal at full speed, with smoking nostrils.

On the other side, Drouet, without even knowing that he was pursued, was speeding away with all his might ; but he had only a posthorse, whereas Charny’s horse was a thoroughbred. The result was that Charny had gained a third of the distance, by the time he had ridden a league. Then Drouet noticed that he was pursued, and redoubled his efforts to escape from the rider who threatened to overtake him.

At the end of a second league Charny continued to

gain at the same rate, and Drouet often looked behind, with increasing anxiety.

Drouet had started so unexpectedly, that he was weaponless. The young Patriot feared not death, as he afterwards proved; but if he were checked in his course, he feared the King would get away; and he also feared lest this splendid occasion for immortalizing his own name should forever escape him.

There were still two leagues to cover before he could reach Clermont; but it was evident that he would be overtaken at the end of the next league,—the third since his departure from Sainte Menehould. Just then, to stimulate his ardor, Drouet scented the royal coach in front of him. We say *scented*, for it was already half-past nine, and though these were the longest days of the year, night had fallen; so Drouet redoubled the cuts of his whip and the digs of his spurs. They were only three-quarters of a league from Clermont, but Charny was not two hundred yards behind. Undoubtedly,—for Drouet knew there were no posthorses,—undoubtedly the King was to keep on to Verdun. Drouet began to despair. Before overtaking the King, he would be himself overtaken.

A half-league from Clermont he heard the gallop of Charny's horse, hard upon his own, and the neighs of Charny's horse responded to those of his own nag. It was necessary to give up the pursuit, or decide to face his adversary; but, as we have said, Drouet had no arms wherewith to encounter his pursuer.

Suddenly, when Charny was only fifty paces behind, Drouet met the postilions, returning to Sainte Menehould with the detached horses, which Drouet recognized as those which had taken the King's carriages to Clermont.

“Ah, it’s you, is it?” he said. “The road to Verdun, is n’t it?”

“What is it about the road to Verdun?” asked the postilions.

“I mean to say that the carriages which you drove are now on the road to Verdun;” and he rode by them, urging his horse to a last effort.

“No!” cried the postilions, “the road to Varennes!”

Drouet uttered a joyful cry. He was saved, and the King was lost! If the King had followed the straight road to Verdun, Drouet would have been obliged to follow straight on by the same line, the regular highway from Sainte Menehould to Verdun; but the King had chosen to go from Clermont to Varennes, and the road to Varennes made an acute angle to the left. Drouet therefore at once made for Argonne Forest, wherein he knew every twist and turn; for by cutting thus across the woods, he could gain fifteen minutes on the King, besides having the obscurity of the forest for his protection.

Charny, who knew the general topography of the country almost as well as Drouet, saw that Drouet was escaping him, and uttered a cry of anger. Almost simultaneously with Drouet he urged his horse into the narrow margin which separated the highway from the woods, shouting, “Stop, stop!”

Drouet did not care to respond. He leaned over his horse’s head, stimulating him with spurs, whip, and voice. If he could reach the wood, that was all he wanted. He would be safe! He reached the wood; but he was within ten steps of Charny, who drew a pistol, aimed at Drouet, and shouted: “Halt, or you’re a dead man!”

Drouet bent himself lower on his horse’s neck, and urged him on. Charny pulled the trigger, but the

sparks of fire, as the flint struck the steel, only served to momentarily brighten the darkness.

Furious at this failure, Charny hurled the recreant pistol at Drouet, and drew a second, throwing himself into the woods, in the fugitive's train. Again he fired, through an interval between the trees; but this pistol failed, like the first.

Then he remembered that when he hurried away from Sainte Menehould, at full gallop, Monsieur Dandoins had called out something which he could not understand.

"Ah!" thought Charny, "I see how it is! I took the wrong horse, and probably he called out to me that the pistols in *these* holsters were not loaded. Never mind! I'll overhaul that rascal, and strangle him with my own hands, if necessary!" and he resumed his pursuit of the flying shadow, which could barely be discerned in the obscurity.

Hardly had he gone a hundred yards in the forest, with which he was not much acquainted, when his horse stumbled in a ravine. Charny rolled head over heels, extricated himself, jumped into the saddle again; but Drouet had disappeared.

This is how Drouet eluded Charny. This is how Drouet was able to cross the highway at Varennes, like a threatening phantom, bidding the postilions conduct the King no farther.

The postilions halted, because Drouet adjured them in the name of the Nation, which had begun to be more powerful than the name of the King.

Hardly had Drouet ridden on towards the Lower Village, when, instead of the gallop of a retreating horse, the royal party could hear the gallop of one coming nearer and nearer; and presently Isidoré reappeared, by the same street through which Drouet had gone away.

His information was the same as that furnished by Monsieur de Préfontaine. Choiseul's horses, under the charge of Jules de Bouillé and young De Raigecourt, were at the other end of the town, at the Grand Monarch. The third officer, Rohrig, was at the barracks, with his hussars. A waiter at an eating-house, who was just shutting up his establishment for the night, had given Isidore these details.

Instead of bringing joy to the illustrious travellers, as he had hoped, Isidore found them in a deep stupor. Préfontaine was in lamentations, and the two bodyguards seemed to be threatening something or somebody invisible and unknown. Isidore therefore paused in the midst of his recital, and asked: "What has happened, gentlemen?"

"Did n't you see a man in the street, — a man who passed you at a gallop?"

"Yes, Sire," said Isidore.

"Well, that man was Drouet!" said the King.

"Drouet?" cried Isidore, with a deep throb in his heart. "Then my brother is dead!"

The Queen uttered a cry, and buried her face in her hands.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE TOLLGATE TOWER AT VARENNES BRIDGE.

THERE was an instant of inexpressible depression among the unfortunate travellers, thus detained on the highway, and menaced with perils unknown, but terrible.

Isidore was the first to rally. "Sire," said he, "dead or living, let us not think of my brother; let us think of your Majesty. There is not an instant to lose. The postilions know the way to the Grand Monarch. — Hurry up! To the Grand Monarch!"

The postilions did not stir.

"Can't you hear?" asked Isidore.

"To be sure we can!"

"Well, why don't you start?"

"Because Monsieur Drouet forbade."

"How? Drouet forbade? So! When the King commands and Drouet forbids, you obey Drouet?"

"We obey the Nation."

"Come, gentlemen!" said Isidore to his two companions. "There are moments when a man's life counts for nothing. Let each of you select his man. I'll take care of this one. Then we'll drive ourselves."

So speaking, he grasped the postilion nearest to him by the collar, and pricked the fellow's breast with the point of his hunting-knife.

The Queen saw the three blades glitter, and screamed out: "Mercy, gentlemen, mercy!" Then she added, to the postilions: "My friends, fifty louis on the spot, to

be divided among you three, and a yearly pension of five hundred francs apiece, if you save the King."

Either because they were frightened by the demonstrations of the three young men, or because they were attracted by the royal offer, the postilions started up their horses, and resumed the journey.

Monsieur de Préfontaine retreated to his house and barred the door.

Isidore galloped in front of the coach. He wished to go through the Upper Village, and cross the bridge. After passing through the town and crossing the bridge, five minutes would bring them to the Grand Monarch.

The coach was driven at full speed down the slope, towards the Lower Village; but when they reached the archway, which opened upon the bridge and ran beneath the tower, they could see that one half of the tollgate was shut. They opened this flap of the gate, and found that two or three wagons obstructed the way.

"Help me, gentlemen!" said Isidore, dismounting, and taking hold of these wagons.

At that moment were heard the first drumtaps and the first strokes of the tocsin. Drouet had done his work!

"Wretch!" cried Isidore, grinding his teeth, "if I ever find thee —"

By a tremendous effort he pushed one wagon aside, while Malden and Valory did as much for another. The third still rested crosswise on the bridge.

"Now for the last!" said Isidore, as the coach came part way through the arch.

Suddenly, between the stakes of the third wagon, were thrust the guns of four or five muskets.

"Not one step, or you're dead, gentlemen!" said a voice.

“Gentlemen, gentlemen,” said the King, putting out his head, “don’t try to force a passage!—I command you!”

The two officers and Isidore took a backward step, while the King asked: “What is wanted with us?”

At the same time a cry of distress was heard in the coach. Besides the men who intercepted the carriage in front, others had glided in behind it, and several musket-barrels were thrust in at the windows. One of these was aimed at the Queen’s breast. Isidore saw the danger, sprang forward, grasped the muzzle, and pulled it aside.

“Fire, fire!” cried several voices. One man obeyed the popular cry, but fortunately his gun missed fire.

Isidore raised his arm, and was about stabbing the fellow with his hunting-knife, when the Queen stayed his arm.

“Ah Madame!” cried Isidore, furiously. “In the name of Heaven, let me finish this scoundrel!”

“No!” said the Queen. “Sheathe your knife! Do you hear?”

Isidore half obeyed. He let his knife fall to his side, but did not restore it to his belt, while he murmured: “Ah! If I encounter that Drouet—”

“As to him,” whispered the Queen, pressing Isidore’s arm with peculiar force, “as to *him*, I leave him to you!”

“Now, gentlemen,” repeated the King, “what do you want?”

“We wish to see your passports,” replied two or three voices.

“Our passports? So be it!” said the King. “Bring the town authorities, and we will show our passports.”

“On my word, these are great goings-on,” cried the

man whose gun had miscarried, thrusting his head into the King's face; but the two bodyguards threw themselves upon him, and knocked him down. In the tussle his gun went off, but the bullet hit nobody.

"Halloo there!" cried a voice. "Who fired?"

The man who was being crushed under the feet of the two guardsmen groaned, and cried for help. Five or six other armed men ran to his relief. The guardsmen drew their hunting-knives, and prepared for a fight. The King and Queen made useless efforts to check the onslaught; but the fight was about to begin,—terrible, ferocious, mortal.

At that moment two men threw themselves into the midst of the contest. One wore his uniform as a National Guardsman, and the other was girded with the tricolored scarf. The man wearing the tricolored scarf was Monsieur Sausse, the town-solicitor. The man in uniform was Hannonet, the commander of the local National Guards. Behind them might be seen a half-hundred muskets, glittering in the light of two or three torches.

The King understood that in these two men lay his help, or at least his safety; so he said: "Gentlemen, I am willing to confide to you both myself and my companions; but pray defend us from the brutality of these fellows." As he spoke he pointed to the men armed with muskets.

"Lower your arms, gentlemen!" cried Hannonet. The men grumblingly obeyed.

"You will excuse us, Monsieur," said the town-solicitor, addressing the King, "but it is noised about that you are his Majesty, Louis the Sixteenth, running away from France; and it is our duty to ascertain if this is true."

"Ascertain if it's true!" cried Isidore. "If that

coach contains the King, you should be at his royal feet. On the contrary, if this coach contains only a private person, by what right do you stop it?"

"Monsieur," said Sausse, still speaking to the King, "I address myself to *you*. Will you do me the honor of answering?"

"Sire," whispered Isidore, "try to gain time. Damas and his dragoons are on the road, and must get here soon."

"You are right!" said the King to Isidore; and then he continued, speaking to Sausse: "If our passports are all right, Monsieur, shall we be allowed to pursue our journey?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Sausse.

"Well, Baroness," said the King to Madame de Tourzel, "have the goodness to hunt up your passport, and give it to these gentlemen."

Madame de Tourzel understood what the King meant by that phrase, *hunt up your passport*; and so she began to search in all those places where she was sure it was not to be found.

"There!" said an impatient voice, full of menace, "you see, very well, that none of these folks have a passport."

"Indeed, we have one, gentlemen; but not knowing that it would really be demanded, the Baroness de Korff does not at this moment remember exactly where she put it."

A sort of howl went up from the crowd, indicating that they were not the dupes of this subterfuge.

"There is a very simple way out of all this bother," said Sausse. "Postilions, drive the coach to my store. The gentlemen and ladies can enter my house, and there everything can be cleared up. — Drive on, postilions!"

Gentlemen of the National Guard, escort the coach, if you please."

This invitation too much resembled a command, for anybody to venture upon its contradiction. Besides, resistance would probably have been useless, if attempted. The alarm-bell continued ringing, the drum beating, and the crowd around the carriage grew larger every instant. The coach was soon in motion.

"Oh Damas, Damas!" murmured the King, "if you'll only come before we reach that cursed house!"

The Queen said nothing; but she thought of Charny, stifled her sighs, and kept back her tears.

They reached Sausse's store, but they heard nothing from Damas.

What had happened, on his side, to prevent that gentleman, on whose devotion the King had so securely counted, from fulfilling the orders which he had received and the promises he had made?

We will tell you, in two words, in order to bring out of its obscurity every point in this lugubrious story, concerning which Michelet has written as follows:

The history of that tragic moment, when the King was arrested, has always been imperfectly known. The principal historians of the trip to Varennes knew nothing about it, except from hearsay. The two Bouillés, father and son, were not there. Choiseul and Goguelat did not arrive till an hour after the fatal moment. Deslon came still later.

We left Damas, just as he had ordered the call to saddle, by the trumpeters, whom he had kept with him for greater security.

When the first trumpet-blast sounded he took some money from the drawer of his desk, and in so doing he drew out several papers, which he neither wished to

leave behind him nor to take with him. He was thus occupied when the chamber door opened, and several town officials appeared on the threshold.

One of them approached the Count, who asked, surprised at this unexpected visit, what they desired, and so changed his position as to conceal a brace of pistols, lying on the chimneypiece.

"Monsieur," politely but firmly responded the visitors, "we wish to know why you are going away at this hour."

Damas was amazed that these men should ask such a question of a superior officer in the King's army; but he answered: "It is very simple, Monsieur! I go away at this hour, because such are my orders."

"Where do you go, Monsieur Colonel?" insisted the questioner.

Damas was more and more astonished. "Where do I go? To begin with, I don't know; but if I did know, I should n't tell you."

The municipal deputies exchanged glances and encouraging gestures, and the one who had before spoken continued the conversation with Damas.

"Monsieur, it is the wish of the Clermont town council that you should remain here till to-morrow morning, and not leave this evening."

Colonel Damas smiled contemptuously, as a military man can smile, when he is asked, either through ignorance or with a view to his intimidation, to do anything incompatible with martial law. "Ah!" said he. "So the town council wishes me to stay here till to-morrow morning?"

"Yes!"

"Well, Monsieur, say to the council that I supremely regret refusing their wish; but no law, that I ever heard

of, authorizes the municipal authorities of Clermont to impede the march of troops. As for me, I receive orders only from my military superior, and there 's his order for my departure."

As he spoke he extended the order towards the town deputies. The nearest man took the paper, and showed it to his companions; while Damas grasped the pistols which lay behind him on the mantelpiece, where they had been hidden from sight by his intervening form.

After examining the paper, with his colleagues, the councillor, who had before spoken, again said to Damas: "Monsieur, the more precise this order, the more it is our duty to oppose it; for undoubtedly it commands something which, in the interests of France, ought not to be done. In the name of the Nation, I announce that you are hereby placed under arrest."

"And I, gentlemen," said the Colonel, — displaying his pistols and covering with them the two councillors nearest him, — "I announce my immediate and positive departure."

Not expecting this armed threat, a natural sentiment of fear made them hastily retreat from the pathway of Damas, who sprang across the threshold, ran through the antechamber, double-locked the door after him, hastened down the staircase, found his horse at the door, jumped on his back, and rode at breakneck speed to the square, where his regiment was mustered. He said to Floirac, one of the officers whom he saw already in his saddle: "We must get out of here as we can, but the important thing is that the King is safe."

Ignorant of Drouet's mission from Saint Menehould, knowing only the insurrection at Clermont, Damas believed the King was safe, if he passed Clermont, as he had done already, and could reach Varennes, where were

stationed Choiseul's relays, and Lauzun's hussars, commanded by Jules de Bouillé and De Raigecourt.

Nevertheless, by way of precaution, he said to the regimental quarter-master, who had come to the square among the first, with his subordinate assistants and the dragoons from his lodgings : " Monsieur Remy, ride on ! Take the road to Varennes, and ride like all-possessed. Overtake the carriages which passed through here a little while ago. You 'll answer to me with your head."

Using both spurs, off went the quarter-master, with his assistants and four dragoons ; but when they reached the fork of the roads, they took the wrong direction and went astray. Everything turned out fatally on that most fatal night !

Meantime the cavalry formed slowly in the square at Clermont. The councillors, whom Damas had locked up, easily escaped, by forcing the door. They stirred up the populace and the National Guards, who came together more quickly and in better order than the dragoons. Whatever movement Damas made, he found himself cheek by jowl with three or four muskets, aimed straight at him, and this did not render him less anxious.

He saw that his soldiers were indifferent, and rode down the ranks, trying to rally their devotion to the King ; but they shook their heads. Although the dragoons were not all assembled, he judged it high time to be on the move, and gave the order to ride forward ; but nobody budged.

Meanwhile the town officials were saying : " Dragoons, your officers are traitors. They are leading you to butchery. The dragoons are the true Patriots. Huzza for the dragoons !"

As for the National Guards and the populace, they shouted : " Hurrah for the Nation !"

As Damas had given the order for departure in a low voice, he at first supposed the command had not been heard; but as he faced about, he saw the dragoons in the second rank jumping from their saddles and fraternizing with the people.

Seeing there was nothing to be hoped from such men, he called his officers to him by a glance of his eye, and said: "These troopers betray their King. I call upon you as soldiers, as gentlemen! Whoever is on my side will follow me. — On, to Varennes!"

Striking his spurs into his horse's flanks he flashed through the crowd, followed by Floirac and three officers. These three officers, or rather sub-officers, were Adjutant Feucq, and Sergeants Saint-Charles and La Potterie. Five or six loyal dragoons also left the ranks, and followed Damas.

A few bullets, sent after the heroic fugitives, were so many bullets thrown away.

Thus we see why Colonel Damas and his dragoons were not on hand to defend the King, when he was arrested in the archway of the old tollbridge tower at Varennes, and forced to leave his coach and go into the house of the town solicitor, Monsieur Sausse.

CHAPTER XLVI.

SAUSSE'S RESIDENCE.

THE house occupied by Monsieur Sausse — at least, as much of it as could be seen by the illustrious prisoners and their companions in misfortune — consisted of a grocery, at the end whereof appeared the dining-room, beyond a glass door, through which, when seated at the table, the grocer's family could see any customers who might enter the store, their entrance being also advertised by a little bell, set swinging by the opening of a low door, with a clear opening upper half, like those still used in provincial stores, whose proprietors, either out of calculation or humility, seem to feel they have no right to entirely screen themselves from the gaze of passers-by.

In one corner of the grocery was a wooden staircase, which led by broad angles to the main story of the house.

This main story was made up of two rooms. The first, an annex of the store, was full of packages piled up from the floor, of candles hanging from the ceiling, of sugar-loaves ranged along the shelves. These sugar cones were wrapped in dark blue papers, with their caps a little tipsy, where the wrappers had been opened to show the fineness and whiteness of the crystalline sugar-peak within. The other room, the one over the dining-room, was the chamber of the proprietor of the establishment, who had been roused by Drouet, and whose room

showed traces of the disorder occasioned by this sudden awakening.

Madame Sausse, half-dressed, came out of the bedroom, crossed the storeroom, and appeared at the head of the staircase, just as several persons passed through the doorway from the street into the store, — first the Queen, then the King, then the royal children, and finally Madame Elizabeth and Madame de Tourzel.

Preceding these travellers, the town-solicitor had already entered his shop. More than a hundred persons had accompanied the coach, and now remained outside Monsieur Sausse's dwelling, which was situated on a small square.

"Well, well! What now?" said the King, as he entered.

"Well, Monsieur," answered Sausse, "there has been some talk about a passport. If the lady who calls herself the mistress of the carriage will produce her passport, I will take it to the townhouse, where the council is in session, to see if it's all right."

Come what would, the passport given by Madame de Korff to Charny, and by the Count to the Queen, was entirely regular; so the King made a sign for his wife to give up the passport.

She drew the precious paper from her pocket, and placed it in the hands of Monsieur Sausse, who charged his wife to do the honors of the house to his mysterious guests, and went at once to the townhouse.

The spirits engaged in this municipal conference were decidedly warm, for Drouet assisted at their deliberations. When Sausse came in with the passport, curiosity took the form of silence; for each one present knew the travellers had been conducted to Sausse's house.

He laid the passport on the table in front of the

Mayor. As we have already given the tenor of this passport, the reader knows there was nothing in it to make a reperusal needful.

After reading it, the Mayor said: "Gentlemen, the passport is perfectly good."

"Good?" repeated eight or ten astonished voices, while as many hands were outstretched to take the precious and mysterious document.

"Unquestionably good," said the Mayor, "for the King's signature is there!" and he pushed the passport towards the extended hands, which were at once laid upon it; but Drouet almost snatched it from the others, as he exclaimed: "Signed by the King, is it? May-be; but is it signed by the National Assembly?"

"Yes!" said one of his neighbors, who read the passport at the same time as Drouet, by the light of the candle, "for there is the signature of a member of the proper committee."

"Agreed!" replied Drouet; "but is it the President's? Besides," persisted the young Patriot, "that is n't really the question. These travellers are not a Russian lady named Korff, her children, her steward, her two companions, and three servants! These travellers are the King, the Queen, the Dauphin, Madame Royale, Madame Elizabeth, some other great lady belonging to the palace, and three couriers, — in fact, the whole royal family! Will you, or will you not, let the royal family leave France?"

The question was thus placed in its proper aspect; but this aspect only served to make it the more difficult for the poor officials of a third-rate town like Varennes to dispose of it.

As they discussed the matter, and their deliberations threatened to continue very late, the solicitor resolved

to leave the council to its legal meditations, and return home.

He found the travellers still standing in the shop. Madame Sausse had urged them to go upstairs into her chamber, or at least to be seated in the shop, and have something to eat ; but they had rejected all these kindnesses. It seemed to the travellers that by installing themselves fairly in the house, or even by sitting down and accepting the proffered hospitality, they would be making some concessions to those who had arrested them, and give up their intended route, — the object of their fondest desires. All their faculties were held in suspense, so to speak, till the return of the master of the house, who would report the decision of the town officials on the important matter of the passport.

Suddenly they saw him threading his way through the crowd outside, and making an effort to reach the house.

The King advanced three steps to meet him, and asked, with an anxiety he vainly tried to conceal, but which made itself apparent in spite of his efforts : “ Well, well, — the passport ? ”

“ The passport,” was Sausse’s response, “ has given rise to a grave debate, which is still going on at the townhouse.”

“ Why so ? ” demanded Louis Sixteenth. “ Do they perhaps doubt its validity ? ”

“ No ; but they doubt if it is in the hands of the true Madame de Korff ; for it is noised abroad that really we have the pleasure of receiving the King and his family within our walls.”

Louis hesitated a moment, and then answered, suddenly determining the proper part to take : “ Well, Monsieur, I am the King. This is the Queen. These

are our children. I beg of you to treat us with that respect which the French people have always shown towards their sovereigns."

As we have said, the upper half of the street door remained open, and a large number of inquisitive folks were gathered about the doorway. The King's words were therefore heard, not only by those inside, but by those outside.

Even if the King had pronounced these words with dignity, this dignity ill corresponded with his gray coat, his dimity vest, his gray breeches and stockings, and the little Rousseau wig which he wore. Think of finding the King of France in such a disguise!

The Queen felt the impression produced on the multitude, and the blood mounted to her face as she said: "Let us accept Madame Sausse's kindness, and go upstairs."

Monsieur Sausse took a lamp and walked towards the stairway, to show his illustrious guests the way.

Meanwhile the news had spread on the wings of the wind, through all the streets of the town, that it was really the King who had come to Varennes, and that the avowal had come from his own mouth.

One man rushed excitedly into the townhouse, and cried: "Gentlemen, the arrested travellers, at Sausse's house, are really the King and royal family! I have just heard so, from the King's own mouth."

"Ah ha, gentlemen, what did I tell you?" cried Drouet.

At the same time they could hear the noise in the streets. The drum continued to beat, and the alarm-bell to ring.

Now how did it happen that all this hubbub did not sooner attract towards the centre of the town, and

consequently nearer the fugitives, our young friends De Raigecourt and Bouillé, with the hussars stationed beyond Lower Varennes, solely on the King's account.

By the way, this Monsieur de Bouillé, whose name appears so often in connection with the unfortunate royal journey, was Jules de Bouillé, and not Louis de Bouillé, his brother, who has already figured in this narrative, and who found his way to the Royal Forge, first in his proper person, introduced by Lafayette, and then in the disguise of a locksmith's journeyman.

Now let us see why Jules de Bouillé and Monsieur de Raigecourt did not come loyally to the King's relief.

At nine in the evening these two young officers had just entered the Grand Monarch Tavern, when they heard the roll of a carriage. Both were in the basement parlor, and ran to the window.

The vehicle was a simple cabriolet, and the two gentlemen therefore held themselves ready to order out their fresh horses, if there was need of it; only they soon perceived the traveller not to be the King, but a grotesque personage, covered with a broad-brimmed hat, and muffled in an enormous coat.

They had taken a step backward, when the traveller called to them: "Say, gentlemen, is n't one of you the Chevalier Jules de Bouillé?"

The Chevalier paused in his retreat, and answered: "Yes, Monsieur, it is I."

"In that case," said the man in the topcoat and the broad-brimmed hat, "I have many things to tell you."

"Monsieur," replied Jules, "I am ready to hear them, although I have n't the honor of your acquaintance; but if you will take the trouble to leave the cabriolet, and come into the inn, we will soon get acquainted."

“Willingly, Monsieur le Chevalier, willingly!” cried the man in the big coat, as he sprang from the carriage without touching the steps, and hurriedly ran into the tavern.

The Chevalier noticed that the new-comer appeared somewhat flurried, when he presently said: “Ah, Monsieur de Bouillé, you will let me have the horses which are here, won’t you?”

“How? The horses I have here?” So replied Jules, flurried in his turn.

“Yes, yes! You’ll let me have ’em! You need keep nothing from me. I’m in it! I know all about it!”

“Monsieur, allow me to say that surprise forbids my answering,” replied Jules, “and that I don’t understand a word of what you’re talking about.”

“I repeat to you, that I know all,” persisted the traveller. “The King left Paris last night, but there is no likelihood that he can complete his trip. So I have already warned Colonel Damas, but he is out of the question. His regiment of dragoons mutinied, and there was a great commotion in Clermont. Why, I could hardly get through the place, — I, who speak to you.”

“But you who are talking to me,” said Jules, impatiently, “who are you, anyhow?”

“I’m Leonard, the Queen’s hairdresser. What? You don’t know me? Just imagine it, now! Without my leave the Duke spirited me away, — Choiseul, I mean. I was at first carrying the Queen’s diamonds, and Madame Elizabeth’s; and when I think, Monsieur, that my brother, whose hat and overcoat I have on, does n’t know what has become of me; and that poor Madame de l’Aage expected me to dress her hair yesterday, and is still waiting for me! Oh Lord, oh Lord! What a long story this is!”

Léonard walked up and down the inn parlor with long strides, lifting his hands desperately to the ceiling.

Jules began to understand. "So you're Monsieur Léonard!" he said.

"Certainly, I'm Léonard," replied the traveller, — waiving, after the fashion of great men, the title of Monsieur, conferred upon him by Bouillé. "Well, now you know me, you'll let me have the horses, won't you?"

"Monsieur Léonard," replied Jules, obstinately remanding the illustrious barber to the class of ordinary mortals, "the horses I have are for the King, and no one shall use them except the King."

"But when I tell you, Monsieur, the King won't probably come this way —"

"That is very well, Monsieur Léonard; but the King *may* come this way; and if he should come, without finding the horses, and I should tell him I had given them to you, perhaps he would respond that I must pay for my bad reasoning."

"Bad reasoning?" said Léonard. "Why, do you suppose, in the extreme situation where we find ourselves, the King would blame me for taking his horses?"

The Chevalier could not suppress a smile. "I don't pretend that the King would blame you for taking the horses; but cock-sure he'd find *me* blameworthy, for letting you have those horses."

"Ah, the Devil! I had n't faced the question from that point of view! Then you refuse me the horses, Monsieur?"

"Positively!"

Léonard sighed. "At least," he presently said, returning to the attack, "you'll help me to get others?"

"As to that, my dear Monsieur Léonard, I ask nothing better."

In fact, Léonard was a very embarrassing guest. Not only did he talk loud, but he emphasized his words with most expressive pantomime ; and this pantomime, thanks to the flapping brims of his big hat and the lappels of his enormous coat, took on a ridiculous appearance, whose absurdity could not but reflect somewhat upon his interlocutors.

Jules therefore made haste to rid himself of Léonard. He sent for the landlord of the inn, and begged him to find some horses, which would take Léonard as far as Dun. This done, he abandoned Léonard to his fate, telling him (what was true enough) that he must go elsewhere and learn the news.

The two officers, Bouillé and Raigecourt, returned to the Upper Village, passed through it, and rode a quarter of a league beyond it, on the Paris road ; but they neither saw nor heard anything, and so they began to take their turn in thinking that the King, already eight or ten hours late, would not come, and finally they returned to the Lower Village and Grand Monarch.

Léonard had just departed. Eleven o'clock sounded.

Already disquieted by what they had heard from the royal hairdresser, at about quarter-past nine they sent an orderly to Clermont. This was the orderly who met the royal coach as it was leaving Clermont, and whom we heard in his chat with Colonel Damas.

The two young officers at the Grand Monarch waited till midnight. At midnight they lay down with their clothes on.

Half an hour later they were awakened by the alarm-bell, by drumming and shouting. Putting their heads out of the tavern window they could see the town in a hubbub, and people running, or rather scurrying, towards the townhouse. Many armed men were rushing in the

same direction, towards the Upper Village, some with muskets, and some with double-barrelled guns; while others only bore swords, sabres, and pistols.

The two young gentlemen ran to the stable and ordered out the King's horses, which they felt bound to retain at all hazards; and for better protection they took these horses outside the village, so that the King would find them, if he succeeded in passing so far through the town. Then they went back after their own horses, which they had kept near the King's, guarded by some postilions.

All this going and coming roused some suspicion, and in order to leave the tavern with their horses, they had to face a combat, wherein two or three shots were fired at them.

In the midst of howls and threats they learned that the King had been recognized, and taken to the town-solicitor's.

Then they took counsel as to what they had better do. Ought they to rejoin the hussars, and try to rescue the King? Ought they to ride on, and try to warn the Marquis de Bouillé, whom they were pretty sure to find, if not at Dun, certainly at Stenay?

Dun was only five leagues from Varennes. Stenay was eight leagues off. In ninety minutes they could be at Dun, and in two hours at Stenay. Then they could immediately march back on Varennes, with the small section of soldiers commanded by the elder Bouillé.

They chose the latter course; and at a half-hour after midnight, just as the royal party decided to enter Solicitor Sausse's chamber, our young men decided to leave the relays of horses they had so carefully guarded, and set off for Dun, at a grand gallop.

Thus it was that this succor, upon which he so surely relied, failed to reach the King.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE COUNSEL OF DESPERATION.

WE may recall the situation in which Choiseul found himself, as commander of the first military station at Sommeville Bridge. Seeing the rebellion on the increase about him, and wishing to avoid a collision, he did not wait any longer for the royal carriages, but said, carelessly, that the military funds had been carried by already; and then he straightway set out for Varennes.

In order not to pass through Sainte Menehould, which was already in a ferment, — as we may remember, — he took a crossroad, taking care, however, to ride slowly, before quitting the highway, in order to give the King's advance courier time to overtake him; but the courier had not overtaken him at Orbeval, where he entered the side road; though Isidore (who was acting as courier) passed by the fork of the Orbeval road soon after Choiseul had taken it.

The Duke firmly believed the King had been detained by some unforeseen event. If he was happily mistaken in this surmise, and the King was still on the road, his Majesty would find Dandoins at Sainte Menehould, and Damas at Clermont.

We have seen, however, what happened to Captain Dandoins at Sainte Menehould, where he was detained by the town officials, and to Colonel Damas at Clermont, who was compelled to effect his escape almost alone; but what is well known to us — looking down on that

painful day from the height of sixty years, in the middle of the Nineteenth Century, with our eyes bent upon each separate actor in the great drama — was hidden from Choiseul by the cloud of doubt in which he was enfolded.

By taking the crossroad to Orbeval, towards night Choiseul reached the woods of Varennes, at the very moment when Charny was bewildered in another part of the forest, in his fruitless pursuit of Drouet.

At the last village on the borders of the forest — Neuville-au-Pont — Choiseul was obliged to lose a half-hour, waiting for a guide. During this delay he could hear the alarm-bells ringing in the neighboring villages, and the four hussars, constituting his rear guard, were arrested by the peasantry. Seasonably warned of this occurrence, Choiseul had only to make one rapid onslaught upon the group, and the four hussars were again free; but soon the tocsin began to ring more furiously than ever, and without a pause.

The crossroad through the forest was extremely difficult, and often dangerous. Either by design or unintentionally, the guide misled the little company. Frequently the hussars were compelled to proceed afoot, in order to ascend or descend some precipitous hill. Sometimes the path was so narrow that they had to march in single file. One hussar fell over a precipice, and as his shouts for help showed that he was not dead, his comrades naturally refused to abandon him. In the work of rescuing him three-quarters of an hour were lost; and these three-quarters of an hour included precisely the minutes when the King was forced to leave his carriage in the town of Varennes, and take refuge in Sausse's store.

At a half-hour after midnight, as Jules de Bouillé and

Raigecourt were fleeing along the road to Dun, Choiseul, with his forty hussars, appeared at the other end of the village, coming from the crossway through the woods.

At the end of the bridge he was greeted by a vigorous "Who goes there?" which came from a partisan member of the National Guard.

"France! The Lauzun Hussars!" was Choiseul's reply.

"You can't pass!" said the sentinel, and he shouted the call to arms.

At the same moment there was a great commotion among the populace. Through the thickening night masses of armed men could be seen; and in the glare of torches, and of candles beaming from every window, muskets were visible, glittering along the streets.

Not knowing what all this meant, nor what had happened, Choiseul wished first to reconnoitre. He began by demanding to be put in communication with the detachment of soldiers stationed at Varennes. This demand led to long debate; but finally it was decided to accede to his request.

While they were coming to this decision, and putting it into execution, Choiseul could see the National Guards utilizing their time in preparations for defence, putting up a barricade of broken branches, and bringing to bear two small cannon upon his forty men.

Just as the marksman had fulfilled his task, the detachment of hussars arrived from the station on foot. They knew nothing, except what they had been told, — that the King had been arrested and taken to the town-house. As to themselves, they had been surprised by the populace, and compelled to dismount, and did not know what had become of their companions.

As they finished these explanations, Choiseul thought

he could see a small troop of horsemen advancing through the darkness, and at the same time he heard the challenge,

“Who goes there?”

“France,” replied a voice.

“What regiment?”

“The dragoons of *Monsieur’s* Regiment.”

At these words a gunshot was heard, fired by a National Guardsman.

“Good!” whispered Choiseul to a subordinate officer near him. “There’s Damas, with his dragoons.”

Without waiting to hear more, Choiseul broke away from two men who were clinging to his bridle, and who shouted to him that it was his duty to obey the town officials, and nobody else. He ordered an attack, took by surprise those who tried to stop him, forced a passage through the crowd, and found his way, followed by his men, into the lighted streets, swarming with people.

As he approached Sausse’s residence Choiseul saw the royal coach, standing unharnessed; and presently he came into a small square, where a numerous guard was stationed before an unpretentious house.

In order not to bring his troops into contact with the inhabitants, he rode straight on to the barracks, whose location he well knew. The barracks were empty, but he placed his forty hussars therein.

As Choiseul was leaving the barracks he was stopped by two men, coming from the townhouse, and summoned to report to the town officials; but as his hussars were still within hearing, he shook off these two men, with the reply that he would come to the townhouse when he had leisure, and called aloud to the sentinel to admit nobody.

Two or three grooms remained in the barracks. Choiseul interrogated them, and thus learned that the

hussars there stationed, not knowing what had become of their chiefs, had followed the crowd who came after them, and were drinking with their captors, all over the village.

At this news Choiseul was somewhat dismayed. His force was reduced to forty men, whose horses had achieved more than twenty leagues that day. Men and horses were alike exhausted. There was therefore no time for dallying.

First he inspected the pistols, to see if they were loaded. Then he made a speech to the hussars in German, who, not understanding a word of French, knew little of what had been taking place around them at Varennes. He told them that the King, Queen, and whole royal family had been arrested, and that it was the duty of the Lanzun Hussars to rescue these august personages from the hands of those who held them as prisoners, and would perhaps put them to death.

The speech was short, but impassioned, and made a lively impression upon the hussars. *Der Koenig! Die Koenigin!* (the King! the Queen!) they repeated in astonishment, and in their own tongue.

Choiseul did not give them time to cool. He ordered them to draw their sabres, break into ranks by fours, and go at a rapid trot towards the house where he had noticed the guard, not doubting that the King was therein a prisoner.

Arriving there, — amidst the curses of the National Guards, but paying no attention to those curses, — he placed sentinels at the door, and dismounted, in order to enter the house.

As he crossed the threshold he felt a hand on his shoulder. Turning quickly he saw Charles de Damas, whose voice he had before recognized, answering the

challenge of the National Guards. Perhaps he had partly counted on this auxiliary.

“Ah!” said Choiseul, “are you here in force?”

“I’m alone, or almost alone,” replied Damas.

“And why so?”

“My regiment refused to follow me, and I am here with only five or six men.”

“What a misfortune! Never mind! I have forty hussars remaining. We must see what we can do with them.”

The King was just then receiving a municipal deputation, with Monsieur Sausse at its head. This deputation had come to say to the King, that as the Varennes people were so very fortunate as to have their King among them, they had come to him for orders.

“My orders?” responded the King. “Have my carriages made ready, and I will leave at once.”

Nobody knows what the precise response of the municipal officials would have been to this demand, for just then the gallop of Choiseul’s horses was heard, and through the windows could be seen the hussars, standing in columns, with sabres in hand.

The Queen trembled, and a joyful ray shone in her eyes. “We are saved!” she murmured in Madame Elizabeth’s ear.

“God grant it!” replied this lamblike offspring of royalty, who referred everything to God, — good or ill, hope or despair.

The King drew himself up and listened. The town officials looked anxiously at each other.

At this instant a great noise was heard in the antechamber, which was guarded by peasants armed with scythes. Some words were exchanged, followed by a brief struggle. Then Choiseul appeared in the door-

way, bareheaded, and with his sword drawn. Over Choiseul's shoulder could be seen the pale but resolute countenance of Damas.

There was a threatening expression in the look of these two officers, which scattered the town deputies, leaving a clear space between the new-comers and the royal prisoners.

As the cavalry officers entered, the interior of the chamber presented the following tableau. In the centre of the room was a table, whereon stood an open bottle of wine, some wineglasses, and some bread. The royal pair stood, listening to the town deputies. Near the window were Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale, — the former, however, very near the Queen. On the bed, half exhausted, slept the little Dauphin, overcome with weariness. At his side was seated Madame de Tourzel, her head buried in her hands; and behind her were Madame Brunier and Madame de Neuville. Then there were the two bodyguards, Malden and Valory, and Isidore de Charny, — all three broken down by sadness and fatigue, — sitting in the shadows, and half reclining on their chairs.

Perceiving Choiseul the Queen crossed the room to clasp his hand. "Ah, Monsieur de Choiseul, is it you? You are most welcome!"

"Alas, Madame, it seems I come too late," said the Duke.

"Never mind that, if you come in good company!"

"Ah, Madame, on the contrary, we are almost alone. Dandoins has been forcibly detained, with his soldiers, at the townhouse in Sainte Menehould; and Colonel Damas has been abandoned by his men."

The Queen shook her head sorrowfully.

"But, where is the Chevalier Jules de Bouillé? Where

is Monsieur de Raigecourt?" and as he spoke, Choiseul looked carefully about him.

Meanwhile the King drew near. "I have not seen those gentlemen," he said.

"Sire," said Damas, "I pledge you my word of honor, that they must have been killed under the wheels of your coach."

"What will you do?" asked the King.

"Save your Majesty, at all hazards! Give your orders!" said Damas.

"I have forty hussars," said Choiseul. "They have ridden twenty hard leagues to-day, but they will be able to go on as far as Dun."

"But how about ourselves?" asked the King.

"Listen, Sire," said the Duke, "for this is all that I can propose. I have forty hussars, as I told you. Seven shall dismount. You shall mount one of the horses, holding the Dauphin in your arms. The Queen will take a second horse, Madame Elizabeth a third, Madame Royale a fourth, while Madame de Tourzel, and the other ladies, De Neuville and Brunier, — whom you do not wish to abandon, — will take the other three horses. We will surround you with the three and thirty hussars still mounted. With a few cuts of our sabres we will let in the daylight, and thus have a chance of safety. — Think well, Sire, and speedily; for this is a measure to be adopted at once, if at all; for in an hour, in half an hour, — yes, in fifteen minutes, perhaps, — my hussars will be won to the other side."

Choiseul paused, awaiting the King's response. The Queen appeared to like this project, and fixed her eyes on her husband, anxiously questioning him with her gaze.

He, on the contrary, seemed to avoid the Queen's glance, and the influence it exerted over him.

At last he said, looking Choiseul full in the face : “ Yes, I know very well that this is one way of rescue ; but can you promise me that a gunshot may not kill my son, my daughter, my wife, or my sister, in this unequal squabble of thirty-three men with seven or eight hundred ? ”

“ Sire, if such a misfortune should come to them, and come because you yielded to my counsel, there would be only one thing to do, — slay myself before your Majesty’s eyes.”

“ Very well, then ! ” said Louis. “ Instead of letting ourselves be carried away by such extreme projects, let us reason coolly about our situation.”

The Queen sighed, and took two or three steps backward. In this movement, whereby she did not conceal her regret, she saw Isidore go to the window, — attracted by a noise in the street, and always in hopes that any disturbance was caused by the arrival of his brother. She exchanged two or three whispered words with Isidore, and he hurried out of the room.

The King continued talking, without apparently noticing what took place between Isidore and the Queen.

“ The town officials do not refuse to let me go away. They only ask me to wait till daybreak. I will not speak of the Comte de Charny, who is so deeply devoted to us, and of whom we have no intelligence ; but there are Jules de Bouillé and Raigecourt. They went away from here some ten minutes after our arrival, to notify the Marquis de Bouillé, and have him come with *his* troops, who are certainly in readiness. If I were alone, I would follow your advice, and leave at once ; but my wife, my two children, my sister, and these ladies ! It is impossible to risk so much with so small a force as yours, — and even more hussars would have to dismount, for I would not leave my three bodyguards here.”

The King drew out his watch. "It is already three o'clock. Young Bouillé rode away at half-past twelve. His father certainly had troops stationed here and there on the road. By this time the first detachments have been notified by the Chevalier, and will be here one after the other. It is only eight leagues from here to Stenay. In two or two and a half hours a man on horseback could easily cover this ground. He will run across these detachments all right. In five or six hours the Marquis de Bouillé will be here in person; and then — without peril to my family, without any violence — we can quit Varennes, and continue our journey."

Choiseul recognized the logic of this reasoning; and yet his instinct told him there were certain moments when one must not hearken to logic.

He turned to the Queen, and his glance seemed to beseech her for different commands, or at least that she would persuade the King to revoke the decision just pronounced; but she shook her head. "I will take nothing on myself," she said. "It is the King who commands. My duty is to obey. Besides, I am of the King's opinion, that Bouillé will come."

Choiseul retreated several steps, taking with him Damas, with whom he wished to arrange some concerted method of action, and he also made a sign to Malden and Valory to come and take their part in the consultation.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

POOR CATHERINE!

THE chamber is not greatly changed in its aspect. As Madame Royale has not been able to overcome her weariness, Madame Elizabeth and Madame de Tourzel have put her to bed beside her brother, and she is now asleep. Madame Elizabeth sits beside the bed, resting her head against one of its corners.

The Queen, rigid with anger, stands near the mantelpiece, looking alternately at the King, who is seated on a bale of merchandise, — brought into the sparsely furnished chamber from the adjoining storeroom, — and at the officers, who are deliberating near the door.

An old woman, an octogenarian, is on her knees by the children's bedside, as if she were before an altar. This is the grandmother of the town-solicitor. Struck by the beauty of the two children, and the Queen's imposing air, she has fallen upon her knees, and is praying in whispers, her face bathed in tears.

What is the burden of her prayer? Is it that God will pardon these two angels, or that these two angels may pardon mankind?

Sausse and the other officials have retired, promising the King that horses shall at once be put to his coach; but the Queen's look shows that she puts no dependence whatever upon this promise.

This makes Choiseul say to Damas, to Floirac, and to Foucq, who are with him on one side of the room, — as

well as Malden and Valory, the two bodyguards : "Gentlemen, we must not rely upon the feigned tranquillity of the King and Queen. The question is not utterly desperate, but let us see exactly how we stand."

The other officers make a motion for Choiseul to proceed, as they are listening attentively.

"It is probable that by this time the Marquis de Bouillé is notified, and that he will arrive here by five or six in the morning ; for he was to be between Dun and Stenay, with a detachment from the Royal German Regiment. It is even possible for his advance guard to be here a half-hour earlier, for under such circumstances everything possible ought to be done ; but we must not forget that we are surrounded by four or five thousand antagonists, and that the moment when Bouillé's troops make their appearance will be a moment of great danger and of ungovernable turmoil. Our enemies will insist upon getting the King out of Varennes. They will try to make him mount a horse and ride back to Clermont. His life will be menaced, and perhaps attempted. This danger need last only for an instant, gentlemen ; for as soon as the barrier is forced, and the hussars are fairly in the town, the rout will be complete. We shall only be compelled to hold our own for about ten minutes, and there are ten of us. As things are arranged here, we may hope they will be able to kill no more than one of us a minute ; consequently there will be time enough."

His hearers contented themselves with nodding assent. This proposal was made with perfect simplicity, and accepted with equal simplicity ; yet it meant devotion to the death.

Choiseul continued : "Well, gentlemen, here is what I think ought to be done. At the first shot heard, at

the first outcry round about us, we must go into the adjoining storeroom. All the people who happen to be there we must kill, and then take possession of the staircase and the windows. There are three windows. Three of us must defend them. The other seven must make a stand at the staircase, which is so easy of defence, being built with broad landings, that one man alone can face five or six assailants. The bodies of those whom we have already killed may serve as a rampart against our living enemies. I'll wager, a hundred to one, that the troops will be masters of the village before the last one of us is done for; and if we all perish, the place we shall occupy in history will hereafter be a full reward for our devotion."

These young gentlemen grasped one another's hands, like Spartans before a battle. Then each selected his post. The two bodyguards, with Isidore de Charny, — whose place was kept for him, though he was absent from the consultation, — were to guard the three windows, opening upon the street. The Duke was to be at the bottom of the staircase. Behind him was to be Damas; and then Floirac, Foucq, and the two subordinate dragoon officers, who had remained faithful to Damas, and had taken part in the conference.

Hardly had these arrangements been agreed upon, when a bustle was heard in the street.

This arose from the visit of a second municipal deputation, composed of Sausse, — who naturally appeared to be a prime element in every deputation, — Commander Hannonet, of the National Guard, and three or four other municipal officers.

They were duly announced, and the King, believing they had come to say his horses might be harnessed, ordered the admission of the deputation.

They entered. The young officers — who were on the lookout for every gesture, every sign, every motion — thought they could perceive some hesitation in Sausse's manner, and a set expression in Hannonet's face, which boded no good to the royal travellers.

At the same time Isidore came upstairs, spoke two words to the Queen, and hastily ran down again.

The Queen took a step backward, with pale cheeks, and leaned against the bedstead, where her children were lying. As for the King, he questioned the town envoys with his eyes, and waited for them to speak ; but they bowed to the King, without saying a word.

Louis pretended to misunderstand their intentions, and said : " Gentlemen, the French people are only misled, for their attachment to their rulers is genuine. Weary with the continual outrages which I have endured in my capital, I have decided to retire to my most remote provinces, where still burns the sacred flame of loyalty. There I am sure to find the ancient love of my people for their sovereigns."

The envoys bowed anew, and the King continued : " I am ready to give proof of my confidence in my people. I will take an escort, half made up of National Guardsmen, and half of regular troops of the line, and they shall accompany me to Montmédy, whither I have made up my mind to retire. Consequently I beg you to choose half of my escort from among your men, and have horses at once put to my carriage."

There was a momentary silence. Sausse was probably waiting for Hannonet to begin, while the captain was waiting for Sausse. At last Hannonet bowed and said : " Sire, it would be very pleasant if I could obey your Majesty's commands ; but there is, in the Constitution, an article which forbids the King's departure from the

kingdom, and forbids loyal Frenchmen from aiding him in so doing."

The King trembled, and Hannonet continued, with a gesture of supplication to the King to hear him through : "Consequently, the town of Varennes has decided, before permitting the King to go farther away, that a courier shall be sent to Paris, and that we will wait till we hear from the National Assembly."

The King felt great drops of sweat on his brow, while the Queen bit her pale lips impatiently, and Madame Elizabeth lifted her eyes and hands devoutly to Heaven.

"Indeed, gentlemen!" said the King, with a certain dignity, which came to him when he was pushed to the wall. "Am I no longer master of my own movements, to go whither I please? In that case, I am more a slave than the least of my subjects!"

"Sire," replied the captain of the National Guards, "you are always the master; only all men — kings, as well as ordinary citizens — are bound by their oaths. You have taken an oath. Be the first to fulfil that oath, Sire, and obey the laws. It will not only be a grand example to set, but a noble duty to discharge."

During this conversation the Duke glanced interrogatively at the Queen; and receiving an affirmative answer to his mute question, he went downstairs.

The King well understood that if he submitted to this rebellion, on the part of a village council, — and from his point of view it *was* a rebellion, — his cause was lost.

Besides, he recognized the same Revolutionary spirit, which Mirabeau had wished to subdue in the provinces, and which had already raised its venomous crest before the royal footsteps in Paris, on July 14, 1789, when the Bastille was taken; on October 5 and 6, 1789, when the royal family were assaulted in their palace at Versailles,

and dragged to Paris ; on April 18, 1791, when the King had made a trial of his liberty, by attempting to drive to Saint Cloud, and had been hindered from doing so by the populace.

“Gentlemen,” said he, “this is simply violence ; but I am not so isolated as it might appear. Before this door I have forty faithful men ; and in the neighborhood of your Varennes, I have ten thousand other soldiers. I command you to have my horses harnessed. You hear me, — this is my wish and my command.”

The Queen came to his side and whispered : “Good, Sire, good ! Let us risk our lives, but let us never sacrifice our dignity.”

“And what will be the result, if we refuse to obey your Majesty ?” said the commander.

“The result will be that I shall be compelled to resort to force, and you will be responsible for the blood which I have refused to shed, and which, in this event, will be shed by yourselves.”

“Very well ! So be it, Sire ! Try to summon your hussars, and I will summon the National Guards !” and Hannonet went down into the street.

The royal pair looked at each other in dismay. Perhaps neither of them dared risk such a crisis.

Just then Madame Sausse, the solicitor’s wife, entered. Pushing aside the old grandmother, who was in prayer at the bedside, she walked up to the Queen and said, with the rudeness and freedom of a woman of the people : “So, Madame, you ’re really the Queen, are you ?”

The Queen turned, and said, her pride wounded by such familiar questioning : “Oh yes ! At least, I believed so an hour ago.”

“Well, if you ’re the Queen,” went on Madame Sausse, unconcernedly, — “they give you and your good man

twenty-five millions a year for keeping your throne. The place is a good one, it seems to me, and well salaried. What do you want to quit it for ?”

The Queen uttered a grievous cry, and turned to the King. “ Oh Monsieur, — anything, anything, anything else, rather than such indignities ! ”

Taking the Dauphin, half-asleep, from his bed, she ran to the window and opened it, saying to the King : “ Monsieur, let us show ourselves to the people, and see if they are wholly poisoned towards us. If they are, let us appeal to the soldiery, and encourage them with voice and gesture. They at least merit so much, when they are willing to die for us.”

The King followed his wife mechanically, and appeared with her on the balcony.

The whole square, into which King Louis and Marie Antoinette looked, presented a lively spectacle.

Half of Choiseul's hussars were on foot, and the others on horseback. Those on foot were lost, swallowed up amidst groups of citizens, whom they allowed to take their horses away in various directions. These hussars were already won to the National cause. Those on horseback seemed submissive to Choiseul, who was haranguing them in German ; but they showed their colonel that half their companions had deserted.

Standing apart was Isidore, his hunting-knife in hand, — seemingly a stranger to all this hubbub, — waiting for a man, like a hunter on the watch for his game.

The King, the King, resounded from five hundred throats, as the royal family appeared on the balcony, — the Queen, as has been said already, holding the Dauphin in her arms.

If Louis the Sixteenth had been clad royally, or even in military garb, if he had wielded sceptre or sword, if

he had spoken in loud and impressive tones, his voice would have sounded to the people, even at that epoch, like the voice of God, or at least the voice of one sent from Heaven; and perhaps he would have gained that influence over the people which he hoped for; but at break of day, in the slanting twilight, which disfigures the greatest beauty, his appearance was against him. He was dressed like a servant, in his gray coat. His beard was three days old. His hair was not powdered, and he wore that ignoble little periwig, which we have before mentioned. He was pale with fatigue. His dull eye expressed no sentiment, either of tyranny or pater-nity, as he alternately lisped these few words: "Gentlemen! my children!" It was not such a sight as either the friends or enemies of royalty wished to see on that balcony.

As it was, when Choiseul called out, "Long live the King!" and Isidore responded, "Long live the King!" such was still the prestige of royalty, that, despite his aspect, — which so poorly corresponded with the popular idea of the chief of a great kingdom, — several voices repeated, "Long live the King!"

In response came a shout from the chief of the National Guardsmen, which met a far different greeting, and found a powerful echo: "Hurrah for the Nation!" Under such conditions this cry meant rebellion, and the royal pair could see that this cry was at once taken up by a party of hussars.

Marie Antoinette uttered a cry of rage. Pressing the Dauphin to her breast, — that poor child, ignorant of the importance of the events transpiring about him, — she leaned over the balcony, gnashing her teeth, and hissing at the crowd this one word: "Wretches!"

It was heard by a few, who responded with threats,

and the square became one great scene of tumult and noise.

In sheer desperation Choiseul wished to kill himself, but he made a last effort. "Hussars, rally, for honor's sake, and save the King!"

At that instant, amidst a score of armed men, a new actor appeared on the scene. This was Drouet, coming from the townhouse, where he had persuaded the officials to decide upon hindering the King's journey.

Marching up to Choiseul he cried: "So you mean to carry off the King? Very well! but one thing I tell you, you'll bear him away a corpse!"

Choiseul advanced upon Drouet, with his drawn sword; but the commander of the National Guards was at hand, and said to the Duke: "A step farther, and I'll kill you!"

At these words another man came forward, before the menacing groups could hinder him. It was Isidore de Charny. The man for whom he had been lying in wait was this very man, — Drouet.

"Back, back!" cried Isidore, pushing aside the crowd with the breastplate of his horse. "That man belongs to me!" Knife in hand, he rushed upon Drouet.

At that moment two simultaneous shots were heard, — from a pistol and from a musket. The pistol-ball flattened itself on Isidore's collar-bone. The musket-ball pierced his breast. The two shots were so near him that the unfortunate fellow was literally wrapped in a billow of flame and a cloud of smoke.

They saw him raise his arms, and heard him say: "Poor Catherine!"

Then, dropping his knife, he fell across his horse's crupper, and thence rolled to the ground.

The Queen uttered a startled cry. She let the Dauphin

slip from her arms, and then fell backward, not seeing a new horseman who came at full speed from the direction of Dun, and entered, so to speak, the wake traced in the middle of the crowd by poor Isidore's onslaught.

The King left the balcony after the Queen, and closed the window.

It was not a few hussars on foot, but the whole crowd who now shouted: Hurrah for the Nation! Among that crowd only a score of hussars, still on horseback, remained faithful to the last, — the forlorn hope of royalty in distress.

The Queen threw herself into a chair, her head in her hands, thinking how she had seen Isidore fall at her feet and die for her sake, as she had before seen his brother George.

Suddenly the door opened, and a great noise compelled her to look up. What passed through the womanly and queenly heart in that instant, we will not try to describe.

Olivier de Charny, pale and bloody from his brother's last embrace, stood in the doorway.

As to the King, he was as one crushed to the earth.

CHAPTER XLIX.

CHARNY.

THE room was filled with National Guardsmen, and other outsiders led thither by curiosity.

The Queen's first impulse was to throw herself in front of Charny, wipe away, with her handkerchief, the blood wherewith he was covered, and utter those consoling words which go straight from heart to heart; but she restrained this impulse, and only dared rise from her seat, and extend her arms towards him, as she murmured, "Olivier!"

Calm and sad, he made a sign to the outside spectators, as he said, in a firm yet soft voice: "Pardon me, gentlemen, but I must speak alone with their Majesties."

The National Guardsmen tried to say that they were there for exactly the opposite purpose, to prevent the King from having any communication with outsiders. Charny compressed his lips, frowned, and opened his riding-coat. In so doing he allowed a brace of pistols to be seen, and repeated, in tones softer than before, and yet more menacing: "Gentlemen, I have already had the honor of telling you that I must speak privately with the King and Queen."

As he spoke he made a sign for the intruders to clear out.

Hearing his voice, and animated by the control exercised over others by his control over himself, Damas, Malden, and Valory recovered their faltering energy.

Pushing themselves against the intruding guardsmen and the rest, these young officers compelled them to evacuate the chamber.

Then the Queen realized how useful such a man would have been in the King's coach, if exacting etiquette had not demanded that Madame de Tourzel should retain her place.

Looking around, to be sure that nobody was near the Queen except her faithful servants, Charny approached her Majesty, and said: "Madame, I am here. I have seventy hussars at the entrance of the village, upon whom I think I can depend. What are your commands with me?"

"Oh, my poor Charny!" said the Queen, in German. "First of all, what has happened to *you*?"

Charny made a motion to the Queen, to show that Malden was within hearing, and understood German.

"Alas, alas!" she continued in French, "losing sight of you, we believed you dead."

"Unhappily, Madame," answered Charny, with deep melancholy, "it is not I who am dead; it is my poor brother Isidore —" and he could not restrain a tear. "But my turn will come!" he presently added, in a low voice.

"Charny, Charny, I ask what has happened to you, and why you disappeared so strangely!" said the Queen; adding in a whisper, in German: "Olivier, you have not treated us well, — myself, in particular."

Charny bowed, as he replied: "I supposed that my brother had apprised your Majesty of the reason for my temporary absence from your side."

"Yes, I know. You pursued that man, that rascally Drouet, and for an instant we believed this pursuit had led you into some great misfortune."

“Indeed, a great misfortune did come to me. In spite of all my efforts, I could not overtake Drouet in season. A postilion, returning from Clermont, apprised Drouet that your Majesty’s coach, which he believed on its way from Clermont to Verdun, had taken the road from Clermont to Varennes. Thereupon Drouet plunged into Argonne Forest. I fired at him with both pistols, but they were not loaded. I had mounted the wrong horse at Sainte Menehould, taking the one intended for Monsieur Dandoins, instead of the one intended for myself. What shall we call it, Madame? Fatality? I nevertheless followed Drouet into the woods; but I was unacquainted with the paths, whereas he knew every footway. Then the darkness became every moment more dense, so that I could not see the fellow; though I pursued him, as one might pursue a ghost. So long as I could hear him I followed the sound, but the sound was soon hushed, and the spectre had vanished; so I found myself alone, in the middle of the forest, enshrouded in shadows. Oh Madame! I am a man, as you well know. Here and now I weep no longer; but in the middle of that forest, amidst the gross darkness, I shed tears of anger, and swore with rage.”

The Queen offered him her hand, which he touched with trembling lips, as he bowed over it.

“Nobody answered my outcry,” continued Charny. “I wandered all night, and towards daybreak found myself near the village of Gèves, on the road from Varennes to Dun. I reasoned with myself thus: Had you been lucky enough to elude Drouet, as he had eluded me? This was possible! In that case you had passed through Varennes, and it would be useless for me to do anything but hasten after you. Had you been arrested at Varennes? Then I was alone, and my devotion would

be equally useless. I resolved finally to continue my journey towards Dun. Just before reaching that village I met Monsieur Deslon, with a hundred hussars. Deslon was uneasy. He had heard no news; only he had met Jules de Bouillé and Monsieur de Raigecourt, riding at full speed towards Stenay. Why had they not spoken to Deslon? Probably they distrusted him, though I knew Deslon to be a worthy and loyal gentleman. I at once surmised that your party had been arrested at Varennes, that Bouillé and Raigecourt had at once fled, in order to notify General Bouillé. All this I said to Deslon, and urged him to follow me with his hussars, which he at once did, leaving thirty of his men to guard the bridge over the Meuse. An hour later we were at Varennes, having gone four leagues in an hour. I wished at once to begin the attack, and go through all obstacles, to reach your Majesties. We found, however, barricade after barricade. To attack them would have been folly; so I tried a parley. An officer of the National Guards presented himself, and of him I asked permission to rejoin my hussars, who were in the city. This request was refused. I demanded permission to come and get orders from the King; and as they were preparing to refuse this second request, as they had the first, I put spurs to my horse, cleared the first barricade, and then the second. Guided by the noise, I came on at full gallop, and reached this square just as your Majesty was retreating from the balcony. — And now I await your Majesty's orders."

The Queen once more pressed Charny's hands in her own. Then turning to the King, still plunged in torpor, she said: "Sire, have you been hearing what has happened to your faithful servant, the Count?"

As the King answered not a word, she rose and went

to his side, saying : "Sire, there is no time to waste. Unhappily, we have lost too much time already ! Here is Monsieur de Charny, with seventy reliable men, as he believes, and he asks for your orders."

She added, as the King shook his head : "Sire, in Heaven's name, — your orders !" and as the Queen pleaded with her voice, Charny pleaded as eloquently with his eyes.

"My orders ?" echoed the King. "I have no orders to give. I'm a prisoner. Do whatever you think you can do !"

"Very well !" said the Queen. "That's all we ask." Drawing Charny aside, she added : "You have *carte blanche*, — full powers. Do, as the King says, whatever you think can be done." Then she added, in a whisper : "But act quickly and vigorously, or we are lost."

"That is so, Madame," replied Charny. "Let me confer an instant with these gentlemen, and what we decide upon shall be at once put into execution."

Just then Choiseul entered, holding in his hand some papers, folded in a blood-stained handkerchief, which he offered to Charny, without an explanatory word.

The Count understood at once that these were the papers found on his brother. He extended his hand to receive the bloody heritage, raised the package to his lips, and kissed it.

The Queen could not repress a sob. Charny did not falter ; but, placing the papers in his breast-pocket, he said : "Gentlemen, can you aid me in the last effort which I shall make ?"

"We are ready to sacrifice our lives !" responded one and another of the young men.

"Do you think you can be answerable for a dozen men who remain faithful ?"

“ We number eight or nine of ourselves.”

“ Well, I have returned with seventy hussars. While I attack the barricades in front, you can make a diversion in the rear. Under cover of that diversion, I will force the barricades, and with our united forces we can penetrate as far as this spot, and carry off the King.”

The only answer of the young noblemen was to offer Charny their hands.

Then he turned again to the Queen and said : “ Madame, in one hour your Majesty will be free, or we shall be dead.”

“ Oh Count, Count ! Don't speak that word ! It savors of ill-luck ! ”

Oliver contented himself with a bow, in confirmation of his promise ; and without noting the renewed shouts and fresh rumors which made themselves heard, and appeared to be invading the house, he marched towards the door ; but as he put his hand on the latch, the door opened, and gave ingress to a new personage, who came to take part in this drama, already so complicated.

He was a man forty or forty-two years of age, with a gloomy and severe face. His collar was rolled back. His coat was unbuttoned. His eyes, red with fatigue, and his dusty clothing, showed that he also, pushed on by violent passion, had entered upon an implacable warfare. In his belt he wore a brace of pistols, and a sabre hung at his side.

Breathless, and almost voiceless, when he opened the door, he appeared only to find relief when he recognized the King and Queen. Then a smile of vengeance wreathed his face, and without troubling himself about the secondary personages, who were in the shadows of the room, he stood in the doorway, which he almost filled with his powerful frame, and exclaimed, raising

his hand : "In the name of the National Assembly, you are my prisoners!"

By a swift movement Choiseul was in front of him, pistol in hand, and in his turn raised his arm, to blow out the brains of this new-comer, who appeared to surpass all his predecessors in insolence and revolution; but, with a movement equally rapid, the Queen grasped Choiseul's threatening hand, and said in a low voice: "Do not hasten our destruction, Monsieur. Be prudent! With all these interruptions we are gaining time, and General Bouillé cannot be far away."

"You are right, Madame," answered Choiseul; and he replaced his pistol in his breast.

The Queen glanced at Charny, astonished that he had not been the first to come forward in this new peril. Strangely enough, Charny seemed to avoid being seen by this intruder; and, to elude his observation, the Count had ensconced himself in the dimmest corner of the room. However, knowing Charny as well as she did, the Queen did not doubt that at the proper time he would emerge from both the shadow and the mystery.

CHAPTER L.

ONE ENEMY MORE.

THROUGH this entire scene, while Choiseul was menacing the man who spoke in the name of the National Assembly, this man apparently took no note of the fact that he barely escaped the peril of death.

He seemed occupied with some sentiment more powerful in his heart than the fear of death. His facial expression could not be mistaken. It was that of a hunter, who at last finds his prey in one den, — the lion, the lioness, and their cubs, which have devoured his only child.

At the word *prisoners*, which had roused Choiseul with a bound, the King raised himself, saying: "Prisoners? Prisoners in the name of the National Assembly? What are you talking about? I don't understand you."

"It is very simple, nevertheless, and quite easy to understand," replied the intruder. "Notwithstanding the oath you took not to leave France, you're fleeing from your country by night, — breaking your word, betraying the people, betraying the Nation, in such a way that the people are roused, and the Nation is calling her citizens to arms; and the Nation speaks to you, through the voice of one of the least of her subjects: Sire, in the name of the people, in the name of the Nation, in the name of the Assembly, you are my prisoner! for this voice is none the less powerful, because it comes from the lowly."

In the storeroom could be heard the sound of approbation, accompanied, or rather followed, by frantic *bravos*.

“Madame, Madame,” murmured the Duke, in the Queen’s ear, “do not forget it was yourself who checked me, and that you would not be subjected to such unparalleled insolence, if you had not shown your pity for this man a moment ago.”

“All this is nothing, if we avenge ourselves!” whispered the Queen.

“Yes!” replied Choiseul; “but if we do *not* avenge ourselves — ?”

The Queen groaned sadly and heavily; but Charny’s hand was extended slowly over the Duke’s shoulder, and touched the Queen’s arm, so that she turned quickly.

“Let me talk and deal with that man!” hissed the Count, softly. “I know what to do with him!”

Meanwhile the King, stunned with this new blow, looked with astonishment upon this gloomy personage, who used such energetic language to a king, and spoke in the name, not of his Majesty Louis the Sixteenth, but of the Assembly and the Nation. With this surprise was mingled an element of curiosity, for it seemed to Louis that this was not the first time he had seen this man, though he could not recall where he had seen him. Finally the King said: “After all, what do you want with me? Speak!”

“Sire, I want you and your family not to take another step towards foreign parts.”

“Doubtless you come with thousands of armed men, to oppose our journey?” said the King, who grew more dignified during this discussion.

“No, Sire, I am alone, or rather, there are only two of us, — one of General Lafayette’s aides, and myself

— a plain peasant ; only the Assembly has issued a decree, and counts on us to execute it, and this will be done.”

“ Give me the decree, that I may at least read it ! ” said the King.

“ I have n't it, but my companion. My companion is sent by General Lafayette and the Assembly, to execute the orders of the Nation. As for me, I am sent by Mayor Bailly, and especially by myself, to watch my companion, and to blow his brains out, if he balks.”

The Queen, the Duke, Damas, and the other listeners, looked on in amazement. They had heretofore seen the populace only in their fury or their humility, either in the attitude of petitioners or assassins ; but now they saw, for the first time, a man of the people, standing upright, with his arms crossed, feeling his own power, and declaiming in behalf of popular rights.

Louis quickly understood that nothing was to be hoped from a man of this temperament, and wished to have done with him at once ; so he asked : “ Well, where is your comrade ? ”

“ There, behind me ! ”

With these words the peasant stepped aside, leaving the doorway clear. Through its opening they could see a young man, clad in the uniform of a staff-officer, leaning against a window. He, also, was in great disorder ; only this disorder arose not from his energy, but from dejection. His face was begrimed with tears, and he held a paper in his hand.

This was young Romeuf, Lafayette's junior aide, with whom — as our readers doubtless remember — we made them acquainted, at the time of young Louis de Bouillé's visit to Paris.

Romeuf, if we may recall his conversation with the

young Royalist at that time, was a Patriot, a sincere Patriot ; but during Lafayette's dictatorship the young fellow had been entrusted with the guardianship of the Queen, accompanying her Majesty whenever she left the palace. In this companionship, and in all his relations with her, he had shown a respectful delicacy, for which the Queen had several times expressed her gratitude.

On seeing him, therefore, it was natural for her to exclaim, in painful surprise : " Oh, is it you ? " Then she added, with the sad moan of a woman who sees the failure of a power she had believed invincible : " Oh, I would never have believed it ! "

" Well, well," said the elder envoy, smiling, " it appears I did well to come."

Romeuf advanced slowly, with downcast eyes, holding the decree in his hand ; but the impatient King, without giving the young man time to present the paper, took a rapid step towards him, and snatched the decree from his grasp.

After reading it, he said : " There is no longer a king in France ! "

Romeuf's comrade smiled, as much as to say, " I know that well enough ! "

At the King's words the Queen made a movement, as if to question him.

" Listen, Madame ! " he said. " Here is the decree which the Assembly has dared to vote ; " and he read, with a voice tremulous with indignation, the following document :

The Assembly orders the Minister of the Interior to instantly send messengers into the various departments, with orders to all public functionaries, all National Guards, and all troops of the regular army, to arrest, or cause to be arrested,

all persons who may be leaving the kingdom, and to prevent the exportation of all sorts of goods, — arms and ammunition, horses and carriages, and gold and silver, in any shape ; and in case these messengers overtake the King, any members of the royal family, or those who have aided and abetted their flight, then the aforesaid public functionaries, National Guards, and troops of the regular army, shall take all possible measures to arrest their flight, and prevent the continuance of their journey, and render an account thereof to the legislative body.

The Queen listened in a sort of torpor ; but when the King finished his reading, she tossed her head, as if to recover her spirits. “ Impossible ! ” she exclaimed, at the same time holding out her hand for the fatal paper. “ Let me see it ! ”

Meanwhile Romeuf’s comrade reassured, with his smile, the National Guards, and other Varennes Patriots, who were a little disturbed by the Queen’s word, *impossible*, although one and all had already learned the tenor of the decree.

“ Oh, read, Madame, read ! ” said the King, bitterly, “ if you are still in doubt. Read the decree, indicted and signed by the President of the National Assembly.”

“ And what man dares to write and sign such a decree ? ”

“ A nobleman, Madame,” replied the King, — “ Alexander de Beauharnais,¹ a marquis ! ”

Is it not strange, — is it not a proof of the mysterious chain which links the past to the future, — that this de-

¹ This allusion is to the first husband of the Empress Josephine. He was the father of Hortense Beauharnais, who became the wife of Louis Bonaparte, and consequently the mother of Napoleon the Third. As Louis Napoleon was on the throne of France when this story was written, such allusions will account for the fact that Dumas first published it in Belgium, instead of France. The omission of certain allusions to the greater Bonaparte, in later Paris editions, — especially from the witty Preface written by Dumas, — would naturally arise from the continued reign of Louis Napoleon.

cree, which arrested the flight of the royal family, should bear a name, though then obscure, which would thereafter attach itself, in a glaring way, to the history of the beginning of the Nineteenth Century.

The Queen took the decree and read it, with contracted eyebrows and compressed lips.

Then the King took it again, and reperused it; after which he threw it on the bed, where were reposing the Dauphin and Madame Royale, insensible to the discussion which was deciding their fate.

At this slight action, the Queen, incapable of longer restraining herself, angrily seized the paper, crushed it in her hands, and threw it far from the bed, exclaiming as she did so: "Oh Monsieur, be careful! I don't wish my children to be contaminated by such a document!"

An immense clamor arose in the adjoining storeroom. The National Guardsmen who were there made a movement as if they were about to rush into the chamber occupied by the illustrious fugitives.

Lafayette's aide uttered a cry of terror.

His travelling companion uttered a cry of rage. "Ah," growled he between his teeth, "they insult the Assembly, they insult the Nation, they insult the people! Good!"

Then turning towards the men who crowded the other room, — armed with muskets, sabres, and scythes, and ready for a fight, — he called them to his aid.

There was a second movement to enter the chamber, — a movement which was the complement of the first, — and God only knows what would have been the result of this collision of angry men; but Charny — who had whispered to the Queen, at the beginning of the scene, the few words already reported, and, during the progress of affairs, had held himself entirely aloof — now came forward, and grasped the arm of the unknown

National Guardsman, at the moment when this belligerent intruder was drawing his sabre, and said to him: "A word, if you please, Monsieur Billot; I want to speak with you."

Billot, for it was he, let a cry of astonishment escape him, became pale as death, remained an instant irresolute, and finally said, pushing back his half-drawn sabre into its sheath: "Very well, so be it! I also have something to say to you, Monsieur de Charny."

Directing his steps to the door he added: "Citizens, give us room, if you please. I must have a private interview with this officer. But be easy, comrades!" he added in a lower voice, "for neither wolf, dam, nor whelps can escape. I'm here, and will be responsible for all."

Although this man was as unknown to the others as he was to the King and his friends, Charny only excepted, the crowd felt that he had the right to give orders; and they accordingly backed downstairs, leaving the storeroom empty.

Moreover each man wanted to tell his friends below what was going on upstairs, and to advise the Patriots to keep better guard than ever.

Meanwhile Charny said to the Queen, in a low voice: "Monsieur de Romeuf is on your side, Madame. I leave you with him. Keep him as far off from us as possible."

This was the easier to do because, when he entered the other room, Charny closed the door, and setting his back against it, prevented anybody, even Billot himself, from going into the bedroom.

