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Portrait of Pétion.

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COMTESSE DE
CHARNY

VOLUME III

BY
ALEXANDRE DUMAS



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LA COMTESSE DE CHARNY.

VOLUME III.

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LA COMTESSE DE CHARNY.

CHAPTER I.

A PEASANT'S HATRED.

ON finding themselves face to face, the two men looked each other straight in the eye; but the gaze of the nobleman did not make the peasant wince. Moreover, it was Billot who was the first to speak.

"The count has done me the honour to say that he wishes to speak with me," he remarked. "I am ready to hear what he has to say."

"Billot, how does it happen that I find you here charged with such a mission of vengeance? I believed you to be our friend, as well as a good and faithful subject of the king."

"I was a good and faithful subject of the king; and if I was not the friend of you noblemen, — for a poor farmer like me could scarcely aspire to such an honour, — I was at least your humble servant."

"Well?"

"But I am so no longer."

"I don't understand you, Billot."

"And why are you anxious to understand me? Do I ask the reason of your fidelity to the king or your devotion to the queen? No, I take it for granted that you have your

reasons for it, and that as you are an honest and sensible man your reasons must be sensible, or at least appear so to your own mind. I have not your high position, count, or your learning, but you know that I am an honest and sensible man too; so you can take it for granted that I, too, have reasons, which are equally good, at least in my opinion."

"Billot," said Charny, who was entirely ignorant of the real cause of the farmer's hatred of the nobility, "Billot, awhile ago, and not so very long ago either, you were a very different man from what you are now."

"Oh, certainly, I do not deny it," replied Billot, smiling bitterly. "Yes, a short while ago I was a very different man from what I am now. I will tell you what I was, count, I was a true patriot, devoted to two men and one thing; those two men were the king and Dr. Gilbert, the other was my country. One day the king's commissioners came, — and I admit that this was the first thing that alienated me from him, — well, one day his commissioners came to my farm, and, partly by force and partly by taking me unawares, they secured possession of a valuable casket Monsieur Gilbert had intrusted to my keeping. As soon as I could get away, I started for Paris. I arrived there on the night of the 12th of July, when they were carrying the busts of Necker and Orléans through the streets, and the people were cheering them. This certainly could not have done the king any great harm; but all of a sudden, the king's soldiers charged upon us, and I saw poor devils, who had committed no other crime than cheering for two men they probably knew nothing about, falling around me, some with their heads cut in twain, some with breasts riddled by bullets. I saw Monsieur de Lambese, one of the king's dearest friends, hunt down women and children who had not even hurrahed for Necker and Orléans, and he trampled one poor old man of seventy under his horse's feet. This made me even more out of sorts with the king. The next day I went to little Sebastian's school to see him,

and learned from the poor child that his father was in the Bastille, through an order from the king granted at the solicitation of one of the ladies of the Court; and I said to myself, if the king was really as kind-hearted as people pretended, he must have moments of terrible ignorance or forgetfulness; so in order to atone for these mistakes on his part, I did everything in my power to capture the Bastille. We succeeded in doing it, though not without a good deal of trouble. The king's soldiers fired upon us, killing nearly two hundred men; and this gave me more grounds for disagreeing with people generally in regard to the wonderful kindness and goodness of the king. The Bastille was taken at last, however, and in one of the dungeons I found Monsieur Gilbert, for whose sake I had just risked my life twenty times, though I forgot all about that in my delight at seeing him again. Well, Monsieur Gilbert still stoutly declared that the king was thoroughly good at heart, that he had no knowledge whatever of the many wrongs committed in his name, and that it was not against him I should be wroth, but against his ministers; and as I considered everything Monsieur Gilbert said to me in those days gospel truth, I believed him, and seeing the Bastille razed to the ground, Monsieur Gilbert free, and Pitou and myself safe and sound, I forgot the fusillades on the Rue St.-Honoré, the charges upon the people from the Tuileries, the one hundred and fifty or two hundred men slaughtered by the Prince of Saxe, and Monsieur Gilbert's imprisonment merely at the request of a Court lady. But excuse me, Monsieur," said Billot, suddenly checking himself, "all this can have no possible interest for you; you did not ask an interview with me to listen to the prating of a poor ignorant peasant, — you a great nobleman, and a great scholar besides."

And Billot made a movement towards the door of the room where the king was; but Charny stopped him.

Charny had two reasons for checking him. In the first place, it might be well, under the circumstances, to ascer-

tain the causes of Billot's animosity; and in the second place, he might be able to gain a little more time, so he said, —

“No, no, tell me all, my dear Billot. You know the friendly feeling we have always entertained for you, — my poor brothers and myself, — and what you say interests me greatly.”

On hearing the words, “My poor brothers,” Billot smiled bitterly.

“Very well, I will tell you all, count,” he said coldly. “I only regret that your two brothers — Monsieur Isidore especially — are not here to listen.

“When the king started for Paris, I saw in him only a father returning to his children, and I marched with Dr. Gilbert near the royal coach, making my body a rampart for the protection of the royal family, and crying, ‘Long live the king!’ until I had no voice left. This was the king's first trip from Versailles to Paris, remember, — when there was nothing behind him, or in front of him, or around him, and even under his horses' feet and carriage wheels, but flowers and benedictions. On our arrival at the Hôtel de Ville it was noticed that though the king no longer wore a white cockade, he had not yet put on a tricoloured one, so the crowd shouted: ‘A cockade! A cockade!’ I took off the one I had on my hat and handed it to him. He thanked me, and put it on his own hat amid the deafening cheers of the multitude. I was intoxicated with delight at seeing my cockade in the king's hat, and hurrahed for the king more lustily than ever. I became such an enthusiastic champion of this great and good king that I remained in Paris. My crops were ready to harvest and required my presence, but what did that matter? I was rich enough to lose one year's crops, and if I could be of any service to this great and good king, — this Father of his People, and this Restorer of French Liberty, as we were fools enough to call him in those days, — why, of course I would remain in Paris. My harvest, which I intrusted

to Catherine's supervision, was ruined. It seems that Catherine had something else to attend to besides the crops. But we won't talk about that. Well, people began to say that the king was no friend to the Revolution in his secret heart, that he had consented to it only under compulsion, and that it was not the tricoloured cockade, but the white, he wanted to wear in his hat. Those who said this were slanderers, as was proved at the banquet of the Royal Body-Guards, where the queen wore neither the white nor the tricoloured cockade, but that of her brother, Joseph II.,—the Austrian cockade, the black cockade! Well, I confess, my doubts began to return again after that; but Monsieur Gilbert said, 'It was not the king who did it, Billot, but the queen, and the queen is a woman, and we must be charitable towards women;' and I believed him so thoroughly that when the mob came from Paris to Versailles to make an attack upon the palace I took sides with its defenders, — so much so, in fact, that I was the first to run and wake Lafayette, and brought him to the palace just in time to save the king. Ah! that day I saw Madame Elizabeth embrace Lafayette, and saw the queen offer him her hand to kiss, and heard the king call him 'his dear friend;' so I said to myself that perhaps Gilbert was right after all. It certainly could not have been fear that made a king and a queen and a royal princess indulge in such demonstrations of affection as these. If they did not share this man's sentiments, no matter how useful he might have been to them in such an emergency, they certainly would not stoop to deception like this. So I again began to pity this poor queen who was only rather imprudent, and this poor king who was only a trifle weak. I let them return to Paris without me this time, however, for I had something to attend to at Versailles, — you know what it was, Monsieur de Charny."

Charny sighed heavily.

"They say the king's second journey was not so gay as the first," continued Billot. "They say there were curses

instead of blessings, and several heads carried on pikes instead of bouquets. I know nothing about it, I was not there. I remained at Versailles. All this time, my farm was without a master, but what of that? I was rich enough to lose the harvest of 1790 as well as that of 1789, if need be. But one day Pitou came and told me that I was on the point of losing something which no father is ever rich enough to lose,—that is, my daughter!”

Charny started violently.

Billot scanned his face searchingly a moment, then continued:—

“I must tell you, count, that only a few miles from us lived a noble family, a family of powerful lords and immensely rich. This family consisted of three brothers. When they were children, the two younger brothers almost always honoured me with a visit on their way from Boursonnes to Villers-Cotterets. They said they had never tasted such good milk as my cows gave, nor eaten such good bread as Mother Billot made; and now and then, they added—and I, poor fool, thought it was to repay me for my hospitality—that they had never seen such a pretty child as my daughter Catherine. And I—well I was grateful to them for drinking my milk, and eating my bread, and thinking my daughter pretty. And why not? If I could trust the king, who is half German, they say, on his mother’s side, I could certainly trust them. So when the youngest brother, who had left the country a long while before, and whose name was George, was killed in the queen’s doorway at Versailles on that terrible night in October, while bravely doing his duty as a gentleman, God only knows how I grieved over it! Ah, count, his brother saw me,—his eldest brother, who had never visited at my house, not, I will do him the justice to say, because he was too proud, but because he had left home much earlier than George,—saw me, I say, kneeling beside the lifeless body, pouring out my tears as freely as he had poured out his blood. Ah! I can see him now, at the end of that little damp

courtyard, where I had taken him in order that his body should not be mutilated like those of his comrades, Vari-court and Deshuttés. I had almost as much blood on my clothing as you have on yours now, count. Oh, he was a lovely boy; and if I was thinking only of him, I believe I could mourn him as deeply as you do, but when I think of the other one, I mourn no longer."

"The other one! What do you mean?" inquired Charny.

"Wait, you will know soon enough," replied Billot. "Pitou came up to Paris and let fall a few words which convinced me that it was not only my harvest that was in danger, but my child. I left the king in Paris. If he was really acting in good faith as Monsieur Gilbert declared, everything would come out all right whether I was there or not, so I returned to the farm. On arriving there I found Catherine very ill, and for awhile I feared she was going to die. She was threatened with brain fever, and I felt very uneasy about her, especially as the doctor would not allow me to enter her room. A half-frantic father forbidden to enter his sick daughter's room, think of it! I considered that I had a right to listen at her door, however, and I did listen, and learned that she was almost crazy because her lover had gone away. I myself had been away a whole year, but instead of mourning, she had rejoiced over my absence; for had not my departure left her free to see her lover at any time? Well, Catherine regained her health, but not her cheerfulness. One month, three months, six months passed without any ray of happiness brightening the face I watched so closely. But one morning I saw her smile, and I trembled. Was her lover coming back, and was that why she smiled? It was even so. The very next day a shepherd who had seen him pass that morning, told me of it. I did not doubt that he would come to my house on the evening of that same day, so when evening came I loaded my gun and lay in wait for him."

"You did that, Billot?" exclaimed Charny.

“And why not? I hide in order to kill the wild boar that uproots my potatoes, the wolf that devours my lambs, and the fox that steals my chickens; so why should I not lie in wait for the man who comes to rob me of my peace of mind, the lover who has brought dishonour upon my only daughter?”

“But when he came your heart failed you, did it not?” asked Charny.

“No, not my heart, but my eye and hand. Spots of blood here and there convinced me that I had not failed entirely, however. But of course as you can very readily understand,” added Billot, with increasing bitterness, “where a father and a lover were concerned, my daughter did not hesitate. When I entered Catherine’s room, Catherine had fled.”

“And you have not seen her since?” inquired Charny.

“No, why should I? She knows very well that if I should see her again, I should kill her.”

Charny started back, gazing with feelings of mingled terror and admiration at the powerful nature before him.

“I went to work again on my farm,” continued Billot. “What did my personal griefs matter, so long as France was happy! Was not the king walking bravely along in the right path? Didn’t he take part in the great Federation? It was pleasant to again behold the good king to whom I had given my tricoloured cockade, and whom I had helped to defend on the sixth of October. How it must rejoice his heart to see all Frenchmen assembled on the Champ de Mars, pledging fidelity as one man to their common country. As I stood there, I forgot everything else for a moment, even Catherine! No, that is false. A father never forgets his daughter. The king, too, took the oath in his turn, but somehow it seemed to me that he did it in a half-hearted fashion, that it was mere lip service. But, nonsense! he had taken the oath, and that was the essential thing. An oath is an oath, whether he took it in his seat or at the altar of his country; it is not the

place where it is taken that makes an oath binding. When an honest man takes an oath, he keeps it, and the king had taken it, so he would keep it. When I returned to Villers-Cotterets, having a daughter no longer, I turned my attention to political matters. Then I heard it rumoured that the king had been more than willing to be abducted by the Marquis de Favras, only that scheme had been promptly nipped in the bud. Later, I heard the king had tried to leave the country with his aunts, but that project, too, had failed; then that he had attempted to go to St.-Cloud, with the intention of going from there to Rouen, but that the people prevented it. I heard all these things, I say, but I did not believe them. Had I not seen him with my own eyes raise his hand and take the oath on the Champ de Mars? Could I believe that a king who had taken an oath in the presence of three hundred thousand citizens would consider it less sacred than those other men take? It was not at all likely. Well, the day before yesterday I went to attend market in Meaux, and slept at the house of the superintendent of the post-station, who is a very particular friend of mine. Well, yesterday morning I was utterly amazed to see the king and the queen and the dauphin in a coach that stopped for fresh horses. I could not be mistaken, for I had seen them often before, and in a carriage, too. Had n't I accompanied them from Versailles to Paris on the sixteenth of July? Then I heard one of their men, dressed in buff, give the order to drive to Châlons. The voice had a familiar sound. I turned and recognised the man who had stolen Catherine from me, — a noble gentleman who was now doing duty as a lackey by running on ahead of the king's carriage!"

As he uttered these words, Billot looked searchingly at Charny to see if he understood him; but Charny wiped the sweat from his brow with his handkerchief, and said never a word.

"I wanted to follow him, but he was some distance off before I recovered from my astonishment. He was armed

too, and I was not; he was on horseback, and I afoot. For an instant I ground my teeth at the thought that the king was escaping from France, and my daughter's seducer was escaping me. Then I said to myself that I, too, had taken an oath, and that though the king was breaking his, I would not break mine. It was only four o'clock in the morning, and I was but a few leagues from Paris. With a good horse, it would take me only a couple of hours to get there. I would see Monsieur Bailly, an honest man, it seemed to me, who would be likely to take sides with persons who kept their oaths, and against those who broke them. This point settled, I asked my friend — without telling him what I intended to do, you understand — to lend me his uniform, for he, too, belongs to the National Guards, and also his sword and pistols. I asked, too, for the best horse in the stable, and then started off at a gallop for Paris. They had only just discovered the king's flight when I arrived there, and nobody had any idea which way he had gone. Romeuf had been sent down the Valenciennes road to investigate, by Lafayette. And now see what a wonderful thing chance is! He was stopped at the barrier; but he persuaded them to take him back to the National Assembly, and entered the hall just as Bailly was telling the members what I had told him. It was only necessary to draw up an order and change Romeuf's route. This took but a minute or two. Romeuf was sent down the Châlons road, and I was ordered to accompany him, — an order I obeyed, as you see. I have overtaken the king, who has so deceived and disappointed me, and he will not escape me again. Now there only remains for me to overtake the man who has so deeply wronged me as a father, and I swear that he, too, shall not escape me."

"Alas! my dear Billot, you are mistaken," said Charny, with a sigh.

"And why?"

"Because the unfortunate man of whom you speak *has* escaped you."

"He has fled!" cried Billot, while an indescribable expression of rage overspread his features.

"No, but he is dead."

"Dead?" repeated Billot, shuddering in spite of himself.

"Dead! This blood you see on my clothing is his. If you doubt it, go downstairs, and you will find his body lying in a little courtyard, — very much like the one at Versailles, — a victim to the same cause for which our brother George gave his life."

Billot gazed with haggard eyes and terror-stricken face at Charny, who spoke so quietly, though great tears were streaming down his cheeks.

"Ah, so there is some justice in heaven, after all!" he exclaimed suddenly. Then, as he turned to leave the room, he added:—

"I believe what you say, count. Still, I must see for myself that justice has been done."

Charny, smothering a sigh and wiping his eyes, watched the farmer as the latter descended the stairs. Then, knowing he had no time to lose, he hastened back into the adjoining room, went straight to the queen's side, and asked softly:

"How about Monsieur de Romeuf?"

"He is on our side."

"So much the better, for there is nothing to hope for from the other man."

"What are we to do?"

"Gain as much time as possible, in expectation of Bouillé's arrival."

"Will he come? Are you sure?"

"Yes, for I am going after him."

"But the streets are blocked, the house is guarded. You cannot do it. You will be killed!"

Charny made no reply, but, walking to the window, opened it, gave a glance of encouragement to the king, bowed to the queen, and leaped to the ground, fully fifteen feet below.

The queen uttered a cry of terror, and buried her face

in her hands, but the young men ran to the window and responded to the queen's cry of terror with one of delight, for Charny had already scaled the garden wall, and disappeared from sight on the other side.

It was time, for at that very instant Billot reappeared upon the threshold.

CHAPTER II.

THE MARQUIS DE BOUILLÉ.

LET us see what had happened to the Marquis de Bouillé during these long hours of agonised suspense, — the marquis, whose coming was so eagerly expected, and upon whom the last hope of the royal family depended.

At nine o'clock in the evening, that is to say, about the time the fugitives were entering Clermont, the Marquis de Bouillé left Stenay in company with his son Louis, and rode towards Dun in order to be nearer the king.

Fearing his presence in that town might create uneasiness, however, he halted when within about three-quarters of a mile of the town, and he and his companion established themselves in a sort of ravine near the road, tethering their horses behind them.

There they waited. It was about time, as they supposed, for the royal courier to make his appearance; and under such circumstances the minutes very naturally seemed hours, and the hours centuries.

Slowly the clocks rang out the hours of ten, eleven, twelve, one, two, and three.

By daybreak the men had become desperate. The marquis felt sure some misfortune had occurred; but as he had no idea what this misfortune could be, he decided to return to Stenay, in order to be as near in the centre of the forces under his command as possible.

They were about half a mile from that town when Louis, chancing to glance behind him, saw a cloud of dust raised by the swift tread of several horses.

The father and son paused and waited. Ere long it seemed to them that they recognised the riders. In a few moments there was no longer any room for doubt. The riders were Jules de Bouillé and Raigecourt.

"The king has been arrested at Varennes!" both exclaimed simultaneously when the two anxious watchers trotted out to meet them.

It was now nearly four o'clock in the morning, and the news was the more appalling from the fact that the arrest had taken place several hours before, and that the town of Varennes was in such a state of excitement that the young officers had been obliged to make their escape from it by forcing their way through the crowd, without securing any very definite information in regard to the catastrophe.

But terrible as this news was, it did not destroy every vestige of hope. Like all army officers of high rank who maintain strict discipline in their corps, the marquis felt confident that his orders had been faithfully carried out, and that he should have no difficulties to contend with so far as the troops were concerned. If the king had reached Varennes, then the numerous detachments which had been ordered to close in behind the king must also be in or near Varennes by this time.

The force would consequently consist of forty hussars of Lauzun's regiment, commanded by Choiseul; the thirty dragoons stationed at Sainte-Menehould under command of Dandoins; the one hundred and forty dragoons stationed at Clermont, under command of Damas; and the sixty hussars at Varennes, with whom Jules de Bouillé and Raigecourt had been unable to communicate, by reason of the young officer's hasty departure. In the absence of his superior officers, the command of these men would devolve upon Rohrig; and though he was hardly twenty years of age, and no very great confidence was placed in him, he could obey the instructions of the other officers who had come to the king's assistance, or at least unite his force with theirs.

Consequently, according to the reckoning of the marquis, the king must now have from two hundred and sixty to two hundred and eighty soldiers around him, — an adequate force surely to quell an insurrection in a small town like Varennes.

While Jules de Bouillé and Raigecourt were telling their story, they saw another rider approaching them at full speed.

It was Rohrig; and on recognising him the marquis advanced to meet him, in one of those moods which compel a man to vent his wrath upon the first comer, even if he is innocent.

“What is the meaning of this? Why have you deserted your post?” cried the general, hotly.

“I beg your pardon, general, but I come by order of Colonel Damas.”

“Then Damas is in Varennes with his dragoons?”

“Colonel Damas is in Varennes, — without his dragoons, general, but with one officer, an adjutant, and two or three privates.”

“And the others?”

“They refused to march.”

“And Dandoins and his dragoons?”

“They are detained as prisoners by the authorities of Sainte-Menehould.”

“But surely Choiseul is at Varennes with his hussars and yours?”

“Choiseul’s hussars have gone over to the other side, and are now cheering frantically for the Nation. As for my men, they are prisoners in their barracks, under the custody of the National Guards of Varennes.”

“And why did you not place yourself at their head and charge upon the rabble?” thundered the general. “Why did you not hasten to the defence of your king?”

“My general forgets that I had no such orders, and that I was not even aware that the king was expected at Varennes.”

"That is true," responded Jules de Bouillé and Raigecourt, in the same breath.

"When I first heard the commotion," continued the young lieutenant, "I went down into the street to find out what it meant. There I learned that a coach, said to contain the king and royal family, had been stopped about a quarter of an hour before, and the occupants taken to the house of the town solicitor. I hastened there at once. The streets were crowded with armed men, drums were beating, and the alarm-bells ringing. In the midst of the uproar, I felt a hand on my shoulder. I turned, and recognised Colonel Damas, with an overcoat over his uniform. He asked if I was a lieutenant of the company of hussars stationed at Varennes, and I said that I was, whereupon he ordered me to mount a horse without losing a second of time, and ride until I met the Marquis de Bouillé. 'Tell him,' said he, 'that the only hope of the king and the royal family is in him.' Under such circumstances I did not consider myself justified in making any objections; on the contrary, I believed it my duty to obey him implicitly, so I mounted my horse, rode like the wind, and here I am!"

"And did Damas tell you nothing else?"

"He told me they would make every effort in their power to gain time, so that you could reach Varennes before it was too late."

"Very well, I see that every one has done the best he could," responded the marquis, with a sigh. "Now we must do the best we can."

Then, turning to his son Louis, he said: "I shall remain here while these gentlemen carry out my orders. The detachments at Mouza and Dun must move towards Varennes at once, guard the bridge over the Meuse, and begin the attack immediately upon their arrival. Take this order for me, Rohrig, and tell them they will speedily be reinforced."

The young officer saluted, and galloped off in the direction of Dun.

“Raigecourt,” continued the general, “head off the Swiss regiment which is now on its way to Stenay, explain the situation to them, and give them my order to double their speed.”

Then, having watched the young officer ride swiftly away in a direction opposite to that which Rohrüg had taken, the general turned to his second son and said, “Jules, change horses at Stenay and ride to Montmédy as fast as you can. Tell Klinglin to start towards Dun with the regiment of Nassau Infantry stationed at Montmédy, and report personally at Stenay.”

The young man saluted, and departed in his turn.

Then the general turned to his eldest son. “The Royal German regiment is at Stenay, is it not?” he asked.

“Yes, father.”

“They received my order to be ready to move at day-break?”

“I gave the order to their colonel myself.”

“Bring the regiment at once. I will wait for it here in the road. Perhaps some one will come along with later news in the mean time. The Royal German can be depended upon, I suppose?”

“Yes, father.”

“Then that regiment will be enough. We will march on Varennes with that. Be off!”

Count Louis departed in his turn. In ten minutes he was back again.

“The Royal German is following me,” he said.

“The men were ready for duty, then?”

“No; to my very great astonishment, they were not. Their commander must have misunderstood me when I gave him your order yesterday, for I found him in bed; but he got up at once, and promised to go himself and hasten the preparations for departure. Fearing you would be anxious, I thought I had better come back and tell you the cause of the delay.”

“Do you think the regiment will be here soon?”

“The commander said he would follow me immediately.”

They waited ten minutes, fifteen minutes, twenty minutes, but not a soul came.

The general glanced impatiently at his son, who said, as if in reply to the glance, “I’ll ride back, father,” and forthwith galloped back to Stenay.

Long as the time had seemed to the anxious general, the colonel did not seem to have made good use of it, for only a few men were ready. Young Bouillé complained bitterly, repeated the general’s peremptory orders, and on receiving the commander’s positive assurance that his men would be outside the gates of the town in five minutes, returned to his father.

As he left the town he noticed that the gate, through which he had already passed four times, was guarded by members of the National Guards.

The father and son waited a quarter of an hour this time, and nobody came; and yet Monsieur de Bouillé realised that every moment lost was a year taken from the lives of the royal prisoners.

At last, when nearly an hour had dragged by since the first sending of the order, he bade his son ride into Stenay for the third time, and not return without the troops.

Louis started off in a furious rage; but on reaching the square his wrath became still more violent, for only about fifty men were in their saddles, and with them, he hastened to take possession of the gate, so as to keep it free for their egress. Then he rode back to the general, who was still waiting, and assured him that the soldiers were certainly close behind him this time; and so he believed, — but not until ten minutes afterwards, when Louis was about to ride back to the town for the fourth time, did they see the regiment approaching.

Under other circumstances the general would have placed the colonel under arrest; but he feared he might incense both officers and men by such a procedure, so he contented himself with reproaching the commander for his tardiness,

and then made a stirring address to the the soldiers. He dwelt upon the honourable nature of the task before them, and told them that not only the king's liberty, but his very life depended upon them. He promised the officers promotion and the men additional pay, and as an earnest of this, distributed four hundred louis among the privates.

This speech, or rather the conclusion of it, perhaps, produced the desired effect; there were tremendous cheers for the king, and then the regiment started towards Varennes at a brisk trot.

At Dun they found a detachment of thirty men left there by Deslon to guard the river. They still had about twenty miles to travel, through a very hilly country, so they could not ride very rapidly; besides, it was necessary to keep the soldiers fresh enough to meet an attack or make a charge if necessary. They felt almost as if they were advancing into an enemy's country, for alarm-bells were ringing in the villages on either side of them, and in front of them they could hear something which sounded very much like a fusillade.

At Grange-au-Bois they saw a man tearing down the road bare-headed, and apparently making signs to them from a distance; so the soldiers quickened their pace.

The horseman was Charny. "To the king's aid, hasten to the king's aid, gentlemen!" he shouted as soon as he was within hearing, waving his hand.

"To the king's aid! Long live the king!" shouted the officers and men.

Charny took his place in the ranks, and briefly explained the situation. When he left Varennes the king was still there, so all was not yet lost.

The horses were tired, but the men kept up their speed wonderfully well, for the animals had been crammed with oats, and the enthusiasm of their riders had been raised to a white heat by Bouillé's speech and gold; so the regiment tore along shouting and cheering.

At Crépy, they met a priest, who was evidently no

royalist, for on seeing them hastening towards Varennes he called out,—

“Go on, go on. Fortunately you’ll get there too late.”

Louis de Bouillé heard him, and, drawing his sabre, rushed upon him.

“What are you about, sir?” interposed his father, sternly; and the young man, knowing that he would be guilty of an unpardonable crime in killing an unarmed man and a priest in the bargain, contented himself with taking his foot out of the stirrup, and giving the offender a rousing kick in the stomach.

“You’ll get there too late!” repeated the priest, as he rolled over in the dust.

The soldiers rushed on, cursing this evil prophet, and getting nearer and nearer to the scene of action. Deslon and his seventy hussars were having a spirited encounter with an equal number of National Guards. The Royal German regiment charged upon the guards, scattered them, and hastened on. From Deslon, they learned that the king had left Varennes at eight o’clock that morning. Bouillé looked at his watch and found it now lacked five minutes of nine, so all hope was not yet lost.

They could not think, of course, of going through the town now,—assaults upon the barricades would consume too much time; but by making a *détour* to the left they might succeed in overtaking his Majesty. To do this, they must cross the river; but Charny assured them it could be forded with perfect safety, so they left Varennes to the right of them, and made for the open fields, resolved, no matter how large the king’s guard might be, to attack it on the open road, and either liberate the king or perish in the attempt.

When they had completed about one-third of the circuit, they came to the river. Charny urged his horse into the water, and the Bouillés followed him. After them came the other officers, then the privates. The stream was almost concealed from view by the many horses and men.

In ten minutes the ford was safely crossed, and the passage through the cool running water had refreshed both steeds and riders, so they sped on towards Clermont like birds on the wing.

Suddenly Charny, who was riding on about twenty yards in advance, paused, and uttered a cry of dismay. He was on the edge of a high steep bank which bordered a canal. Though he had drawn this canal on his topographical maps, he had entirely forgotten its existence. It extended a distance of several leagues, and presented the same difficulties all along its course; so if they could not cross it here, they could not cross it anywhere.

Charny set the example by urging his horse down into the water. Though the canal was too deep to ford, the animal swam bravely to the opposite side; but the bank was so steep and slippery that he could secure no foothold upon it. Three or four times the gallant steed endeavoured to climb it, but finally slipped backwards into the water, snorting dreadfully, and almost falling upon his rider.

Charny knew that what his horse — a thoroughbred, assisted by a rider of his acknowledged skill — could not accomplish, could certainly not be accomplished by any regiment of cavalry.

The attempted rescue had proved a failure. Fate was too strong for them. The king and queen were lost. If he could not save them, there was but one thing for him to do, — perish with them.

He made one last, supreme effort to regain the solid ground above him. It proved as futile as the others; but as he made it, he stuck his sword half-way to the hilt in the clay which formed the bank of the canal, and this sword might furnish a foothold for a man, though not for a horse.

Dropping his bridle and freeing his feet from the stirrups, Charny swung himself from his horse just as the animal was about to sink, then he swam to his sword, grasped it, pulled himself up by it, and after two or three

vain attempts succeeded in scrambling out upon the turf above.

He looked back. On the other side of the canal he could see Bouillé and his son weeping with anger and chagrin, and the soldiers gloomy and despondent; for after beholding Charny's well-nigh fatal attempt, they all realised how utterly useless it would be to attempt a crossing.

The general wrung his hands in his despair, — this brave and daring commander, whose military undertakings had always been crowned with such success heretofore that the expression, "As lucky as Bouillé," had become a proverb in the army.

"Oh, gentlemen, never call me lucky again!" he cried lugubriously.

"Do not take it so to heart, general," cried Charny from the opposite bank. "I will tell them you did all that mortal man could do; and when I tell them that, they will believe me. Farewell!"

Covered with mud, his pistols useless now, by reason of the powder having become wet, his clothing dripping at every step, Charny started across the fields, and soon reached the road over which the royal prisoners must pass. He had only to follow it to overtake them.

Before doing so, he turned for the last time and saw Bouillé and his men still standing on the edge of the canal. In spite of the utter impossibility of advancing, they could not make up their minds to beat a retreat.

Charny made them a farewell gesture, turned the corner, and disappeared from their sight altogether. To guide him now, he had a frightful uproar, made up of the shouts, threats, jeers, and curses of nearly a thousand men.

CHAPTER III.

THE DEPARTURE.

OUR readers know that the king had left Varennes, and we will now proceed to give some account of that departure and the subsequent journey, during which we shall learn the fate of several faithful adherents and devoted friends of this unfortunate monarch.

As we have previously remarked, Charny's feet had scarcely touched the ground, after he leaped from the window of the solicitor's house, before the door opened again, and Billot reappeared upon the threshold.

Charny's flight was obvious enough, for the count was no longer there, and Damas was closing the window. Leaning out, Damas fancied he saw the fugitive just clearing the garden wall.

Some sort of a compact, too, had evidently been concluded between Monsieur de Romeuf and the queen, — a compact in which Romeuf had pledged himself to remain neutral; at least so it seemed to Billot.

The store-room behind Billot was again filled with the same class of people as before, — peasants, for the most part, armed with muskets, scythes, and sabres, — men upon whom Billot felt he could rely if a resort to violence should be deemed necessary.

"Well, have they decided to go?" he asked, turning to Romeuf.

The queen made no reply, except to bestow a withering glance upon Billot, and seat herself more firmly in her chair, clutching the arms as if resolved to weld herself to it.

"The king desires a little more time," replied Romeuf. "No one slept any during the night, and their Majesties are terribly fatigued."

"Monsieur de Romeuf," replied Billot, "you know perfectly well that it is not because their Majesties are tired that they ask for this delay, but because they hope that General Bouillé will arrive during the time. But let their Majesties beware," continued Billot, impressively; "for if they refuse to come of their own accord they will be dragged by the feet to their carriage."

"Wretch!" exclaimed Damas, rushing towards Billot, with sabre uplifted.

But Billot merely folded his arms upon his breast and looked him full in the face.

In fact, it was not at all necessary for him to defend himself, for eight or ten men were in the room in a second, and Damas found as many different weapons pointed straight at him.

The king saw that only a word or gesture was needed to cause the slaughter of those around him, so he said, —

"Very well, have the horses put to the carriage, and we will go."

Madame Brunier, one of the queen's attendants, screamed and fainted.

Her cry awakened the two children. The dauphin began to weep bitterly.

"Ah, monsieur," said the queen, turning to Billot, "have you no children yourself, that you can be so cruel to a mother?"

Billot started, then, with a bitter smile, he answered: "No, madame, I have none." Then, turning to the king, he added: "It is not necessary to put horses to the carriage. They are already harnessed."

"Then drive up."

"The coach is at the door."

The king walked to the window and saw that the coach was really in readiness, though he had not heard it drive

up, on account of the noise in the street. The people saw the king at the window, and a threatening cry—a howl of rage and hatred—went up from the multitude. The king turned pale.

“What are your Majesty’s orders?” Choiseul asked, approaching the queen. “My comrades and I had rather die than see this.”

“Do you think Monsieur de Charny made his escape?” whispered the queen, hastily.

“I am sure of it.”

“Then let us go; but in Heaven’s name, and even more on your own account than our own, do not leave us.”

The king understood the fear the queen entertained, so he said to Romeuf, —

“Of course Monsieur de Choiseul and Monsieur de Damas are to accompany us, and I do not see any horses for them.”

“We certainly have no right to prevent these gentlemen from following the queen,” Romeuf remarked, turning to Billot.

“These gentlemen must follow the king as best they can,” responded Billot. “My orders relate merely to the king and queen. I have nothing whatever to do with these gentlemen.”

“But I positively declare that I will not go until these gentlemen have horses provided for them,” said the king.

“What do you say to that?” demanded Billot, turning to the spectators. “The king will not go until horses are provided for these gentlemen.”

The men addressed laughed boisterously.

“I will go and order them,” said Romeuf; but Choiseul intercepted him. “Do not leave their Majesties,” he said. “Your mission gives you some authority over the rabble, and your honour makes it incumbent upon you to see that not a hair of their Majesties’ heads is harmed.”

Romeuf paused. Billot shrugged his shoulders. “Very well,” he said, “I’ll go and attend to it myself.” But at

the door he turned again, and asked frowningly, "Can I go with safety?"

"You need have no fears," responded the peasants, with another loud burst of laughter, which indicated that they would be only too glad to be of service in case of any resistance on the part of the prisoners.

So Billot did not even take the trouble to return to the chamber. One of the men stood near the window watching the proceedings in the street below, and presently he exclaimed: "Here are the horses, let's be off!"

"Yes, let's be off," repeated his companions, in tones that admitted of no discussion.

The king went first. Choiseul followed, giving his arm to the queen. Next came Damas, with Madame Elizabeth, then Madame de Tourzel and the two children, and around them the other members of this faithful little party.

As the envoy of the National Assembly, and consequently invested with a certain sacredness of character, it was Monsieur de Romeuf's special duty to protect the royal party; but Monsieur de Romeuf had abundant need of protection himself, for it was rumoured that he had not only executed the Assembly's orders with great mildness, but had also favoured the escape of one of their Majesties' most devoted adherents, who had hastened to General Bouillé to implore him to come to the immediate relief of the royal party. The natural result of all this was that while Billot was lauded to the skies by the populace, Romeuf was greeted with cries of "Traitor!" and "Aristocrat!" and with all sorts of threats when he reached the street.

The royal party entered the coach in the same order as that in which they had descended the stairs, and the two guardsmen took the same seats they had previously occupied,—outside; for as they were about to leave the room, Valory approached the king and said: "Sire, my comrade and I have a favour to ask of your Majesty."

"What is it, gentlemen?" asked the king, surprised that he had it in his power to grant any favour now.

"Sire, as we can no longer have the good fortune to serve you in a military capacity, we ask the favour of occupying places as servants in your household."

"Servants, gentlemen?" cried the king. "Impossible!"

But Valory bowed.

"Sire," said he, "in the situation in which your Majesty now finds yourself, we feel that such a position would reflect honour upon a prince of the blood, much more so upon such insignificant persons as ourselves."

"So be it then, gentlemen," answered the king, with tears in his eyes. "Remain, and never leave us again."

So these two young men made their livery and their pretended positions as couriers a reality, and took their places on the seat at the rear end of the coach, as Choiseul closed the door of the vehicle.

"Gentlemen," said the king. "I give you positive orders to take me to Montmédy. To Montmédy, postilions!"

But a single voice, a deafening voice, not the voice of a single community, but of a dozen communities combined, shouted: "No, no! To Paris! to Paris!"

A moment of silence followed; then Billot, pointing with his sword to the road they were to take, called out: "The road to Clermont, postilions!"

The coach began to move in obedience to this last order.

"I call you all to witness that I am compelled to go in this direction against my will," cried the king.

Then, as if overcome by this last effort to assert himself, the unfortunate king sank back in the coach between the queen and Madame Elizabeth, and the carriage moved on. In about five minutes, and before they had gone two hundred yards, loud cries were heard behind them. Partly on account of the positions they occupied, and partly by reason of the difference in their temperaments, the queen was the first to thrust her head out of the window; but she drew it in again almost instantly, and buried her face in her hands.

"Oh, what misery is ours!" she exclaimed. "They have killed Choiseul!"

The king made a movement as if to see for himself; but his wife and sister seized him and held him back, and he dropped down between them again. Besides, the coach had just turned a corner, and it was impossible to see what was taking place.

The facts of the case were as follows: Choiseul and Damas mounted their horses at the solicitor's door, but Romeuf's had mysteriously disappeared, though it had been brought from the stable with the others. Romeuf, Floirac, and Foucq consequently followed afoot, hoping that some of the still faithful troopers would offer them their horses, or that they might find some of the animals that had been abandoned by their masters, who were fraternising with the people and drinking to the health of the Nation.

But they had not proceeded fifteen yards before Choiseul from his place beside the coach-door perceived that Romeuf, Floirac, and Foucq were in imminent danger of being separated, swallowed up, and perhaps suffocated in the crowd. Choiseul halted an instant, and let the coach pass on; then, judging that Romeuf, by reason of the mission intrusted to him, could be of greater service to the royal family than either of his companions, he shouted to his servant James Brisack, whom he saw in the crowd: "My other horse for Monsieur de Romeuf, James!"

The words were scarcely out of his mouth before the mob closed in around him, shouting: "It's the duke! That's Choiseul! That is one of the fellows that tried to carry off the king! Down with the aristocrat! Death to the traitor!"

We all know how quickly the deed follows the word in such turbulent assemblages. In an instant the duke was dragged from his horse and swallowed up in that frightful maelstrom called the multitude, out of which, in that epoch of deadly passion, a man could emerge only in fragments.

But as he fell, five men rushed to his aid, — Damas, Floirac, Romeuf, Foucq, and James Brisack, — from whose

hands the bridle he was holding had been snatched, thus leaving them free for his master's defence.

Then there was a moment of deadly combat, like one of those combats of ancient times, or among the Arabs of our own day, around the bleeding bodies of the wounded and the dead.

Contrary to all human probability, — fortunately for him, — Choiseul was neither killed nor wounded, or, rather, his wounds were very slight, considering the dangerous weapons borne by his opponents. A gendarme standing near parried with the butt-end of his musket one sweeping blow of a scythe intended for the duke. A second cut was parried by James Brisack with a cudgel he had wrested from one of the assailants. The stick was cut in twain like a reed, but the blow was turned aside, and only wounded Choiseul's horse.

Then Adjutant Foucq called out: "Help, help, dragoons!" And several troopers, ashamed to stand by and see their old commander murdered before their very eyes, forced their way through the crowd to his side.

Romeuf sprang in front of them, shouting: "In the name of the National Assembly, whose agent I am, and of General Lafayette, who deputed me to come to this town, conduct these gentlemen to the town-hall."

The popularity of the National Assembly and of Lafayette were then at their height, so this adjuration produced the desired effect.

"To the town-hall with them! to the town-hall!" shouted a number of voices.

A determined effort was made by numerous right-minded citizens, and the duke and his companions were taken to the town-hall.

It took fully an hour and a half to get them there, and death threatened them at every step; for the slightest opening in the circle of protectors around the prisoners immediately afforded a passageway for a sword blade, the prongs of a pitchfork, or the point of a scythe.

They reached the town-hall at last, however. Only one of the municipal authorities had remained there, and he was completely overpowered by the burden of responsibility devolving upon him. As a mode of relieving himself of it, probably, he gave orders that Choiseul, Damas, and Floirac should be locked up, under the supervision of National Guardsmen. Romeuf declared that he would not leave the duke who had exposed himself to danger for his, Romeuf's, sake, so the officer ordered him into custody with the other three.

At a sign from the duke, his servant, who was of too little importance to attract much notice, vanished. His first care, for we must not forget that James Brisack was a groom, — and an excellent one, — was to look after the horses. He learned that they were at the inn, in the care of several hostlers.

Reassured on this point, he entered a café, asked for some tea, a pen and some ink and paper, and wrote to Madame de Choiseul and Madame de Grammont to allay any anxiety they might feel concerning the fate of their son and nephew, who was unquestionably safe the instant he became a prisoner.

Poor James Brisack was rather premature in this announcement, however. It is true that Choiseul was a prisoner, and that he was in the custody of the National Guards of the town; but his custodians neglected to station sentinels around his cell, and the prisoners were fired upon several times through the loopholes; so they were finally compelled to take refuge in the furthest corner of their cell. This decidedly unpleasant state of affairs lasted about twenty-four hours, during which Monsieur de Romeuf positively refused to desert his companions.

At last, on the 23rd, the National Guards from Verdun having arrived, Romeuf had the three prisoners placed in their charge; but he would not leave them until he received from the officers appointed to guard his friends their solemn promise not to lose sight of the prisoners until

they were safe in the custody of the Supreme Court in Paris.

As for poor Isidore de Charny, his body was taken to the house of a weaver, where strange but kindly hands performed the last sad offices for him; he being less fortunate in this respect than his brother George, who at least received the last sad services from the fraternal hands of the count and the friendly hands of Gilbert and Billot.

Billot was then a devoted and respectful friend; but we have seen how this friendship became changed into hatred, — a hatred as implacable as his former devotion had been profound.

CHAPTER IV.

VIA DOLOROSA.

MEANWHILE the royal family was pursuing its sorrowful journey towards Paris by what we can truly call the Via Dolorosa, or Sorrowful Way.

Alas! Louis the XVI., and Marie Antoinette, too, had their Calvary. Were they thus to atone for the crimes of the monarchy, as Jesus Christ atoned for the sins of mankind? This is a problem which the past has not solved, but which the future perhaps will.

The coach advanced slowly, for the horses could move only as fast as the escort. This escort was composed principally of men armed, as we have before explained, with pitchforks, guns, pikes, flails, swords, and scythes; but there was also a large number of women and children, the women in many cases carrying their children on their shoulders, so that they could see a king being taken back by force to his capital, — a sight they were not likely ever to behold again.

In the middle of this multitude, which overflowed into the fields on both sides of the road, was the king's big coach, followed by the cabriolet containing Mesdames Brunier and Neuville, — the small vehicle following the large one like a tiny skiff following a big vessel through a raging sea into the very jaws of perdition.

They reached Clermont without perceiving any diminution in the size of their escort, though the distance was about twelve miles. Those men, whose business compelled them to return to their homes, found substitutes in those who joined the procession at other villages along

the route, — eager to behold the sight of which some were beginning to weary.

Among the captives transported in this moving prison two were especially exposed to the wrath of the crowd and made the butt of its gibes and threats. These were the unfortunate guardsmen, Malden and Valory, who occupied the rear seat, outside. Every minute or two — and this was a means of reaching the royal family, whose persons had been made inviolable by a special order of the Assembly — every minute or two a bayonet was pointed at their bodies, while occasionally a sickle, which was really in this case that of death itself, was raised threateningly above their heads, or a lance, gliding like a perfidious serpent into the slight space between the two men, would strike its sharp fang into the living flesh, and then retreat again with equal rapidity, with its point red with blood, under the eye of its gratified master, who rejoiced to see that its thrust had not failed.

Suddenly every one was amazed to see a man, bareheaded and unarmed and with garments covered with mud, force his way through the crowd until he reached the coach, when he respectfully saluted the king and queen, and then, grasping the side of the vehicle, draw himself up to the seat outside between the two guardsmen.

The queen uttered a cry of mingled fear and joy and sorrow. She had recognised Charny. A cry of fear, because he had done such an audacious thing, for it seemed indeed a miracle that he had accomplished it without receiving a single wound; of joy, for she was so happy to see that he had escaped the many perils he must have incurred in his flight, dangers which seemed all the greater from the fact that, being unable to specify any particular one, she had imagined him the victim of all; of sorrow, for she knew that Charny's return, alone and in such a condition, indicated beyond a doubt that they must renounce all hope of succour from General Bouillé.

But the crowd, astonished at this man's audacity, seemed to respect him the more on account of it.

Hearing the increased commotion around the carriage, Billot, who was on horseback at the head of the procession, turned, and, recognising Charny, said to himself, —

“I ’m glad nothing has happened to him; but woe to the man who may be tempted to make another such attempt, for it will certainly cost him his life.”

They reached Sainte-Menehould about two o’clock in the afternoon. Loss of sleep and the excitement and fatigue of the night at Varennes had told perceptibly upon the entire party, more particularly upon the dauphin; and by the time they reached Sainte-Menehould the poor child was really ill with fever, and the king was consequently obliged to order a halt.

Unfortunately, of all the towns along the route Sainte-Menehould was the one most bitterly incensed against this unfortunate family; so no attention was paid to the king’s request. On the contrary, orders were given by Billot that fresh horses should be immediately attached to the carriage, and Billot was obeyed.

The little dauphin wept bitterly, and exclaimed between his sobs: “Why don’t they undress me and put me in my nice bed when I feel so sick?”

The queen could not stand these complaints, and broke down completely for a moment.

Lifting the weeping and shivering child up in her arms and showing him to the people, she exclaimed: “Let us stop! For this poor child’s sake, let us stop!”

But the horses had already been put to the carriage.

“Forward!” shouted Billot.

“Forward!” repeated the people.

As the farmer rode by the window to resume his place at the head of the procession, the queen said to him: —

“Ah, monsieur, I repeat it, you must have no children of your own!”

“And I repeat that I did have one, madame, but that I have one no longer.”

“Do as you please, you are the stronger,” said the queen,

“but beware! There is no voice that cries louder to Heaven for vengeance than that of a little child.”

The travellers resumed their journey. Their experience in passing through Sainte-Menehould was most trying. The enthusiasm the sight of Drouet created would in itself have been a lesson to these royal prisoners if kings were capable of learning anything; but Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette could see only blind fury in these cries of the populace. In these really patriotic men, who were convinced that they had saved France, the king and queen saw only rebels against the lawful government.

The king seemed completely crushed. Mortification and rage brought out big drops of sweat on the queen's forehead. Madame Elizabeth, a veritable angel who had strayed down from heaven, prayed softly, not for herself, but for her brother, her sister-in-law, her nephew and niece, in short, for everybody. The saintly woman could not separate those she considered victims from those she regarded as persecutors, and in the same prayer she laid them all at the feet of her Saviour.

The king had believed — and it was this belief which had led him astray in many matters, perhaps — that the spirit of discontent and insubordination was confined to Paris, and that there was not the slightest doubt of the loyalty of the provinces; but the provinces were not only disappointing him, but had evidently turned remorselessly against him. And it would have seemed even worse to the king, had he been able to see what took place in the different towns and villages when the news of his arrest was received. In an instant the entire population was aroused. Mothers carried their infants in their arms, and led by the hand such children as were able to walk. Men armed themselves with any weapons they could lay their hands upon, and hastened forward, not to act as the king's escort this time, but to kill the king, — the king who at harvest-time had sent for their pitiful gleanings to trample them under the feet of the horses of those thieving, destruc-

tive vandals, the hussars. But three angels protected the royal coach, — the poor little dauphin, moaning with pain on his mother's lap; Madame Royale, glowing with the radiant beauty that generally accompanies chestnut hair, standing at the carriage window, and surveying everything with an astonished, but unfaltering gaze; and Madame Elizabeth, now twenty-seven years of age, but whose purity of soul enwreathed her brow with the radiant aureole of youth.

When they saw all this, — the queen bending tenderly over her sick child, and the king so utterly crushed, — their fury abated, or strove to find some other object upon which to vent itself; so they jeered at the devoted guardsmen, and called them cowards and traitors.

Two interesting incidents which are related by Michelet, the poetic and picturesque historian, may be quoted as illustrations.

What would the king, who still seemed to be labouring under a delusion, have said had he known that a man walked all the way from Mézières, a distance of nearly two hundred miles, with his gun on his shoulder, on purpose to kill the king on his return to Paris? But when he reached Paris, and saw the king so wretched, so poor, and so humiliated in spirit, he shook his head and abandoned his project.

What would the king have said had he known that a young carpenter, who felt sure that the king would be immediately tried and convicted after his flight, what would the king have said had he known that this young carpenter walked all the way from the most remote district in Burgundy, in order to be present at the trial and conviction? But, on the way, a master carpenter succeeded in convincing him that a much longer time than he supposed would elapse before the royal culprit was brought to trial, and urged him to stop awhile and work with him. The young man consented, and subsequently married his employer's daughter.

What Louis XVI. did see was quite as significant,

perhaps, even if less terrible; for though a triple shield of innocence protected him from the wrath of the populace, it was vented in an unmistakable manner upon his adherents.

The cortège had left Sainte-Menehould, and were perhaps a little over a mile from the town, when an old gentleman came galloping across the fields towards them. He was a knight of the order of St. Louis, and wore the cross of that order in his button-hole. At first, the people thought he had come merely out of curiosity, and made way for him; but the old nobleman approached the coach hat in hand, saluting the king and queen in the most deferential manner, and addressing them by their royal titles. The populace were incensed at the bestowal of these honours upon the prisoners,—honours which they considered due only to the Nation; so they began to growl, and to threaten the offender.

The king had heard these sullen growls at Varennes, and understood their significance.

“Both the queen and myself are deeply touched by this public display of devotion, monsieur,” he said to the aged knight, “but for Heaven’s sake leave us! Your life is in danger.”

“My life is my king’s,” responded the old chevalier; “and the last day of my life will be the grandest and happiest if I die for my sovereign.”

Several persons overheard this response, and growled louder than ever.

“Go, monsieur, go!” cried the king. Then, leaning out of the carriage, he added: “My friends, make way for Monsieur de Dampierre, I beseech you!”

Those who were nearest and who heard the king’s appeal complied with the request; but a little further on both horse and rider found themselves hemmed in. The old nobleman tried to urge his steed on with bridle and with spur, but the crowd was so dense that it could scarcely control its own movements. Several women shrieked, a

child wept loudly, and some of the men clenched their fists threateningly; but the indomitable old man shook his whip at them all. Then the threats changed into angry roars, and the fury of the populace became terrible. Monsieur de Dampierre had already reached the outer edge of this forest of men, and plunging both spurs into his horse's flanks he cleared the ditch which bordered the roadside at a single bound, and started off at a gallop across the fields. As he did so the old gentleman turned, and, again doffing his hat, shouted at the top of his voice, "God save the king!" A final token of homage to his sovereign, but a deadly insult to the already infuriated populace.

A shot rang out through the air.

Pulling a pistol from his holster, Dampierre returned shot for shot. Then everybody who had a musket fired simultaneously at the deluded man.

His horse fell riddled with bullets.

Was its rider wounded or killed? The crowd rushed like an avalanche to the spot where man and horse had fallen, about fifty yards from the royal coach. A frightful uproar ensued, then a head, crowned with white hair, suddenly rose on the end of a pike out of the surrounding chaos. It was the head of the unfortunate Dampierre.

The queen shrieked and sank back half-swooning in the coach.

"Monsters! Cannibals!" shouted Charny.

"Silence, count, silence!" said Billot, "or I will not be responsible for your safety."

"So be it," replied Charny. "I am tired of life. Nothing worse can happen to me than has happened to my poor brother."

"Your brother deserved his fate," replied Billot, grimly; "you do not."

Charny made a sudden movement, as if with the intention of leaping from his seat; but the guardsmen held him back, and twenty bayonets were already directed towards him.

“My friends,” said Billot, in his most impressive tones, “whatever this man” — pointing to Charny as he spoke — “may do or say, I forbid you to harm a hair of his head. I am answerable to his wife for him.”

“To his wife,” muttered the queen, shuddering as if one of the bayonets that threatened Charny had pierced her own heart. “To his wife? And why?”

Why, indeed? Billot could not have answered the question himself. He had invoked the name and the image of Charny’s wife merely because he knew what a power such words exert over a crowd of people, made up for the most part of husbands and fathers.

CHAPTER V.

VIA DOLOROSA.

It was late when they reached Châlons, and the coach drove into the courtyard of the post-house, for couriers had been sent on in advance to secure lodgings for the party.

The courtyard was thronged with National Guards and curious spectators; and it was necessary to drive the people away before the king could alight from his carriage.— As he set foot on the steps leading to the house, a shot resounded, and a bullet whistled by the king's ear.— Was the shot fired with regicidal intent, or was it only an accident?

“Some awkward fellow has let his gun go off,” remarked the king, turning round with great coolness. “Be careful, gentlemen,” he added in louder tones, “or we shall have an accident.”

Charny and the two guardsmen followed the royal family into the house unhindered.

In spite of the ominous shot, it seemed to the queen that she was entering a much more genial atmosphere. A compassionate murmur had arisen from the crowd of bystanders as the royal family left the carriage, and a sumptuous meal was awaiting them, served with an elegance that surprised the prisoners not a little.

Several servants were in attendance, but Charny claimed for himself and the two guardsmen the privilege of waiting on their Majesties. He did this in order to be able to remain with the king, and be ready for any emergency.

The queen understood his motive, but she never so much as glanced in his direction, or thanked him by word or gesture. That remark of Billot's, “I am answerable to

his wife for him," had created a frightful tempest in Marie Antoinette's heart.

Charny, whom she had hoped to take out of France with her, — Charny, whom she had hoped to see expatriated with her, — was now returning with her to Paris, where he would meet Andrée again.

Charny, however, had no suspicion of what was passing in the queen's mind. He had entirely forgotten the remark, in fact, his thoughts being entirely engrossed with the situation, for he was beginning to take a rather more hopeful view of it.

Charny had spent so much time on the road from Montmédy to Paris that he understood the state of feeling in each town pretty thoroughly. Châlons was an old town with very few mercantile interests, the population consisting for the most part of retired tradesmen, noblemen, and those who drew their income from the public funds; and consequently all, or nearly all, were royalists.

In fact, the royal guests were hardly seated at table before their host, the Intendant of the department, entered and, bowing respectfully, said to the queen,—

"Madame, some of the young girls of our town request the privilege of presenting some flowers to your Majesty."

Greatly surprised, the queen turned first to Madame Elizabeth, and then to the king.

"Flowers!" she repeated.

"If the request is ill-timed, or too audacious, madame, I will send word to them that they are not to come up," replied the Intendant.

"Oh, no, no, monsieur, quite the contrary," exclaimed the queen. "Flowers and maidens! Let them come in by all means."

The Intendant withdrew, and a moment afterward a dozen girls, from fourteen to sixteen years of age, appeared in the open doorway.

"Come in, come in, my children," cried the queen, holding out her arms to them.

One of the young girls, acting as spokesman, not only for her companions, but for their parents as well, and indeed for the entire town, had learned a very pretty little speech; but the greeting of the queen, her open arms, and the emotion displayed by the entire royal family drove every word of it out of the poor girl's head, and she could only sob: "Oh, your Majesty, what a calamity!"

The queen took the bouquet and kissed the young girl.

In the mean time Charny had bent over and whispered in the king's ear: "Perhaps we may derive some advantage from the loyal feeling that seems to pervade this town, sire. Possibly all is not lost, even now. If your Majesty will grant me leave of absence for an hour, I'll go out awhile, and report what I have seen and heard, and perhaps accomplished, on my return."

"Go, monsieur, but be very prudent. If any misfortune should befall you, I should never get over it. Alas! two deaths in one family are more than enough!"

"Nevertheless my life belongs to the king, sire, just as much as my poor brothers' lives did," replied Charny.

He left the room; but as he crossed the threshold he dashed away a tear, for he was not nearly so stoical as he endeavoured to appear while in the presence of the royal family. "Poor Isidore!" he murmured, pressing his hand upon his breast to satisfy himself that the papers Choiseul had taken from his brother's dead body were still in his pocket.

Behind the young girls, upon whom Madame Royale bestowed a true sisterly greeting, were their parents, mostly aged noblemen or respectable citizens of the middle class. They had come timidly and humbly to ask the privilege of paying their respects to their unfortunate sovereigns. The king rose to receive them, and the queen bade them enter, in her sweetest tones.

Were they in Châlons, or were they at Versailles? Could it be that only a few hours had elapsed since they saw poor Monsieur de Dampierre murdered before their very eyes?

In about half an hour Charny returned.

"Well?" asked the king.

"Well, sire, everything promises well. The Châlons National Guards offer to conduct your Majesty back to Montmédy to-morrow."

"Then you have decided upon some plan of action?"

"Yes, sire. I have conferred with the leading men of the town. To-morrow the king will ask to attend mass prior to his departure; and as it is Corpus Christi day, the request is not likely to be refused. The coach will wait for the king at the church door. When he enters it, loud cheers for his Majesty will be heard, and in the midst of these cheers the king will give orders to turn about and drive towards Montmédy."

"Good!" exclaimed the king. "Thank you, Monsieur de Charny. If nothing happens in the mean time, it shall be as you say. Now go and get some sleep, for you and your comrades must need it even more than we do."

When they were ushered into the suite of rooms reserved for them, the sight of a sentinel stationed at the door reminded the king and queen that they were still prisoners, though the man presented arms respectfully. By the precision of his movements, the king perceived that the sentinel must be an old soldier, so he asked,—

"Where did you serve, my friend?"

"In the French Guards, sire," answered the man.

"Then I am not surprised to see you here," responded the king, dryly; for Louis XVI. could not forget that on the thirteenth of July, 1789, the French Guards had gone over to the people.

An hour later, when this sentinel was relieved, he asked for an interview with the chief of escort. This was Billot, who was eating his supper in the street at the time with the men who had come from the different villages along the route. The majority of these men, having seen what they came to see, — the king, — were anxious now to return and keep the *fête* day in their homes. Billot tried

to dissuade them, for the royalistic atmosphere of the town caused him anxiety; but all his efforts proved fruitless.

The discussion was interrupted by the arrival of the sentinel, and the two men conversed together some time in a very animated manner. Then Billot sent for Drouet, and another lively conversation ensued; after which Billot might have been seen galloping along the road to Rheims, and Drouet along the road to Vitry le Français.

By daybreak barely six hundred of the immense escort of the evening before remained in Châlons. By the first gray light of dawn a dozen men in uniform entered the house of the Intendant, where the king was staying, but soon emerged from it and hurried away.

A detachment of Villeroy's troops had been stationed at Châlons a short time before. A dozen of these gentlemen were still in the town, and it was they who had presented themselves at Charny's request. He gave them orders to put on their uniforms and be at the church door on horseback when the king came from mass.

Many peasants, who had been really too tired to start for home the evening before, left early in the morning; so the number of faithful patriots was now reduced to about four hundred or four hundred and fifty.

Charny could count upon an equal number of National Guards who were still devoted to the king, to say nothing of Valory and Malden and the officers before mentioned, who would constitute a sort of special bodyguard ready to brave any danger. Besides, the town was royalist in feeling, as we have already remarked.

The next morning, as early as six o'clock, the most zealous champions of the royalist cause were assembled in the courtyard of the Intendant's house. Charny and the Guardsmen were also there waiting.

The king rose at seven o'clock, and at once announced his intention of attending mass.

Drouet and Billot were sent for, in order that the king's desire might be made known to them; but neither of them

was to be found. When their absence was announced to the king, the monarch rejoiced; but Charny shook his head dubiously. Though Drouet was a stranger to him, he understood Billot's character perfectly.

Nevertheless, all the indications seemed favourable. The streets were thronged with people, but it was easy to see that they were in sympathy with the king. As long as the shutters of the royal chambers remained closed the crowd moved about as quietly as possible, so as not to disturb the slumber of the royal prisoners; but when the shutters were thrown open, loud shouts of "Long live the king!" and "Long live the queen!" resounded with such energy that the king and queen both showed themselves on their respective balconies, without having consulted each other on the subject. Then the acclamations became deafening, and the two victims of destiny could again delude themselves with false hopes.

Just then the pealing of a bell announced that the church was open, and almost simultaneously Charny tapped lightly at his Majesty's door.

"All right! I am ready," responded the king. Charny glanced at the monarch. His bearing was calm, almost firm. He had suffered so much that he seemed to have lost his irresolution by reason of his very suffering.

The coach was at the door, and the royal family entered it, surrounded by a crowd nearly equal in size to that of the evening before; only instead of insulting the prisoners, these people begged for a look or a word, and thought themselves fortunate indeed if they could but touch the skirt of the king's coat or kiss the hem of her Majesty's robe. The three officers took their former seats on the outside of the vehicle, and the coachman was ordered to drive to the church. He obeyed without a word. Besides, who had any right to give any contradictory order, the two leaders of the populace being absent. Charny looked around in search of Billot and Drouet, but in vain.

The escort of peasantry resumed its place around the carriage, but the number of National Guards increased every minute, coming round each street corner in companies; and when they reached the church Charny felt satisfied that he had about six hundred men at his disposal.

Seats had been reserved for the royal family under a sort of canopy, and although it was only eight o'clock the priests were beginning mass.

Charny noted the fact with great inward satisfaction, for he had been terribly afraid there might be some delay, and any delay might prove fatal to his plans. He had even sent the officiating priest notice that the service must not last more than a quarter of an hour.

"I understand," was the priest's response, "and I shall pray God to grant their Majesties a safe and prosperous journey."

The service was completed within the time specified; nevertheless, Charny pulled out his watch twenty times. The king himself could not conceal his impatience. The queen, kneeling between her two children, rested her head upon the cushion of the prie-Dieu; Madame Elizabeth, calm and serene as a marble statue of the Madonna, — either because she was entirely ignorant of this new project, or because she had already confided her life and that of her brother to God's keeping, — showed no sign of anxiety or impatience.

At last, turning to the congregation, the priest uttered the concluding words of the service, *Ite, missa est*, and, descending the steps of the altar, pyx in hand, he blessed the king and the other members of the royal family as he passed into the sacristy.

They all bowed reverently in their turn as they responded to his benediction with a low "Amen!"

Then they walked towards the door. All the other members of the congregation knelt as they passed, their lips moving the while in earnest prayer, and it was easy to

conjecture the nature of the petition they were addressing to Heaven.

At the church door they found ten or twelve more guards on horseback. The royalist escort was beginning to assume very respectable proportions; still, it was evident that the peasants with their strong wills and their more formidable looking, but perhaps less dangerous, weapons might be able at the decisive moment to turn the scale by throwing their weight into the balance. So it was not without considerable fear and anxiety that Charny leaned towards the king and said, by way of encouragement, "Let us proceed, sire."

Indeed, the king had already decided. Leaning out of the carriage window, and addressing the persons nearest the vehicle, he said:—

"Yesterday at Varennes, gentlemen, I was made the victim of violence. I had given orders to drive to Montmédy, but I was dragged by force towards a rebellious capital. But yesterday I was surrounded by rebels; to-day, I am among loyal subjects, and I repeat: To Montmédy, gentlemen!"

"To Montmédy!" cried Charny.

"To Montmédy!" repeated the guardsmen of Villeroy's company.

"To Montmédy!" repeated all the National Guardsmen of the town.

Then a general shout of "Long live the king!" went up from the crowd.

The carriage turned the corner of the street, and began to retrace its course over the road travelled the evening before.

Charny watched the peasantry closely, and it seemed to him that in Drouet's and Billot's absence the man who had been on guard at the king's door the night before was acting as their leader. This man seemed to note every movement closely, and with a sullen and gloomy look that indicated great dissatisfaction. His followers seemed to

share this feeling; nevertheless, they allowed the Châlons National Guard to move on ahead, while they massed themselves together as a rear-guard.

In the front ranks of this rear-guard marched the men carrying pikes, pitchforks, and scythes. About one hundred and fifty men armed with muskets followed. This manœuvre, which was as cleverly executed as if it had been performed by regulars, excited Charny's apprehensions; but he had no means of preventing it, nor could he even ask for an explanation of it, under the circumstances.

The explanation came soon enough.

As they neared the gates of the town, a dull distant sound, steadily increasing in volume, became distinctly audible even above the shouts and cheers of the escort accompanying the carriage.

Suddenly Charny turned pale, and placing his hand on the knee of the guardsman beside him, he exclaimed: —

“All is lost!”

“Why?”

“Don't you recognise that sound?”

“A drum, is n't it? What of it?”

“You will soon see,” answered Charny.

Just at that moment they turned into a public square where two roads met, — one leading from Rheims, the other from Vitry-le-Français. Up both these roads two large companies of National Guards were advancing, with drums beating and flags flying, — one numbering eighteen hundred, the other fully two thousand men.

Each of these bodies of troops was under the command of a man on horseback. One of these men was Billot, the other, Drouet. The reason of their protracted absence was now only too evident. Warned of the royalists' plans, they had hurried off, one to hasten the arrival of the National Guards from Rheims, and the other to summon the National Guards from Vitry.

Their arrangements being carefully made, both companies

had arrived at the same time. They halted their men in the square, thus closing it up completely; and, without any preamble whatever, an order to load the muskets was given.

The royal cortège paused. The king put his head out of the window. Charny was standing there, pale as death, his teeth tightly clenched.

“What is the matter?” asked the king.

“Our enemies have secured reinforcements, and are standing there with muskets loaded, as you see, while behind us and the National Guard of Châlons are the peasants ready to attack us in the rear.”

“What do you think of the situation, Monsieur de Charny?”

“I think we are between two fires; but that need not prevent us from pressing on, if your Majesty says the word; but how far we can go, I do not know.”

“Very well, then let us turn back.”

“Your Majesty has fully decided?”

“Monsieur de Charny, too much blood has been shed for me already, — blood I mourn with bitter tears. I will not have another drop shed if I can help it. We will turn back.”

The young guardsmen had jumped down from the top of the coach, and Villeroy’s men had rushed up. The brave young fellows were all longing for a fight; but the king repeated his order even more positively than before.

“Gentlemen, we will turn back. The king commands it!” exclaimed Charny, loudly and imperatively. And, grasping the bridle of the nearest horse as he spoke, he turned the heavy coach round.

At the gate on the road to Paris the Châlons National Guards, unable to render any further service, relinquished their places to the peasantry and the National Guards from Vitry and Rheims.

“Do you think I have acted wisely, madame?” the king inquired of Marie Antoinette.

“Yes,” she replied; “but it seems to me that Monsieur de Charny acquiesced very readily.”

And she relapsed into a gloomy reverie, in which the situation in which they found themselves, terrible as it was, played a very insignificant part.

CHAPTER VI.

VIA DOLOROSA.

THE coach was proceeding slowly but surely towards Paris, in charge of the two grim men who had compelled it to change its course, when, on the road between Epernay and Dormans, Charny, thanks to his tall stature and the elevated seat he occupied, discerned another vehicle drawn by four horses coming at full speed from Paris.

Charny immediately suspected that this vehicle must be bringing some important personage or intelligence; and this conjecture was corroborated by the fact that when the carriage met the advance-guard, and a few words had been interchanged, the ranks opened, and the men presented arms respectfully.

The king's coach was consequently obliged to stop; and as it did so, enthusiastic shouts of "Hurrah for the National Assembly!" were heard.

The vehicle, which had just arrived from Paris, continued to advance until it reached the king's coach, when three men, two of whom were entire strangers to the royal family, alighted from it. But the third occupant of the carriage had scarcely put his head out of the door before the queen whispered to her husband, —

"Latour-Maubourg, Lafayette's tool!" Then, shaking her head, "This augurs us no good," she added.

The eldest of the men came forward, and, pulling the door of the royal coach roughly open, said with great brusqueness, "I am Pétion, and these men here are Barnave and Latour-Maubourg, sent, like myself, to act as your escort, and to see that the anger of the people

does n't lead them to take the law into their own hands. Move up a little, so as to make room for us."

The queen darted at the speaker and his companions one of those supremely scornful glances the proud daughter of Maria Theresa knew so well how to bestow.

Latour-Maubourg, a courteous gentleman of the old school, could not bear this look, so he said, —

"Their Majesties are too much crowded already. I will go in the other carriage."

"Do as you please about that," answered Pétion; "but my place is here with the king and queen," and as he spoke, he stepped into the coach.

The king and queen and Madame Elizabeth were sitting on the back seat. Pétion looked at each of them in turn; then, addressing Madame Elizabeth, he said: —

"Excuse me, madame, but, as the representative of the National Assembly, the place of honour belongs to me; so oblige me by getting up and taking the front seat."

"Was the equal of that ever heard?" murmured the queen.

"Really, monsieur," protested the king.

"It is only the proper thing," insisted Pétion. "Come, madame, get up and give me your seat."

Madame Elizabeth relinquished her place, making a little sign to indicate that it did n't matter in the least, to her brother and sister-in-law, as she rose.

Meanwhile Maubourg had made his escape; and he asked the two female attendants to give him a seat in their cabriolet, with much more courtesy than Pétion had displayed towards the royal family. Barnave remained standing outside, unwilling to push his way into a carriage that was already much too full for comfort.

"Well, Barnave, what's the matter? Are n't you coming?" shouted Pétion.

"Where will you put me?" asked Barnave, considerably embarrassed.

"Should you like my seat, monsieur?" asked the queen, sharply.

“I thank you, madame, but the other seat is good enough for me.”

Madame Elizabeth drew Madame Royale closer to her side, and the queen took the dauphin on her lap. In this way they made room on the front seat, and Barnave was brought face to face and knee to knee with the queen.

“Now go ahead!” cried Pétion, without condescending to consult the king; and the procession moved on again, amid deafening cheers for the National Assembly.

The people, in the persons of Barnave and Pétion, now occupied a place in the carriage with the king. They had secured the right to do soon the 14th of July and the 5th and 6th of October.

A moment's silence ensued. Let us avail ourselves of the opportunity to say a few words in relation to the persons who had just appeared upon the scene.

Jérôme Pétion was a man about thirty-two years of age, endowed with a strong personality, though his chief merit lay in the purity and integrity of his political principles. His birthplace was Chartres, where he had been admitted to the bar as an advocate, and afterwards sent to Paris as a deputy in 1789. He was subsequently elected Mayor of Paris, and enjoyed a popularity which far exceeded that of Bailly or Lafayette; but he came to his death by being devoured by wolves in a forest near Bordeaux. His friends styled him the Honest Pétion. He and Camille Desmoulins were already republicans, though no one else in France had yet espoused those principles.

Pierre Joseph Marie Barnave was born in Grenoble, and was hardly thirty years old. Elected to the National Assembly, he had speedily acquired both wide-spread fame and popularity by entering the lists against Mirabeau, just as the fame and popularity of that great orator began to wane. All the enemies of the famous deputy from Aix were sure to be Barnave's friends, and they sustained, applauded, and encouraged him in his stormy debates with his rival. At this time he did not look more than

twenty-five, with his large, handsome blue eyes, big mouth, retroussé nose, and shrill, piercing voice. Though he was aggressive and even quarrelsome in disposition, his manner and appearance were both characterized with an air of elegance that made him look like some young military officer in the garb of a tradesman. He belonged to the Constitutional Royalist party. As Barnave was settling himself on the front seat, opposite the queen, the king remarked, —

“Gentlemen, I wish to say here and now that I never had the slightest intention of leaving the kingdom.”

Barnave, half-seated, stopped short, and looked at the king.

“Are you telling the truth, sire?” he asked. “In that case this assurance on your part may save France.”

And now something strange took place between this plain citizen from a provincial town and a woman descended from one of the proudest dynasties in Europe. Each tried to read the other’s heart, not like two political opponents who are striving to discover state secrets, but like a man and a woman who are endeavouring to fathom the mysteries of each other’s love.

Barnave aspired to be Mirabeau’s successor in all things. In his own opinion, at least, the mantle of that great statesman had already descended upon his shoulders.

But his aspirations were not yet entirely realised. In the opinion of the public generally, — though we know how little foundation there was for this belief, — Mirabeau was honoured with the confidence of the king and the special favour of the queen. That single interview at St.-Cloud had been exaggerated into frequent secret audiences, in which Mirabeau’s presumption had amounted to audacity, and the queen’s condescension to positive weakness; for it was the fashion in those days not only to slander poor Marie Antoinette, but also to believe these calumnies.

Now, Barnave’s ambition to become Mirabeau’s successor

in all things had induced him to secure an appointment as one of the three commissioners sent to meet the king; and he had come with all the assurance of a man who knows that even though he may lack the power to inspire love, he will at least be able to inspire hatred.

One quick glance had enabled the queen to discover all this, and one thing more, — that Barnave's undivided attention was bestowed upon her. Five or six times during the first quarter of an hour the young deputy scrutinised the three young men outside with the utmost care, and after each scrutiny his expression became harder and more hostile; for Barnave knew that one of these three men, though he was not sure which, was Charny, and gossips declared that Charny was the queen's lover.

Barnave was jealous, — strange as this may seem, — and the queen saw it. Knowing the weak spot in her adversary's coat of mail, she realised that she could strike home whenever she chose.

"Monsieur," she said at last, addressing the king, "you heard what that man said in relation to Monsieur de Charny, did you not?"

"He said he was responsible to the count's wife for his safety, did he not? What of it?"

"Well, you recollect, of course, that the count's wife is my old friend Andrée de Taverney; so don't you think it would be well to give him leave of absence on our return to Paris, so that he may reassure and comfort his wife? He has incurred great risks on our account, and his younger brother was killed in our defence. I think to insist upon a continuation of his services would be cruel, under the circumstances."

"You are right, madame; though I doubt if Charny will accept a dismissal," replied the king.

"In that case, we shall both have done our duty, however, — we in offering the count leave of absence, and the count in declining it."

She was innocent, there could be no doubt of it. Oh,

how gladly Barnave would have asked forgiveness of the *queen* for his injustice towards the woman! Hitherto Barnave's manner had been that of a magistrate before a culprit he feels that he has a right to try and condemn; but now the culprit had unwittingly answered a mental accusation, which she could not even have guessed, with words that convinced him of her innocence; so now Barnave became gentle, almost humble. He would have given anything to attract the queen's attention to himself, but she seemed to ignore his very existence. Should he speak to her? He did not dare. Should he wait until the queen addressed a remark to him? But the queen, satisfied with the effect her few words had produced, said not another word.

The young deputy was in a state of nervous exaltation in which he would cheerfully have undertaken the labors of Hercules to win the attention of this indifferent woman.

He was imploring the Supreme Being, — there was no God in 1791, — he was imploring the Supreme Being to grant him some opportunity to attract the notice of this proud but beautiful creature, when, as if in answer to his prayer, a poor priest who had been waiting by the roadside to see the august prisoners pass, lifted his clasped hands and tearful eyes to Heaven, exclaiming, "Sire, may God watch over your Majesty!"

It had been some time since the rabble had had any object to vent their wrath upon, so they were not inclined to neglect the opportunity which had just presented itself.

Yelling and hooting, they rushed upon the offender, and in another instant he was felled to the earth, and seemed about to be torn in pieces, when the frightened queen cried out to Barnave, "Oh, monsieur, don't you see what they are doing?"

Barnave raised his head and glanced at the sea of human beings in which the poor priest had been swallowed up, and which was now surging in angry and tumultuous waves round the coach.

“You wretches!” he shouted; and he hurled himself against the carriage door so violently that it flew open, and he would have been precipitated to the ground had not Madame Elizabeth caught him by the skirt of his coat. “You tigers, — you are no Frenchmen, — or France, once the land of the brave, has become a land of assassins!”

The apostrophe may seem rather pretentious to us, but it suited the taste of the time. Besides, Barnave represented the National Assembly. It was the supreme power of the State they heard speaking through him. The crowd recoiled; the old man was saved. He tottered to his feet.

“You have done well to save me, young man,” he said; “an old man will pray for you.” And, making the sign of the cross, he walked away.

The young deputy resumed his seat naturally and quietly, not at all with the air of a man who thinks he has just saved another man’s life.

“I thank you, monsieur,” said the queen; and the words thrilled Barnave through and through.

It is incontestably true that during our long acquaintance with Marie Antoinette she had never seemed so attractive as now, though she had been much more beautiful.

In fact, instead of being enthroned as a queen, she now seemed to be enthroned as a mother. On her left she had the dauphin, a charming boy with golden curls, who, with the careless freedom and innocence of childhood, had slid from his mother’s lap to the knee of the virtuous Pétion, whose natural kindness made him stroke the boy’s golden locks occasionally. On her right sat her daughter, Madame Royale, who was the very picture of what her mother must have been in the flower of her youth and beauty. Marie Antoinette herself wore in place of the golden crown of royalty, the thorny crown of sorrow. Above her dark eyes and snowy brow a few prematurely gray hairs glistened amid her luxuriant hair, and these spoke more eloquently to the heart of the young deputy than the most plaintive appeal would have done.

Suddenly the young dauphin uttered a slight cry of pain. The child had played some kind of a trick upon Pétion, and that worthy thought proper to punish him by pulling his ears.

The king reddened with anger, and the queen turned pale with mortification. She turned to take the little fellow from Pétion's lap; and as Barnave, too, attempted to do the same thing, the dauphin was lifted in their four arms simultaneously, and an instant later he found himself on the last-named gentleman's knee.

Marie Antoinette tried to entice him into her own lap again, but without success.

"No, no, mamma, I like it here," exclaimed the dauphin.

And though Barnave, who noted the queen's movement, opened his arms to allow her to carry out her intentions, the queen — was it a mother's or a woman's coquetry? — left the young prince where he was.

An indescribable feeling possessed Barnave's heart at that moment. He felt happy and proud at the same time.

The child began to play with Barnave's lace frill, then, with his belt, and finally with the buttons on his deputy's uniform. These buttons interested the boy particularly from the fact that they had a device engraved upon them. The dauphin named the letters one after another, and then putting them together, spelled out the four words, "Live free, or die."

"What does that mean, monsieur?" he asked.

Barnave hesitated, as if in doubt what to reply.

"It means, my little man," explained Pétion, "that the French people have sworn never to have another master. Do you understand that?"

"Pétion!" exclaimed Barnave.

"Well, explain the words differently if you know any other meaning for them," replied Pétion, carelessly.

Barnave was silent. The device, which had seemed sublime to him before, now seemed cruel, and he took the dauphin's hand and kissed it respectfully.

The queen dashed away a furtive tear, while the coach which was the scene of this little drama, — simple almost to childishness, — rolled on amid the cries of the angry crowd, bearing six of the eight persons it contained to their deaths.

A few minutes afterwards, they reached Dormans.

CHAPTER VII.

VIA DOLOROSA.

No preparations had been made for the reception of the royal family at Dormans, and they were consequently obliged to stay at an inn.

Either by order of Pétion, who had been offended by the reticence of the royal couple during the journey, or because the inn was really full, three attic rooms were assigned to the royal guests.

On alighting, Charny was about to approach the king and queen for orders as usual; but a glance from the queen gave him to understand that he was to hold himself aloof, and without understanding the cause of the unspoken command, the count unhesitatingly obeyed it.

So it was Pétion who entered the inn to make the necessary arrangements, and he did not take the trouble to come out again, but merely sent a servant to inform the royal family that their rooms were ready.

Barnave was much embarrassed. He was dying to offer his arm to the queen, but he feared that the very persons who had scoffed at etiquette in the person of Madame de Noailles would be the last to overlook any breach of it in him.

The king alighted first, assisted by Malden and Valory; then the queen stepped out, and extended her arms to take the dauphin; but as if the poor child realised intuitively the benefit his mother would derive from this flattery, he exclaimed, —

“No, I want to stay with my friend Barnave.”

Marie Antoinette nodded her assent with a pleasant smile, so Barnave waited for Madame Elizabeth and

Madame Royale to alight, and then followed them himself, still holding the dauphin in his arms.

Madame de Tourzel alighted next, intending to forthwith rescue her royal pupil from the plebeian hands that held him; but another glance from the queen calmed the aristocratic ardour of the governess.

The queen mounted the steep and winding staircase, leaning on her husband's arm. On reaching the second story, she paused, thinking twenty steps quite enough; but the waiter called out, "Higher! higher yet!" so she continued to ascend.

Drops of shame and anger bedewed Barnave's brow.

"What! higher yet?" he demanded.

"Yes," replied the waiter. "On this floor there is nothing but the dining-room and the apartments reserved for the gentlemen of the National Assembly."

Barnave's eyes gleamed wrathfully. Pétion had reserved the apartments on the second floor for the use of himself and his colleagues, and relegated the royal family to the third story. The young deputy said nothing; but, fearing the queen's anger and indignation when she saw the rooms assigned her and her family by Pétion, Barnave set the dauphin down on the upper landing, and started downstairs.

"Mamma, mamma, my friend Barnave is going away," cried the little prince.

"He is wise," responded the queen, laughing, as she glanced around the apartments, which consisted of three small rooms opening into each other.

The queen with Madame Royale took possession of the first; the second was taken by Madame Elizabeth for herself, the dauphin, and Madame de Tourzel; the king took the third, which was little more than a closet, with a second door opening upon the stairway.

The king, being tired, wished to lie down a few minutes before supper; but the bed was so short that he was very soon obliged to get up again. Opening the door, he called

for a chair; so Malden and Valory, who were in the hall, got a chair from the dining-room and brought it to the king. There was one chair in the room already, and Louis arranged that and the second chair brought by Malden in such a way as to make the bed long enough.

"Oh, sire, can you manage to get through the night in this way?" exclaimed Malden, dolefully.

"Certainly, monsieur," replied the king. "If all the complaints that reach my ears are true, many of my subjects would be glad enough to have this little room with its bed and two chairs."

And he stretched himself out on his improvised couch, as if thus preparing himself for the long imprisonment, with its attendant privations, which was in store for him.

A short time afterwards, some one came to announce that supper was ready. On going downstairs, the king perceived that there were six plates on the table.

"Why is the table laid for six?" he asked.

"One plate is for the king," answered the waiter, "one for the queen, one for Madame Elizabeth, one for Madame Royale, one for Monseigneur the dauphin, and one for Monsieur Pétion."

"And why not one for Monsieur Barnave and one for Monsieur Latour-Maubourg?" asked the king, sarcastically.

"There were, sire, but Monsieur Barnave ordered them removed."

"And left Monsieur Pétion's?"

"Monsieur Pétion insisted upon it, sire."

Just then the austere face of the Chartres deputy appeared in the doorway, but the king pretended not to see him, and said to the waiter, "I am unaccustomed to sit down at table except with members of my own family, or with those whom I invite."

"I knew that his Majesty had forgotten the first article of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, but I thought he would at least *pretend* to remember it," growled Pétion, from the doorway.

The king pretended not to hear Pétion exactly, as he had pretended not to see him; and with a gesture ordered the waiter to remove the extra plate. The waiter obeyed, and Pétion went off in a towering rage.

“Close the door, Monsieur de Malden, so that we may be alone, if possible.”

Malden obeyed; and Pétion could hear the door close behind him. So the king dined *en famille* after all, and the two guardsmen waited upon him as usual. Charny did not make his appearance. Though he was no longer the queen’s servant, he was still her slave; but there were times when the implicit obedience he displayed to the queen grieved the woman sorely; and now, as she waited impatiently for a glimpse of him, she wished he would be less obedient.

When supper was over, and the king pushed back his chair to rise from the table, the door opened, and a servant came in to request their Majesties, in Monsieur Barnave’s name, to have the goodness to exchange their apartments for a suite on the floor below.

The king and queen interchanged glances. Should they stand upon their dignity and decline the courtesy of one deputy to punish the impertinence of the other? Possibly the king had some such intention; but the dauphin ran into the parlor, crying “Where is my friend Barnave? Where is my friend Barnave?” ✓

The queen followed the dauphin, and the king followed the queen.

Barnave was not in the parlor. The door leading into the adjoining rooms was open, and the queen stepped inside. There were three bedrooms, as in the attic above; but they were larger, and comfortably, though not luxuriously, furnished. ✓

Two or three times during the day the queen had uttered exclamations of admiration on passing some beautiful flower-garden; now she found her chamber adorned with the loveliest flowers, while the open windows allowed

the too powerful fragrance of the blossoms to escape. Fresh white muslin curtains, too, at the windows concealed the fair prisoner from prying eyes.

It was Barnave who had attended to all this. The queen sighed: six years before, it was Charny who had made all this provision for her comfort. And Barnave had the delicacy not to present himself to be thanked. This, too, reminded her of Charny. But how was it that a petty country lawyer could be as thoughtful and attentive, and display the same delicacy, as the most elegant and distinguished gentleman of her court?

All this would certainly furnish a woman with abundant food for thought, even if that woman was a queen.

Meanwhile, what had become of Charny. He had quietly withdrawn, in obedience to a sign from the queen, and had not reappeared. Though duty chained him to the steps of his sovereigns, he did not regret this temporary dismissal, or even stop to ask himself the cause of it, as it afforded him a little time for solitude and reflection.

He had lived so rapidly during the past three days, — he had lived so entirely outside of himself, so to speak, so entirely for others, — that he was not sorry to forget their troubles for a while, and think of his own.

Charny was a gentleman of the old school, the head of his family above all things. He adored his brothers, to whom he had been a father rather than an elder brother.

On the death of his brother George his grief had been very deep, but at least he had been able to kneel beside the dead body and vent his sorrow in tears; besides, the other brother remained, and his entire affection was soon transferred to him, Isidore, who had become even dearer to him than before, during the months of Olivier's stay in Metz. During that time his brother and Andrée were ever in his thoughts; for though we cannot explain the mystery, it is an indubitable fact that some hearts grow warmer, instead of colder, when separated, as if absence furnished fresh food for memory to thrive upon.

In fact, the less Charny saw of *Andrée*, the more he thought of her; and to think more and more of *Andrée* was to love her.

When he saw *Andrée*, when he was near her, it seemed to him that he was near a statue of ice, which might melt, it is true, if exposed to the sunshine of love, but which kept itself sedulously in the shade, as if afraid that the sun would find it. When away from her, absence had its usual effect of enchantment, by softening the more glaring colors and too sharp outlines. Then, *Andrée's* cold and frigid manner became more animated, her calm and rather monotonous voice more sonorous, her shy, quiet glance imbued with a clear, even ardent, fire, — then it seemed, indeed, as if an inward fire illumined the soul of this fair statue, and enabled him to see the heart beat and the blood circulate through the alabaster flesh.

It was in these hours of solitude that *Andrée* became in very truth the queen's rival. In the feverish gloom of night, Charny fancied he saw the walls of his room suddenly open, and this transparent statue approach, with outstretched arms, and quivering lips, and eyes radiant with love. Then Charny, too, would extend his arms and try to press the lovely phantom to his heart; but, alas! the phantom always eluded him. He embraced only empty air, and fell back, panting for breath, into the cold and gloomy reality.

Isidore had become more dear to Charny than George had ever been, and both had died for this fatal woman, for this hopeless cause. And for this same woman, and for this same cause, he, Charny, would unquestionably die some day in his turn.

During the two days which had elapsed since the death of his brother, and since that last embrace which had left his garments stained with blood and his lips moist with the victim's last sigh, Charny had scarcely had a moment in which he could give way to his grief. The sign from the queen that he was to hold himself aloof was conse-

quently received as a favour, and he immediately set about hunting for some quiet nook not too far away from the royal family, where he could be alone with his sorrow. At last he found a small garret room at the top of the stairway which Malden and Valory were guarding. He entered it and closed the door; then, seating himself at a table on which a lamp was burning, he took from his pocket those blood-stained papers, the only remaining relics of his brother. With his forehead resting on his hands, and his eyes riveted on the letters, Charny sat a long time, with tears streaming down his cheeks and falling thick and fast upon the table.

At last he heaved a sigh, raised his head, picked up one of the letters, and opened it. It was from poor Catherine. For several months Charny had suspected his brother's relations with the farmer's daughter, but he did not attach to the affair the importance it deserved until after he had heard Billot's account of it.

His interest, too, was greatly increased by his perusal of Catherine's letter. He saw now that the title of mistress had been rendered sacred by the title of mother; and by the simple words in which the writer confessed her love, he could see that the entire life of the woman would be devoted to expiating the crime of the girl. He opened a second letter, and then a third. Each contained the same plans for the future, the same hopes of happiness, the same maternal joy, the same loving fears, the same regrets, and the same words of repentance.

Among the letters Charny suddenly came to one addressed to him in Andrée's handwriting. To this letter a folded paper was attached by a seal having Isidore's coat-of-arms.

This letter from Andrée, found among Isidore's papers, seemed so strange that he opened the note attached to the letter, before opening the letter itself.

The note had been hastily written in pencil, probably upon a tavern table while some one was saddling a horse for him, and read as follows:—

This letter does not belong to me, but to my brother, Count Olivier de Charny. It was written by his wife, the countess. If any accident should happen to me, the finder of this paper is requested to send it to my brother, or else return it to the countess.

I received it from her with the following instructions: —

Should the count succeed in the undertaking in which he is engaged, and should no mishap befall him, the letter is to be returned to the countess.

If he should be badly wounded, but not unto death, he is to be requested to grant his wife the privilege of coming to him.

If he should be mortally wounded, this letter is to be given to him, and if he cannot read it himself, it is to be read to him, in order that he may know the secret it contains before he dies.

If the letter is sent to my brother Olivier, he will probably receive the note at the same time, and his own sense of delicacy will be the best guide as to the course he should pursue in relation to these three requests.

I commend to his tenderest care poor Catherine Billot, who is now living in the village of Ville d'Avray, with my child.

ISIDORE DE CHARNY.

The count read his brother's letter through to the end, slowly, carefully, and even reverently; then, picking up Madame de Charny's letter, he pressed it to his lips and then to his heart, as if it might thus communicate the secret it contained. Then he read Isidore's note again, and, shaking his head, said to himself in a low tone: "I have no right to open this letter, but I will entreat her to let me read it."

Then, as if to strengthen himself in this resolve, he exclaimed: "No, I will not read it; I will not!"

He did not read it, but daylight found him still seated at the table, and still devouring with his gaze the superscription on the letter, moist with his breath, so often had he pressed it to his lips.

Suddenly, in the midst of the noise which indicated that the preparations for departure had begun, he heard Malden's voice calling him.

"Here I am," responded the count, and, replacing poor Isidore's papers in his pocket, he kissed the unopened

letter once more, placed it upon his heart, and hurried downstairs.

On the steps he met Barnave; who was inquiring how the queen felt, and requesting Valory to ascertain her wishes in regard to the hour of departure. It was easy to see that Barnave had slept no more than Charny himself.

The two men bowed to each other, and Charny could hardly have failed to notice the jealous light in Barnave's eyes, had he been able to think of anything besides the letter that was resting upon his heart.

CHAPTER VIII.

VIA DOLOROSA.

ON re-entering the coach, the king and queen saw with astonishment that only the population of the town had assembled to witness their departure, and that only a squad of cavalry was to accompany them.

This was still another attention from Barnave. He had noticed how greatly the queen had suffered the day before from heat and dust by reason of being compelled to travel so slowly, so he pretended he had received warning of an intended invasion, — that he had been informed that General Bouillé was about to re-enter France with fifty thousand Austrians, and that every man who could carry a musket, a scythe, or any other weapon would be needed to repel the invaders; so the rabble had hurried back to their homes.

In those days an intense hatred of foreigners pervaded France, — a hatred so powerful that it even exceeded the hatred that was felt towards the king and queen, and more especially towards the queen, whose greatest crime in the eyes of the people was that of being foreign born.

Marie Antoinette knew to whom she must owe this blessed relief, and she rewarded him with a grateful glance.

As she resumed her seat, she looked around for Charny. He was already on the top of the coach, only instead of sitting in the middle, as on the day previous, he had insisted upon changing places with Malden, who occupied a rather more exposed position; for, to tell the truth, Charny almost hoped that a wound would give him an excuse for opening the letter which seemed to be posi-

tively scorching his heart; and under these circumstances he very naturally failed to see that the queen was endeavouring to catch his eye.

The queen heaved a deep sigh. Barnave heard it, and, anxious to discover the cause, the young deputy paused on the carriage step and said: "Madame, I noticed yesterday that you were very much crowded in the coach. One passenger the less would make it much more comfortable, I am sure, and if you prefer I will ride in the other carriage with Maubourg, or I will follow you on horseback."

Barnave when he was making this offer would willingly have given half the years of life remaining to him — and not many did remain — to have had this offer declined. It was declined.

"No, no," exclaimed the queen hastily, "remain with us!" And the dauphin, stretching out his little hands to draw Barnave towards him, cried: "My friend Barnave, my friend Barnave, I don't want you to go away!"

Barnave's face was radiant as he took his former place in the carriage. He was hardly seated when the little dauphin of his own accord slipped out of his mother's lap and perched himself upon Barnave's knee. As the queen released her son she leaned down and kissed him on the cheek.

The dewy imprint of her lips lingered on the child's velvety skin, and Barnave gazed at the place as Tantalus must have gazed at the luscious fruits suspended above his head.

"Madame," he said, addressing the queen, "will your Majesty deign to grant me the privilege of embracing the august prince, who, guided by the infallible intuition of childhood, calls me his friend?"

The queen nodded a smiling assent, and Barnave's lips fastened themselves with such ardour to the spot where the mother's lips had rested that the frightened child uttered a cry.

None of this by-play escaped the keen eye of the queen.

Perhaps she had slept no better than Barnave and Charny; perhaps the unusual animation which brightened her eyes was caused by the fever that burned within her; but however this may have been, the roseate flush that suffused her cheeks transformed her into a dangerous siren, quite capable of drawing her adorers into an unfathomable abyss, with a single hair of her lovely head.

Thanks to Barnave's precautions, the coach moved on at the rate of about six miles an hour.

They stopped for dinner at Château-Thierry. The house where they halted was charmingly situated on the bank of the river, and belonged to a wealthy tradeswoman who had not really expected to be so honoured, but who, hearing the evening before that the royal family was to pass through Château-Thierry, had despatched one of her clerks on horseback to offer the members of the Assembly, as well as the king and queen, the hospitalities of her dwelling; and the offer had been accepted.

As soon as the coach stopped, a large retinue of respectful and attentive servants indicated a very different reception from that at Dormans the night before. The king, the queen, Madame Elizabeth, and Madame de Tourzel and the two children were each conducted to separate apartments, where every provision had been made, not only for their comfort, but for a careful toilet, should they so desire.

The queen had met with no such thoughtfulness and consideration since she left Paris. The fastidious instincts of the woman were gratified by this delicate attention, and Marie Antoinette was beginning to appreciate such attentions; so she asked to see her kind hostess, in order that she might thank her.

A few minutes afterwards a well-preserved, still blooming woman of forty, dressed with great simplicity, presented herself. Up to this time, modesty had prevented her from intruding upon her guests.

"Is it you, madame, who are the mistress of this house?" inquired the queen.

"Ah, madame," this excellent woman replied, bursting into tears, "wherever her Majesty deigns to stop, whatever house she honours with her presence, wherever the queen is, the queen is sole mistress."

Marie Antoinette glanced about the room to see if they were alone. Then, satisfied that no one could see or hear them, she said, taking the hand of the lady, drawing her towards her, and embracing her as she would have embraced a dear friend: "If you value our peace of mind and your own safety, calm yourself, and conceal these signs of grief; for if the cause is known, it might injure you greatly, and you must understand that if any misfortune should befall you on our account, it would greatly increase our sorrow. We may meet again some day, so restrain yourself, and thus enable me to keep a friend whose regard, as evinced to-day, will always be unspeakably precious to me."¹

After dinner their journey was resumed. The heat was overpowering, and the king, who had noticed that Madame Elizabeth, overcome with fatigue, had fallen asleep several times, insisted that the princess should take his place on the back seat, that being more comfortable. It was only at the express command of the king that Madame Elizabeth yielded, however.

Pétion listened to the entire conversation without once offering the princess his seat. Barnave shaded his face with his hand to conceal his blush of shame, but this did not prevent him from seeing the queen's half-sarcastic, half-melancholy smile.

At the end of an hour Madame Elizabeth's fatigue became so great that she fell into a deep sleep, losing consciousness so entirely that her angelic head, after dropping first on one side, and then on the other, finally sank until it found a resting-place on Pétion's shoulder. It was this that led the chivalrous deputy from Chartres to say, in the unpublished account of his journey, that this saintly

¹ It is from the narrative of one of the body-guards who accompanied the king on this journey that we copy these words uttered by Marie Antoinette.

creature became enamoured of his charms, and showed her amorous proclivities by laying her head upon his shoulder.

About four o'clock in the afternoon they reached Meaux, stopping at the bishop's palace, where Bossuet, the author of the "Thesis on Universal History," had once lived, and where he had died eighty-seven years before. The ecclesiastical functionary who now occupied the palace was a strong Constitutionalist, as will soon become apparent from the manner in which he received and entertained the royal family.

The queen was deeply impressed by the gloomy aspect of the building which she was about to enter, and which seemed indeed a fit asylum for the profound misery which now sought a shelter for the night within its walls. It was not like Versailles, where the grandeur of the place is due to its magnificence. The imposing effect of the palace at Meaux is due chiefly to its very simplicity. A broad path paved with brick leads up to the living apartments, which open upon a garden, for which the ramparts of the city serve as a support, or rather foundation. The lofty church tower, shrouded from top to bottom with ivy, casts its shadow over this garden, and from it by a path bordered with holly one can reach the room which was once the study of the eloquent bishop of Meaux, and from which he uttered those warnings which presaged the downfall of monarchies.

The queen glanced at the gloomy building, and its aspect seemed to harmonize so well with her state of mind that she said, turning to Barnave, who happened to be standing near her: —

"Give me your arm, monsieur, and have the goodness to serve as my guide through this old palace. I really dare not venture into it alone. I should be afraid of hearing that grand voice which once startled all Christendom with the cry, '*Madame is dying! Madame is dead!*'"

Barnave hastily approached, and offered his arm to the queen with mingled eagerness and deference.

But the queen cast still another glance around before accepting it, for Charny's continued absence annoyed her. Barnave, whose keen eye seemed to see everything, noticed the look.

"Does the queen desire anything?" he asked.

"I was only wondering where the king is."

"He is granting Monsieur Pétion the honour of a few moments' private conversation, I believe, madame."

The queen seemed satisfied; but in a moment, as if anxious to divert her thoughts, she added hastily, "Come, monsieur," and led Barnave as swiftly through the old part of the palace as if she were being pursued by some grim phantom, and dared not look either before or behind her. On reaching the chamber of the famous divine she paused, almost breathless. By the merest chance she found herself directly in front of a large portrait of a woman, and, raising her eyes mechanically, she read upon the frame the name, "Madame Henriette."

She gave a violent start. Barnave noticed it, but did not understand the cause of it.

"Is your Majesty ill?" he asked.

"No, — but that portrait," gasped the queen.

Barnave could imagine now what was passing in the poor woman's mind.

"Yes, Madame Henriette," he remarked, "not the widow of the unfortunate Charles I, of England, but their daughter, the wife of that faithless Philippe of Orléans; not the Henriette who thought she should perish of cold in the Louvre, but the Henriette who died of poison at St.-Cloud, and who on her death-bed sent her ring to Bossuet —"

Then, after an instant's hesitation, he added: "I wish it were a portrait of the other Henriette."

"And why?"

"Because there are some lips that can alone venture to give certain counsels; and these lips are, above all, those that are closed in death."

"Can you tell me what counsel the lips of the widow of Charles I. would be likely to give me, monsieur?"

"If your Majesty desires it, I will try."

"Do so."

"It seems to me those lips would say: 'My sister, do you not see the resemblance between us? I came from a foreign land, as you did. I might have given my deluded husband good advice, but I either kept silence or gave him evil counsel. Instead of trying to reconcile him to his people and to reconcile his people to him, I incited him to wage war upon them. I advised him to march upon London with an army of Irish protestants. I not only carried on a correspondence with the enemies of England, but went to France twice in order to make arrangements for bringing a foreign army into the country. At last —'" Barnave hesitated. "Go on!" commanded the queen, with frowning brow and lips compressed.

"Why continue, madame?" responded the young deputy, shaking his head sadly. "You know the end of the tragical story quite as well as I do."

"Well, then, I will tell you what the portrait of Queen Henriette says to me, so you can tell me wherein I am at fault. At last the Scotch betrayed and delivered up their king. Charles I. was arrested as he was about to cross the Channel, with the intention of entering France. A tailor arrested him; a butcher conducted him to prison; a brewer presided over the court that tried him; and in order that no odious feature might be lacking in his most iniquitous trial and the execution of its sentence, the royal victim was beheaded by a masked executioner. That is what Queen Henriette's portrait would say to me. Good Heavens! I know all this as well as anybody else can. I know that nothing is wanting to complete this fatal resemblance. We, too, have our brewer, only his name is Santerre instead of Cromwell; we, too, have our butcher, only we call him Legendre, I believe, instead of

Harrison. There, you have heard what Queen Henriette says to me."

"And what is your reply?"

"I answer her thus: It is not advice you give me, my poor, dear princess; it is a course of history. The course of history is completed, and now I await your counsel."

"Oh, as to counsel, madame, if you would not refuse to follow it, there would be living as well as dead persons who would be glad to give it."

"Living or dead, let those who ought to speak do so. Who knows but if the advice be good, it will be followed?"

"Ah, madame, the living and the dead have the same advice to give you."

"And that is?"

"To make the people love you."

"And is it such an easy matter to win the love of your people?"

"Why, madame, these people are much more yours than mine. Surely you need no better proof of it than that the people adored you on your arrival in France."

"Popularity is a very fragile thing, monsieur."

"But, madame, if I, an unknown man, from an obscure and humble sphere in life, have been able to gain no little popularity, how much more easy would it be for you to retain it, or even regain it! But no," continued Barnave, becoming more and more earnest, "your cause, the monarchical cause, the noblest and holiest of causes,—to whom have you confided it? To what voices and what hands have you intrusted its defence? Oh, how blind, how utterly blind its adherents have been to the signs of the times! How oblivious to the real sentiments of the people! Oh, bear with me, who have so long craved the opportunity I am now enjoying of speaking to you! How often I have been on the point of offering you my devotion, my —"

"Hush, some one is coming!" interrupted the queen.

"We will talk of this some other time, Monsieur Barnave;

I will see you again, listen to your advice, and perhaps follow it."

"Ah, madame, madame!" exclaimed Barnave, in a transport of delight.

"Hush!" repeated the queen.

"Your Majesty, dinner is ready," said the servant, whose footsteps the queen had just heard approaching.

They entered the dining-room. The king had come in from another apartment, where he had had a long conversation with Pétion, and his Majesty seemed greatly excited.

The two guardsmen claimed the privilege of waiting upon their Majesties, as usual. Charny was standing a little further off in the embrasure of a window.

The king glanced around him, and, taking advantage of a moment when no outsider was present, he remarked to the three gentlemen: "After supper I must have a short conversation with you. You will follow me to my room, if you please."

The meal began, but though it was served in the palace of one of the chief bishoprics in the kingdom, the table was meagrely spread. The king, who always had a good appetite, ate heartily, in spite of the poor fare. The queen ate only a couple of fresh eggs.

All day the dauphin, who was still far from well, had been begging for strawberries; but the poor child was no longer with those who hastened to gratify his slightest wish. When he asked for strawberries again at the table, he was told that there were none, or that there were none to be had, though all along the road he had seen peasant children eating whole handfuls of ripe luscious berries, which they had picked by the roadside. This longing which she had not been able to gratify troubled the queen; and when the child refused to eat what was set before him, and again begged for the berries, tears filled the eyes of the helpless mother.

Glancing about for some one to whom she could appeal, she saw Charny standing by the window, silent and motion-

less. She beckoned to him once — twice; but, deeply engrossed with his own thoughts, he failed to notice her gesture. At last, in a voice hoarse with emotion, she called him by his full name and title.

Charny started violently, as if suddenly awakened from a dream, and made a movement to approach the queen; but at that very instant the door opened, and Barnave entered with a plate of strawberries in his hand.

“The queen will pardon me, I trust, for thus intruding, and the king as well,” he remarked; “but I heard the dauphin ask for strawberries several times to-day, and seeing these on the bishop’s table, I appropriated them for him.”

Meanwhile Charny had been making his way towards the queen, but she did not give him time to reach her.

“Thanks, count,” she said to him, “but Monsieur Barnave has anticipated my wishes, and I need nothing further.”

Charny bowed and returned to his place without a word.

“Thank you, my dear Barnave,” cried the dauphin.

“Our dinner is not particularly tempting, my dear Monsieur Barnave,” said the king, “but you will confer a great favor upon the queen and myself by sharing it with us.”

“An invitation from the king is a command,” replied Barnave. “Where does your Majesty wish me to sit?”

“Between the queen and the dauphin,” answered the king.

Barnave obeyed, almost beside himself with pride and delight.

Charny looked on without the slightest feeling of jealousy; but as he saw this poor butterfly singeing his wings in the blaze of royalty, he said to himself: “Another man ruined. It is too bad, for he’s decidedly better than the majority of them.”

Then, returning to the subject that was ever uppermost in his mind now, he murmured, “That letter! that letter! What can there be in that letter?”

CHAPTER IX.

CALVARY.

AFTER dinner, the three officers repaired to the king's chamber, as they had been requested to do.

Madame Royale, the dauphin, and Madame de Tourzel had retired to their own rooms. The king, the queen, and Madame Elizabeth were evidently waiting for them.

As soon as the young officers entered, the king said: "Monsieur de Charny, will you do me the favour to lock the door, so that no one can interrupt us, for I have a very important communication to make. Yesterday, at Dormans, Monsieur Pétion suggested to me that you officers should make your escape in disguise. At first, both the queen and myself were opposed to this plan, for fear the proposal was a trap, and that he was merely trying to entice you away from us in order to assassinate you or surrender you to some provincial court that would condemn you to death. The queen and I consequently took it upon ourselves to decline this proposal; but to-day Monsieur Pétion has been urging it again, and I feel it my duty to tell you what he apprehends and what he proposes."

"Sire, before your Majesty proceeds any further," interrupted Charny,—"and I speak not only for myself but for my brother officers, for I feel sure I express their sentiments as well,—before going any further, will the king promise to grant us one favour?"

"Gentlemen," responded the king, "your devotion has very nearly cost you your lives again and again during the

last three days. You have shared the ignominy into which we are plunged, and the insults which have been heaped upon us; consequently you not only have the right to ask a favour, but you need only make your wishes known to insure their immediate fulfilment, if it be in our power to grant them."

"Then, sire, we humbly but most earnestly implore your Majesty, whatever the proposal made by the deputies may be, to leave us free to accept or decline their offer as we see fit."

"I give you my word that I will bring no pressure to bear upon you in this matter, gentlemen. The decision shall be left entirely to you."

"Then we will gladly listen, sire," responded Charny.

The queen gazed at him in astonishment. She could not understand the growing indifference she noticed in him. She found it so difficult to reconcile it with his evident determination not to flinch from what he felt to be his duty.

"Now, with the full understanding that the decision is to be left unreservedly to you, I will state Pétion's plan to you in as nearly his own words as possible. As soon as we reach Paris, he says, the lives of the three officers in attendance upon me will be in imminent peril, for neither he nor Barnave nor Maubourg can guarantee to protect them from the fury of the populace."

Charny glanced at his brother officers. A contemptuous smile wreathed their lips. "And what of that, sire?" he asked.

"Pétion therefore proposes to procure three uniforms like those worn by the National Guards, and to have the doors of this palace left open to-night, so that each of you will have no difficulty in making his escape."

Charny again glanced at his companions, but their only answer was the same contemptuous smile.

"Sire," he said, turning again to the king, "our days have been consecrated to your Majesties; and as you have

deigned to accept our devotion, it will be easier for us to die for you than to live apart from you. Do us the favour to treat us hereafter exactly as you have treated us in the past. Of all your court, of all your army, of all your guards, three hearts remain faithful to you. Do not deprive them of the only glory to which they now aspire, — that of remaining faithful to the last.”

“So be it, gentlemen,” responded the queen. “We accept your devotion, but only, you understand, on condition that henceforth everything must be in common between us. You are no longer our subjects, but our friends and brothers. I need not ask you to tell me your names,” — she drew her tablets from her pocket as she spoke, — “for I know them well; but give me the names of your fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters. We may not only be so unfortunate as to lose you, but also to survive your deaths. It will then be my duty to inform these loved ones of our mutual loss, and at the same time to do all I can to help them to bear their sorrow. Speak, Monsieur de Malden, speak, Monsieur de Valory. In case of your death, — and we are so near the reality that we certainly should not shrink from the name, — what relatives and friends would you specially commend to our tender care and eternal gratitude?”

Malden mentioned his mother, an aged and infirm lady residing on a small estate near Blois; Valory, his sister, an orphan girl, at school in a convent at Soissons.

Certainly there could be no stronger or more courageous hearts than those of these two young men; yet as the queen wrote down the addresses of Madame de Malden and Mademoiselle de Valory, both the guardsmen failed in their efforts to restrain their tears, and the queen was obliged to suspend her writing more than once in order to dry her eyes.

When she had finished jotting down these addresses, she turned to Charny and said: “Alas! monsieur, I know only too well that you have no near relatives to commend

to our care. Your father and mother are both dead, your two brothers also — ”

Here, the queen's voice failed her utterly.

“Yes, madame, my two brothers had the good fortune to suffer death in defending your Majesty,” added Charny; “but the last to die left a babe which he commended to my care in a sort of will found among his papers. The mother of this child is a young girl whom he enticed away from her parents, who are not likely to ever forgive her. As long as I live neither she nor her child shall ever know want; but, as your Majesty just remarked, we are face to face with death, and if I am struck down, the poor girl and her babe will be without resources; so, madame, deign to inscribe upon your tablets the name of a poor peasant girl; and if I should have the honour to die for my august master and mistress, like my two brothers, extend your generosity to Catherine Billot and her infant, both of whom are to be found in the little village of Ville d'Avray.”

Probably the thought of Charny dying as his brothers had died was too much for Marie Antoinette's composure, for she uttered a faint cry, and, dropping her tablets, sank into an arm-chair. Charny picked up the tablets, wrote the name of Catherine Billot upon them, and placed them on the mantel-piece.

The queen made a powerful effort to recover her composure, and the young officers, thinking she must desire to be alone after such a paroxysm of emotion, prepared to withdraw; but, extending her hand towards them, she said: —

“Gentlemen, you will not leave me, I hope, without kissing my hand.”

The two guardsmen advanced in the same order in which they had given the names and addresses, Monsieur de Malden first, then Monsieur de Valory. Charny came last. The queen trembled as she awaited his kiss, — the kiss for whose sake alone she had offered her hand to the other officers; but the count's lips scarcely grazed that

beautiful hand, for with Andrée's letter resting upon his heart it seemed to him that he would be guilty of sacrilege in pressing the queen's hand to his lips.

Marie Antoinette heaved a sigh that was almost a groan. Never before had she realised how rapidly the gulf between her and her lover had widened day by day.

The next morning, Maubourg and Barnave, ignorant of what had taken place the evening before, again proposed that the three officers should at least don the uniform worn by the National Guards; but this they positively refused to do. So Barnave had boards fastened on each side of the upper seat, in order that two gendarmes might occupy the extra places, and so protect the king's obstinate attendants, if possible.

They left Meaux at ten o'clock in the morning. They would soon be in Paris, from which they had now been absent five days. Five days! But an unfathomable abyss had been created in those five days.

They were not more than three miles from Meaux before their cortège assumed a more terrible aspect than ever before. The populace from the suburbs of Paris had begun to swell the ranks. Barnave ordered the postilions to drive at a brisk trot; but the National Guards of Claye barred the way with their bayonets, and to attempt to force a passage through the obstruction would have been the height of imprudence. Even the queen realised the danger, and implored the deputies to do nothing that was likely to increase the fury of the populace.

Soon the crowd became so dense that the horses could scarcely move at all. Never had the weather been so hot. It was not air one breathed, but fire.

The impertinent curiosity of the people pursued the king and queen into the furthest corners of the coach, where they endeavoured to find a refuge. Men climbed upon the steps and put their heads inside the carriage. Some climbed upon the top of the coach, others got astride the horses.

It was a miracle that Charny and his two companions were not killed a dozen times, for the two gendarmes were not able to parry every blow. They begged and threatened and implored in vain; they even commanded the rabble to desist in the name of the National Assembly; but their voices were drowned in a frenzied chorus of yells and shouts and vituperations.

An advance guard of more than two thousand men preceded the coach; a rear guard of over four thousand followed it.

As they approached still nearer to Paris, the very air seemed to fail them, as if it had all been absorbed by the great city; and the vehicle moved on under the glaring sun in a cloud of dust, each atom of which resembled a speck of pounded glass.

Two or three times the queen sank back, exclaiming that she was suffocating. At Bourget the king became so pale that they feared he was ill. He called for a glass of wine; his heart was failing him. A little more, and they might have given him, as they did Christ, a sponge soaked in gall and vinegar. In fact, the suggestion was made, but, fortunately, it was not favourably received.

At last they reached Villette. There were men and women and children everywhere. The crowd far exceeded computation. The pavement was so densely packed that the people standing on it could not move. The doorways, windows, and roofs were filled with people. The trees bent beneath their burden of living fruit.

The people almost without exception wore their hats, principally, doubtless, because the following notice had been posted all over the city the night before:—

“Any person who salutes the king shall be flogged;
Any person who insults him shall be hanged.”

All this was so alarming that the commissioners of the National Assembly dared not enter the Faubourg St. Martin, a street full of obstructions, and consequently of

danger, — an unfortunate street, a gloomy street, a street noted in the annals of assassination since the terrible death of Berthier. So it was decided to enter the city by the Champs Elysées, though to do this it would be necessary for the procession to make the circuit of the city by way of the outer boulevards.

This meant three more hours of torture; and the torture was so intolerable that the queen begged them to take a shorter route, even though it might be more dangerous.

Twice she endeavoured to lower the curtains; but each time the ominous mutterings of the crowd compelled her to raise them.

At the barrier, a large company of grenadiers surrounded the carriage. Several marched close to the windows, thus obstructing these openings almost entirely with their big bearskin caps.

At last, about six o'clock, a guard appeared just beyond the walls of the Monceau Garden, bringing with them three pieces of artillery. This guard was composed of cavalry and infantry; but the crowds on either side encroached upon it to such an extent that it was almost impossible for the soldiers to keep in the ranks and maintain any sort of order in their advance.

This was the third time Louis XVI. had entered his capital by this fatal gate. He first came in that way after the taking of the Bastille; the second time, on that terrible sixth of October; the third time, — this time, — after his flight to Varennes.

All Paris, hearing that the procession was approaching by the Neuilly road, hastened to the Champs Elysées; so when the king and queen reached the gate, they saw a vast sea of human faces, extending as far as the eye could reach, — a vast sea of silent, gloomy, sullen, threatening faces. But more frightful, or at least more ominous perhaps than all else, was the double line of National Guards, extending from the gate to the Tuileries, all holding their muskets reversed, in token of mourning.

It was indeed a day of mourning, — mourning for a dynasty of seven centuries. This coach which rolled slowly along through the crowd was a funeral chariot conveying royalty to its grave.

On seeing the long lines of National Guards, the soldiers who accompanied the coach waved their weapons in the air and shouted: "Long live the Nation!"

This was the cry of fraternity that went up all over France. Only one family — the family that had tried to escape from France — was excluded from that fraternity.

As the cortège entered Place Louis Quinze, now known as the Place de la Concorde, the king noticed that some one had bandaged the eyes of his ancestor's statue.

"What is the meaning of that?" inquired Louis, turning to Barnave.

"I do not know, sire," was the reply.

"I do," said Pétion; "it is intended to illustrate the total blindness of the monarchy."

Two or three times during the journey, in spite of the armed escort, in spite of the presence of the commissioners, in spite of the notices which forbade any one to insult the king, under penalty of hanging, the mob broke through the line of grenadiers, and the queen saw the hideous, cruel, leering faces appear at the windows, — faces of such men as only occasionally appear on the surface of society, like those monsters which rise to the surface of the ocean only in times of storm and tempest.

At first, she was so terrified by the sight that she hastily lowered one of the windows.

"What are you putting down the window for?" roared a dozen furious voices.

"Look at my poor children, gentlemen," pleaded the queen. "See what a pitiable condition they are in. We are suffocating," she added, as she wiped off the perspiration that was streaming down their cheeks.

"Bah! that's nothing," responded a coarse voice. "Never mind about that; we'll suffocate you in another fashion pretty soon."

And a blow of the fist shattered the glass into fragments.

Nevertheless, there were a few instances of devotion and affection that would have consoled the king and queen a little, had they come under their observation.

In spite of the posters forbidding any demonstration of respect to the king, Monsieur Guilhermy, a member of the Assembly, uncovered himself as the monarch passed; and when they tried to compel him to put his hat on, he threw it a long distance from him, and exclaimed: "Now let me see who dares to bring it back to me."

At the entrance to the swinging bridge leading into the palace gardens, they found a delegation of twenty deputies who had been appointed to receive and protect the royal prisoners.

Then, Lafayette and his staff appeared.

"Oh, monsieur, save our body-guards!" the queen exclaimed, as soon as she saw him.

This was no idle request, for danger was at hand, and great danger, too.

Meanwhile, quite a romantic scene was taking place at the gate of the palace.

Five or six of the queen's personal attendants who had left the Tuileries after the departure of the royal family, believing the queen had gone away forever, wished to re-enter the palace, in order to make proper arrangements for her reception.

"Clear out!" cried the sentinels, pointing their bayonets at the ladies.

"Slaves of that Austrian woman!" yelled the fish-wives, shaking their fists savagely.

Braving them all, a sister of Madame Campan stepped forward and exclaimed: "Listen to me. Ever since the queen was fifteen years old I have been in her service. She gave me my dowry and provided my wedding outfit. I served her when she was rich and powerful; I leave it to you if I ought to abandon her now misfortune has overtaken her."

"She is right. Let her pass, soldiers!" yelled the crowd; and at this order from rulers that brooked no contradiction the ranks opened and the women passed into the palace.

A few minutes later, the queen saw them waving their handkerchiefs from the windows of the palace.

Meanwhile, the coach rolled on, driving a huge crowd of people and a cloud of dust before it, as a ship forces its way through the waves and foam; and the comparison is the more striking from the fact that never were mariners threatened by a more tempestuous and turbulent sea than that which was preparing to engulf this unfortunate family on their arrival at the Tuileries, which they regarded as a haven of refuge.

At last the carriage stopped. They had reached the foot of the main terrace.

"Oh, gentlemen, our body-guards, do not let them kill our body-guards!" exclaimed the queen, appealing to Pétion and Barnave this time.

"Is there any one you especially desire to commend to our protection?" inquired Barnave.

The queen looked him full in the face with unflinching eyes.

"No one," she replied promptly.

Then she insisted that the king and the children should get out of the carriage first.

The next ten minutes were the most trying of her life, not even excepting those when she was being led to execution. She felt certain, not that she should be assassinated, — death was nothing, — but that she should be given over to the mob for a plaything, or be incarcerated in some prison from which she would emerge only for an ignominious and disgraceful trial.

So, as she placed her foot on the carriage steps, protected by an arch of the muskets and bayonets of the National Guards, formed by Barnave's order above her head, a sensation of dizziness made her feel for an instant as if she

were falling to the ground; but as her eyes were about to close she saw, or fancied she saw, standing in front of her that dread personage who had so mysteriously lifted the veil of futurity for her at the Château Taverney years before, the man she had seen only once since that time, — on her return from Versailles on October 6th, — the man who appeared only to predict some great catastrophe, or at the hour these predictions were being fulfilled.

When she was sure that her eyes did not deceive her, she closed them again, and uttered a cry of despair. She could fight bravely against realities, but she felt incapable of struggling against this sinister influence.

The earth seemed to give way beneath her feet, and the crowd, the trees, the burning sky, the grim palace walls whirled wildly around and around. Strong arms seized her, and she felt herself being borne swiftly along through a yelling, hooting throng. Just at that instant, she fancied she heard the voices of the body-guards trying to divert the fury of the populace from her and turn it upon themselves. She re-opened her eyes for an instant, and saw the unfortunate men dragged from their seats on the coach. Pale and handsome as ever, Charny was struggling alone against ten men, with the martyr light in his eyes, and a disdainful smile upon his lips. Then, as she involuntarily glanced up in the face of the person who was bearing her through this frightful maelstrom, she perceived with terror that it was the same mysterious man she had seen at Taverney and the Sèvres Bridge.

“You! you!” she exclaimed, trying to push him away with her rigid hands.

“Yes, I!” he whispered. “I have need of thee to drive the monarchy to utter ruin, — therefore I save thee!”

This was more than she could bear, and, uttering a shriek, she fell into a deep swoon. Meanwhile, the rabble were trying to cut Charny and Malden and Valory to pieces, and landing Drouet and Billot to the skies.

CHAPTER X.

THE ARRIVAL.

WHEN the queen recovered consciousness she found herself in her chamber in the palace. Her two favourite waiting-women, Madame de Misery and Madame Campan, were beside her.

Her first inquiry was for the dauphin. He was asleep in his own room, watched over by Madame de Tourzel, his governess, and Madame Brunier. But this assurance did not satisfy the queen, and she sprang up and hastened to her son's apartment.

The child had been terribly frightened, and had wept bitterly; but his attendants had at last succeeded in quieting him, and he was now sleeping quite peacefully, though an occasional start showed what a shock his nervous system had sustained.

For a long time the queen stood by the side of the bed, gazing at the child with tearful eyes.

The frightful words uttered by that terrible man still rang in her ears: "I have need of thee to drive the monarchy to utter ruin, therefore I save thee."

Was this true? Was it indeed she who was urging the monarchy on to destruction? It must be so if her enemies had preserved her because she could accomplish the work of destruction more quickly and effectually than they themselves could do it.

Would this abyss into which she was plunging the monarchy close again after swallowing up the king, or must her two children also be cast into the gulf? Was it not innocence that could alone appease the vengeance of the

gods in ancient times? And though Jehovah prevented Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac, did he not afterwards accept the immolation of Jephthah's daughter?

These were gloomy thoughts for a queen, but gloomier still for a mother.

At last she shook her head sadly, and returned to her own room. Then for the first time she noticed the disorder of her attire. Her clothing was sadly rumpled, and also badly torn in many places. Her shoes had been cut by the sharp stones of the pavement over which she had been dragged, and she was covered with dust. She called for a bath, and some shoes and fresh clothing.

Barnave had called twice to inquire for her. Madame Campan looked much surprised as she mentioned these visits.

"You will thank him most kindly, madame," said the queen, and Madame Campan looked more and more astonished.

"We are under great obligations to this gentleman," said the queen, deigning to give her reasons, — a very unusual thing with her.

"But I always thought that Monsieur Barnave was a man of the people, a demagogue who hesitated at nothing to carry his point."

"That may be true, madame. But it is a feeling of ambition which I cannot but admire which has led him to scruple at nothing to advance the interests of the class to which he belongs. There is no excuse for the nobility who have espoused the Revolutionary cause; but if we ever regain power, Barnave's pardon is granted in advance. Go now, and try to find out something in regard to Monsieur de Malden and Monsieur de Valory."

She longed to add Charny's name to these two, but her lips refused to utter it.

Some one came in to say that the queen's bath was ready. During the brief time which had elapsed since her visit to the dauphin, sentinels had been stationed everywhere in

the palace, even at the door of the queen's bedroom and bathroom. It was with great difficulty that she finally induced these guards to leave the door closed while she took her bath.

The following is Prudhomme's allusion to this incident in his "Paris Revolutions:"—

"Some kind-hearted patriots, in whom the sentiment of compassion is more strong than that of loyalty, have felt considerable anxiety in regard to the mental and physical condition of Louis XVI. since his return from his unfortunate journey.

"They can cease to trouble themselves. The above-mentioned gentleman, on his return to his old quarters, Saturday evening, seemed in quite as good condition as after one of his hunting-expeditions. He ate his chicken as usual, and the next day, after dinner, enjoyed a romp with his son.

"As for the mother, she took a bath as soon as she arrived. The first thing she did was to call for some shoes, taking care to show how dilapidated those she had worn during her journey had become. She conducted herself very arrogantly towards the officers who had been appointed her special guardians, and thought it ridiculous and indecent that she should be obliged to leave the door of her bathroom and of her bedroom open."

Do you observe that this royal monster really committed the unpardonable crime of eating a chicken when he reached home, and of playing with his little son the next day?

Think, too, of this Sybarite who positively took a bath after a five days' journey! This extravagant creature who asked for another pair of shoes to replace those worn out during her journey! This Messalina who, thinking it ridiculous and indecent that she should be obliged to leave the doors of her bathroom and bedroom open, asked the guards for permission to close them!

Ah, Monsieur Journalist, you seem to me very much like a man who eats chicken only on feast-days, who has no children, who never takes a bath, and wends his way to the National Assembly with his toes out of his shoes.

Braving all the scandal such a deed might occasion, the

queen took her bath, after obtaining permission to close her door; but the sentinel did not fail to improve his opportunity to taunt Madame Campan with being an aristocrat, when she returned with such information as she had been able to gather.

The news was much less terrible than they had feared.

On their way through the Champs Elysées, Charny and his companions had devised a plan to protect the royal family by attracting the attention of the infuriated populace to themselves. It was accordingly agreed that as soon as the coach reached its destination, one officer should spring off on the right side, and another on the left, while the one who sat in the middle should scramble down in front. In this way the attention of the crowd would be divided, and the way perhaps left clear for the king and queen to enter the palace in safety.

When the carriage stopped at the foot of the terrace, the would-be assassins were in such a hurry to seize their prey that they rushed in front of the horses, and two were badly hurt; so, for a minute or two, the grenadiers who were on the box were able to protect the officers, but the grenadiers themselves were soon pulled to the ground.

This gave the three officers the opportunity they had been waiting for. All three jumped down quickly, but not so quickly as to fail to overturn five or six men who had climbed upon the wheels and steps with the intention of pulling the officers down.

Malden had hardly touched the ground before he found himself under the axes of two sappers, who stood with their weapons raised, ready to strike the guardsmen as soon as they could do so without injuring any one else. By a rapid and violent movement Malden succeeded in freeing himself from the grasp of some men who had seized him by the collar; then, folding his arms, he cried, "Strike!"

One of the two axes remained lifted. The victim's courage had fairly paralysed one assassin. The other axe fell; but as it fell, it encountered the barrel of a musket

which turned it aside, so only the edge grazed Malden's neck, inflicting a slight wound.

Then he bent his head and rushed straight at the bystanders, who involuntarily stepped back to let him pass; and a few steps further on he ran into a little group of officers, who, to save him, pushed him through to the other side of the line of National Guards, who were making a way from the coach to the palace for the royal prisoners. At that very moment Lafayette caught sight of Malden; and, urging his horse towards him, the general grasped him by the collar, and drew him close to one side of his horse, thus endeavouring to shield him (Malden) by his own popularity. But Malden called out: "Never mind me. Attend to the royal family, and leave me to these curs."

And Lafayette did release him; for, seeing a man just then who seemed to be carrying off the queen, he rushed in that direction.

Malden was then knocked down by some, and helped up by others. Some persons attacked him; others defended him. At last, covered with blood and bruises, he reached the gate of the palace. There an officer, seeing he was about to succumb, seized him by the collar, and, dragging him roughly along, exclaimed: "It's a shame to let a scoundrel like this die such an easy death. Some special torture ought to be invented for such wretches. Leave him to me, I'll attend to him!"

So he continued to abuse Malden and to shout, "Come along here, you rascal! Come along! You've got me to deal with now!" until he got him in a dark corner, when he said: "Run, monsieur, and forgive my ruse to get you out of the hands of those cut-throats."

So Malden had then darted up the steps of the palace and disappeared.

Valory's experience had been of a somewhat similar nature. He had received several wounds in the head; but just as a score of bayonets and as many sabres and

daggers were uplifted to put an end to his life, Pétion sprang forward and confronted the assassins.

"In the name of the National Assembly, I declare you unworthy of the name of Frenchmen," he exclaimed, "if you don't stand aside this instant and let this man alone. I am Pétion."

Pétion's rough exterior concealed a really honest and courageous heart, and the assassins, shrinking from his just indignation, slunk away, leaving Valory in his hands. Then Pétion helped him upon his feet, — for, exhausted by the rough treatment he had received, Valory was hardly able to stand without assistance, — and conducted him as far as the line of National Guards, where he delivered him into the charge of an aide-de-camp, who got him safely into the palace.

At that very moment Pétion heard Barnave shouting to him for help, as he found himself unable to defend Charny without assistance.

The count had been seized by a score of sturdy arms and dragged roughly along through the dirt; but he managed to regain his feet and to wrench a bayonet from a gun, and so make his way through the crowd for a little distance; but he would soon have been overpowered and killed if first Barnave and then Pétion had not come to his assistance.

The queen listened to her attendant's report while still in her bath; but Campan, who had not heard all the particulars, could give her positive information only in regard to Malden and Valory, who had both been seen in the palace; but though the rescue of Charny by Barnave and Pétion was well authenticated, the count had not been seen to enter the palace.

When Madame Campan said this, such a deadly pallor overspread the queen's face that her attendant, thinking it had been caused by a fear lest some terrible misfortune had befallen the count, exclaimed: "Your Majesty need not despair of the count's safety because he has not been

seen in the palace. The queen is doubtless aware that Madame de Charny is still residing in Paris, and perhaps the count has found a refuge with his wife."

This was the very idea that had occurred to Marie Antoinette and made her turn so pale. She sprang out of her bath, crying: "Dress me, Campan, dress me at once. I must find out what has become of the count!"

"What count?" inquired Madame de Misery, who happened to come in just then.

"Monsieur de Charny."

"He is now in your Majesty's ante-chamber, and solicits the honour of a brief interview."

"Ah," murmured the queen. "So he has kept his word!"

The two ladies exchanged wondering glances, having no idea what the queen meant. Trembling, and apparently incapable of uttering another word, she motioned them to make haste.

Never was a toilet completed more quickly. It is true, however, that the queen contented herself with having her hair, which had been washed in perfumed water, to cleanse it from the dust, twisted into a simple knot, and with slipping a white dressing-gown over her under-garments. Then, white as the gown she wore, she returned to her boudoir and gave orders that the count should be admitted immediately.

CHAPTER XI.

A PARTHIAN THRUST.

A MOMENT afterwards a footman announced, "Monsieur le Comte de Charny," and that gentleman appeared in the doorway, illumined by the golden reflection of a ray of the setting sun.

Like the queen, he had spent the time since his return to the palace in removing the traces of his long journey and of the terrible struggle through which he had just passed.

He had donned his old uniform, that is to say, the uniform of a captain in the navy, with red facings and lace shirt-frill. It was the very costume he had worn the day he met the queen and Andrée de Taverney in the Place du Palais Royal, and subsequently escorted them back to Versailles.

Never had the count had such an air of distinction, nor looked so calm and handsome; and as she gazed at him, the queen could hardly believe this was the man who had so narrowly escaped being torn in pieces by the mob an hour before.

"Oh, monsieur!" the queen exclaimed, "they must have told you how anxious I felt on your account, and how I sent everywhere to make inquiries concerning you."

"Yes, madame," answered Charny, bowing; "but you may rest assured that I did not go to my room until I had learned through your ladies that you were safe and well."

"I am told that you owe your life to Pétion and Barnave. Is this true? And am I consequently under still greater obligations to Barnave?"

"It is true, madame, and I am under a twofold obliga-

tion to Monsieur Barnave; for after refusing to leave me until he had seen me safe in my own room, he had the goodness to tell me that you had alluded to me in the most kindly terms during our journey homeward."

"Indeed, count?"

"Yes, madame, and that you had called the king's attention to the anxiety your old friend Andrée must feel on account of my prolonged absence. Though I by no means agree with you concerning the liveliness of her solicitude, still —"

He paused, for the queen's face, which had been pale when he began, was now absolutely livid.

"Still —?" repeated the queen.

"Still, without accepting unreservedly the leave of absence you propose offering me, I should be very glad, now I am assured of the safety of the king, of yourself, and of the entire royal family, to report my well-being in person to the Comtesse de Charny."

The queen pressed her hand upon her heart, as if to satisfy herself that its throbbings had not been for ever hushed by the blow it had just received; then in a dry, rasping voice she said:—

"It is indeed only right and proper, monsieur; only I am asking myself why you have neglected this important duty so long."

"The queen forgets that I pledged my word not to see the countess again without the royal permission."

"And you come to ask that permission?"

"Yes, madame, and I entreat your Majesty to grant it."

"Though in your present extreme eagerness to see Madame de Charny again, you might conclude to dispense with this permission altogether. Am I not right?"

"I think the queen is unjust to me," replied Charny. "When I left Paris I supposed I was leaving it for years, if not for ever. During the entire journey, I did everything in my power to make the plan a success. Nor was it my fault, as your Majesty will recollect, that I did not

lay down my life like my brother at Varennes, or be torn in pieces like Monsieur Dampierre, along the road or in the garden of the Tuileries. If I had been so fortunate as to have got your Majesties safely beyond the frontier, I should have become an exile, and probably never have seen the countess again; but I repeat to your Majesty that if, on my return to Paris, I am not permitted to give any information concerning myself to the lady who bears my name, — and your Majesty knows how nobly she bears it, and how greatly she honours it, — it will indeed be a mark of unpardonable indifference, especially as my brother Isidore is no longer here to act in my stead. If I am not very much mistaken, this was your Majesty's opinion also, two days ago."

The queen allowed her arm to glide along the back of her couch, following it with an inclination of her entire body that brought her much closer to Charny, as she said: —

"You must love this woman very much to coolly cause me such a heart-ache as this."

"Madame, it is nearly six years since you yourself, — at a time I never even thought of such a thing, as there then existed but one woman on earth for me, and she had been placed so far above me that I could never hope to win her, — it is nearly six years ago, I repeat, since you imposed me upon Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney as a husband, and imposed her upon me as a wife. During these six years my hand has touched hers but twice. I have not addressed a dozen words to her that were not absolutely necessary, and we have not exchanged a dozen glances. My life has been fully occupied, — occupied with another passion, a thousand cares, a thousand tasks. I have lived at court, I have travelled much, and I have not counted either the days, months, or years as they passed. Time has flown all the more rapidly on account of my unfortunate passion, and the many cares and interests and struggles of which I speak. With Madame de Charny it has been very different. Since she had the misfortune to be obliged

to leave you, doubtless because she had unintentionally displeased you, she has lived in solitude in her unpretending home on the Rue Coq-Héron. This isolation and loneliness she has endured without a word of complaint, for she does not seem to feel the need of affection that most women do; but she might not be disposed to submit to the neglect of the simplest attention and common courtesies of life on my part."

"Good heavens! monsieur, you certainly seem to be very much concerned as to what the countess thinks of you, whether you see her or not. Before exhibiting so much solicitude, it might be well to ascertain if she even condescended to think of you at all when you went away, or to give you so much as a thought now on your return."

"Whether she gives me so much as a thought now or not, I do not know; but I am sure she did when I went away."

"Then you saw her before you left Paris?"

"I have already had the honour of telling your Majesty that I have not seen Madame de Charny since I gave the queen my word not to see her."

"She wrote to you then?"

Charny was silent.

"So she *did* write to you, monsieur?" exclaimed the queen. "Why don't you admit it?"

"She intrusted a letter for me to my brother Isidore."

"And you have read it? What did she say? What could she say to you? Yet she solemnly promised me — But speak! Answer at once! What did she say in the letter? Speak! Don't you see that I am wild with impatience?"

"I cannot tell your Majesty what the countess said in her letter. I have not read it."

"You tore it up?" cried the queen, joyfully. "You threw it into the fire without reading it? Charny, if you did that, you are the most faithful of men, and I was indeed wrong to complain, for I have no cause." And the

queen extended both her arms as if to draw him to her; but Charny remained motionless in his place.

"I neither tore it up nor threw it into the fire," he said coldly.

"Then how does it happen that you have not read it?" exclaimed the queen, sinking back in her chair.

"My brother was told not to give me the letter unless I was mortally wounded. Alas! it was not I whom Death had selected as his victim, but Isidore. After his death some one brought me his papers. Among them was this letter from the countess, with this memorandum attached to it. Here, madame."

As he spoke, Charny held out the few lines which Isidore had written and subsequently affixed to Andrée's letter.

Marie Antoinette took it with a trembling hand, and touched the bell.

"Lights, at once," she said imperiously; for since the beginning of this interview it had become quite dark in the room.

The footman withdrew, and a moment of silence ensued, in which the queen seemed to hear the loud throbbing of her heart.

The footman soon returned with two candelabra, which he placed upon the mantel. The queen did not wait for him to withdraw, but approached the mantel with the note in her hand before the servant had reached the door.

Twice she glanced at the paper without being able to even see it.

"It is not paper, but flame!" she muttered.

Passing her hand over her eyes as if to restore the sense of vision she seemed to have lost, she stamped her foot impatiently, and exclaimed:—

"My God! oh, my God!"

At last, by sheer force of will, she made her hand cease trembling, and regained her clearness of sight. But it was in a hoarse tone utterly unlike her usual voice that she began to read the instructions aloud,—

"This letter does not belong to me, but to my brother, Count Olivier de Charny. It was written by his wife, the countess."

The queen paused a few seconds, then resumed, —

"If any accident should happen to me, the finder of this paper is requested to send it to my brother, or else return it to the countess."

Again the reader paused, shook her head, and then continued, —

"I received it from her with the following instructions: —

"Should the count succeed in the undertaking in which he is now engaged, and should no misfortune befall him, the letter is to be returned to the countess."

The queen's voice became more and more tremulous as she proceeded, but she persevered, —

"If he should be dangerously wounded, but not unto death, he is to be requested to grant his wife the privilege of coming to him.

"If he should be mortally wounded, this letter is to be given to him; and if he is unable to read it himself, it is to be read to him, in order that he may know the secret it contains before he dies."

"Well, do you still deny it?" demanded Marie Antoinette, confronting the count with blazing eyes.

"Deny what?"

"Deny what? Good heavens! Why, deny that she loves you?"

"The countess loves me? What are you saying, madame?" cried Charny, impetuously, in his turn.

"Unfortunate woman that I am, I speak the truth."

"The countess loves me? Me? Impossible!"

"And why? I love you."

"But in these six years, if the countess loved me, she would have told me so, — or she would at least have allowed me to discover it."

The poor queen was suffering so that it seemed to her it

would be a relief to plunge the dagger still deeper into her heart.

"No," she cried, "no! She would say nothing; she would let you discover nothing. But it was only because she knew she could never really be your wife."

"Could never really be my wife?" repeated the count. -

"No, because she knew only too well that she had a secret which would inevitably destroy any affection you might feel for her, and because she knew only too well you would despise her the moment she divulged it."

"I! despise the countess?"

"Does not one despise a girl who is a wife without marriage, a mother without a husband?"

It was Charny's turn to become as death now, and to clutch at the chair nearest him for support as he said:—

"Madame, madame, you have said either too much or too little, and I have a right to demand an explanation."

"An explanation, monsieur, from me,—from the queen?"

"Yes, madame, and I demand it."

At that moment the door opened.

"What is wanted?" asked the queen, angrily.

"Your Majesty told me some time ago that you were always at home to Dr. Gilbert."

"Well?"

"The doctor desires to be allowed the privilege of paying his respects to you."

"Dr. Gilbert?" said the queen, "are you sure it is Dr. Gilbert?"

"Yes, madame."

"Then let him come in, let him come in!" cried the queen, excitedly.

And, turning to Charny, she added:—

"You desire an explanation in regard to Madame de Charny. Very well. Ask Dr. Gilbert for it. He is better able to give it than any one else I know."

In the mean time Gilbert had appeared in the doorway; but on hearing Marie Antoinette's words, he stood for a moment motionless on the threshold.

As for the queen, throwing Charny his brother's note, she started towards her dressing-room; but the count, with an even more rapid step, intercepted her, and, grasping her by the wrist, exclaimed: "Pardon me, madame, but this explanation must be made in your presence."

"Monsieur, you forget that I am the queen," she hissed, with teeth set and blazing eyes.

"You are an ungrateful woman who basely slanders her best friend; you are a jealous woman who traduces another woman, and that woman the wife of a man who has risked his life for you a hundred times in the last three days, — the wife of Comte de Charny. It is here, in the presence of one who has so insulted and calumniated her that justice shall be done her. Sit down, I say, and listen."

"So be it, monsieur," responded the queen. "You hear what the count wants, Dr. Gilbert," she added, with a forced laugh.

"Monsieur Gilbert, you hear the queen's commands," said Charny, in a perfectly courteous and dignified manner.

Gilbert came forward and gazed sorrowfully at Marie Antoinette.

"Oh, madame, madame," he murmured reproachfully.

Then, turning to Charny, he added: "Monsieur, what I have to say enhances the glory of a woman, and casts disgrace of the deepest dye upon a man. A poor peasant lad loved Mademoiselle de Taverny,—loved her as madly as hopelessly. One day he chanced to find her alone and unconscious, and, disregarding her youth, her beauty, and her innocence, he basely took advantage of her defenceless position; and thus it was that this young girl became a wife without marriage, and a mother without a husband. Mademoiselle de Taverny was an angel. Madame de Charny is a martyr."

Charny wiped away the sweat that was trickling from his brow.

"I thank you, Monsieur Gilbert," he said, with a sigh

of unspeakable relief. Then, turning to the queen, he added:—

“I was not aware, madame, that Mademoiselle de Taverny had been so unfortunate. I did not know that Madame de Charny was so good; but for this fact, I assure you that I should not have been six years in falling at her feet, and in adoring her as she deserves to be adored.”

And bowing low to the stupefied queen, he left the room, without the unfortunate lady venturing to make so much as a movement to detain him; but he heard the cry of despair she uttered as she saw the door close between them.

For she realized that upon this door, as upon the gate of hell, the hand of jealousy had just inscribed those dread words:—

Lasciate ogni speranza!

CHAPTER XII.

DATE LILIA.

AND now let us see what happened to Andrée while the foregoing scene was taking place between Charny and the queen.

Being fully acquainted with the state of her feelings, it is easy for us to imagine how terribly Andrée must have suffered after Isidore's departure.

Rightly surmising that the enterprise in which the two brothers were about to engage was the king's flight, its success or failure seemed likely to prove equally fatal to her hopes of happiness. If the project succeeded, she knew enough of Charny's devotion to the royal family to feel sure he would not forsake them in their exile. If it failed, she knew enough of Olivier's courage to feel sure he would continue to fight as long as the slightest hope remained, and even after all hope had vanished.

From the moment Isidore took leave of her, Andrée's eye was ever on the alert to catch the slightest glimmer of light, and her ear to seize the slightest rumour.

The next day, in common with all other Parisians, she learned that the king and his family had fled. She knew that Charny was with them, and consequently felt positive that he was going farther and farther away from her.

Then, for two days, Paris remained mute and dazed. At last, on the morning of the third day, a startling rumour was circulated through the city. The king had been arrested at Varennes. No particulars were given. The king had been arrested at Varennes; that was all.

Andrée did not even know where Varennes was. This little town, so widely celebrated since that time, and whose

very name was destined to become a terror to royalty, then shared the obscurity which enshrouded and still enshrouds ten thousand equally unimportant and equally unknown French towns and villages.

Andrée opened a geographical dictionary and read: —

“Varennes — in Argonne — county seat — 1607 inhabitants.”

Then she hunted the place up on the map, and found it in the middle of a sort of triangle between Stenay, Verdun, and Châlons, near the edge of the Forest of Argonne, and on the banks of a small river. It was upon this obscure spot that the attention of all France was now concentrated.

Further information began to come in, though very slowly, and each detail was of the greatest interest to Andrée.

It was reported that General Bouillé had hastened to the king's assistance and attacked the escort, but that, after a desperate conflict, he had been compelled to retreat, leaving the royal family in the hands of the patriots. Of course Charny had taken part in this fight, and of course had been the last to retire from the fray, — that is, if he had not fallen upon the field of battle.

Shortly afterwards it was reported that one of the three guardsmen who accompanied the king had been killed. Then the name was given, — only people did not know whether it was the count or the viscount, Isidore or Olivier. It was a Charny, — that was all anybody knew about it. The two days of suspense that followed were days of intolerable agony to Andrée.

At last the return of the king and the royal family was announced for Saturday, the 26th.

The august prisoners were to sleep in Meaux; so the king could hardly reach Paris before noon, and in case he returned to the Tuileries by the most direct route, he would re-enter the city by the Faubourg St. Martin.

About eleven o'clock Madame de Charny, in the simplest of gowns and closely veiled, was at the Barrière. She

waited there until three o'clock in the afternoon. Then she learned that the procession was to make the circuit of the city by the outer boulevards, and enter Paris proper by way of the Champs Elysées.

So she had the entire city to cross, and to cross on foot; for no one would think of attempting to drive a carriage through the dense crowds that filled the streets. Never had travel been so obstructed since the taking of the Bastille two years before.

But Andrée did not hesitate. She started for the Champs Elysées, and was one of the first to arrive there.

Here she had to wait three hours longer, — three mortal hours.

At last the procession appeared, and Andrée uttered a cry of joy as the coach passed; for she saw Charny on the seat outside.

Her cry was answered by another, that would have seemed like the echo of hers, had it not been a cry of anguish. Andrée turned, and saw a young girl struggling wildly in the arms of three or four kind-hearted persons who seemed to be trying to calm and console her.

Perhaps Andrée herself would have given the poor girl more attention, had she not heard all sorts of threats and imprecations showered upon the three men on the outside of the coach. It was upon them that the fury of the populace was chiefly directed. They seemed likely, and in fact almost certain, to be made the scapegoats of royalty's offences, and to be torn in pieces the moment the carriage stopped.

And Charny was one of these three men. Andrée resolved to leave no means untried to effect an entrance into the garden of the Tuileries. To do that, she must make the circuit of the crowd, and then follow the bank of the river and enter the garden, if possible, from the Tuileries quay. By forcing her way through the Rue Chaillot, she succeeded in reaching the bank of the river, and finally the Tuileries quay.

At last, after repeated efforts, and at the risk of being crushed to death a dozen times, she reached the gateway; but there was such a dense crowd around the carriage that she could not dream of gaining a place in the foremost rank.

It occurred to Andrée that from the terrace nearest the river she might be able to see over the heads of the crowd. To be sure, the distance would be too great for her to see or hear very distinctly; but it would be better to see and hear a little than to hear and see nothing at all.

So she hastily climbed the terrace on the bank of the river. From it she could see the seat on the top of the coach, the seat occupied by Charny and the two guardsmen, — Charny, who little suspected that a hundred yards off a heart was throbbing so violently for him; Charny, who probably had not so much as a thought for her, but who was thinking only of the queen, forgetting his own peril entirely in his anxiety for her safety.

Oh, had she but known that he was pressing her letter to his heart at that very instant, and offering her, in thought, his last sigh! — for he really believed that moment was destined to be his last.

At last the carriage stopped, in the midst of the most frightful hooting and yelling conceivable. A scene of the wildest confusion ensued. Bayonets, pikes, and swords were brandished madly. One seemed to be gazing at a field of iron grain bending beneath the fury of the gale.

The three men disappeared as instantaneously as if they had been swallowed up in a seething whirlpool. Then there was such a strong eddy in the crowd that those in the outer ranks were pushed violently back against the stone wall that supported the terrace.

Andrée was in agony. She could hear and see nothing. In her despair she threw up her arms, and tried to utter a few words of protest and entreaty; but everything seemed to whirl round and round; the sky turned a vivid scarlet; there was a roaring like that of the sea in her ears; and

she fell to the ground, realizing that she was alive merely because she was suffering so terribly.

A sensation of coolness restored her to consciousness. One woman was pressing a handkerchief wet with water from the river to Andrée's forehead, and another was holding a bottle of smelling-salts to her nostrils. This last woman she recognized as the one she had seen so overwhelmed with grief at the Barrière, without knowing how analogous their situations were, and the bond of mutual sorrow that united them.

On regaining consciousness, Andrée's first question was, "Were they killed?"

True compassion is quick-witted, and those around Andrée instantly comprehended that she was anxious in regard to the three men whose lives had been in such imminent peril.

"No, they were saved," was the reply.

"All three?"

"Yes, all three."

"Thank God! Where are they now?"

"In the palace."

"In the palace? Thank you."

Rising, Andrée hastily left the garden by the gate on the side next the river, in order to re-enter it by the arched gateway leading into the Louvre, which adjoined the Tuileries; for she rightly conjectured that the crowd would be much less great there. In fact, she found the Rue des Orties nearly deserted.

Crossing a corner of the Place du Carrousel, she entered the Princes' Courtyard, and rushed into the porter's lodge. The porter knew the countess by sight, and very readily consented to go in search of further information. By an inside corridor he soon reached the main building, where he learned that the three officers were safe, that Monsieur de Charny had gone to his own room immediately after reaching the palace, but had left it a quarter of an hour later, in his naval uniform, evidently with the intention

of reporting to the queen, as he was now in her Majesty's apartments.

Andrée bestowed her purse upon the bearer of this good news.

So Charny was safe.

She thanked the kind-hearted man again and again, and then wended her way back to the house on the Rue Coq-Héron. Once inside its protecting walls, she threw herself, not into an arm-chair, but upon her prie-Dieu.

It was not to pray with her lips, however. There are moments when our gratitude to God is so great that words fail us, — when it is the hands, the eyes, the whole body, the whole heart and soul, that lift themselves to Him.

She was still plunged in this state of ecstasy when she heard the door open. She turned slowly, scarcely realising what sound it was that had aroused her from her reverie.

Her maid was standing in the doorway, looking for her mistress, whom she failed to discover first in the dim light. Behind the maid was a figure whose outlines were but dimly distinguishable in the gloom; but with Andrée recognition was instantaneous. It was her husband.

She tried to rise; but her strength failed her, and, sinking down again upon the cushion, she turned half-way round, resting her arm on the sloping top of the prie-Dieu for support.

"The count!" she murmured; "the count!" For though he was standing there before her, she could scarcely believe her eyes.

The maid stepped aside to allow Charny to enter the room, and then withdrew, closing the door behind her.

Charny and the countess were alone together.

"I am told that you have just come in, madame," said Charny. "I trust I have not been indiscreet in following you so closely."

"No," she replied, in a voice that trembled violently, in spite of her efforts to steady it; "no, you are most welcome, monsieur. I felt so anxious that I went out to ascertain what was taking place."

"You have been out in the streets! How long, may I ask?"

"Ever since morning. I went first to the Barrière St.-Martin, and afterwards to the Champs Elysées. There I saw — I saw —" she hesitated — "the king and the royal family, and — and you — and I felt reassured, at least for the moment; but everybody prophesied danger when you left the coach, so I hastened to the Tuileries. There — there — I thought I should die."

"Yes," said Charny, "the crowd was terrible. You were nearly suffocated. I can understand —"

"No, no! it was not that. At last I made inquiries, and learned that you were safe; so I came home, and, as you see, I have been on my knees thanking God for his great mercy."

"As you are on your knees communing with God, do not rise, I beseech you, without remembering my poor brother in your prayers."

"Isidore? Ah, then it was he!" exclaimed *Andrée*. "Poor fellow!"

And she covered her face with her hands.

Charny advanced a few steps, and gazed sadly and tenderly at this pure creature as she prayed. There was intense compassion and sympathy and commiseration in his gaze, and something, too, of repressed desire.

Had not the queen told him, or rather had she not allowed the startling revelation, that *Andrée* loved him, to escape her unawares?

Her prayer concluded, the countess again turned to Charny.

"So he is dead?" she said.

"Yes, madame, dead. He died for the same cause and in fulfilling the same duty as poor George."

"And in the midst of this great sorrow you have found time to think of me," murmured *Andrée*, in a voice so low that her words were scarcely audible.

But fortunately Charny was listening with both heart and ears.

“Did you not intrust my brother with a commission for me, madame?” he asked.

“Monsieur!” stammered Andrée, looking anxiously at the count.

“Did you not give him a letter addressed to me?”

“Monsieur?” repeated Andrée, faintly.

“After poor Isidore’s death his papers were brought to me, and this letter was among the papers.”

“And you read it?” exclaimed Andrée, burying her face in her hands. “Ah!”

“I was to know the contents of this letter only if I was mortally wounded; and I am safe and sound, as you see.”

“And the letter—”

“Is here intact, madame, exactly as you gave it to Isidore.”

“Oh,” murmured Andrée, as she took the letter, “it is a very noble or a very cruel thing that you have done!”

Charny took Andrée’s hand in both his own. She made a movement to withdraw it; but as Charny persisted, murmuring tenderly, “Grant me this favour, madame,” she heaved a sigh, almost of terror, but, unable to resist the promptings of her own heart, she left her trembling hand in his.

Deeply embarrassed, not knowing which way to look, and unable to escape Charny’s ardent gaze, leaning as she was against the prie-Dieu, she faltered:—

“Yes, I understand, monsieur; you have come to return the letter.”

“For that, yes, madame, and for something else. I have come to ask your forgiveness, countess.”

Andrée’s heart thrilled with rapture. This was the first time Charny had ever addressed her by this title without prefacing it with the formal *madame*. Besides, the word had been uttered in a tone of infinite tenderness.

“Forgiveness! my forgiveness! And for what?”

“For the manner in which I have behaved towards you for the last six years.”

She gazed at him with unfeigned astonishment. "Have I ever complained?" she asked.

"No, because you are an angel."

In spite of herself, Andrée felt her eyes grow dim. It was tears that obscured her vision.

"You are weeping, Andrée!" cried Charny.

"Oh, pardon me, monsieur," exclaimed Andrée, bursting into tears, "but I am not accustomed to hear you speak to me in this way. Oh, my God! my God!"

And, springing up, she threw herself into an arm-chair, and covered her face with her hands. But after a moment, conquering her emotion, she lifted her head again, and exclaimed:—

"How foolish I am! I—"

But suddenly she paused. While her eyes had been hidden, Charny had come and knelt before her.

"What! you on your knees at my feet!" she exclaimed.

"Did I not tell you, Andrée, that I had come to implore your forgiveness?"

"On your knees, at *my* feet?" she repeated, like one who could not believe her own eyes.

"Andrée, you have taken your hand away from me," said Charny.

And he again held out his hand to his young wife. But she, recoiling, with a feeling closely akin to terror, exclaimed, "What does this mean?"

"It means that I love you, Andrée," said Charny, in tones of infinite tenderness.

She pressed her hand on her heart and uttered a cry; then, springing to her feet, and pressing both hands upon her throbbing temples, she repeated, —

"He loves me? he loves me? Why, it is impossible!"

"Say it is impossible for you to love me, Andrée, but do not say it is impossible for me to love you."

She looked down searchingly into Charny's face, as if to satisfy herself that he was telling the truth; and the count's large dark eyes spoke far more eloquently than any

words. *Andrée*, though she might have doubted his words, could not doubt that look.

"Oh, my God!" she moaned, "is there in this whole world a creature so unfortunate as myself?"

"*Andrée*," pleaded *Charny*, "tell me that you love me; or if you cannot say that you love me, at least tell me that you do not hate me."

"Hate you!" she exclaimed, a dazzling light gleaming in her usually serene and limpid eyes. "Ah, *monsieur*, you would make a great mistake if you called the sentiment you inspire in me hatred."

"If it is not hatred, and if it is not love, what is it, *Andrée*?"

"It is not love, only because I have no right to love. Did you not hear me cry out to God just now that I was the most unfortunate woman on earth?"

"And why have you no right to love me, when I love you, *Andrée*, with all the strength of my being?"

"That is something I cannot, dare not tell you," moaned *Andrée*, wringing her hands.

"But what if this secret which you cannot and dare not and will not tell me has already been revealed to me by some other person?" asked *Charny*, his voice becoming more and more soft and tender with every word. "What if I know all?"

Andrée laid both her hands heavily on *Charny's* shoulders.

"Oh, my God!" she groaned.

"And what if I deem you all the nobler on account of this very misfortune? What if it was the discovery of this terrible secret that gave me courage to come and tell you that I loved you?"

"If this is true, *monsieur*, you are the noblest and most generous of men."

"I love you, *Andrée*," repeated *Charny*, passionately. "I love you! I love you!"

"Oh, God!" cried *Andrée*, raising her eyes gratefully to

Heaven; "I did not know there could be such happiness in this world!"

"But now tell me that you love me in return, *Andrée*."

"No, no, I dare not!" cried *Andrée*; "but read this letter, which was to have been given to you on your death-bed."

And she handed the count the letter he had returned to her.

She buried her face in her hands as the count eagerly broke the seal. He read the first few lines; then, uttering a cry of delight, he removed *Andrée*'s hands from her face, and pressed her fondly to his heart as he exclaimed passionately: —

"And you have loved me ever since the day of our first meeting, six years ago? Oh, my blessed darling, how can I ever love you enough to make you forget all you have suffered!"

"Oh, my heavenly Father," murmured *Andrée*, bending like a reed under the weight of so much happiness, "if this be a dream, let me never wake from it; for the awakening would kill me!"

Portrait of Madame Roland.

Photo-Etching. — From Engraving by Levachez.



CHAPTER XIII.

A LITTLE SHADE AFTER SUNSHINE.

ON the 16th of July, 1791, about three weeks after the events we have just related, two persons sat writing at the same table in a little parlour on the fourth floor of the Hôtel Britannique, on the Rue Guénégaud.

The two persons are of opposite sexes, and each is worthy of special mention.

The man, who was probably about sixty years of age, was tall and slight, with an austere and yet impassioned air, — the straight lines of his face indicating a calm and profound thinker, whose strong reason and remarkable powers of analysis hold his imagination under strict control.

The woman did not look more than thirty or thirty-two, though she was really over thirty-six. By her rather too vivid colouring it is easy to see that she comes of plebeian stock; but she has beautiful eyes, of that changing hue which partakes almost equally of gray and blue and green, — eyes which are both mild and firm in their expression. Her mouth is large, but her teeth are perfect and her lips rosy; her chin and nose are both a trifle tip-tilted; her hands are beautifully shaped, though a little large; her figure is graceful, undulating, and even voluptuous. Her throat is wonderfully beautiful in its contour, and she has the hips of the Syracusan Venus.

The man is Jean Marie Roland de la Plâtière, born at Villefranche, near Lyons, in 1732. The woman is Manon Jeanne Phlipon, born in Paris in 1754.

They had been married eleven years, that is, since 1780.

We have remarked that this woman came from the people; her names prove it. The daughter of an engraver, she worked at the same trade until she reached the age of twenty-five, when she married Roland, who was twenty-two years older than she. Then she became a copyist, translator, and compiler. The compilation of such books as the "Manufacture of Woollen Fabrics" and a "Dictionary of Manufactures" absorbed the best years of this richly gifted woman's life, in which passion was never destined to play a part, not by reason of coldness of heart, but simply by reason of her perfect purity of soul.

In her relations with her husband filial respect filled the place of wifely love. Her affection was a chaste worship, which often led her to abandon her work — though she would be obliged to toil far into the night in consequence — to prepare a nourishing meal for her aged spouse, whose enfeebled stomach could bear only certain kinds of food.

In 1789 Madame Roland was leading an obscure and laborious life in the provinces, when the cannon of the Bastille suddenly aroused all that was noble and grand and patriotic in the heart of this gifted woman.

France was no longer a kingdom; it was the Nation. It was no longer merely a country where people lived, it was Fatherland.

Then came the great Federation in Paris in 1790, preceded, as the reader may recollect, by the lesser Federation in Lyons.

Jeanne Phlipon, who from the window of her father's house on the Quai de l'Horloge, on the bank of the Seine, near the Palace of Justice, could not only see the sun rise every morning, but follow it in its course as far as the end of the Champs Elysées, where it sank to rest behind a grove of trees, had also seen at three o'clock in the morning, on the heights of Fourvières, the rising of that much more luminous and absorbing and powerful sun which men call liberty. From this point she enjoyed a comprehensive view of that grand reunion; and her heart had plunged

into this grand sea of fraternity, from which she emerged, like Achilles, vulnerable in only one spot; and it was in this spot she was subsequently wounded, though she did not succumb to Cupid's dart by any means.

On the evening of that glorious day, enraptured by all she had seen and heard, she wrote a glowing description of the fête, and sent it to her friend Champagneux, the editor of the "Lyons Journal." The young man, astonished and dazzled by the brilliant description, published it in his paper, and the next day he was obliged to publish an edition of sixty thousand copies, instead of twelve or fifteen hundred, as usual.

And now let us briefly explain why this poetical imagination and womanly heart espoused politics with such marvellous ardour. It was because Jeanne Phlipon, treated as an engraver's apprentice by her father, — and Madame Roland, treated merely as a secretary by her husband, — had seen, both in the paternal home as well as in her married life, only the stern and practical side of life. It was because Madame Roland, who had never read a frivolous book in her life, found her chief recreation as well as amusement in such works as the "Official Report of the Elections of 1789," or "An Account of the Taking of the Bastille."

As for Roland himself, he was a striking example of how chance or fate, through some apparently trivial occurrence, effects a marvellous change in a man's career or in the history of a nation.

He was the youngest of five brothers. His parents wished to make a priest of him; he insisted upon remaining a man, and at the age of nineteen he left his father's house alone, on foot and penniless. He succeeded in making his way to Nantes, where he secured a position with a shipping merchant, and finally received an appointment to India. When the time came for his departure, at the very hour he was to go aboard the ship he had quite a severe hemorrhage, and his physician forbade a sea voyage.

Had Cromwell sailed for America instead of remaining in England, detained there by an order of Charles I., it is probable that the scaffold at Whitehall would never have been erected. If Roland had sailed for India, perhaps that memorable tenth of August would never have figured in history.

Unable to fulfil his contract with the shipping merchant, Roland left Nantes and repaired to Rouen, where one of his relatives, recognising the young man's ability, secured him a position as inspector of manufactures.

After this, Roland's life became one of constant study and unremitting toil. Economy was his Muse, and Commerce his inspiration. He travelled, he collected statistics, he edited the productions of others, he wrote treatises on sheep-raising and on numerous mechanical inventions. He wrote Letters from Sicily, from Italy, and from Malta, "The French Financier," and other works which we have already alluded to, and which were copied by his wife, whom he married, as we have before stated, in 1780.

Four years afterwards they went to England; and on their return he sent her to Paris to ask for a patent of nobility, and his transfer from Rouen to Lyons. The transfer was effected, but the letters of nobility were not granted.

When the Revolution began, he was still holding the office of inspector of commerce and manufactures at Lyons; and at the dawn of this new epoch he and his wife felt springing up in their hearts, that beautiful plant, with golden leaves and diamond flowers, which we call "enthusiasm."

We have seen how Madame Roland wrote her account of the Lyons fête, and how the journal that published it was obliged to print sixty thousand copies, and how each National Guardsman on returning to his native village or town or city carried a bit of Madame Roland's soul with him.

As the article bore no signature, and the paper did not

give the author's name, one might almost have fancied that it was Liberty herself who had come down to earth and dictated to some unknown scribe this account of the great festival, as the angel dictated the book of Revelation to St. John.

The husband and wife were full of faith and confidence and hope when their little circle of friends, consisting of Champagneux, Bose, Lanthenas, and two or three more perhaps, was enlarged by the introduction of a new acquaintance.

Lanthenas, who was on very intimate terms with the Rolands, and who was in the habit of spending weeks and even months at their house, brought home with him one evening one of the electors whose official report Madame Roland had so greatly admired.

The new-comer was Bancal des Issarts. He was about thirty-nine years of age, handsome, unpretentious in manner, a noble-hearted and exceedingly devout man, — not a brilliant person intellectually, but endowed with a most generous heart and truly philanthropic soul. He had been a notary, but had given up his business in order to devote himself to politics and philosophy.

At the end of a week spent in the Roland household the new guest, the host, and Lanthenas had become so much attached to one another, and formed such a harmonious trio in their devotion to country, their love of liberty, and their respect for all sacred things, that they resolved never to part, but to live together and bear the expense in common.

When Bancal left them for a brief season, the necessity for this union must have made itself even more strongly felt; for Roland wrote to him as follows: —

“Hasten back to us, my friend. Why do you delay? You have seen our free and easy way of living. A man's habits do not change at my age. We preach patriotism, we elevate the soul. Lanthenas does noble work as a physician, my wife is the nurse of the neighbourhood, and you and I, — well, we attend to the business affairs of the society.”

The union of these three well-to-do gentlemen furnished quite a snug little fortune. Lanthenas had twenty thousand francs, Roland sixty thousand, and Bancal a hundred thousand.

Roland fulfilled his mission as a propagandist very thoroughly. He catechised every peasant he met by the roadside on his tours of inspection. A capital walker, this pilgrim, staff in hand, went north and south, east and west, sowing the new word of life — the blessed seed of liberty — everywhere, with a liberal hand.

Bancal proved an admirable disciple and helper. The idea that Bancal might fall in love with his (Roland's) wife never once entered the brain of the future colleague of Clavière and Dumouriez, nor that she would ever be likely to return his love. Had not Lanthenas, young man though he was, lived in close proximity to this staid, industrious, pure-minded woman, as a brother lives with his sister. Was not Madame Roland the very personification of womanly strength and virtue?

Roland was consequently much pleased when Bancal replied to the above-mentioned note in the most affectionate manner, and promised a speedy return. Roland received this letter while in Lyons, and immediately sent it to his wife at La Plâtière.

Oh, do not take my word for it, read Michelet, if you wish a clear insight into the character of the admirable woman we call Madame Roland.

She received the letter on one of those warm days when the air is full of electricity, and when the coldest hearts thrill with emotion. It was autumn, but a summer tempest was gathering in the sky.

Since the day she first met Bancal, emotions she had never before known had moved the heart of this chaste woman. A sweet song, like that of some shy forest bird, was continually resounding in her ears. She had never known love; but, like all women, she divined its nature very accurately. She realised her danger.

With tears in her eyes, but smiling all the while, she went straight to her desk, and, without the slightest hesitation or circumlocution, she wrote to Bancal, exposing the flaw in her armour, confessing her love, but with the same breath destroying any hope which this confession might arouse.

Bancal understood her. He said nothing more about joining their family circle, but went to England, where he remained two years.

It was of such stuff as this that the heroes and heroines of ancient times were made. And after the scenes of turmoil and passion through which we have passed, it seems to me it will be pleasant to the reader to rest awhile in the shadow of such pure and refreshing beauty, strength, and virtue.

Let no one say that we represent Madame Roland as other than she was, — chaste in her father's workshop, chaste in her home, chaste by the cradle of her child. Standing face to face with the scaffold, in an hour when one does not lie, she wrote, "I have always controlled my passions, and no person ever lived who was more free from sensuality than myself."

And yet her chastity should not be imputed to coldness. The epoch in which she lived was an epoch of bitter hatred, I know; but it was likewise an epoch of impassioned love as well. France herself set the example. The poor, long-imprisoned captive, like Marie Stuart when she was released from her prison-house, longed to imprint a kiss upon the lips of all creation, and take all nature to her arms.

No; all the women loved devotedly, and all the men loved ardently, — Lucile and Camille Desmoulins, Danton and his Louise, Mademoiselle de Keralio and Robert, Sophie and Condorcet, Vergniaud and Mademoiselle Candelle. There was not one, not even the cynical and sarcastic Robespierre, whose heart did not pay tribute to the power of love; for Robespierre loved the daughter of his

landlord, a carpenter, whose acquaintance we shall make by and by.

And was not this love — though less pure, I admit, still love is one of the chief of virtues — was not this love quite as genuine as the love of Madame Tallien, as the love of Madame de Beauharnais and the love of Madame de Genlis, and all those other lovers whose whispered words of tenderness and consolation illumined the pale faces of those who died an ignominious death upon the scaffold?

Yes, everybody loved in those days, and we must take the word in its fullest sense. Some loved the ideal, some the material; some loved their country, some the human race. The desire, or rather the need to love, had been increasing ever since Rousseau's time. One might almost have supposed that each being, vaguely conscious of the near approach of death, was eager to seize love and enjoy its transports before it was too late, and that each heart, as it drew nearer and nearer to the grave, palpitated with a more and more intense and devouring passion.

But we have wandered a long way from the old man and the young wife who were writing in the little parlour on the fourth floor of the Hôtel Britannique. Let us return to them.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FIRST REPUBLICANS.

ON the 20th of February, 1791, Roland was sent from Lyons to Paris to plead the cause of twenty thousand famishing workmen.

He had been at the capital five months when those startling events occurred at Varennes, — events which exerted such a potent influence over the destinies of our heroes, as well as over the destiny of France, that we have felt it our duty to devote nearly an entire volume to them.

But in the interval of time between the return of the king, on the 25th of June, and the 16th of July, many strange things had happened.

Everybody had shouted, “The king is running away!” and everybody had rushed after the king to bring him back; but when they had brought him back and had him safe in the Tuileries again, nobody knew what to do with him.

Every one had advice to give. It came from every point of the compass, like the wind when a tempest is raging. Unfortunate indeed is the ship that is out at sea in such a storm!

On the 21st of June, when the king’s flight became known, the Cordelier Club issued a proclamation signed by Legendre, the French butcher whom the queen had mentioned as the counterpart of the English butcher Harrison, in her conversation with Barnave.

This proclamation had the following quotation from Voltaire as a heading:—

“ Si parmi les Français, il se trouvait un traître
 Qui regrettât les rois et qui voulût un maître,
 Que le perfide meure au milieu des tourments,
 Et que sa cendre soit abandonnée aux vents.”

Which may be translated almost literally as follows:—

“ If among the French people there be a traitor
 Who regretteth our kings and desireth a master,
 Let the perfidious wretch die in the direst of torture,
 And his ashes be thrown to the four winds of heaven.”

Though written by Voltaire, the rhyme might be better; but the lines expressed the ideas of the persons who issued the proclamation very accurately, and also imparted a literary air to the document.

This proclamation announced that each and every member of the Cordelier Club had taken a solemn oath to stab any person who dared to encroach upon the territory, the liberty, or the constitution of France.

As for Marat, who always dwelt apart, and who said, as a pretext for his isolation, that turkeys go in flocks, but the eagle dwells in solitude, — Marat proposed a dictator, as the following extract from his paper shows:—

“ Select,” he said, “ a true Frenchman and a true patriot, — the citizen who has displayed the most intelligence, the most zeal, fidelity, and disinterestedness, — take him at once, or the Revolutionary cause is lost.”

Or, in other words, “ Take Marat.”

As for Prudhomme, he suggested nothing, but he heartily abominated the old *régime*. Listen to him:—

“ On Monday the dauphin was taken out for an airing on the terrace overlooking the river. Whenever he saw a group of citizens of any considerable size, the base hireling in attendance upon him picked up the child and placed him on the stone parapet, and the royal puppet, faithful to his morning lesson, threw kisses to the people. This was done to curry favour for his dear papa and mamma.

Only a few spectators were cowardly enough to shout, 'Long live the dauphin!' Citizens, be on your guard against a court which grovels to the people in its hour of weakness."

Immediately after these lines came the following: —

"On the 27th of January, 1649, the English Parliament condemned Charles I. to be beheaded for having exceeded his royal prerogatives and having insisted upon maintaining the encroachments of his father, James I. On the 30th of January, he expiated his crimes, — which crimes had been legalised to a certain extent by custom, and sustained by a large party, but the voice of the people made itself heard throughout the length and breadth of the land. Parliament declared the king a *fugitive*, a traitor, and a public enemy, and Charles Stuart was beheaded in front of the Banquet Hall, at Whitehall Palace."

Bravo! citizen Prudhomme. You certainly are not backward, and on the 21st of January, 1793, when Louis XVI. is decapitated in his turn, you may justly claim the credit of suggesting this plan as early as June 27, 1791.

It is true that Monsieur Prudhomme afterwards became a Royalist and a Conservative, and published a book entitled, "A History of the Crimes committed during the Revolution."

Consistency is a fine thing.

The journal known as "The Iron Mouth" was even more outspoken and much less hypocritical. It was edited by Bonneville, an honest, fearless, foolhardy young fellow. The following is an extract from his journal: —

"No more kings, no more man-eaters for us! The name has been frequently changed, but the thing itself has been retained. Now let us have no regent, no dictator, no protector, no Orléans, no Lafayette! Must a nation be under tutelage for ever? Let our *departments* unite and declare that they will have neither tyrant nor king, neither protector nor regent, nor any of those semblances of royalty whose shadow is as fatal to the public welfare as the accursed upas-tree is fatal to those that come beneath its shade.

"It is not enough to prate of a republic. Venice, too, was a

republic. What we need is a National Commonwealth, — a National Government. Summon the people together in broad daylight, and proclaim that the Law is the only sovereign power. Swear that the Law alone shall rule. There is not a friend of liberty on earth who will not repeat the oath.”

As for Camille Desmoulins, he climbed upon a chair in the Palais Royal, the usual scene of his oratorical triumphs, and said: —

Gentlemen, it will be a great misfortune if this perfidious man is brought back to us. What shall we do with him? If he is brought back, I move that he be placed on public exhibition for three days with a red handkerchief around his head, and then be conducted by easy stages to the frontier.”

We must confess that of all the suggestions offered, the one made by that hare-brained, fanatical Camille Desmoulins was not the most foolish, by any means.

The reader will observe that in all these extracts the word *republic* has been mentioned only by Bonneville. Neither Brissot, Danton, Robespierre, nor even Pétion had dared to utter the word. It even frightened the Cordeliers, and filled the hearts of the Jacobins with wrath and indignation.

On the 13th of July, Robespierre said in the rostrum: “I am neither a republican nor a monarchist.”

Had Robespierre been driven to the wall, he would have found it difficult to explain what he was.

Well, everybody was in about the same situation, except Bonneville and that young woman who was sitting opposite her husband in the fourth story of the Hôtel Britannique, copying a political document.

On the 22nd of June, the day after the king's departure, she wrote: —

“Indignation against Louis XVI., hatred of kings in general, and republican sentiments are heard on every side.”

Republican sentiments, you see, are rampant on every side, it seems, but the word *republic* is not even breathed.

The National Assembly, in particular, was strongly opposed to it.

The great trouble with legislative assemblies is that they never progress any further after they are elected; that they pay no heed to current events; that they do not keep in touch with the spirit of the times, and do not follow where the people lead, though they still claim to represent them. X

The Assembly said, "The customs of France are not republican." What would have introduced republican manners and customs into France, I should like to know? The monarchy? Certainly not. A monarchy requires obedience, servility, and corruption; so a monarchy fosters servile and corrupt customs and manners. It is a republic which institutes republican customs and manners. First get your republic, and republican customs and manners will speedily follow.

There was a time when it would have been an easy matter to proclaim a republic, and that was just after the king had departed, taking the dauphin with him. Instead of running after them and bringing them back, the royal fugitives should have been furnished with the best horses in the stables, and with energetic postilions well provided with whips and spurs. Then the courtiers should have been sent after the king, and the priests after the courtiers, and the door tightly closed behind them.

Even Lafayette, whose lucid moments were rare, was favoured with one at this time.

About six o'clock on the morning of June 21st some one came to inform Lafayette that the royal family had run away. It cost the person no little effort to wake the general, for he was sleeping as soundly as on that memorable night at Versailles.

"Gone!" he exclaimed, "why, that is impossible; I left Gouvion leaning against the door of their bedroom."

But he arose, dressed himself, and went downstairs. At the door he met Bailly, the mayor of Paris, and

Beauharnais, the President of the Assembly. Bailly's nose seemed longer and his face looked more sallow than ever. Beauharnais seemed overwhelmed with consternation.

Strange, was it not, that Josephine's husband, whose death on the scaffold left the way clear for his widow to ascend the throne of France, should be so overcome with consternation at the flight of Louis XVI.?

"How unfortunate that the Assembly is not yet in session!" exclaimed Bailly.

"Yes, very unfortunate," chimed in Beauharnais.

"So the king has really gone?" cried Lafayette.

"Alas! yes," responded the two statesmen, in the same breath.

"Why do you say 'alas'?" inquired Lafayette.

"What! is it possible you do not understand?" exclaimed Bailly. "Why, because he will come back with a pack of Prussians and Austrians and *émigrés* at his heels, and force us into either a foreign or a civil war."

"Then you think the return of the king is absolutely essential to the public welfare?" inquired Lafayette, thoughtfully, only partially convinced.

"Yes, unquestionably," was the prompt reply.

"In that case, we must send after him," said Lafayette.

And he wrote this order: —

"The enemies of our country having abducted the king, the National Guards are hereby ordered to arrest them wherever they may be found.

"Take notice that as the king is necessary to France, and as he must be brought back, it must not be admitted that he went of his own accord; it must be supposed that he had been abducted."

Lafayette was by no means convinced, however; so in starting Romeuf off, he gave him to understand that he need not be in too much of a hurry. The young aide-de-camp even took the wrong road, so as not to overtake the fugitives; but fortunately or unfortunately Billot was on the right track.

The Assembly was appalled when it heard the news. In fact, the king had left a threatening letter on his departure, giving people to understand that he had gone to secure foreign intervention, and would speedily return to bring France to its senses.

The royalists, on the other hand, lifted their heads again, and began to assert themselves in a rather alarming manner.

It was Suleau, I believe, who wrote:—

“All persons who desire to be included in the amnesty we offer our enemies in the name of the Prince of Condé can enter their names in our office from now until the month of August. We shall have fifteen hundred registers for the accommodation of the public.”

One of those who suffered most from fright was Robespierre. The Assembly having adjourned from half-past three to five, hastened to Pétion's house. The weak nature sought the strong.

In his opinion, Lafayette was in league with the court, and a massacre of the deputies was imminent.

“I shall be one of the first persons killed,” he cried despairingly. “I have n't twenty-four hours to live.”

Pétion, being of a cool and phlegmatic temperament, took an entirely different view of the situation.

“Now we know the king's real character, we can act accordingly,” was his only comment.

Brissot came in. He was one of the most progressive men of the time, and wrote for “The Patriot.”

He exclaimed, “A newspaper is to be started, of which I am to be one of the editors!”

“What is it to be called?”

“The Republican.”

Robespierre made a wry face.

“The Republican!” he retorted contemptuously. “I wish you would be kind enough to explain to me what a republic is.”

They were still in Pétion's apartments when the two Rolands called to see their friend. The husband was the same resolute, austere person as ever; the calm wife with her clear, eloquent eyes was pleased rather than alarmed. On their way from their quarters on the Rue Guénégaud, they had seen the proclamation issued by the Cordeliers, and, like the Cordeliers, they were certain that a king was by no means essential to the welfare of a nation.

Their courage imparted fresh courage to Robespierre's sinking heart, and he went back to the Assembly, not to take any active part in the proceedings, but to watch and be ready to profit by any turn affairs might take. About nine o'clock in the evening he perceived that the tendency of the Assembly was towards sentimentalism, that the members were preaching fraternity, and that they were likely to soon put their theories into practice by going over *en masse* to the Jacobins, — with whom they had been on the worst of terms, and whom they had even styled a band of assassins.

Then he slipped off his bench, sneaked to the door, and ran as fast as he could go to the Jacobin Club, where he mounted the platform, denounced the king, denounced the cabinet, denounced Bailly, denounced Lafayette, denounced the entire Assembly, described the horrors of the impending St. Bartholomew's day in the most harrowing manner, and concluded by laying his life upon the altar of his country.

When Robespierre was talking of himself, he always became eloquent; and on learning that the virtuous and exemplary Robespierre was in such peril, his auditors sobbed pitifully. "If you die, we will die with you!" cried a voice. "Yes, yes, every man of us," repeated his hearers in concert; and some raised their hands to swear it, others drew their swords, and some fell upon their knees and lifted their arms heavenward. It was the fashion of the day. Look at David's picture of the Oath in the Tennis Court.

Madame Roland was present. She could not understand why Robespierre should be in any danger, but she was a woman, and consequently vulnerable to emotion. The excitement was intense, and she was greatly moved, as she herself acknowledged.

Just then Danton entered the hall. As his popularity was on the increase, it seemed eminently proper that he should be the one to attack Lafayette, whose popularity was on the wane.

But why this almost universal dislike of Lafayette? Was it because he was really an honest man and always the dupe of parties, provided the parties appealed to his generosity?

So when the gentlemen of the Assembly were announced, and when Lameth and Lafayette — mortal enemies — entered arm in arm, to set an example of fraternity, everybody shouted: —

“To the tribune, Danton! To the tribune, Danton!”

Robespierre was more than willing to surrender his place, for Robespierre was a fox, not a dog, by nature. He pursued the absent enemy, sprang upon him from behind, clung to his shoulders, and gnawed through his skull down into his very brain, but seldom or never attacked a person face to face.

But though the platform was promptly vacated for Danton, it was a difficult matter for Danton to take it. Though he might be the proper person to attack Lafayette, Lafayette was perhaps the only man Danton could not attack with impunity.

And why?

We will explain. There was a good deal of the Mirabeau in Danton, as well as a good deal of the Danton in Mirabeau. They resembled each other strongly in temperament; both were sensual in their tastes, and both had the same need of money, and were consequently equally susceptible to bribery.

It is said that Danton, too, received money from the

court. When? Through whom? And how much? No one knew, but he had received it, — at least, so everybody said.

The facts were really as follows: —

Danton had just sold to the cabinet his position as Advocate to the King's Council, and it was said that he had received from the ministry four times as much as the office was worth.

This was true; but the secret was then known to only three persons,—Danton the seller, Montmorin the purchaser, and Lafayette the intermediary.

If Danton attacked Lafayette, Lafayette might hurl the whole history of the transaction in his face.

Any other man would have hung back. Danton, on the contrary, went straight on. He knew Lafayette thoroughly, and consequently knew how often his generosity of heart amounted to positive idiocy.

Danton said to himself that Montmorin, a friend of Lafayette's, — the same Montmorin who had signed the king's passports, — was too deeply compromised by that act for Lafayette to throw another stone at him.

So he mounted the platform.

His speech was short, and to the point.

"Mr. President," he said, "I accuse Lafayette of being the king's accomplice. Let the traitor come here. Let two scaffolds be erected, and I will consent to mount one of them if he is not found deserving of death upon the other."

The traitor did not come, he was there already, and had heard the accusation against him; but as Danton had foreseen, Lafayette was too generous to defend himself.

Lameth took this duty upon himself. He poured the lukewarm water of his commonplace pastorals over Danton's burning lava, and proceeded to preach fraternity.

Then came Sieyès, who also preached fraternity. Then Barnave preached fraternity.

These three popular orators eventually succeeded in overcoming Danton's influence. Everybody was glad

Danton had attacked Lafayette, but they were also glad that Lameth, Sieyès, and Barnave had defended him; and when Lafayette and Danton left the club, it was Lafayette who was escorted home with torches and acclamations.

The court party considered this ovation rendered to Lafayette a great victory. The two great powers of the day had been worsted in the person of their leaders, — the Jacobins in Robespierre, the Cordeliers in Danton.

But it is very evident that another chapter will have to be devoted to explaining the protest which Madame Roland was copying as she sat opposite her husband in the little parlour on the fourth floor of the Hôtel Britannique.

CHAPTER XV.

AN IMPORTANT INTERVIEW.

IF the reader wishes to understand the situation and see his way clearly through one of the most mysterious chapters of the Revolution, let him accompany us to the Tuileries on the night of the 15th of July, 1791.

At the door of a suite of apartments opening upon a lonely and deserted corridor in the basement of the palace a woman stands listening intently, with her hand upon the key.

The second apartment of the suite is the only one lighted, and it is at the door of the first room that the woman stands listening, and starting violently at the sound of every footfall.

Who is this anxious watcher? Marie Antoinette.

For whom is she waiting? Barnave.

Oh, haughty daughter of Maria Theresa! What if any one had told you the day you were crowned Queen of France that the day would come when you would stand behind the door of the room of one of your maids, divided between hope and fear, as you anxiously awaited the coming of a petty Grenoble lawyer, — you who disappointed Mirabeau's hopes so often, and condescended to receive him but once.

But do not let the reader make the mistake of supposing that it was anything but political interest that led the queen to meet Barnave in secret.

For some time after that eventful evening when Charny left the Tuileries never to return, the queen remained utterly indifferent to everything; but gradually she began

to perceive that two traits of her powerful character were still alive, — pride and hatred.

Not that she had any desire to be revenged on Charny, or hated Andrée. When she thought of them, it was with a feeling of supreme contempt for herself; for she was too honest and truthful not to see that the wrong-doing was all on her side, and all the devotion on theirs.

What she did hate, from the very bottom of her heart, was the populace, who had laid hands upon her as if she were an ordinary fugitive from justice,— the populace, who had heaped insults upon her, covered her with disgrace, and filled her with disgust. Yes, she hated the rabble, who had formerly called her Madame Deficit and Madame Veto, but who now called her that Austrian woman; and if she could be avenged, she certainly meant to be.

The situation was extremely critical; but, thanks to Lafayette and the National Assembly, the first blow had been successfully parried. The king had not fled, he had been abducted.

We must not forget the manifesto issued by the Cordelier Club, however, nor Marat's proposal of a dictatorship, nor Monsieur Prudhomme's petty slurs about the dauphin's outing on the terrace, nor the suggestion that the king should be carted back to the frontier, nor the proposed establishment of a new journal under the control of Brissot, which was to be known as "The Republican."

Would you like to see the prospectus of said journal? It was brief, but explicit. It was written in English by a young man named Thomas Paine, and then translated into French by a young officer who had fought in the American Revolution.

"We have proved that the king's absence is better for us than his presence. He has deserted his throne, which is equivalent to an abdication on his part. The Nation will never regain confidence in this perjured runaway.

"Whether his flight was his own doing or the doing of others, matters little. Whether he be a knave or an idiot, he is equally

unworthy of power. We are well rid of him, and he has no further claim upon us. He is a private individual now,—plain Louis de Bourbon. His safety is assured, for France will never so degrade herself as to take his life; but royalty is a thing of the past. What is an office worth when it is dependent merely upon birth, and is liable to be filled at any time by an idiot?”

The effect of such a bulletin posted on the walls throughout the entire city can be imagined. Malouet, the constitutionalist, was amazed and horrified, and he rushed to the National Assembly and demanded that the authors should be arrested without delay.

“Very well, but let us read the prospectus first,” replied Pétion.

Pétion, one of the few republicans then in France, was perfectly familiar with the prospectus. Malouet, who denounced it, did not want it read. What if the hearers should applaud? And he was almost certain they would applaud.

Chabroud and Chapelier tried to repair their colleagues’ blunder by saying: “The press is free, and every man, be he wise or foolish, has a right to make his opinions known. Let us pay no attention to these mutterings of frenzy, but resume the business of the day.”

The Assembly did so, consequently we need say no more about it.

But it was a hydra that threatened the monarchy.

One head was no sooner cut off than another put forth its fangs to bite.

Monsieur’s conspiracy with Favras had not been forgotten, nor the time when it was his intention to get the king out of the way and then have Monsieur appointed regent. But nobody was thinking of Monsieur now. He had fled when the king did, only he was more fortunate than his brother, and reached the frontier.

But the Duke of Orléans remained. And he had a devoted friend who was continually pushing him forward,—Laclos, the author of “Dangerous Entanglements.”

A decree in regard to a regency was mouldering among the archives somewhere. Why not utilize it?

So, on the 28th of June, a certain journal offered the position of regent to Orléans. Louis XVI. no longer existed, it would seem, though there was still such a thing as a National Assembly. As there was no longer any king, why not offer the regency to the Duke of Orléans? Of course the duke pretended to be greatly surprised, and declined the offer. Nevertheless, on July 1st Laclous urged the necessity of a regency, and on July 3d Réal declared that the proper guardian of the dauphin was Orléans; but neither of these suggestions found favour in the eyes of the Jacobins.

On the 8th of July — you see we are gradually nearing the end — Pétion brought up the question of royal inviolability, making a distinction, however, between political and personal inviolability.

The objection was made that the deposition of Louis XVI. would embroil France with the sovereigns of other nations.

“If these kings want to fight us, we shall deprive them of their most powerful ally by deposing Louis XVI.,” answered Pétion; “but if we leave him on the throne we give our enemies all the power we vest in him.”

Then Brissot mounted the rostrum and discussed the question as to whether or not the king could be legally tried.

Brissot’s speech was a masterly effort. It excited the wildest applause and enthusiasm; and it was not only decided that the king could be tried, but the motion was carried by a large and enthusiastic majority.

The National Assembly could not refuse to discuss this question in its turn. The constitutionalists, however, instead of shirking the controversy, encouraged it, feeling confident of a majority; but the majority in the Assembly did not correspond with the majority in the country. But what did that matter? Legislative bodies seldom trouble themselves about such little discrepancies. They make

laws, and the people unmake them; and when the people unmake what the legislators have made, we have a revolution.

On the 13th of July, the day the committee was to present its report on the subject, the hall and corridors were filled to overflowing. No decision was reached, however, but the report was read. This report said:—

“No provision is made in the Constitution for the course of action to be instituted in case of the king’s flight, but his person is declared inviolable.”

That is to say, the committee, considering the king himself as beyond the Assembly’s jurisdiction, delivered up to justice only General Bouillé, Charny, Madame de Tourzel, and the other attendants. Was there ever a better illustration of the old fable of the big and little fishes?

The question was discussed much more fully in the Jacobin Club than in the Assembly.

But as no decision had been arrived at, Robespierre was still on the fence. He was still neither a republican nor a monarchist. He was a man who rarely compromised himself; and yet we have seen what terrors seized him a little while ago even when he was not in the slightest danger.

There are some men who are not so cautious. Danton was one of them, Legendre the butcher was another.

“The Assembly may absolve the king,” said Danton, “but its verdict will be reversed by the country, for France condemns him.”

“The committee-men are fools,” growled Legendre. “If they knew the opinion of the masses, they would come to their senses. I say what I do for their own good.”

Such remarks excited the wrath of the constitutionalists; but unfortunately for them they were not in a majority in the Jacobin Club as they were in the Assembly, so they contented themselves with withdrawing from the club. They made a great mistake, however. It is always a mistake to give up one’s place. “Les absents ont toujours

tort," you know. There is also another very sensible old French proverb: "He who quits his place loses it."

And the constitutionalists not only lost their places, but these places were speedily filled by deputations from the people armed with protests against the action of the committee.

In the mean time an address, which was destined to exert a powerful influence over the events which were to follow, had been drawn up at the other end of Paris, in a district known as the Marais, or Swamp District, by a club, or rather a fraternal society of men and women, known as the Society of Minnows, — a name suggested perhaps by the tiny fish which abounded in that locality in those days. The writer of this address was a young man named Jean Lambert Tallien; but it bore a much more formidable signature, it was signed: "The People."

On the 14th of July the debate opened in the Assembly. This time it was impossible to exclude the public from the galleries, and to fill the corridors with royalists and knights of the poniard, as on the former occasion.

The prologue had been played before the claqueurs alone; now the real drama must be enacted before the real public, and it soon became evident that this audience was not very favourably disposed towards the defenders of royalty, for Duport, who had been so popular three months before, was listened to in sullen silence when he proposed to hold the king's *entourage* alone accountable for the king's offence.

Duport persevered to the end, however, surprised to find himself speaking for the first time without eliciting a single word or sign of approbation.

Robespierre, the prudent, ascended the platform next. He said that he was there in the interests of humanity; that it seemed to him both cruel and unfair to attack only the weak; that he would not attack the king, inasmuch as the Assembly had declared the king unimpeachable. But he wished to defend Bouillé, Charny, Madame de

Tourzel, and the others who had been obliged to obey the king by reason of their subordinate or dependent positions.

The Assembly fretted considerably during this speech. The galleries listened attentively, not knowing whether to approve or disapprove; but at last they discovered that this was a covert attack upon royalty, and only a pretended defence of courtiers, and then they applauded.

Prieur (from the Marne) endeavoured to rid the debate of all subterfuges and paradoxes by putting the question in this form: "What would you do, citizens, if the king was entirely out of the way, and some one should come and demand his full restoration to power?"

This question was the more embarrassing because it was direct; but there are times when nothing can embarrass reactionists.

Desmeuniers, in his reply, seemed to sustain the cause of the Assembly at the expense of the king.

"The Assembly is an all-powerful legislative body," he said, "and therefore possesses the right to suspend the royal prerogatives and maintain this suspension until the constitution is completed.

"Finally," continued this speaker, "if any one asks me to give my views concerning the proposed decree, I should suggest: First, that this suspension of the king's authority shall continue until the king accepts the constitution; and secondly, if he does not accept it, the Assembly shall depose him."

"Oh, don't trouble yourself about that," cried Grégoire, from his seat; "he'll not only accept it, but swear to anything you wish."

The Assembly was about to seize upon Desmeuniers' suggestion then and there; but Robespierre, without leaving his seat, called out: "Be careful; such a decree decides in advance that the king is not to be tried."

Thus caught in the very act of offending, the Assembly dared not vote for the decree. It was relieved from its embarrassment, however, by a commotion at the door.

This was caused by a deputation from the Fraternal Society of Minnows, with the address prepared by Tallien and signed by "The People."

The Assembly revenged itself by refusing to listen to this address.

Barnave rose and said: "Postpone the reading until tomorrow if you will, but hear it then; only do not let us be troubled by seditious opinions. The law has only to hoist its signal, and we shall see all good citizens rally to its support."

"Let the law hoist its signal!" Impress these words upon your mind, reader, for the phrase is highly significant under the circumstances. It was uttered on the 14th of July; it presaged the massacre of the 17th.

Not content with tricking the people out of the advantage gained by the king's desertion, or rather by his treachery, the Assembly evidently intended to endow the monarch with absolute power again; and if the people ventured to expostulate, if the people ventured to petition, this would only be considered an indication of seditious feeling, and justify the Assembly in hoisting the signal of the law, which meant nothing more or less than the unfurling of the red flag and the proclamation of martial law.

On July 15th, — the decisive day, — the Assembly presented a formidable appearance. Nobody threatened the peace and safety of the Assembly, but it had the appearance of being in great peril. It summoned Lafayette to its aid, and Lafayette sent five thousand National Guardsmen, among whom he took care to mix a thousand men armed with pikes, from the Faubourg St.-Antoine. The muskets represented the aristocracy of the National Guards; the pikes, the proletariat.

Convinced, like Barnave, that it was only necessary to display the signal of the law to bring to its support, not the people, but Lafayette, the Commander of the National Guards, and Bailly, the Mayor of Paris, the Assembly decided to bring matters to a crisis.

Half the session was devoted to listening to a report on departmental affairs, — for the leaders knew they had only to weary members and auditors with unimportant discussions, and postpone the important business to the close of the session, to carry their point, — then a hearing was granted to three or four members who were in the habit of taking part in every important discussion, then, the limit of debate being reached, the others were silent while two speeches were delivered, one by Salles, and the other by Barnave.

Two argumentative, lawyer-like discourses, which proved so convincing to the Assembly that, Lafayette himself having moved that the vote be taken, it was taken with the utmost serenity.

In fact, the Assembly had no cause for alarm that day. To use a slang expression, it had a *picked* audience: the gardens of the Tuileries were closed; the police force was under the president's orders; Lafayette occupied a seat on the floor of the Assembly, so as to put an end to debate at any time; Bailly was in his place at the head of the City Council; and everywhere the authorities were fully prepared to put down any insubordination by force of arms.

So the people, being in no condition for such a contest, passed the long lines of pikes and bayonets, and betook themselves to their Mount Aventine, that is to say, the Champ de Mars, — not in a rebellious spirit, like the Romans of old, but to gather around the patriot altar which the government had not found time to demolish since the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille, the day before, prompt as governments usually are to tear down such structures.

The crowd desired to draw up a protest there, and then send this protest to the National Assembly.

While the crowd was signing this protest, the Assembly was passing, first the following preventive measure: —

“Should the king break his oath and attack his people, instead of defending them, he abdicates his throne, becomes a private citizen,

and therefore personally responsible for all offences committed after his abdication.”

Then this repressive measure: —

“Bouillé shall be prosecuted as the chief culprit, and all other persons who took part in the king’s abduction shall also be prosecuted as accomplices.”

When the people returned to present their protest to the Assembly, they found it even more strongly guarded than before. All the officers of the Assembly were soldiers that day. The president of the Assembly was Charles Lameth, a young colonel; Lafayette was present in all his glory as Command&r-in-Chief of the National Guards; and even our worthy Bailly had a warlike air with a tricoloured sash knotted around his long black coat, and a three-cornered cocked hat crowning his pensive brow; and so becoming did this martial costume prove, that Madame Bailly might easily have mistaken him for Lafayette, as they say she sometimes mistook Lafayette for her husband.

The crowd talked and reasoned and argued, and finally it was decided that a deputation should be allowed to confer with P&tion and Robespierre. You may notice how the popularity of these new names increased in proportion as the popularity of the old names — the names of Duport, Barnave, Lameth, Lafayette, and Bailly — waned. Duly notified, P&tion and Robespierre hastened to meet the delegates, six in number; but it was too late. The vote in the Assembly had been taken.

These two members of the Assembly, being opposed to the measure which had just passed, did not state the case in such a way as to make the delegates swallow the pill very peaceably, so they returned furiously angry to those who had sent them.

The people had lost the game, with the best cards fortune had ever placed in the hands of a nation.

The populace became wroth, indeed, and the first thing

they did was to make the managers close all the theatres; and when the theatres are closed in Paris, it is as if a pall was spread over the city.

The opera, having a garrison inside its walls, refused to obey the order.

Lafayette with his four thousand muskets and one thousand pikes asked nothing better than the privilege of suppressing this growing insubordination; but the municipal authorities declined to give the necessary orders.

Up to this time the queen had been kept fully informed concerning the progress of events; but now reports suddenly ceased to come in, and she was greatly in doubt as to what the probable result would be.

Barnave, for whom she was waiting so impatiently, was to come and tell her what had taken place during the day, for everybody felt that a crisis was near at hand.

The king, who had also been awaiting Barnave's arrival in Madame Campan's apartments in company with the queen, was notified of a visit from Dr. Gilbert, and had gone up to hear what that gentleman had to say, leaving the queen with Barnave.

About half past nine o'clock a step resounded in the corridor, a voice was heard exchanging a few words with the sentinel on duty, and a young man clad in the uniform of a lieutenant in the National Guards paused in front of the door.

It was Barnave. The queen, her heart throbbing as violently as if this man were the most fondly adored of lovers, opened the door, and Barnave, after a quick glance behind and around him, slipped inside.

The door was instantly closed, and before a word could be spoken, the grating of a bolt was heard as it slipped into its socket.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN EVENTFUL DAY.

THE hearts of both these individuals were throbbing with equal violence, though under the influence of entirely different sentiments. The queen's heart was filled with hopes of revenge; that of Barnave was aflame with an intense desire to win her love.

The queen passed hastily into the adjoining room, which was lighted. She certainly felt no fear of either Barnave or his love; she knew how respectful and devoted his love was, but, with true feminine instinct, she shunned darkness.

As soon as she entered the room, she seated herself; but Barnave paused on the threshold and took a survey of the little parlour, which was lighted by only a couple of candles. He had fully expected to find the king there, for his Majesty had been present at both of Barnave's previous interviews with the queen; but for the first time since their visit to the archbishop's palace at Meaux, Barnave found himself alone with the queen, and he involuntarily placed his hand upon his heart to suppress its wild throbbings.

"I have been waiting for you for two hours, Monsieur Barnave," said the queen, after a moment's silence.

Barnave's first impulse, on hearing this reproach uttered in a plaintive rather than fault-finding tone, was to throw himself at the queen's feet; but a feeling of reverence deterred him.

"Alas! madame, that is true," he replied; "but I trust your Majesty feels convinced that the delay is due to no fault of mine."

"Oh, yes, I know and appreciate your devotion to the monarchy," she responded.

"And above all to the queen," added Barnave. "I wish your Majesty could be equally convinced of that."

"I do not doubt it, Monsieur Barnave. And it was impossible for you to get here any sooner, you say?"

"I tried to do so at seven o'clock, but it was broad daylight, and I met Marat upon the terrace."

"Marat? Isn't Marat that newspaper man who is always attacking us?"

"Yes, and everybody else as well. His keen eye followed me until I disappeared beyond the grating of the Feuillant Terrace. I passed without even so much as glancing at your window. Fortunately, however, whom should I happen to meet upon the bridge but Saint-Prix."

"Saint-Prix? Who is he? An actor?" asked the queen, with almost as much disdain as she had just displayed in alluding to Marat.

"Yes, madame, an actor; but what of that? He is one of the most influential men of the day. Actors and journalists, men of whose very existence kings were formerly ignorant, except when they condescended to give them orders which the poor wretches were only too glad to obey,—actors and journalists have become citizens with no small share of influence, and play prominent parts in the great political and social dramas of the day. Well, I noticed that Saint-Prix was in uniform, and knowing him very well, I stopped him and asked him where he was to be on guard. Fortunately it was to be here in the palace, and knowing I could rely upon his discretion, I told him I was to have the honour of an audience with you this evening."

"Oh, Monsieur Barnave!"

"Would it have been better for me to renounce the"—he was about to say "happiness," but hastily substituted "honour"—"honour of seeing you, and so leave you in ignorance of the important information I had to divulge?"

"No, you did right, that is if you think you can trust Saint-Prix."

"Madame, this is a critical moment, I assure you," said

Barnave, earnestly. "Those who are faithful to you now are friends indeed, for if the Jacobins prevail over the Constitutionalists, — and that will be decided to-morrow, — your partisans will be regarded as nothing more or less than your accomplices; and, as you know, the decree which has passed the Assembly exonerates you from blame, but places it upon your friends, whom it styles your accomplices."

"That is true; but you were remarking just now that Monsieur Saint-Prix —"

"Was to be on guard at the Tuileries from nine until eleven, and that he would try to secure a post on the ground floor, so that in this way your Majesty might have two hours in which to give me full instructions. But he advised me to put on the uniform of an officer in the National Guard, and I obeyed his counsel, as you perceive."

"And you found him at his post?"

"Yes, madame. It cost him two theatre tickets to get the appointment from his sergeant. You see bribery is a very easy matter," added Barnave, smiling.

"Marat — Saint-Prix — two theatre tickets," repeated the queen, thoughtfully, as if casting a wondering look into the labyrinth from which emerge those trivial events which so deeply affect the destinies of kings in times of revolution.

"Yes, madame. It is very strange, is it not? This is what the ancients called Fate, what philosophers call Chance, and what the devout call Providence."

The queen pulled one of her long curls down across her beautiful neck and gazed at it sadly. "It is this, too, that whitens my hair," she said sadly, at last. Then, returning to Barnave and the political side of the question, after this brief survey of the romantic and picturesque side, she exclaimed: —

"But I thought we had gained a victory in the Assembly?"

"We have gained a victory in the Assembly, madame,

but we have suffered an ignominious defeat in the Jacobin Club."

"I don't understand it. I thought the Jacobins and Lameth and Duport were on your side, and that you could do whatever you pleased with them."

Barnave shook his head.

"That was the case a short time ago, but a change has come over the spirit of their dreams."

"They have all gone over to Orléans, then, I suppose."

"Yes, the present danger is chiefly from that quarter."

"Danger? Does n't the action of the Assembly to-day insure our safety?"

"It is best for you to understand the situation perfectly, so that you will know what to decide. The decree passed to-day is simply this: 'Should the king break his oath, and attack, instead of defend, his people, he abdicates his throne, becomes a private citizen, and is consequently responsible for any crimes committed after his abdication.'"

"Very well," responded the queen; "but the king will not break his oath, nor will he wage war upon his own subjects. On the contrary, the king will defend them in case they are attacked."

"Yes, madame; but by the adoption of this measure a door is left open for revolutionists and Orléanists. The Assembly has not fully decided concerning the king as yet. Measures have been taken to prevent a second desertion on his part, but no action has been taken in relation to his recent flight, so far as he himself is concerned. But do you know what was proposed at the Jacobin Club last evening by Laelos, Orléans' tool?"

"Something outrageous, no doubt."

"He asked that a petition for the king's resignation should be circulated in Paris and throughout the entire country, and said he could vouch for at least ten million signatures."

"Ten million signatures!" cried the queen. "Good heavens! can it be possible that there are ten million people who desire to get rid of us?"

"Such majorities are easily secured, madame."

"And did the motion pass?"

"It created a great deal of discussion, and Danton supported it."

"Danton! Why, I thought Danton was on our side. Montmorin said something to me about the purchase, or sale, I forget which, of some office which would insure us this man's support."

"Monsieur de Montmorin was mistaken, madame. If Danton belongs to any one, it is to Orléans."

"And did Robespierre speak? They tell me he is beginning to exert a very powerful influence."

"Yes. He did not support the motion, however, but merely advocated the issuing of an address to the Jacobin societies in the provinces."

"It seems to me that it would be well for us to secure Robespierre, if he is becoming such an important personage."

"That is impossible, madame. Monsieur de Robespierre is not to be bought. He is striving after an ideal, a phantom, a Utopia, — or perhaps it is ambition that is urging him on."

"But, whatever his ambition may be, we can gratify it. Do you suppose he is anxious for wealth?"

"He cares nothing for money."

"To be a cabinet minister, then?"

"Perhaps he wishes to be something more than a cabinet minister."

The queen gazed at Barnave with something like terror.

"It seems to me that the office of cabinet minister is the highest to which any of our subjects could possibly aspire," she remarked, after a brief silence.

"If Robespierre considers the king deposed, he no longer regards himself as a subject."

"What does he aspire to, then?" asked the startled queen.

"There are times, madame, when men dream of new political titles."

“Yes; I can understand how the Duke of Orléans may dream of becoming regent, for his birth entitles him to that high office; but Robespierre, — a petty country lawyer —”

The queen forgot that Barnave, too, was only a petty country lawyer.

Barnave showed no sign of emotion, either because the remark did not wound him, or because he had the courage to conceal the pain it caused him.

“Marius and Cromwell came from the common people,” he said quietly.

“Marius, Cromwell! Alas! when I heard those names in my childhood, I little thought they would ever have such a dread sound in my ears. But we keep wandering from the matters which should engross our attention. Robespierre opposed the Laelos resolution, you said, I believe?”

“Yes, but just then a crowd of people from the Palais Royal came in, — brought, I am almost positive, to support Laelos, — so his resolution was not only passed, but it was decided that the Jacobins should convene to-morrow morning at eleven o’clock to hear the petition read. It is then to be carried to the Champ de Mars and laid on the patriot altar for the people to sign, and copies are also to be sent to the societies in the provinces, that they may sign it.”

“And who is to draw up this petition?”

“Danton, Laelos, and Brissot.”

“But, good heavens! what are our friends, the Constitutionalists, going to do?”

“Well, madame, they have decided that to-morrow they will win or lose all.”

“But of course the constitutionalists cannot remain with the Jacobins after this.”

“Your admirable penetration enables you to see the situation exactly as it is, I perceive. Yes, led by Duport and Lameth, your friends have separated themselves from your enemies, and set up the Feuillant Club, in opposition to the Jacobins.”

“But why do they call themselves the Feuillants?”

There are so many new names and combinations in politics now, that every other sentence I utter is a question, it seems to me."

"The old Feuillant Convent is a large building close to the Riding School, and consequently adjoining the Hall of Assembly. This building also gives its name to the terrace near the Tuileries."

"And who belongs to this new club?"

"Lafayette, — that is to say, the National Guards; and Bailly, — that is to say, the municipal authorities."

"Lafayette! Do you think you can rely upon Lafayette?"

"I believe he is devoted to the king."

"Yes, as a woodman is devoted to the oak he means to fell to the ground some day. As for Bailly, well, I have no cause to complain of him, quite the contrary; for when that Rochereul woman told him of our intended departure, he very kindly sent her letter to me. But tell me more about this new club. What do they intend to do? Is it a powerful organisation?"

"Immensely powerful, madame, because, as I had the honour to say to your Majesty just now, they have the National Guards, the municipal authorities, and a majority in the Assembly at their disposal."

"But what does the Assembly intend to do?"

"The Assembly intends to reprove the mayor sharply for the hesitation and leniency he displayed to-day. The result will be that Goodman Bailly will be all right after that, for he belongs to the clock family, and only needs to be wound up and set going to do all right."

Just then the striking of a clock told them that it was a quarter of eleven, and they heard a warning cough from the sentinel.

"Yes, yes, I know it is time for me to go," murmured Barnave; "but it seems to me I have a thousand things still to say to your Majesty."

"And I, Monsieur Barnave, have but one answer to make to you, — that I am grateful, deeply grateful, to

you and your friends for the dangers to which you have exposed yourselves for my sake."

"Madame," replied Barnave, "whether I succeed or fail, I shall be more than content if the queen will reward me with a smile, whatever the result may be."

"Ah, monsieur, I hardly know what a smile is, now; but you are doing so much for us, I will try and remember the time when I was happy, and I promise that my first smile shall be for you."

Barnave bowed, with his hand upon his heart, and walked backwards towards the door.

"When shall I see you again, monsieur?" asked the queen.

Barnave seemed to consider.

"The petition, and the second vote in the Assembly tomorrow," he mused. "The next day, the explosion and the suppression. — On Sunday evening, madame, I will endeavour to come and tell you what has taken place on the Champ de Mars."

The queen went thoughtfully upstairs to her husband, whom she found equally thoughtful. Dr. Gilbert, who had just left him, had told him almost the same things that Barnave had told the queen. The royal couple had only to exchange glances to see that the outlook appeared equally gloomy to both.

The king had written a letter, and without a word he handed it to her for perusal.

This letter gave Monsieur authority to solicit, in the king's behalf, the intervention of the Emperor of Austria and of the King of Prussia.

"Monsieur has done me a great deal of harm," said the queen. "And Monsieur still hates me, and will do me all the harm he possibly can; but if he has the king's sanction, he shall have mine."

And, taking the pen, she heroically placed her signature beside that of the king.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH WE AT LAST COME TO THE PROTEST MADAME
ROLAND WAS COPYING.

WHILE the foregoing conversation was taking place between Barnave and Marie Antoinette, three men were sitting around a table with pen, ink, and paper in front of them. These three men were Danton, Laelos, and Brissot, the persons appointed by the Jacobins to draw up the petition.

Danton was not the man for this kind of work. He was too active, and much too fond of pleasure and excitement, not to be impatient for the close of every committee meeting in which he took part; so, after a short time, he took himself off, leaving Brissot and Laelos to frame the petition to suit themselves.

In a few minutes Laelos, too, showed signs of real or pretended weariness; and, throwing himself back in his chair, and letting the quill fall from his hand, he exclaimed, "Go ahead, my dear Brissot, and write whatever you think proper. As for me, excuse me, if you please. If it were a naughty book now, a sequel to 'Dangerous Entanglements,' for instance, I might undertake it; but a petition — a petition, why, the very thought of it puts me to sleep," and he yawned until it seemed as if he would dislocate his jaws.

Brissot, on the contrary, was the very person for this kind of work; and, satisfied that he could draw up the petition better than anybody else, he accepted the task, while Laelos closed his eyes and settled himself in his chair as if with the intention of taking a nap, while he was really preparing himself to weigh each word and phrase in order

to insert a provision for the regency of his prince, if he saw any possible chance to do so.

As soon as Brissot finished a clause, he read it aloud, and Laelos signified his approval by a slight nod of the head or a faint grunt.

In stating the situation, Brissot called attention to the following points:—

First. The timid or hypocritical silence of the Assembly, which either would not or dared not take action in relation to the king.

Secondly. The virtual abdication of Louis XVI. at the time of his flight, and also his subsequent deposal, inasmuch as the Assembly had voted his suspension from office when they caused him to be pursued and arrested. As acknowledged sovereigns are never pursued or arrested, if Louis XVI. was pursued and arrested, it proved conclusively that he was no longer king.

Thirdly. The urgent necessity of providing a substitute.

“Good!” exclaimed Laelos, when he heard this last clause. Then, as Brissot was about to go on, he cried: “Wait, wait a minute; it seems to me something ought to be added to that, — something that will bring the weak-hearted over to our side. Every man has n’t burned his ships behind him, as we have.”

“Very well, what shall it be?”

“Oh, that’s for you to say, my dear fellow. I think I should add — let me see —”

And Laelos pretended to be searching for a phrase which had in reality been formulated for a long while in his brain, only waiting for a fitting opportunity to emerge from it.

“Well, after the words providing a substitute I should add, ‘by all constitutional means.’”

Note and admire, all ye politicians and past, present, and future framers of petitions, protests, and laws! The addition of these few apparently harmless words was a very little thing, was it not?

Well, you shall see by and by what these three words might have led to.

All the constitutional means for providing a substitute for the king could be expressed in a single word, and that word was a "regency."

And in the absence of both Monsieur and Artois, the two brothers of Louis XVI. and uncles of the dauphin, extremely unpopular, both of them, on account of their departure from the country, upon whom would the duties of regent devolve? Upon Orléans, of course.

This apparently meaningless and innocent phrase thus slipped into the petition would make the people ask, or rather appear to ask, that Orléans should be appointed regent during the minority of the dauphin, who was now only five or six years old.

Brissot made no objection to this addition, perhaps because he did not perceive the danger lurking in the words, — the snake in the grass, which might lift his hissing head at any moment, — perhaps because, knowing the risk he ran as the framer of this petition, he was not sorry to leave a loophole of escape; so he merely remarked: "That will bring some of the constitutionalists over to our side. It is a very good idea, Laclos."

The next day Pétion, Brissot, Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and Laclos went to the Jacobin Club with the petition. The hall was empty, or nearly so. Everybody was at the Feuillant Club. The desertion was complete.

So Pétion, too, hastened to the Feuillant Club.

Whom did he find there? Barnave, Duport, and Lameth, preparing an address to the Jacobin clubs in the provinces, announcing that the Jacobin Club was no longer in existence, but had been transformed into the Feuillant Club, under the name of the Society of the Friends of the Constitution.

So this association, which it had been so much trouble to organise, and which had spread until it formed a complete network over the entire land, ceased to exist, destroyed by hesitation.

Whom should it obey, the old Jacobins or the new?

Meanwhile, a strong anti-revolutionary scheme was in course of preparation, and the people, trusting in the honesty of those whom they had chosen as their representatives, were likely to wake only to find themselves bound again hand and foot.

This danger must be met. Every one who had any influence must prepare a statement of the case, and send it to that province where he was best known or most popular.

As a delegate from Lyons, Roland had considerable influence in that city and the country round about; so, before taking the petition to the Champ de Mars to be signed by the people in default of the Jacobins, who were nowhere to be found, Danton hastened to Roland's lodgings, explained the situation to him and his wife, and asked them to send a protest to the people of Lyons, a protest Roland himself was to prepare for this purpose.

And this was the document which Madame Roland was copying.

Meanwhile, Danton hastened to the Champ de Mars; and when he arrived there he found a heated discussion going on in relation to the four words introduced into the petition by Laclous.

It is probable, though, that they would have passed unnoticed had not a man, whose dress and manner indicated beyond a doubt that he belonged to the lower classes, interrupted the reader with a freedom almost amounting to violence.

"Stop!" he cried. "The people are being deceived again!"

"How so?"

"By those words, 'By all constitutional means.' You intend to substitute a regent for the king. You mean to re-establish royalty, and we've had enough of kings."

"No more kings! No more kings!" shouted a majority of the listeners.

And then a singular thing happened. What should the old Jacobins do but take sides with royalty?

"Be careful, gentlemen!" they exclaimed. "That cry 'No more kings!' means a republic; and we are not ripe for a republic yet."

"May be not," responded the man of the people; "but one or two sunny days like that at Varennes will ripen us!"

"Let those who no longer acknowledge the power of Louis XVI. or any other king, raise their hands!" shouted the unknown man.

Such an immense majority raised their hands that it was not even necessary to call for the negative vote.

"Very well," called out the same man. "To-morrow, all Paris can come to the Champ de Mars and sign this resolution. I, Billot, will see that due notice is given."

Thus the boldest of the Cordeliers and of the Jacobins were far outstripped, and by whom? By a man of the people, — in other words, by the instinct of the masses.

As Desmoulins, Danton, Brissot, and Pétion felt sure that such a thing could not be done without creating a disturbance, it was deemed advisable to obtain permission of the municipal authorities for the meeting the next day, and Desmoulins and Brissot were deputed to attend to the matter.

Bailly was not at the Hôtel de Ville, but the first syndic was, and though he would not take it upon himself either to give or refuse the desired permission, he seemed to see no objection; and Desmoulins and Brissot left, feeling sufficiently authorised to proceed with the matter.

But as soon as they left, the syndic sent a messenger to warn the National Assembly of the march thus stolen upon them.

The Assembly was caught in its own trap. They had come to no apparent decision concerning the status of the fugitive, who had been deprived of his royal titles, and who had been pursued and arrested at Varennes, and

brought back to the Tuileries, where he had been held as a prisoner for nearly a month.

No time was to be lost. Desmeuniers, with every appearance of being a bitter enemy to the royal family, offered the following resolution:—

“The suspension of the power vested in our chief executive shall continue until the constitution is presented to the king and accepted by him.”

This resolution, offered at seven o'clock on the evening of July 16th, was adopted at eight by an immense majority.

This, of course, would render the people's petition useless, as by the action of the Assembly the king, suspended from office only until he accepted the constitution, would become by that mere act of acceptance as much of a king as ever; besides, any one who demanded the removal of a king constitutionally maintained by the Assembly would of course be considered in open rebellion against the government, and consequently liable to prosecution.

That evening there was a meeting of the City Council at the Hôtel de Ville. The session began at half-past nine, and at ten it had been decided that by eight o'clock the next morning printed copies of the latest decree of the Assembly should be posted all over the city, and likewise be proclaimed at every street-corner by the city criers, accompanied by an armed escort.

This decision reached the ears of the old Jacobins an hour after it was made. They felt powerless after the desertion of most of their number to the Feuillants, so they yielded.

Santerre, the popular brewer of the Bastille district (who was destined to be Lafayette's successor), consented to go to the Champ de Mars in behalf of the society and withdraw the petition.

The Cordeliers showed even more prudence. Danton declared he was going to spend the day at Fontenay-sous-Bois, where his father-in-law, the restaurant-keeper, had a

small country-house. Legendre promised to join him there with Desmoulins and Fréron.

The Rolands received a short note informing them, that it would be useless to send the petition to Lyons, as everything had either failed or been postponed. It was nearly midnight, and Madame Roland had just finished her copy of the document, when this most unsatisfactory note came.

Just about this time two men, who were taking their third bottle of fifteen-sous wine in the back room of a wine-shop in Gros Caillou, hit upon a strange plan.

One of these men was a barber, the other a disabled soldier.

"That's certainly a funny idea of yours, Lajayette!" exclaimed the pensioner, with a vulgar, half-muddled laugh.

"Yes, you understand my scheme, don't you?" responded the barber. "Just before dawn we'll go to the Champ de Mars, rip off a plank from the side of the patriot altar, slip underneath it, and replace the plank; then with a big gimlet or auger we'll bore a lot of holes in the plank, and when a crowd of young and pretty citizenesses go up on the platform to-morrow to sign that petition — Well, we'll see what we shall see."

The coarse laugh of the old soldier changed into a still coarser chuckle; evidently he was already gazing in imagination through the holes in the platform.

The barber seemed in a less jubilant mood, for the honourable and aristocratic craft to which he belonged found itself wellnigh ruined by the recent change in the political world. Emigration had deprived these artists of many of their best patrons; moreover, Talma had been enacting the part of Titus in Racine's "Bérénice," with his hair cut short and without powder.

As a general thing, hairdressers were consequently strong royalists. Read Prudhomme, and you will see that a barber cut his throat in a fit of despondency on the day of the king's execution.

So these two men thought it would be a capital joke to peep under the petticoats of the pretty patriotesses, as they were styled by the fine ladies who still remained in France. In fact, the idea pleased them so much that they called for a fourth bottle of wine, and were about to open it, when the old soldier too had an idea. This was to get a small keg, and empty the wine into this keg instead of into their glasses, and take the keg with them to the scene of action.

The barber approved; and as the landlord suggested that it was n't worth while for them to hang around his establishment any longer if they had drunk all they wanted, our two sly foxes bargained with him for a keg and an auger, then put three bottles of wine in the keg, and proceeded exultantly to the Champ de Mars, where they pried up a plank; then, lying down on the soft dirt underneath the platform, they soon fell asleep, with the keg between them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PETITION.

THE night of the 16th of July was gloomy, agitated, and full of suppressed excitement. The leaders of the old Jacobins and the Cordeliers, having received some hint as to their enemies' plans, kept carefully out of sight; but the well-meaning and conscientious men of this progressive party were resolved to unite again, and proceed with the undertaking already begun.

Others, animated by less honest and philanthropic sentiments, are also on the watch, — such men as love riots and the smell of blood, as vultures and tigers love armies which destroy each other, and so keep them supplied with food.

Amongst them is Marat, in his subterranean lair, — Marat, who always believes or pretends to believe himself the object of threats and persecution. He lives in the shadow, like a beast of prey; and out of the shadow come forth each morning the sinister predictions which impart a lurid, bloody tint to the pages of the journal which he styles "The Friend of the People." Ever since the king's return, this journal had advocated a general massacre, and the establishment of a dictatorship, as the only effectual means of protecting the rights of the people. And by way of varying the universal throat-cutting and hanging, he proposes to saw off hands, cut off thumbs, bury people alive, or impale them upon knives. In fact, it was high time for Marat's physician to come to his patron's relief, and say, according to his custom, "Your writings are too bloodthirsty, Marat. You need bleeding."

Verrière — the hideous little hunchback, with immensely long arms, whom we met at the beginning of this narrative, but who shortly afterwards went back into obscurity — reappeared on the 16th of July like a vision of the Apocalypse, as Michelet expresses it, mounted on Death's white horse, pausing at each street-corner like a harbinger of misfortune, and warning the populace to be at the Champ de Mars the following day.

Fournier, who now appears for the first time in our narrative, and whom they call "Fournier the American," — not because he was born in America, for he is a native of Auvergne, but because he has been a slave-driver in St. Domingo, — Fournier is at hand. Ruined and soured by unsuccessful litigation, he is bitterly exasperated by the indifference with which the Assembly has treated the twenty or more petitions he has addressed to it. His want of success is due — at least so he imagines — to the fact that the leaders of the Assembly are planters, like the Lameths, or the friends of planters, like Barnave and Duport; so he is resolved to be avenged at the very first opportunity, and keeps his word, — this man with the instincts of a brute and the grin of a hyena.

The king and queen are waiting anxiously at the Tuileries. Barnave has promised them a victory over the people. He did not say what the triumph would be, or how it was to be effected. What does that matter to them? They are indifferent as to the means, if the result is to their advantage. But the king desires this triumph because it will ameliorate the condition of royalty; the queen, because she sees in it the beginning of her revenge; and in her opinion it is only right to be avenged upon those who have made her suffer so greatly.

The Assembly, relying upon one of those apparent majorities which satisfy such legislative bodies, await the result quite tranquilly. Its precautions have been taken. The law is on its side.

Lafayette, too, feels no apprehensions. He has his

National Guards, devoted to him as yet; and among these guards is a corps of nine thousand men, made up almost entirely of old soldiers, which consequently belongs to the army, rather than the militia. These men are paid; the National Guardsmen, as a general thing, are not. It is therefore dubbed the Hireling Brigade. If there is to be bloody work to-morrow, these are the men to do it.

Bailly and the other municipal authorities are in a state of anxious expectancy. After a life devoted to study and scientific research, Bailly suddenly finds himself forced into political quarrels and bickerings. Called to account yesterday by the Assembly for the weakness he displayed on the night of the 15th of July, he is sleeping to-night with his head pillowed upon a treatise on Martial Law. And he will rigorously enforce martial law to-morrow, should necessity require it.

Whatever the day is to bring forth, it dawns magnificently. By four o'clock in the morning all the venders of chocolate, gingerbread, cakes, and candy are on their way to the patriot altar, which stands solitary and alone, like a gigantic catafalque in the middle of the Champ de Mars.

By half-past four about one hundred and fifty people may be counted on the Champ de Mars. Those who rise with the sun are generally those who have slept poorly; and those who sleep poorly are generally those who have supped poorly, or not at all.

When one has had no supper and very little sleep, he is not apt to be in a very good humour at four o'clock in the morning; consequently there are some very cross and surly fellows among the one hundred and fifty persons assembled around the patriot altar.

Suddenly a woman, a dealer in lemonade, screams loudly. The point of an auger has pierced her shoe. She shrieks for help, and everybody rushes to her. The plank is full of holes, for which no one can see any cause or reason; but the presence of the auger indicates the presence of one or more men under the platform on which the altar stands.

They are called upon to explain their presence and to state their intentions, as well as to come out and show themselves; but there is no response.

A messenger hastens to Gros Caillou for the police; but the police do not consider the mere fact that a woman has been pricked in the foot sufficient cause for troubling themselves, and snub the messenger. When he returns without the officers, the crowd become indignant. The crowd has increased; it numbers fully three hundred men now. They tear off some of the planks, and take a look underneath the platform.

There they find two very guilty-looking men. The barber, thinking the auger would be conclusive proof of his guilt, has thrown it as far from him as possible; but he forgot all about the keg. The men are seized by the collar, dragged out upon the platform, and questioned in regard to their intentions.

As they hesitate, they are taken before a police magistrate.

When questioned by him, they confess why they were hiding under the platform. The commissioner considers it a trifling offence, and releases the men; but at the door they are met by some Gros Caillou laundresses, with the beetles they use in washing clothes at the river in their hands. They seem to be extremely jealous of the honour of their sex, these laundresses of Gros Caillou, for these angry Dianas fall upon these modern Actæons and belabour them soundly with their beetles.

Just then a man comes rushing up. A keg, — a keg of powder, has been found under the platform; so the two culprits could not have gone there merely to peep, as they pretend, but to blow up the entire assemblage of patriots.

It was only necessary to remove the bung to ascertain whether the keg contained wine or powder; and even if it had contained powder, a little reflection would have sufficed to convince people that if the two conspirators fired the keg, they would have been blown up sooner and more effec-

tually than the patriots; but there are times when nobody reflects, when no one considers the evidence, when nobody wishes to know the truth.

In an instant the squall becomes a tempest. A number of desperate-looking men appear upon the scene. Whence did they come? No one knows. Where did the men come from who killed Foulon and Berthier and Flesselles? the men who were responsible for the horrors of the fifth and sixth of October? Out of the depths to which they returned when the work of carnage is over.

These new-comers seize the old soldier and the poor barber. Both are thrown down. The old soldier, stabbed in twenty, yes, fifty places, never rises again. The hair-dresser is dragged to the nearest lamp-post. In another second a rope is around his neck, and he is hoisted into mid-air. At a height of about ten feet the weight of his body breaks the rope, and he falls to the ground, still alive. Raising himself on his elbow an instant, he sees his friend's head on the end of a pike. How does it happen that a pike is always ready on the very instant? He utters a shriek, and then swoons at the sight; then his head too is cut, or rather hacked off, and another pike is found ready to receive the bloody trophy.

Then the two heads must be paraded through the city, and the pike-bearers march up the Rue Grenelle, singing at the top of their voices, accompanied by a hundred ruffians like themselves.

About nine o'clock, just as the criers are proclaiming in the Place du Palais-Royal the last decree of the Assembly, and the consequences that will follow any violation of that decree, these ruffians come pouring into the square through the Rue St. Thomas.

This seemed an ample justification for the stand taken by the municipal government. However harsh the repressive measures they threaten, they can hardly attain the magnitude of the crime just committed.

The members of the Assembly begin to gather. It is

only a short distance from the riding-school to the square, and the report of these lawless proceedings reaches the Assembly in an inconceivably brief space of time; only the victims are no longer merely a barber and an old pensioner too severely punished for a prank worthy of college boys. They are represented as highly esteemed citizens, friends of law and order, who have been cruelly murdered for counselling revolutionists to respect the laws.

Regnault de Saint Jean d'Angély springs upon the platform, and cries: "Citizens, I demand martial law. I demand of the Assembly that all persons who encourage resistance to lawful authority, either by individual or collective publications, shall be declared guilty of the crime of *lèse-nation*, — treason against France.

The Assembly rises almost in a body, and then and there declares that all persons shall be regarded as guilty of the crime of *lèse-nation* who by individual or collective writings incite the people to resist the law.

This is equivalent to declaring the innocent petitioners on the Champ de Mars guilty of treason; and this was the real object of the motion.

Robespierre is on the watch in an obscure corner of the hall. As soon as the vote is taken, he rushes off to the Jacobin Club to report what has been done. The hall is almost deserted; but Santerre is there, and he is immediately despatched to the Champ de Mars to warn the petitioners of impending danger.

He finds two or three hundred people on the platform of the altar, signing the petition which was drawn up by Brissot, but from which the clause suggested by Laclos has been left out.

The prime mover in the affair is Billot, the hero of the day before. He cannot sign his name himself, but those around him guide his hand; so his signature appears among the first.

Santerre ascends the platform and announces that the Assembly has just declared all who demand the king's

resignation rebels and traitors; he also adds that he has been sent by the Jacobins to withdraw the petition framed by Brissot.

Billot descends a few steps and finds himself face to face with the famous brewer.

They recognise each other as brothers; for they fought side by side at the Bastille two years before.

"Very well; the Jacobins can have their petition back again, and we will frame another," said Billot.

"And you need only bring that petition to me in the Faubourg St.-Antoine," says Santerre, "and I'll sign it myself and have it signed by all my men." And he offers his big hand to Billot, who shakes it cordially.

At the sight of this powerful alliance between city and country there is loud applause.

Billot returns the petition to Santerre, who immediately departs with it, but not without making to the people one of those gestures of encouragement which are not to be mistaken. Santerre is becoming well known.

"It seems that the Jacobins are afraid," remarked Billot. "Being afraid, they do right to withdraw their petition; but we are not afraid, so we will draw up another."

"Yes, yes," answered several voices. "Here in this same place, to-morrow."

"But why not to-day?" asks Billot. "Who knows what may happen by to-morrow!"

"Yes, yes, yes!" cry many voices. "To-day, at once!"

A number of prominent persons gather around Billot. Strength of character is a powerful magnet.

This group is composed chiefly of members of the Cordelier and Jacobin clubs, who, either because they are more courageous than their leaders, or because they are not so well informed, have come to the Champ de Mars against the explicit orders of their chiefs.

Many of these persons bear names which are as yet unknown, but which are soon to become celebrated in different ways.

Among them are Robert, Mademoiselle de Kéralio, and the Rolands; Brune, a type-setter who is destined to become marshal of France; Hébert, the future editor of that scurrilous sheet called "Father Duchêne;" Chaumette, a journalist and medical student; Sergent, an engraver who is to become the brother-in-law of Marceau and the manager of those celebrated "Festivals of Reason;" Fabre d'Eglantine, author of "The Epistolary Intrigue;" the Isabeys, father and son, — the latter the only witness of the scene we are describing who will be alive to tell the story at the ripe old age of fourscore and eight.

One patriot rushes off for writing materials. While they are waiting for his return, the crowd take hold of hands, and begin to dance the farandole to the music of the famous *Ça ira*.

In a few minutes the patriot returns; for fear there should not be enough, he brings a pint of ink, a whole bundle of quills, and five or six quires of paper.

Robert takes a pen, and Mademoiselle de Kéralio, Madame Roland, and her husband dictate in turn, as Robert writes the following:—

PETITION TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

Written on the Patriot Altar.

July 17th, 1791.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NATION:—

Your labours are fast drawing to a close. Soon the successors chosen by the people will take your places, without being confronted by any obstacles which have been placed in your way by the representatives of two privileged classes who are necessarily enemies to all the sacred principles of equality.

A great crime has been committed. Louis XVI. fled; he shamelessly deserted his post of duty. The country was on the verge of anarchy. Citizens arrested the king at Varennes, and brought him back to the capital. The residents of the national capital

implore you not to decide the fate of the royal culprit hastily, but to wait until the other eighty-two departments have had time to express their opinion. There is a great difference of opinion in this matter. Many addresses and petitions are on their way to the Assembly. From every part of the empire simultaneously comes the demand that Louis shall be tried. You, gentlemen, have decided that he is innocent, and have placed him beyond the reach of the law by declaring in your vote of July 16th that the Constitution shall be submitted for his acceptance as soon as it is completed.

Legislators! this is not the will of the people, and we deem it your bounden duty, as well as your greatest glory, to be the faithful exponents of the public will.

Possibly, gentlemen, you have been constrained to take this step by the numerous refractory deputies who have forfeited their rights by protesting in advance against the Constitution; but, gentlemen, representatives of a generous and confiding people, remember that these two hundred protesters have no voice now in the National Assembly, and that this decree is consequently null and void, both in principle and in form, — null in principle, because it is contrary to the will of the sovereign people; null in form, because it was passed by two hundred and ninety unqualified voters.

These considerations, as well as the imperative necessity of preventing anarchy, — a danger almost certain to result from a lack of harmony between the representatives and the people represented, — justify us in demanding in the name of all France that you reconsider your decree of July 16th with reference to the king; that you regard the offence of Louis XVI. as proved; that, he himself having virtually abdicated the throne, you assent to this abdication, and convene a new legislative body to proceed in a constitutional manner with the organisation of a new executive power.

The petition being completed, there is a call for silence. Every sound is instantly hushed, and every head is uncovered. In a stentorian voice Robert reads the document.

It meets the wishes of all. No objection is made; on the contrary, unanimous applause greets the concluding words.

Now it is to be signed. There are not two or three hundred people on the Champ de Mars now, but at least ten thousand; and as crowds continue to pour in at all the entrances, it is evident that there will be fifty thousand

persons around the patriot altar in the course of an hour or two.

Those who drew up the petition are the first to sign it, and they then pass the pen to their neighbors. In a few seconds the entire sheet is covered with signatures; so sheets of blank paper like that on which the petition is written are distributed through the crowd. The sheets are duly numbered, so that they may be appended to the petition itself.

In compliance with the orders of the Assembly issued to Lafayette, to whom the assassinations of the morning had also been reported, troops are already arriving on the Champ de Mars; but the people are so engrossed with the petition that they are hardly conscious of the presence of the soldiers.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RED FLAG.

THESE troops are led by one of Lafayette's aides. Which one? His name is not given. Lafayette had so many aides that history quite loses itself among them.

Whoever he may be, a shot from the hillside strikes the young man. The wound is slight, and as this is the only shot fired, the troops scorn to notice it. A similar incident occurs at Gros Caillou, where Lafayette appears with three thousand men and several field-pieces. Fournier is there at the head of a band of ruffians, — the same probably who murdered the barber and the disabled soldier in the morning. They are engaged in erecting a barricade, and Lafayette and his men ride up to the barricade and demolish it.

While this is going on, Fournier fires his musket at Lafayette through the spokes of a waggon wheel. Fortunately the gun misses fire, and Fournier is seized and dragged before Lafayette.

"Who is that man?" he asks.

"The fellow who fired at you just now."

"Let him go. He'll be sure to get himself hanged in some other way."

Unfortunately, Fournier does not get himself hanged. He disappears for a time, to reappear during the September massacres the following year.

Lafayette reaches the Champ de Mars. The people are signing the petition, and perfect tranquillity reigns. The order is so perfect that Madame de Condorcet is there promenading with her infant only a year old.

Lafayette approaches the patriot altar and inquires what is going on. The people show him the petition, and promise to disperse quietly as soon as the petition is signed. He sees nothing objectionable in all this, and retires with his soldiers.

But though the shot which wounded Lafayette's aide, and that fired at the general himself, created little or no commotion on the Champ de Mars, they have aroused the wildest excitement in the Assembly.

Lafayette is wounded! One of his aides is killed! There is fighting going on upon the Champ de Mars!

These are the reports which find credence throughout the city, and which the Assembly transmit to the Hôtel de Ville; but the municipal authorities, having also heard alarming reports of the proceedings on the Champ de Mars, have already sent three officials, Messrs. Jacques, Hardy, and Renaud, there to investigate; but instead of finding a disorderly crowd, as they anticipated, they see only quiet, well-behaved citizens, some promenading, some signing the petition, others dancing the farandole and singing the "ça ira."

The crowd is orderly, but perhaps the petition is reprehensible in its character. The officials ask to have it read to them. The request is complied with. The commissioners do not consider the document illegal, and even go so far as to say that they would sign it themselves, did not their position as office-holders forbid.

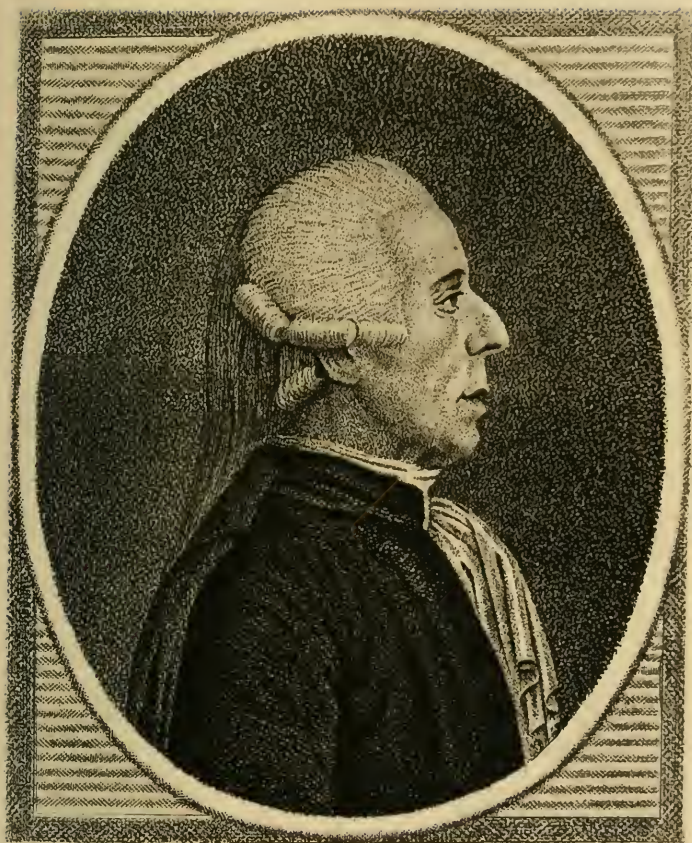
In the silly squabble which had just occurred between the populace and the National Guards, two men had been arrested; but, as almost always happens under such circumstances, the two prisoners were entirely innocent, and the more prominent persons among the petitioners requested that they be set at liberty.

"We cannot assume that responsibility," replied the officials; "but appoint some commissioners to accompany us to the Hôtel de Ville, and justice shall be done."

A dozen commissioners were accordingly appointed, and

Portrait of Bailly.

Photo-Etching. — From Engraving by Verité.



Billot, being unanimously chosen as one, returned to the city, in company with his colleagues and the three municipal delegates.

When they reach the Place de Grève, in front of the City Hall, the commissioners are surprised to find the square so full of soldiers that it is almost impossible to force their way through the forest of bayonets.

At the door of the Council Chamber the three officials ask the twelve commissioners to wait a moment, open the door and go in, but fail to reappear.

A whole hour the commissioners wait.

But not a word.

Billot stamps his foot impatiently, and frowns. Suddenly the door opens, and the entire City Council appears, with Bailly at its head.

Bailly is very pale. Being, above all, a mathematician, he has a keen sense of justice and injustice. He feels that he is being forced into a wrong course of action; but the orders of the Assembly are explicit, and Bailly will fulfil them to the letter.

Billot walks straight up to him, and says, in that decided way with which our readers are familiar, —

“Monsieur Mayor, we have been waiting for you over an hour.”

“Who are you, and what is your business with me?”

“Who am I?” repeats Billot. “I am surprised you ask such a question, Monsieur Bailly. It is true, however, that those who turn to the left don’t recognise those who keep to the right. I’m Billot.”

Bailly starts. The name recalls to his mind the man who was the first to enter the Bastille; the man who assisted in the defence of the City Hall at that terrible time when Foulon and Berthier were assassinated; the man who marched beside the door of the king’s coach the first time the king was brought from Versailles; the man who aroused Lafayette on that awful October night; the man, too, who had brought the king back from Varennes.

"As to my business," continues Billot, "I am sent here, with these gentlemen, by an assemblage of people on the Champ de Mars."

"And what do those people desire?"

"They wish you to keep the promise made by your three commissioners here to release two unjustly accused citizens, for whose innocence we vouch."

"Do you fancy we can rely upon such assurances?" asked Bailly, trying to pass on.

"And why not?"

"Because they are made by seditious persons."

The commissioners gaze at each other in astonishment.

"Seditious persons!" repeats Billot, scowling; "so we are rebels, are we?"

"Yes," responds Bailly, "and I am on my way to the Champ de Mars to restore order now."

Billot shrugs his shoulders and gives a laugh, — one of those laughs which sound almost like a threat coming from certain lips.

"Restore order at the Champ de Mars?" he exclaims. "Why, your friend Lafayette has been there and gone away again, and your three commissioners have been there, and they, too, can tell you that the Champ de Mars is much more quiet and orderly than the Hôtel de Ville."

Just then a captain of the Bonne Nouvelle battalion rushes up in a great state of excitement.

"Where 's the mayor?" he cries.

Billot steps aside, so that Bailly can be seen, as he replies: "Here I am."

"To arms, Monsieur Mayor, to arms!" shouts the captain. "There is fighting on the Champ de Mars, and fifty thousand scoundrels are about to make an attack upon the Assembly."

But the words are hardly out of his mouth when a heavy hand is laid upon his shoulder, and Farmer Billot asks:

"Who says so?"

"Who says so? The Assembly says so."

"Then the Assembly lies," answers Billot.

"Monsieur!" cries the captain, drawing his sword.

"The Assembly *lies*," Billot repeats, seizing the sword partly by the hilt and partly by the blade, and wrenching it from the captain's grasp.

"Enough, gentlemen, enough! I will go and see for myself, Monsieur Billot. I beg you will return the captain's sword; and if you have any influence over those who sent you here, go back to them and persuade them to disperse."

"To disperse?" cries Billot. "We will see about that. The right of petition is guaranteed by law; and until the law is annulled, no one — no, not even a mayor or a commander-in-chief of the National Guard — has any right to prevent a citizen from making his wishes known. You are going to the Champ de Mars you say? Very well, we will precede you, Monsieur Mayor."

The bystanders are only waiting for a word or gesture from Bailly to spring forward and arrest Billot; but Bailly feels that the voice which speaks so firmly and decidedly is the voice of the people, and he signifies by a gesture that Billot and his fellow-commissioners are to pass unmolested.

As they descend to the square below, an immense red flag, suspended from one of the windows of the City Hall, unfurls its blood-red folds in the first gust of a rising storm.

But unfortunately the shower lasts only a few minutes. There is a good deal of thunder, but no rain; and this only increases the heat, and fills the air with even more electricity.

By the time Billot and his colleagues reach the Champ de Mars the crowd has increased until it numbers about sixty thousand souls. These sixty thousand men and women are on the sides of the knoll on which the altar stands, and also upon the platform and steps of the altar itself.

The return of Billot and his companions creates a great sensation. The people crowd around them. "Have the two innocent men been released? What did the mayor say?"

"The two citizens have not been released, and the mayor made no reply, except to say that the petitioners were a set of seditious rascals."

The "seditious rascals" laugh good-naturedly, and then resume their conversations, their promenades, and their various occupations.

All this while the signing of the petition has been going steadily on. Before night, the number of signatures will reach fifty thousand. The Assembly will feel obliged to yield to such pressure as this.

Suddenly a citizen rushes up, out of breath. He has not only seen the red flag floating from the City Hall, but he has also heard the order given to the National Guards to march to the Champ de Mars. The soldiers were ordered to load their guns; and while that was being done, one of the municipal officers had gone from company to company, giving whispered instructions to the leaders. The man who brought these tidings had hastened on ahead to warn the patriots; but such peace and harmony prevail that the persons who are there exercising a right recognised by the Constitution cannot believe that they are in any danger. So the signing of the petition goes on; so does the singing, and likewise the dancing.

Soon the roll of a drum is heard. The sound comes nearer. The petitioners look up and become a little alarmed as they see bayonets glittering in the sun, like a waving field of steel.

Members of the different political societies consult together, and many advise immediate departure; but from the steps of the patriot altar Billot calls out: "Brothers, we are doing nothing wrong. Why should we feel afraid? It will be time enough to run away when we are ordered to do so."

“Yes, yes, we are not transgressing the law,” is the cry that resounds on all sides. “Let us wait. The Riot Act has to be read three times. Let’s stay where we are.”

So everybody remains. The sound of the drum is very near now, and at that very instant three detachments of National Guards appear at three entrances of the Champ de Mars, — one at the gate near the Military School, one at the gate a little lower down, the other at the gate opposite the heights of Chaillot. This last detachment crosses the wooden bridge and advances with a red flag at its head and Baily in the ranks; only the red flag is an almost invisible ensign, and does not attract any special notice.

This is what the petitioners assembled on the Champ de Mars see. Now what do the new-comers themselves see?

An immense plain crowded with quiet, inoffensive promenaders, and in the middle of it the patriot altar, a huge structure, standing on a platform reached by four wide staircases.

From this platform other steps lead up to a smaller platform surmounted by the patriot altar, shaded by a beautiful palm. Each step, from the lowest to the highest, serves as a seat for a larger or smaller number of spectators, according to its capacity, thus forming a bright-hued, animated pyramid of humanity.

The National Guard from the Marais district and the Faubourg St.-Antoine, four thousand or more men, with their artillery, enter by the gateway at the south corner of the Military School, and range themselves along the front of that building.

Lafayette has not over much confidence in these troops, which compose the ultra-democratic portion of his army; so he has added a battalion of paid soldiers, the Pretorian guard, so to speak, composed of old soldiers, members of the disbanded French Guards, and of enthusiastic Lafayetteites, who, knowing their divinity has been fired upon, are longing to avenge this crime, which is far greater in

their estimation than that which the king committed against the nation.

This detachment enter from the Gros Caillou side, brilliant, formidable, and threatening, and so find themselves almost directly in front of the patriot altar.

Through the same gates by which the National Guards entered come several squads of cavalry, raising such a dust that the tragedy which follows can be but dimly seen, as through a murky veil or through occasional rents in a cloud of sand.

The scene that ensued we will endeavour to describe.

The crowd, driven back by the cavalry, whose horses gallop at the top of their speed around the outer edge of the vast arena, seek a refuge at the foot of the patriot altar, as if upon the threshold of an inviolable sanctuary.

A single shot is heard from the river bank; then, the smoke of a vigorous fusillade mounts towards the sky.

Bailly is greeted with shouts of derision by the *gamins* on the slopes of Grenelle. A bullet whistles by the mayor's head and wounds a dragoon. Bailly orders his men to fire, but to fire into the air, simply to frighten the crowd; but the echo has scarcely died away when another fusillade is heard.

It comes from the Hireling Guard.

Upon what and whom are they firing? Upon that inoffensive crowd around the patriot altar.

Wild shrieks of terror follow the discharge, and a strange sight ensues, but one which, alas! is destined to become much more common in days to come, — the populace fleeing in all directions, leaving motionless corpses and wounded victims weltering in blood behind them, the cavalry pursuing the fugitives wildly through the smoke and dust.

The Champ de Mars presents a deplorable aspect. Injured women and children are lying about everywhere.

As usual under such circumstances, the carnage spreads far and wide. The artillery is placed in position, and the

gunners prepare to fire. Lafayette has barely time to rush to the spot and place himself and his horse in front of the cannon's mouth.

After a frantic, headlong rush, first in this direction, then in that, the frenzied crowd flee, as if by instinct, to the National Guards of the Marais district and the Faubourg St.-Antoine, who open their ranks to receive the fugitives. The wind having blown the smoke in their faces, these troops suppose at first the fugitives are actuated by fear alone; but when the smoke is dispelled, they are horrified to see the ground stained with blood and strewn with corpses.

At that very instant an aide gallops up with orders for these guards to advance and sweep the field, so as to effect a union with the other troops; but these stanch democrats not only defy the aide, but also the cavalry, which are charging upon the populace. The aide and the cavalry alike recoil before the bayonets of these patriots, and the people who have sought a refuge with them find safety at last.

In another moment the immense plain is empty, or at least there remain upon it only the bodies of the men, women, and children killed or wounded by the fusillade of the Hireling Guard, or trampled under the feet of the dragoons' horses.

And yet, in the heat of this carnage, undismayed by the cries of the wounded and the fall of the dead, a few patriots gather up the papers bearing the signatures to their petition, and these papers find a safe resting-place in the house of Santerre.

Who gave that unfortunate order to fire? No one knows. It is one of those mysteries which remain unexplained, in spite of the most careful investigation. Both the chivalrous Lafayette and the honest Bailly abhorred bloodshed, and yet this blood pursued them both until the end of their days, and cost them both their popularity.

The number of victims left on the field of carnage no

one knows. Some persons underrated the number in order to lessen the responsibility of the mayor and the general in command; others overrated it, in order to increase the wrath of the populace.

When night came many of the corpses were thrown into the Seine, which bore them to the sea. The sea swallowed them up.

In vain were Bailly and Lafayette, not only absolved from guilt, but publicly congratulated by the Assembly. In vain did the constitutionalist journals declare the day's work a triumph of the law. The victory was branded with shame, like every such disastrous day in which rulers slay those who are offering no resistance to lawful authority.

The people, who generally give things their right names, called this pretended triumph, "The Massacre of the Champ de Mars."

CHAPTER XX.

AFTER THE MASSACRE.

Now let us return to Paris and see what is going on there.

Paris heard the sound of the fusillade, and shuddered. She did not know which party was in the right, or which party was in the wrong; but she felt that she had just received a wound, and that the blood was flowing from the wound.

Robespierre remained at the Jacobin Club like a commander in his fortress. There, and there only, he felt safe. One of the members of the club was sent to ascertain the condition of affairs. As for the Feuillant Club, it was not necessary for them to send out for news. They were kept informed of what was going on hour by hour, and almost minute by minute. The game was being played, and thus far they were the winners.

The Jacobin messenger returned in about ten minutes with the terrible news that Bailly and Lafayette were slaughtering the people.

Every one had not heard Bailly's cry of grief and consternation; every one had not seen Lafayette ride directly in front of the loaded cannon.

The news terrified the thirty or forty remaining members beyond expression. They realised that it was upon them that the Feuillants would endeavour to cast the odium of the affair, for had not the first petition emanated from the Jacobins? True, it had been withdrawn; but the second petition, which had not been withdrawn, was unquestionably the natural outcome of the first. It is little wonder that the Jacobins were frightened.

That pale-faced phantom of virtue, that shadow of Rousseau's philosophy known as Robespierre, became fairly livid. He longed to sneak away, but could not. He was obliged to remain and take his stand. Terror was his counsellor.

The Jacobins announced their willingness to swear allegiance to the Constitution anew, and also to obey the behests of the National Assembly.

This announcement was scarcely made when a frightful noise from the street resounded through the corridors of the old convent. The noise consisted of laughter, jeers, threats, and songs.

The Jacobins listened intently, hoping the disturbers of the peace would pass them by and keep on to the Palais Royal, where Orléans resided. But no, the sound ceased, and the crowd came to a halt in front of the low and gloomy portal opening upon the Rue St.-Honoré. Some one increased the prevailing consternation by calling out, "It is the Hireling Guards returning from the massacre on the Champ de Mars. They intend to blow us up."

Fortunately some guards had been stationed at the entrance; and they closed and barricaded all the doors so as to prevent this band, drunk with the blood already spilled, from committing another outrage.

One by one, the Jacobins and the spectators slunk away. It did not take long to empty the hall, however, even at this rate; for there were only about forty members present, and not more than a hundred persons in the galleries.

Madame Roland, who seems to have been everywhere that day, was one of the last to leave; and she relates that a Jacobin, on hearing that the soldiers were about to invade the hall, lost his head so completely that he climbed up into the ladies' gallery. Madame Roland made him ashamed of his terror, and he went back the way he had come.

When Robespierre departed in his turn, he was at a loss which way to go. He lived at the farther end of the

Marais district, and if he went home he was sure to encounter the Hireling Guard; so he determined to go and ask a shelter of Pétion, who lived in the Faubourg St.-Honoré, and accordingly turned his steps in that direction.

He was very anxious to escape notice; but how could he hope to do it in that plain olive coat, those spectacles, which midnight study had made a necessity to the patriot at an unusually early age, and with that stealthy tread, like that of a weasel or a fox. In fact, he had hardly taken twenty steps before two or three persons exclaimed: "Look at Robespierre! That's Robespierre! See, that slender man, walking along close to the wall. He's trying to hide, he's so modest!"

It was not from modesty but fear that Robespierre was trying to escape notice; but who would dare suggest such a thing in relation to Robespierre, the virtuous and incorruptible Robespierre, the idol of the people?

One man stuck his face under Robespierre's very nose to make sure it was he, and Robespierre pulled his hat still further down over his eyes, not knowing why he was so closely inspected; but the man recognised him and called out, "Hurrah for Robespierre!"

Robespierre would have greatly preferred having an enemy to deal with than such a friend as this.

"Robespierre!" cried another even more enthusiastic bystander. "Long live Robespierre! If we must have a king, why not have Robespierre?"

Oh, thou immortal Shakespeare! "Cæsar died, that his assassin might be Cæsar!"

If any man ever cursed his popularity it was Robespierre at that moment. A crowd of people quickly gathered around him, and his admirers even proposed to bear him along on their shoulders in triumph. He peered around from under his glasses in terror, hoping to find some open door or dark alley through which he could make his escape; and just then he felt himself seized by the arm and pulled aside, while a friendly voice whispered, "Come this way."

A minute more and he heard a door close behind him and found himself in a carpenter's shop. The proprietor was a man about forty-five years of age; near him stood his wife; and in a room back of the shop two girls, one about fifteen, the other eighteen, were preparing supper.

Robespierre was very pale, and seemed in danger of fainting.

"Bring a glass of water, Leonora!" cried the joiner. And Leonora, the joiner's daughter, timidly approached, glass in hand.

It is quite possible that the austere lips of the orator touched the fingers of Mademoiselle Duplay, for Robespierre was now for the first time in the dwelling of the carpenter of that name.

And now let us leave Robespierre in the bosom of the worthy family he will soon make his own, and follow Dr. Gilbert to the Tuileries.

Again we find the queen waiting anxiously; but it is not Barnave she is expecting this time, nor is she standing with her hand upon the door-knob, but she is seated in an arm-chair with her head resting upon her hand. She is waiting for the return of Weber, whom she had sent to the Champ de Mars.

In order that the reader may do the queen justice and understand that hatred of the French for which she has been so severely censured, we will give a brief description of what she was compelled to endure after her enforced return from Varennes. The people seemed to have had but one idea: that, the king and queen having escaped once, they would do so a second time, and this time reach the frontier. In fact, the queen was regarded by the common people as nothing more or less than a sorceress, who might fly out of her window, like Medea, in a car drawn by two griffins; and the officers appointed to guard Marie Antoinette seem to have shared these notions.

Gouvion, who had let her slip through his fingers even after having informed Bailly of her intended departure,

declared that he would not be responsible for the consequences if any woman except Madame de Rochereul — his mistress — was allowed to enter the queen's apartments; and he accordingly placed at the foot of the steps leading up to the royal apartments a large portrait of Madame de Rochereul, in order that the sentinels might notice any other woman who attempted to gain access to the queen.

On being apprised of this order, the queen hastened to the king and informed him of the insult; but though the king could not believe it at first, he found the report to be true. The king then appealed to Lafayette, who ordered the portrait removed, and the queen's regular attendants resumed their service; but another equally offensive precaution was instituted. Officers were stationed in the room adjoining the queen's bed-chamber, and they were ordered to keep the door always open, so that they could have the royal family under their constant supervision.

One day the king ventured to shut this door; an officer re-opened it immediately. A moment afterwards, the king closed it again, but it was again opened, and the officer on guard remarked: "Sire, it is useless for you to close this door, for I shall have to re-open it as often as you close it; such are my orders."

So the door remained open; and the only concession that could be obtained was that while the queen was dressing and undressing the door might be left merely ajar, but as soon as she was dressed or in bed the door must be set wide open again.

This tyranny became so intolerable that the queen conceived the idea of placing her attendant's bed between her own couch and the door, so that this bed with its hangings would serve as a sort of screen behind which she could dress and undress.

One night, seeing that the attendant was asleep and the queen awake, the sentinel took advantage of the opportunity to enter the room and approach her Majesty's bedside.

The queen looked at him with that haughtiness of manner she knew so well how to assume when any one showed a lack of proper respect; but the man, who was really a well-meaning fellow who had no intention of showing her any disrespect, gazed at her with such an unmistakable expression of compassion as he proceeded to give her some advice and tell her what he would and would not do if he were in her place, that the queen's resentment vanished, and she listened to him with profound sadness.

During the conversation the attendant woke, and, seeing a man near the queen's bedside, she screamed, and sprang up with the intention of summoning assistance; but the queen checked her by saying: "No, Campan. Let us listen to what this gentleman has to say. He is a good Frenchman, and though, like many others, he is deceived in regard to our intentions and motives, his remarks indicate a sincere attachment to royalty."

So the officer went on until he had said all he wished to say.

Before the journey to Varennes, Marie Antoinette had not a gray hair; but during the night that followed the scene between Charny and herself, her hair became nearly white. Perceiving the sorrowful change, she smiled bitterly, and cut off a lock, which she sent to Madame de Lamballe, who was then in London, with the following comment:—

Whitened by sorrow!

The firing at the Champ de Mars was heard at the Tuileries, and the queen was greatly alarmed by it. The Varennes affair had been a hard but useful lesson to her. Until then the Revolution had seemed a trivial affair to Marie Antoinette. She thought Paris merely misled by a few demagogues, and talked much like the king of "our faithful provinces;" but now she had seen the provinces, and had found them even more disloyal than Paris. So the queen was awaiting Weber's return with great anxiety,

when the door opened, and admitted, instead of the portly form of her foster-brother, the stern and austere face of Dr. Gilbert.

He was no favourite with her, for she regarded him as little better than a Republican; and though she had a great respect for him personally, she would not have sent for him in any mental or physical crisis, though she could not help yielding to his influence when she was in his presence.

"Ah, it is you, doctor!" she exclaimed, upon his entrance.

"Yes, madame, it is I," he replied, bowing. "I know that you are expecting Weber, but I can give you more authentic information than he will be able to, for he was on the other side of the Seine, where there was no blood shed, while I was on this side of the river, where the slaughter took place."

"Slaughter? What has occurred, monsieur?"

"A great calamity, madame. The court party has triumphed, but the victory has been won by such frightful means that it is a thousand times worse for the victors than a defeat would have been."

"But what has happened?"

"The troops fired on the populace, and Lafayette and Bailly can never be of any further service to you."

"And why?"

"Because their popularity is irretrievably lost."

"But what were the people upon whom they fired doing?"

"They were signing a petition for the king's removal."

"And you think it was wrong to fire upon them after that?"

"I think it would have been better to convince them than to shoot them."

"Convince them of what?"

"Of the king's sincerity."

"But the king is sincere."

"Pardon me, madame. Three days ago I spent an entire evening trying to make his Majesty understand that his

worst enemies are his two royal brothers, Condé, and the other fugitives from the kingdom. On my knees, I entreated the king to break off all negotiations with them, and to offer to honestly adopt the Constitution, on condition that two or three really impracticable articles should be changed. The king became convinced, — at least so I believed, — and promised me that he would have nothing more to do with the *émigrés* and their plans; but my back was hardly turned, madame, before the king signed, and asked you to sign, a letter to Monsieur authorising him to solicit the intervention of the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia.”

The queen blushed like a child detected in a fault, but straightway recovered herself.

“So our enemies have spies even in the king’s study,” she said scornfully.

“Yes, madame, and it is this very fact which makes every such false step so ruinous to the king,” replied Gilbert, coolly.

“But, monsieur, the letter was written by the king’s own hand. After I signed it, it was folded and sealed by the king, and then given to the courier who was to deliver it.”

“True, madame.”

“Was the messenger arrested?”

“The letter was read.”

“Are we then surrounded by traitors?”

“All men are not Charnys.”

“What do you mean, monsieur?”

“I mean that one of the most certain omens of the impending ruin of kings is the alienation of friends who should be bound to them by hooks of steel.”

“I did not send Monsieur de Charny away,” the queen answered bitterly; “he left of his own accord. When one’s star is declining there are no bonds strong enough to keep friends at one’s side.”

Gilbert looked sadly at the queen, and gently shook his head.

"Do not slander Monsieur de Charny, madame, or the blood of his brothers will cry out from the tomb that the Queen of France is an ingrate."

"Monsieur!"

"You know that I speak the truth, madame. You know perfectly well that when real danger threatens you Charny will be at his post, and that this post will be one of imminent peril."

The queen hung her head.

"You did not come here merely to talk to me about Charny, I suppose," she said at last, impatiently.

"No, madame, but ideas, like events, are bound together by invisible threads, and some are suddenly brought into notice which were better left hidden in the innermost recesses of the heart. No, I came to speak to the *queen*. Forgive me if, without really intending to do so, I have spoken to the woman."

"And what do you wish to say to the *queen*, monsieur?"

"I should like to set before her the situation both of France and of Europe at this present time. I should like to say to her: Madame, the happiness or misery of the world depends upon you. You lost the first game of the rubber on that frightful October night, two years ago. Now, or at least so it appears to the eyes of your courtiers, you have just won the second game. The third game, the rubber, is about to begin. If you lose, you lose throne, liberty, and perhaps life itself."

"And do you think we are so cowardly as to recoil on that account, monsieur?" said the queen, drawing herself up proudly.

"I know the king is brave, he is a descendant of Henry IV. I know the queen is brave, she is the daughter of Maria Theresa. I can only attempt to influence them through their convictions; and, unfortunately, I doubt very much if I shall ever succeed in arousing in the heart of the king and queen the convictions that fill my own."

"Why take the trouble if you think the effort so futile?"

"Because I feel it my duty, madame. Believe me, when one lives in such stormy times as these, it is a comfort to be able to say to one's self, even if one's efforts prove unsuccessful: I have done my duty."

The queen looked Gilbert straight in the eyes.

"First of all tell me one thing: Do you believe it is still possible to save the king?"

"I do."

"And royalty also?"

"I hope so."

"Ah, monsieur, you are more fortunate than I am," responded the queen, sighing deeply. "Both are lost, irretrievably lost, I believe, and I struggle against Fate only to satisfy my own conscience."

"I can understand that, madame, because you are contending for an absolute monarchy. You are like a miser who will not sacrifice a part of his wealth to save the remainder, as well as his own life, even when he is in sight of a shore which will more than repay him for what he loses in the wreck. He clings fast to his treasure until it drags him down with its deadly weight. You, too, will perish by reason of the tenacity with which you cling to the baubles you are trying to preserve. Oh, madame, cast these things to the winds, I beseech you, and strike out boldly towards the future."

"To do that, would be to break faith with all the other monarchs of Europe."

"Yes, but you forget that it is to form an alliance with the French people."

"The French are our enemies."

"Only because you have taught them to distrust you."

"But the French people cannot contend successfully against a European coalition."

"Let them have at their head a king who adheres faithfully to the Constitution, and the French nation can conquer Europe."

"It would require a million men to do that!"

“Europe cannot be conquered by a million men, madame, but Europe can be conquered by a single idea. Plant along the Rhine and upon the Alps the tricoloured flag with this motto: ‘Down with tyrants! Liberty to all nations!’ and Europe is conquered.”

“Really, monsieur, there are times when I am tempted to believe that the wisest men go mad.”

“Ah, madame, madame, you do not know what France is in the eyes of other nations. France is the Virgin Goddess of Liberty. The entire world adores her. From the Rhine, from sunny Italy, millions of voices invoke her aid. She has only to set foot outside her own boundaries to find the other nations of the earth kneeling before her. Oh, madame, take advantage of the fact that France has not yet reached the stage of violence; for if you wait too long, the hands now extended so fraternally to all the world will be turned upon herself. Belgium, Germany, and Italy are watching each movement of France with joy and love. Belgium says to her: ‘Come!’ Germany exclaims: ‘I await thee!’ Italy says to her: ‘Save me!’ In the Far North, an unknown hand, in the land of Gustavus has written: ‘No war with France!’

“Besides, not one of these monarchs whose aid you implore, is ready for war. Two nations hate us intensely. I say two nations, but I ought rather to say, an empress and a minister, — Catherine the Second of Russia and Pitt of England; but they are powerless to injure us, at least for the present. Catherine is holding Turkey under one claw, and Poland under the other. She will need to have two or three years to subdue the one and devour the other; but she is urging the Germans on against us, and offers them France as a reward. She reproaches your brother Leopold for his inaction, and points to the King of Prussia invading Holland merely to avenge a slight affront offered to his sister. She says to him, ‘Make haste! March on!’ but she herself does not move. Pitt is swallowing India just now, and is like a gigantic boa-constrictor suffering

from an attack of indigestion. If we wait until he gets over it, he will attack us in our turn, not by waging open war upon us, probably, but by encouraging a civil war in France. I know you stand in mortal dread of Pitt. I know you admit that you never think or speak of him without a shudder. Would you stab him to the very heart? Then make France a republic, with a king at its head. Instead of that, what are you doing, and what is your friend the Princesse de Lamballe doing? She tells England, to which country she has gone as your representative, that the highest ambition of France is to have a charter like the Magna Charta of England, and what does Pitt reply: 'That he will not suffer France to be made a republic, and that he will save the monarchy;' but all the persuasions and entreaties in the world cannot induce him to promise to save the monarch, for he hates the monarch. For was it not this very monarch, Louis XVI., who disputed his (Pitt's) claim to India, and helped the American colonies to free themselves from the British yoke? Pitt has but one desire, as far as Louis XVI. is concerned, — that his shall be a companion portrait to Charles I. in history."

"Monsieur, monsieur, who has told you all this?" cried the startled queen.

"The same man who tells me the contents of your Majesty's letters."

"Then we no longer have so much as a thought that we can really call our own, it seems."

"As I have already told you, madame, the kings of Europe are entangled in an invisible net from which they cannot extricate themselves. Do not think of such a thing as resisting, madame. Place yourself at the head of the progressive ideas you are now endeavouring to keep back, and those who hate you will become your warmest defenders, and the unseen daggers which now threaten you will be turned upon your enemies."

"You forget, monsieur, that those whom you call our enemies are our brother monarchs."

“Ah, madame, once call the French people your children, and you will see of what small account brothers are in politics and diplomacy. Besides, can you not see that all these kings and princes wear upon their brows that fatal seal, the seal of madness? Look at your brother Leopold, worn out at forty in his Tuscan seraglio transported to Vienna. Look at Frederick of Prussia, look at Gustavus of Sweden. One died, and the other will die, without posterity; for everybody knows that the heir to the throne of Sweden is the son of Monk, and not of King Gustavus. Look at the King of Portugal, with his three hundred nuns. Look at the King of Saxony, with his three hundred and fifty-four bastards. Look at Catherine, the Pasiphaë of the North, who has three armies from which to choose her lovers. Oh, madame, madame, can you not see that all these monarchs are rushing madly on into a gulf, an unfathomable abyss,—to utter suicide,—and that you, instead of blindly following them to death and destruction, may attain to a world-wide empire, a universal monarchy?”

“Why do you not say all this to the king, Monsieur Gilbert?”

“I have, madame, again and again; but he, like yourself, has his evil geniuses who undo all I have just done.” Then he added in a tone of profound melancholy, “You used Mirabeau, you are using Barnave, and you will use me; and that is all it will amount to.”

“Monsieur Gilbert, wait for me here; I want to see the king a moment.”

Gilbert bowed, and the queen left the room by the door leading to the king’s apartments. The doctor waited ten minutes, fifteen minutes, half an hour. At last a door opened; but it was not the door through which the queen had passed out, but the one opposite to it.

An attendant entered, who, after looking carefully around him, approached Gilbert, made a masonic sign, handed him a letter, and vanished. Gilbert opened the letter and read:—

“You are wasting your time, Gilbert. At this very moment the king and queen are listening to Breteuil, who has just arrived from Vienna, bringing this counsel: ‘Treat Barnave as you did Mira-beau. Gain time by swearing to support the Constitution, then carry it out to the letter, to show how utterly impracticable it is. France will cool off and become tired of the struggle. The French are naturally volatile; they will take up some new hobby, and give liberty the go-by. If liberty is not forgotten, we shall at least have gained a year, and in a year we shall be ready for war.’

“Those two consummate fools, who are still derisively called the king and queen, and whose doom is sealed, leave them to their fate, Gilbert, and hasten to the hospital at Gros Caillou, where you will find a dying man, — though his case is not so desperate, perhaps, as that of Louis and Marie Antoinette. You may be able to save *him*, but they cannot be saved, and they may drag you with them in their downfall.”

The letter bore no signature, but Gilbert recognised the handwriting as that of Cagliostro. At that very moment Madame Campan entered, and handed Gilbert a note which read as follows: —

“The king begs that Dr. Gilbert will put in writing the policy which he just suggested to the queen.

“Detained by important business, the queen regrets that she cannot see Dr. Gilbert again this evening, and it will be useless for him to wait for her any longer.”

Gilbert read the note, reflected a moment, then, shaking his head dubiously, exclaimed: “Idiots! their fate is indeed sealed!”

“Have you any answer to send to their Majesties, monsieur?” asked Madame Campan.

Gilbert handed her the anonymous letter he had just received.

“That is my answer,” he said, and left the room.

CHAPTER XXI.

“NO MORE MASTERS! NO MORE MISTRESSES!”

BEFORE following Gilbert to the hospital at Gros Caillou, suppose we take a peep at the Assembly, which is about to dissolve after accepting the Constitution whereon the retention in office of Louis XVI. depends, and see what the Court party has gained by the victory of July 17th, which two years later will cost Bailly his head.

We saw the danger to which Robespierre was exposed, and from which he was saved by the timely intervention of the worthy Duplay. While he was quietly eating his supper in the little dining-room opening into the courtyard, his friends were feeling very anxious about him, especially Madame Roland, who, quite forgetting that she had been seen and recognised at the patriot altar, and ran quite as much risk as the other persons who had assisted in drawing up the objectionable petition, insisted upon taking Robert and Mademoiselle Kéralio to her lodgings; and when it became known, that same night, that the Assembly was preparing an accusation against Robespierre, she hastened out to warn him, but not finding him at home, stopped to see Buzot on her way back.

Buzot was one of Madame Roland's most devoted friends; and, knowing her great influence over him, she resolved to enlist his services in Robespierre's behalf. If Robespierre was attacked at the Feuillant Club, Grégoire was to defend him. If the attack was made in the Assembly, Buzot was to act as his champion; and this was the more commendable in Buzot as he was no admirer of Robespierre.

Grégoire and Buzot were both on hand, but no attack upon Robespierre was made at either place, the deputies and

Feuillants being too much dismayed by their sanguinary victory.

The following day the Assembly listened to the report of the Mayor of Paris and of the Commander-in-Chief of the National Guard. Every one had an interest in deceiving himself, so the farce was easily played.

Both the mayor and the general in command expatiated upon the alarming and wide-spread disorder they had been obliged to suppress, — the lynching of the morning and the attempted assassinations in the afternoon, the danger which threatened the king, the Assembly, and society in general, — danger which they, of all others, knew perfectly well had never existed.

The Assembly then thanked Lafayette and Bailly with effusion for the energy they had displayed, and congratulated them upon a victory they both deplored from the very bottom of their hearts. Thanks were also returned to Heaven that both rebels and rebellion had been annihilated at one fell swoop.

Listening to all this, one might have supposed the Revolution was over. On the contrary, the Revolution was just beginning.

Robespierre, still shuddering at the suggestion that he should be made king in place of Louis XVI., made an address in behalf of the former as well as the present members of his club; and in this address thanked the Assembly warmly for its wisdom, firmness, vigilance, and incorruptible justice and impartiality.

The Feuillants recovered their courage. No wonder they believed themselves all-powerful when they saw their opponents' humility.

For a brief time they fancied themselves not only masters of Paris, but of France.

But, alas! they did not understand the situation. By separating themselves from the Jacobins, the Feuillants simply constituted themselves into another assembly, an exact duplicate of the other; and this was not what the

people desired. They wanted a popular organisation which was not the ally of the National Assembly, but its opponent, — an organisation which would not aid in the reinstatement of royalty, but in its destruction.

In July there were about four hundred large political organisations. Of these four hundred, three hundred affiliated equally with the Feuillants and Jacobins, while one hundred adhered to the Jacobins alone. In August six hundred new societies were organised, only one hundred of which were in harmony with the Feuillants.

In proportion as the popularity of the Feuillants waned, that of the Jacobins, under the leadership of Robespierre, increased; for Robespierre was fast becoming the most popular man in France. Cagliostro's prediction concerning the Arras pettifogger was being verified.

At last, the Assembly completed its revision of the Constitution.

The Constitution was an iron cage in which, in spite of the Assembly, and indeed almost without its knowledge, the king was virtually imprisoned. The bars were gilded, it is true, but the gilding could not conceal the real nature of the bars. The king's only means of resistance lay in his veto, which could delay any measure he did not approve for three years.

Meanwhile the day when the king was to take the oath to support the Constitution was approaching.

England and the *émigrés* wrote to the king: “Perish if need be, but do not degrade yourself by taking this oath.”

Leopold and Barnave said: “Take the oath, and let him keep it who can.”

At last the king decided the matter for himself in this language: —

“I confess I do not see sufficient means of action and unity in the Constitution, but, as opinions differ on the subject, I am willing experience should decide.”

Whether the Constitution should be presented to the king for his acceptance at the Tuileries or at the Assembly

was a still mooted question; but the king cut that discussion short by announcing that he would take the oath to support the Constitution in the very place where the Constitution had been framed, and the day appointed by his Majesty was September the thirteenth.

The Assembly greeted this announcement with enthusiastic applause. The king would come to the Assembly! In his delight, Lafayette arose, and suggested that a general amnesty should be granted to all against whom charges were pending on account of their complicity in the king's recent abduction. This motion was passed by acclamation, without one dissenting voice.

A delegation of sixty members was sent to thank the king for his letter.

That same morning a decree was passed abolishing the Order of the "Saint-Esprit," but authorising the king alone to wear the decoration. The delegation found the king ornamented only with the cross of St. Louis. As he perceived the effect which the absence of the other insignia produced upon the deputies, the king said: "You have this day abolished the Order of the 'Saint Esprit,' though you permit its insignia to be used by myself alone; but as such a decoration would be valueless in my eyes except as a means of conferring pleasure and dignity upon others, I shall henceforth consider it abolished for myself, as well as for all other persons."

The queen, the dauphin, and Madame Royale were present. The queen was pale; her teeth were clenched, and she trembled in every limb. As for the king, he had remarked to Montmorin several days before: "I know perfectly well that I am ruined. Whatever is done hereafter must be done simply for the sake of my son."

Louis XVI. responded with apparent cordiality to the speech of the delegation, and when he had finished, turning to his wife, he said: "Gentlemen, here are my wife and children, who share my sentiments."

Yes, his wife and children shared his real sentiments,

for when the delegation withdrew, Marie Antoinette, laying her cold hand on the king's arm, said: "These people want no more sovereigns. They are demolishing the monarchy stone by stone, and building us a sepulchre out of these same stones."

She was mistaken, poor woman! She was to be buried with paupers, and not have so much as a grave of her own! But she was not mistaken in believing that the royal prerogative was fast dwindling into nothingness.

Monsieur de Malouet was president of the Assembly at the time; and though an ardent royalist, he felt obliged to put the question to the Assembly whether the members should stand or remain seated while the king took the oath.

"Seated, seated!" was the cry that resounded on all sides.

"And the king?"

"Must stand with head uncovered!" cried a voice.

The Assembly started. That single voice rang out clear, powerful, and resonant. It seemed to be the voice of the people uttered by one voice so that it could be more distinctly heard.

The president turned pale.

Who had uttered the words? Had they come from the floor of the house, or from the galleries? It mattered not. They were so full of conscious power that the president felt compelled to reply to them, in spite of himself.

"Gentlemen," he said, "there can be no circumstances under which the National Assembly should not recognise the king as its head when he is present. If the king takes the oath standing, I must request the Assembly to listen in the same attitude."

But again that unknown voice made itself heard:—

"I propose an amendment to which I am sure every one will agree," said the voice. "The privilege of kneeling shall be allowed Monsieur de Malouet and any one else who prefers that posture while listening to the king; and

now let us proceed to take action on the motion already before us."

The motion was set aside.

It was on the very next day after this discussion that the king was to take the oath. The hall was filled to overflowing. The galleries, too, were packed.

At noon the king was announced. The king delivered his address standing; the Assembly listened standing. The speech concluded, they all signed the Constitution, and then everybody sat down.

Then the president—it chanced to be Thouret on this occasion—rose to make his speech; but after uttering two or three sentences, seeing that the king did not rise, Thouret sat down again.

This action on his part elicited considerable applause from the galleries; and as the outburst was repeated several times, the king turned very pale, and, drawing his handkerchief from his pocket, he wiped the perspiration from his brow.

The queen was present, occupying a seat which had been especially reserved for her. She could endure no more. She rose and went out, slamming the door violently behind her. On her return to the palace she shut herself up in her apartments, without saying a word even to her most intimate friends.

The king returned half an hour later.

"Where is the queen?" he asked.

They told him, and an usher was about to lead the way to the queen's apartments; but the king motioned him aside, opened the door himself, and suddenly presented himself on the threshold of the room where the queen was.

He looked so pale and dejected, and such great drops of sweat stood on his brow, that the queen sprang up and uttered a cry on beholding him.

"What has happened, sire?" she exclaimed.

The king threw himself into an arm-chair and burst into a fit of sobbing.

"Oh, madame, madame," he exclaimed, "why did you attend the session? Was it necessary that you should be a witness of my humiliation? Was it for this that I brought you to Paris, under pretence of making you a queen?"

Such an outburst on the part of Louis XVI. was as pathetic as it was rare. The queen could not restrain her feelings; and, running to the king, she fell upon her knees before him.

Just then, the opening of a door made her turn. It was Madame Campan, who was coming in. Stretching out her arms, the queen cried:—

"Leave us, Campan, leave us!"

Madame Campan understood the feeling which prompted the queen to send her away, and respectfully withdrew; but, standing outside the door, she heard the royal pair talk a long time, their conversation being frequently interrupted with sobs.

At last the sobs ceased; the speakers seemed to become calmer, and after about half an hour the door opened, and the queen herself called Madame Campan.

"Campan," said she, "deliver this letter into the hands of Monsieur de Malden. It is addressed to my brother Leopold. Tell Monsieur de Malden to start for Vienna with it at once. The letter must reach there before the account of to-day's proceedings. If he needs two or three hundred louis, give them to him, and I will repay you."

Two hours later, Malden was on his way to Vienna.

The worst thing about all this was that it was necessary for the royal family to smile and wear a joyous, contented air.

All the rest of the day, the Tuileries grounds were thronged with people. That night the city was ablaze with illuminations. The king and queen were invited to drive through the Champs Élysées, escorted by the aides-de-camp and officers of the Paris National Guards.

As soon as they appeared, shouts of "Long live the king!" and "Long live the queen!" resounded on all sides; but in an interval when these shouts had ceased,

and the carriage had halted for a moment, a ferocious-looking man of the lower class, who was standing with folded arms near the door of the royal coach, said, "Don't believe them! Long live the Nation!"

The carriage moved on slowly; but this same man placed his hand on the window-ledge and walked along by the side of the vehicle, and every time the people shouted, "Long live the king!" or "Long live the queen!" the man repeated in the same surly voice, "Don't believe them! Long live the Nation!"

Special performances were given at the different theatres: first, at the Opera, then at the Comédie Française, then at the Italian Theatre. At the Opera house and the Comédie Française, every precaution had been taken; there was a picked audience, and the king and queen were greeted with great apparent enthusiasm; but when an attempt was made to do the same at the Italian Theatre, it was too late. All the seats in the parquet, or pit, had been bought up in a lump, and there was good reason to fear things would not go so smoothly here as at the previous performances.

This fear became a certainty when the occupants of the seats in the lower part of the house were recognised. Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Legendre, and Santerre were in the front row; and when the queen entered the royal box, the people in the boxes and balconies tried to applaud, but the pit hissed.

The queen looked down with terror into the boiling crater below her, in which, as through an atmosphere of flame, she could see eyes full of hatred and indignation glaring up at her. But she knew none of these men by sight, and scarcely by name; so, trying to conceal her annoyance with a smile, she said to herself: "Good heavens! what have I ever done that they should hate me so?"

But suddenly her gaze was arrested by the sight of a man standing by one of the pillars that supported the gallery. This man was gazing at her with alarming intentness. It was the man she had met at the Château de

Taverney, the man she had seen at the Sèvres Bridge, and in the garden of the Tuileries on her return from Varennes, — the mysterious man whose every word was a threat, and every act a gruesome mystery. When her eyes had once fallen upon this man, she seemed unable to remove them. He exercised the same fascination over her that a serpent exercises over a bird.

The performance began; the queen made a strong effort to break the charm, and finally succeeded in directing her attention to the stage.

The play was Grétry's "Unforeseen Events."

But in spite of all the queen's efforts to drive that terrible man from her thoughts, her frightened eyes would insist on turning in that direction, as if attracted there by a magnetic power much stronger than her own will; and each and every time the man was standing in the same place, with the same sardonic, almost mocking expression, upon his face.

The whole atmosphere of the place, too, seemed to be heavily charged with electricity. These two opposing influences, though now held in check, could hardly fail to collide, as when two storm-clouds approach from different points in the horizon, and meet above our heads in an August sky.

At last the crisis came. Madame Dugazon, a charming actress, had a duet to sing with the tenor, and in the duet occurred this line: —

“ Oh, how I love my mistress! ”

The charming little woman advanced to the front of the stage, and, raising her eyes and hands respectfully to the queen, uttered the fatal words.

The queen saw that the tempest was upon them, and involuntarily her eyes sought out the man standing by the pillar. She fancied she saw him make a gesture of command which the entire pit obeyed; for, as if with one voice, — but what a terrible voice! — the entire pit shouted: —

“No more masters! No more mistresses! Liberty!”

To these shouts, the boxes and balcony replied with cries of “Long live the king! Long live the queen! May our noble master and mistress live for ever!”

“No more masters! No more mistresses! Liberty! Liberty! Liberty!” yelled the pit a second time.

This double declaration of war made and accepted, the fight began.

The queen uttered a cry of terror, and closed her eyes; she had not even strength to glance at the unknown, who seemed to be the guiding spirit of the fray.

The officers of the National Guard immediately surrounded her, making a living rampart around her with their bodies, and got her safely out of the theatre; but even out into the corridors those yells of, “No more masters! No more mistresses! No more kings! No more queens!” followed her. She was borne fainting to her carriage, and this was the last time she attended a theatre.

On September 30, the Assembly declared that, having fulfilled its duties, its sessions were at an end. The result of its labours may be briefly stated as follows:—

The complete disorganisation of the monarchy.

The organisation of a popular government.

The destruction of all ecclesiastical privileges.

The issue of twelve hundred million francs in assignats.

The establishment of religious liberty.

The suppression of the monastic orders.

The abolition of secret imprisonment.

The discontinuance of internal revenue taxes.

The organisation of the National Guard, and, finally, the adoption of the Constitution and the acceptance of it by the king.

Gloomy indeed must the forebodings of the king and queen have been, if they believed they had more reason to fear the new Assembly that was about to convene, than the one just dissolved.

CHAPTER XXII.

BARNAVE'S FAREWELL.

ON the 2d of October, that is to say, two days after the dissolution of the Assembly, Barnave was ushered into the queen's apartments. The very day the king swore to support the Constitution, Lafayette and his guards disappeared from the palace; so if the king had not become powerful again, he had at least regained his freedom, and this must have been some compensation for the humiliation he had complained of so bitterly to the queen.

Consequently, though he did not undergo the formalities of a public reception, Barnave was not subjected to the numerous precautions formerly deemed necessary when he visited the Tuileries.

He was very pale, and seemed very sad; and the queen noted both his pallor and his evident depression of spirits.

She received him standing, though she knew the young deputy's respect for her too well to fear he would do what President Thouret had done if she sat down.

"Well, Monsieur Barnave," she exclaimed, "you are satisfied now the king has taken your advice and sworn to sustain the Constitution, I hope."

"The queen is very kind to say that the king has been guided by my advice in this matter," replied Barnave, bowing; "but if this advice had not coincided with that of the Emperor Leopold and Prince Kaunitz, perhaps his Majesty would have hesitated longer before he took this step, — the only one which can save the king however; that is, if the king can —"

Barnave paused suddenly.

"That is, if the king can be saved," said the queen, completing the sentence for Barnave with the courage, or rather the audacity, which was such a prominent trait in her character. "That is what you mean, I suppose."

"God forbid that I should be a prophet of evil, madame; and yet, now that I am about to leave Paris, and bid farewell to the queen for ever, I am equally loath to discourage her Majesty or to awaken false hopes."

"You intend leaving Paris, Monsieur Barnave?"

"The labours of the Constitutional Assembly are ended; and as that Assembly has decided that none of its members are eligible for re-election, there is nothing to detain me here any longer."

"Not even the possibility of being of service to us, Monsieur Barnave?"

Barnave smiled gloomily. "No, not even that, madame, for I realise only too well that I can be of no further use to you."

"You set too slight a valuation on your talents, monsieur."

"Alas! no, madame, I weigh myself in the balance and find myself wanting. The only real power I possessed was my influence in the Assembly and in the Jacobin Club, but the Assembly is dissolved, the Jacobins are transformed into the Feuillants, and my popularity is a thing of the past."

"Then you see, monsieur, that popularity is exceedingly short lived," said the queen; and there was a gleam of something very like triumph in her eyes as she spoke.

Barnave sighed, and the queen perceived that she had been guilty of one of those slight acts of cruelty which were habitual to her.

For if Barnave had lost his popularity all in a few short months, and had been compelled to bow to Robespierre's supremacy, whose fault was it? Was it not the fault of that fatal monarchy, which seemed to be dragging everything it touched down to destruction?

She endeavoured to atone for her thoughtlessness, for she knew it was exceedingly generous in Barnave to answer merely with a sigh, when he might have thundered, "For whom did I sacrifice my popularity, madame, if not for you?" So she said to him:—

"Monsieur Barnave, you surely are not going to desert us entirely?"

"I will remain, of course, if the queen commands it; remain as a soldier remains to guard the flag once intrusted to him, though he has received his discharge. But if I remain, do you know what the result will be? Instead of merely becoming unpopular, I shall become a traitor."

"Explain, if you please, monsieur, I do not understand you," responded the queen, rather offended.

"Will the queen allow me to explain her present situation as well as that in which she will soon find herself?"

"Certainly, monsieur. I am becoming accustomed to gazing down into this abyss, though if I were inclined to dizziness I should have fallen into it long ago."

"The queen perhaps regards the last Assembly as hostile to royalty; but it was never guilty of but one hostile act towards the king and yourself, and that was when it passed a decree that none of its members should form a part of the new legislature."

"I do not understand you," repeated the queen, with a rather incredulous smile.

"It is very plain, it seems to me. The former Assembly has snatched the shield from the arm of your friends."

"And the sword from the hand of our enemies as well, it seems to me."

"You are mistaken in regard to that, madame. This blow came from Robespierre, and it is a hard one, like every blow that comes from that source. First of all, you will be obliged to fight in the dark. You knew with what and whom you were contending in the old Assembly; you know nothing at all about this new one. Note this fact, too, madame: by proposing that none of us should be

eligible for re-election, Robespierre intended to reduce France to the alternative of electing a legislative body either superior or inferior to us in rank. Now there is scarcely any one left who is superior to us, — the wholesale emigration having disorganised society; but even if there were any of the nobility left, the people would scarcely choose them as their representatives now. Their choice must consequently be made from those who are beneath us in rank, and the entire body will therefore be intensely democratic; there will be different degrees of intensity, that is all."

It was evident from the queen's face that she was listening to Barnave's explanation with the closest attention, and that her alarm increased in proportion with her comprehension of the situation.

"For three or four days these deputies have been arriving in Paris," continued Barnave, "and I have met quite a number of them, especially those from in and around Bordeaux. They are nearly all obscure men who are anxious to make themselves a name, and are all the more in a hurry to do it because they are so young. Aside from Condorcet and Brissot and a few others, the eldest among them is not over thirty. There are to be no more gray-haired men in the Assembly, but a new France, with locks of raven blackness."

"And you think we have more to fear from those who are coming, than from those who are taking their departure?"

"Yes, madame; for the coming statesmen are armed with instructions to wage a vigorous warfare on the nobility and clergy. They have received no orders, yet, in relation to the king, but we shall soon see. If he will be content with simply retaining executive power, the past may be forgiven —"

"What!" interrupted the queen, "what! The past may be forgiven! It is for the king to forgive, it seems to me."

"Yes, madame, certainly; but they do not view the matter in that light. The new-comers — and you will soon have abundant proof of this fact — unfortunately will not even keep up the hypocritical conventionalities practised by their predecessors. To them — I have this from a deputy named Vergniaud — the king is nothing more or less than a public enemy."

"A public enemy?" repeated the queen, in astonishment.

"Yes, madame, a public enemy; that is to say, he is the voluntary or involuntary representative of all the foreign and domestic enemies of the nation. And, alas! it must be admitted that these new-comers are not entirely in the wrong; though they fancy themselves the discoverers of the fact, when their only merit consists in proclaiming from the housetops what your bitterest foe has heretofore only ventured to say under his breath."

"A public enemy!" repeated Marie Antoinette; "the king the enemy of his people! Ah, Monsieur Barnave, you can never make me believe that, or even make me understand how such a thing could be possible."

"It is the truth, nevertheless, madame. Three days ago the king formally accepted the Constitution, did he not?"

"Yes, what of that?"

"On his return to the palace the king was nearly ill with anger and chagrin, and that same evening he appealed to your brother, the emperor."

"But how can you expect us to endure such humiliations as were imposed upon us?"

"Ah! madame, the enemy, — the inevitable enemy, as you must see yourself; the more so, too, from the fact that, having been educated by Monsieur de la Vauguyon, the head of the Jesuits, the king's heart is at the mercy of the priests, who are the worst foes of the nation. He is likewise the involuntary enemy of the people, because he is necessarily the chief of the anti-revolutionary faction. Even though he does not leave France, his heart is in

Coblentz with the *émigrés*, in the Vendée with the priests, and in Vienna and Prussia with his allies, Leopold and Frederick. The king does nothing reprehensible, madame, I admit that; but though he takes no active part in any of the movements, his name is used with great effect. In the cottages, the schools, and the castles, the royalists are continually talking of the *poor* king, the *good* king, the *saintly* king, until there are beginning to be symptoms of a revolt against the revolution, — a revolt due chiefly to pity.”

“Can it be you who are saying these things to me, Monsieur Barnave? Were you not among the first to pity us?”

“Yes, madame, I pitied you, and I pity you still, most sincerely; but there is this great difference between myself and those of whom I speak, — their pity may lead to your ruin, mine, to your salvation.”

“But has any definite plan of action been decided upon by these new deputies who have come, as you believe, to wage a war of extermination upon us?”

“No, madame, or at least I have heard of only a few vague schemes as yet; such as the suppression of the title of Majesty, and the use of a plain arm-chair to the right of the presiding officer, instead of a throne, at the opening of the Assembly.”

“Do you think this any worse than what Monsieur Thouret did, seating himself because the king was seated?”

“It is certainly a step ahead instead of backward. And what makes it still worse for you, madame, is the fact that Lafayette and Bailly are to be superseded.”

“Oh, I shall not be inconsolable over their loss,” retorted the queen, quickly.

“Then you are very wrong, madame, for both Bailly and Lafayette are warm friends of yours.”

The queen smiled bitterly.

“Yes, friends, madame, and nearly your last friends.

If they have any popularity left, avail yourself of it, but make haste. It is waning fast, like my own."

"You show me the volcano, monsieur, you lead me to the mouth of the crater, and tell me its depth, but you show me no way of escaping it."

Barnave was silent for a moment, then, heaving a deep sigh, he murmured: "Ah, madame, why were you stopped on your way to Montmédy!"

"What, is it possible that you, even you, begin to approve of our Varennes expedition?"

"I did not approve of it at the time, madame; but the situation in which you find yourself to-day is the inevitable result of that journey; and when I see the disastrous consequences of your flight, I deplore its failure."

"So you, Monsieur Barnave, a member of the National Assembly, deputed by that Assembly to bring the king and queen back to Paris, regret that the royal family did not one and all make their escape to a foreign land?"

"Let us come to a full understanding with each other, madame. The person who regrets this is not a member of the National Assembly and the colleague of Pétion and Latour-Maubourg, but only poor Barnave, who is no longer anything except your humble servant, ready and willing to give his life — which is all he has left to give — for you."

"I thank you, monsieur," replied the queen. "The tone in which you make this offer proves you to be the man to keep it; but I trust it will not be necessary for me to ask such a sacrifice of you."

"So much the worse for me, madame," replied Barnave, quietly.

"So much the worse for you?"

"Yes, for I would much rather perish in battle than live on as I shall be forced to live in the wilds of Dauphiny, where I can be of no service to you. The errors of the past have decided your future. You are counting upon foreign aid, but it will either not come at all, or come too late. The

Jacobins will soon be the controlling power both in the Assembly and outside of it. Your friends will be obliged to flee the country to escape persecution. Those who remain will be arrested and imprisoned. I shall be one of these last, for I will not flee. I shall be tried and convicted, beyond a doubt. My death will prove unavailing to you, you may not even hear of it; but even if the news of it should ever reach you, I have been able to accomplish so little that you will forget the time when I really hoped to be of some service to you."

"Monsieur Barnave, I know not what Fate may have in store for the king and myself," said the queen, with dignity; "but this much I do know, that the names of all who have aided us are indelibly inscribed upon our memories, and that no good or ill fortune which may happen to them will be a matter of indifference to us. In the mean time, Monsieur Barnave, can we do anything for you?"

"Much, — at least you personally can. Madame, you can prove to me that I have not been a creature utterly without value in your eyes."

"And in what way can I do that?"

Barnave dropped upon one knee before her. "By giving me your hand to kiss, madame."

A tear mounted to Marie Antoinette's dry eyelids, and she extended to the young man the cold white hand which had thus, at scarcely a year's interval, been touched by the most eloquent lips in the Assembly,—those of Mirabeau and Barnave.

Barnave barely touched it with his lips. It was evident that if he once pressed his lips upon that beautiful marble cold hand, he would not have the power to detach them again.

"Madame," he said, rising, "I lack the assurance and pride to say, 'The monarchy is saved,' but I say, 'Should the monarchy be lost, there is one who will perish with it that will never forget the priceless boon the queen has just

vouchsafed him;'" and, bowing low, he hastily left the room.

Marie Antoinette watched him as he sadly withdrew, and when the door closed upon his retreating form she murmured:—

"Poor squeezed lemon! It did not take long to reduce you to an empty rind!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

WE have endeavoured to describe the tragical events which took place on the Champ de Mars in the afternoon of the 17th of July, 1791; let us now endeavour to describe the scene after the tragedy was over.

A sad sight met the gaze of a young man attired in the uniform of an officer of the National Guards as he entered the Champ de Mars by way of the Rue Grenelle.

The scene, illumined by the rays of a nearly full moon which was sailing along among dense black clouds which entirely concealed it from view from time to time was indeed lugubrious to look upon.

The Champ de Mars looked like a battle-field covered with dead and wounded, among whom the men intrusted with the task of casting the dead into the Seine, and conveying the wounded to the hospital at Gros Caillou, wandered around like ghosts.

The young officer we have referred to paused, and, clasping his hands, exclaimed, with an expression of horror upon his face: —

“Good God! it was even worse than they said!”

Then, after watching the strange work that was going on, he approached two men whom he saw carrying a body in the direction of the river, and said: —

“Citizens, will you be kind enough to tell me what you are going to do with this man?”

“Follow us, and you will see.”

The young officer followed them.

On reaching the wooden bridge, the men swung the body back and forth as they counted, "One, two, three," then, at the word "three," flung the body into the Seine.

"Why, what are you doing, citizens?" asked the young man, in a tone of dismay.

"Clearing the ground, as you see," responded the men, promptly.

"And you have orders to do this?"

"Certainly."

"From whom?"

"From the city government."

"Oh!" murmured the astonished and bewildered young man.

Then, after a moment's silence, as he wended his way back with them, he asked:—

"Have you thrown many bodies into the Seine?"

"Five or six."

"Excuse me, citizens," said the young man, "but I am greatly interested in this matter. Among those five or six bodies was there one of a man probably forty-six or forty-eight years of age, about five feet five inches tall, a stocky, vigorous man, half peasant, half *bourgeois*?"

"Upon my word, we only take notice of one thing," responded one of the men; "that is, whether the persons are alive or dead. If they 're dead, we throw them into the river; if they 're alive, we carry them to the Gros Caillou hospital."

"I ask," remarked the young man, "because I have a good friend who has not returned to his lodgings; and as I know he was here at least a part of the day, I am afraid he may be among the dead or wounded."

"Well, if he was here, it is quite likely he is here still," replied one of the men, roughly shaking a body over which the other was holding a lantern. "If he did n't get home, it is more than likely that he never will."

And again shaking the body lustily, the man called out: "Halloo! I say, are you dead or alive? If you 're not dead, try and answer."

"Oh, this fellow is dead fast enough," replied the other. "He has a bullet-hole clean through his breast."

"Then to the river with him!" responded the other. And the two men lifted the body and again started for the bridge.

"You don't need your lantern to throw this man into the water, citizens," said the young officer, "so have the kindness to lend it to me a minute, and while you are gone I'll look for my friend."

The lantern was relinquished to the young officer, who began his search with great care, and with an expression on his face which indicated that the title of friend bestowed upon the missing man came not from the lips alone, but from the heart.

A dozen or more men, also provided with lanterns, were pursuing the same mournful investigation; and from time to time a name was uttered in a tone loud enough to be distinctly heard all over the field. Sometimes a moan, a groan, or a faint cry responded to the call, but more frequently the only answer was a mournful silence.

After hesitating awhile, as if afraid to make the experiment, the young officer followed the example of the others, and shouted three times, "Monsieur Billot, Monsieur Billot, Monsieur Billot!" but there was no reply.

"He must be dead," murmured the young officer, dashing the tears from his eyes. "Poor Father Billot!"

Just then the two men passed, carrying another body towards the river.

"Eh, I do believe this fellow made a sound!" exclaimed the man who was holding the corpse by the shoulders.

"If we listened to all these fellows there would n't be a dead man among them," laughed the other.

"Citizens," interposed the young officer, "will you let me take a look at the man you're carrying?"

"Certainly," was the prompt reply. And they laid the body down so that the officer could see the man's face more distinctly. The young man held the lantern close to

it and uttered a cry; for in spite of the terrible wound that disfigured the face, the officer thought he recognised the man for whom he was looking. But was he dead or alive?

The head of this man, who was on the way to a watery grave, had been cloven nearly in twain by a sabre stroke. Half the flesh had been cut from the left side of the head, and overhung the cheek, leaving the skull bare. The temporal artery, too, had been severed, so that the entire body of the dead or wounded man was covered with blood.

The left side of the face was unrecognisable; but with a trembling hand the young man held the lantern over the other side, and then exclaimed: "Ah, citizens, it is he! It's the very man I'm looking for! It's Monsieur Billot!"

"You don't say so! Well, he's pretty badly damaged, to say the least, this friend of yours."

"Did n't you say you heard him sigh just now?"

"I thought I did."

"Then do me a favour," said the young officer, drawing a gold piece from his pocket as he spoke.

"What is it?"

"Run to the river and get some water in your hat."

While the man ran to the river-side, his willingness to oblige being greatly increased by the sight of the gold coin, the young officer took his place and supported the wounded man.

In a few minutes the other man was back again.

"Throw some water in his face," said the young officer.

Dipping his hand into his hat, the man sprinkled some water on the wounded man's face.

"He moved! He is n't dead!" cried the officer, who was still holding the wounded man in his arms. "He is n't dead! Oh, my dear Monsieur Billot, how lucky I got here in time!"

"Yes, it was a good thing. A few minutes more, and your friend would have been in the river."

"Sprinkle his face again."

Again the wounded man started, and this time he uttered a faint sigh.

"He's no dead man, certainly!" exclaimed the second bearer.

"Well, what are we to do with him?" asked the other.

"Help me to carry him to Dr. Gilbert's, on the Rue St.-Honoré, and you shall be well paid for your trouble," said the young officer.

"We can't do that."

"And why not?"

"Because we have orders to throw all the dead into the Seine, and take all the wounded to the hospital at Gros Caillou. As this fellow is n't dead and we can't throw him into the river, we've got to take him to the hospital."

"Get him to the hospital as soon as possible, then. Where is it?"

"About three hundred rods off, not far from the Military School."

"Then we have to cross the entire field?"

"Yes, and more."

"Great Heavens! have you a stretcher?"

"One can be found, I guess, if you're willing to pay as well for it as you did for the water," answered one of the men.

"That's only fair," said the officer. "You have n't had anything yet, have you? Well, here's a gold piece for you. Now get me the stretcher."

In ten minutes a stretcher was ready, the wounded man was laid upon it, and the party took up its line of march, headed by the officer, bearing the lantern.

It was terrible that tramp by night over ground soaked with blood, and amid the cold and rigid bodies with which one came in contact at every step, and among wounded men who tried to raise themselves up, only to fall back again, begging for help.

At the end of a quarter of an hour the party reached the doorway of the hospital at Gros Caillou.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE HOSPITAL AT GROS CAILLOU.

IN those days hospitals, especially military hospitals, were not organised with anything like that degree of perfection that characterises them at this present time; so it is not surprising that the utmost confusion prevailed in the hospital at Gros Caillou, and that this confusion greatly interfered with the accomplishment of the necessary surgical work.

One of the chief troubles was a lack of beds. The mattresses of people residing in the neighbouring streets were consequently brought into requisition, and placed on the floors and even in the courtyard, and on each mattress lay a wounded man waiting for attention; but surgeons were as scarce as mattresses, and even more difficult to secure.

The young officer, in whom our readers have of course recognised their friend Ange Pitou, was able, by the judicious expenditure of a few crowns, to secure a mattress, as he had previously secured a stretcher; so Billot was soon gently deposited in the hospital courtyard.

Pitou, anxious to make the best of the situation, had the wounded man placed as near the entrance as possible, so as to intercept the first surgeon that passed in or out. He was strongly tempted to rush through the wards and compel some surgeon to come and help him; but he dared not leave his friend, for fear some one, thinking him dead, might place him on the ground and appropriate the couch.

Pitou had been there an hour, and had appealed energetically, though in vain, to two or three surgeons as they

passed, when he saw a man dressed in black, and accompanied by two or three hospital attendants with lights, making his way from one bed of suffering to another. The nearer this man approached Pitou, the more sure Pitou felt that he knew him; and soon all his doubts ceased, and he called out lustily: "Here, Dr. Gilbert, this way! Here I am! here! this way!"

The surgeon who was indeed Dr. Gilbert, hastened forward at the sound of this familiar voice.

"Ah, it is you, Pitou! Have you seen anything of Billot?" he cried.

"Yes. I've got him right here."

"Is he dead?"

"I hope not, but there's no use trying to disguise the fact that he is very near death."

Gilbert examined the wound carefully. "It is a very serious case," he said gravely; then, turning to the attendants, he added: "I must have a separate room for this man, who is a particular friend of mine."

The attendants consulted together a moment. "There's no room we can give you, except the laundry," they said at last.

"That's the very thing," responded Gilbert. "Take him to the laundry."

They lifted the wounded man as gently as possible; but, in spite of all their precautions, a faint groan escaped him.

"Ah!" murmured Gilbert, "no exclamation of joy ever gave me so much pleasure as that groan. He is alive, and that's the main thing, after all."

As soon as the removal had been effected, Gilbert proceeded to examine carefully and dress the wound.

The temporal artery had been cut, and the great loss of blood that ensued had produced insensibility. The cessation of the pulsations of the heart had checked the hemorrhage, however; for Nature had profited by this cessation to form a clot of blood, which had closed the injured artery.

With admirable skill, Gilbert first tied the artery with a silken thread, then washed the flesh and replaced it upon the skull. The coolness of the water, and possibly, too, the pain the operation caused, made Billot open his eyes and utter a few incoherent words.

"There 's concussion of the brain," said Gilbert.

"But as he is n't dead, you can save him, can't you, Dr. Gilbert?" exclaimed Pitou.

Gilbert smiled sadly.

"I shall do my best, Pitou; but you have one thing to learn, my dear fellow, — that Nature is a much better physician than any of us."

Gilbert now finished dressing the wound. After the hair had been cut off as closely as possible, he brought the two edges of the cut together and fastened them with strips of plaster; then he ordered the attendants to place the injured man in a sitting posture, with his back supported by pillows.

Not until all these matters had been attended to did Gilbert ask Pitou how he happened to be in Paris, and how, being in Paris, he had managed to reach the spot just in time to rescue Billot from a watery grave.

The explanation was very simple. After Catherine's mysterious disappearance and her husband's departure for Paris, Mother Billot had relapsed into a state of apathy, which increased until she had not only ceased to talk altogether, but had actually taken to her bed; and Dr. Raynal now declared that there was only one thing that could arouse her from this deathlike stupor, and that was the sight of her daughter.

So Pitou had offered to go to Paris at once, or rather he started for Paris without saying anything about it to any one. Thanks to the long legs of the gallant captain of the Haramont National Guard, the eighteen leagues between Villers-Cotterets and the capital was only a pleasant walk for him. He left home at four o'clock in the morning; between seven and eight in the evening he reached Paris.

Pitou seemed destined to be always on hand when any great event was happening in Paris. On his first visit, he reached the city just in time to assist in taking the Bastille. The next time, he followed Sebastian to the capital the very day after the royal family had been dragged from Versailles to Paris by the mob. The third time, he came as a delegate to the great Federation of 1790. The fourth time,—this time,—he arrived the very day of the massacre on the Champ de Mars.

The first people he met, after he entered the city, told him what had occurred. Bailly and Lafayette had fired upon the populace, and the populace were cursing them loudly. When Pitou was last in Paris, these men had been worshipped as divinities; now, they were the object of universal execration. Pitou could not understand this; but he did succeed in understanding that there had been fighting and wholesale slaughter on the Champ de Mars in consequence of some petition, and that Gilbert and Billot had both been there.

Pitou hastened to the doctor's lodgings on the Rue St. Honoré. The doctor had returned, but nothing had been seen of Billot. The Champ de Mars, so the servant told him, was thickly strewn with dead and wounded; and possibly Billot, his kind friend and employer, was among them.

The Champ de Mars covered with dead and wounded! Pitou could not imagine such a thing. That same Champ de Mars which he had helped to level, in company with ten thousand comrades, the scene of those brilliant illuminations and joyful songs and gay dances, covered with dead and wounded; and all because the people wished to celebrate the second anniversary of the taking of the Bastille, as they had celebrated the first! Impossible! In one year how could the causes for joy and thankfulness have become the causes for rebellion and massacre?

What was the explanation of this strange revulsion of feeling?

As we have before explained to our readers, — during the preceding year, thanks to the powerful influence of Mirabeau, to the organisation of the new Feuillant Club, to the support of Bailly and Lafayette, and, above all, to the reaction which had followed the return from Varennes, the Court had regained not a little of its former power, and this cruel massacre was the first outward manifestation of that power.

July 17th, 1791, was a fearful retaliation for October 5th and 6th, 1789.

As Gilbert had remarked to the queen, the populace and royalty stood game to game. It remained to be seen who would win the rubber.

Engrossed with these thoughts, though no one of them had the power to retard his rapid strides, our friend Ange Pitou reached the Champ de Mars just in time to prevent Billot from being thrown into the river for dead.

The reader, on the other hand, may recollect that Gilbert, while vainly awaiting the return of the queen, had received a letter which he knew to be from Cagliostro, though it bore no signature, and which contained the following paragraph: —

“Those two consummate idiots who are still derisively called the King and Queen, and whose doom is sealed, — leave them to their fate, Gilbert, and hasten to the hospital at Gros Caillou, where you will find a dying man, — though his case is not so desperate, perhaps, as that of Louis and Marie Antoinette. You may be able to save him; but they cannot be saved, and they may drag you with them in their downfall.”

As soon as Gilbert learned through Madame Campan that the queen had no intention of returning, according to her promise, he left the Tuileries and hastened to the hospital, where he went from one patient to another for a long time without finding any one he knew, until he heard a familiar voice calling him by name. It was Pitou's voice, and the bedside to which it summoned him was that of Billot.

We have described the worthy farmer's condition and his chances for recovery, — chances which would have been slight indeed had the wounded man been under the care of a less skilful physician than Dr. Gilbert.

CHAPTER XXV.

CATHERINE.

OF the two persons whom Dr. Raynal desired to have informed of Mother Billot's precarious state, one, the husband, was lying very near to death. Catherine must, however, be apprised of her mother's condition, as well as her father's, without delay; but where was Catherine? There was only one way to ascertain, and that was by applying to the Comte de Charny.

Pitou had been so kindly received by the countess when he went to take Sebastian to her house in the Rue Coq-Héron that he felt no hesitancy about going there again to inquire as to Catherine's whereabouts, though it was now nearly midnight.

So, leaving Billot to the care of the hospital attendants, Pitou and Dr. Gilbert stepped into the last-named gentleman's carriage and drove to the house on the Rue Coq-Héron.

No light was visible, and the house seemed to be deserted. After ringing for about ten minutes, Pitou was about to try the knocker, when a door opened, — not the house door, but the door of the porter's lodge, — and a querulous voice cried out impatiently: —

“Who 's there?”

“I.”

“And who 's 'I'?”

“Sure enough. I 'm Ange Pitou.”

“I don't know any such person.”

“Ange Pitou, — a captain in the National Guard.”

“Captain,” repeated the porter; “captain?”

"Yes, captain," replied Pitou, emphasising the word.

The porter began to think this nocturnal visitor must be one of Lafayette's aides, at the very least, so he spoke rather more courteously, though he evinced no inclination to admit the functionary.

"What do you want, captain?" he asked.

"I want to see the count."

"He 's not here."

"The countess, then."

"She is n't here either."

"Where are they?"

"They left this morning for Boursonnes."

"The deuce! They must have been the people I passed in that post-chaise near Dammartin!"

"My friend," interposed the doctor, at this juncture, "in the absence of your employers, I wonder if *you* could not give us a little information."

Recognising the voice of a master in those gentle but decided tones, the concierge instantly emerged, night-cap in hand, and stepped to the carriage door to take the gentleman's orders, as servants say.

"What information do you desire, monsieur?" he asked deferentially.

"Do you know a young woman in whom the count and countess take a great deal of interest?"

"Mademoiselle Catherine?"

"Precisely."

"Yes, monsieur. The count and countess have been to see her twice, and have often sent me there to inquire if she needed anything; but though I 'm sure she 's as poor as a church mouse, she always says she does n't want a thing."

"Well, my friend," continued Gilbert, "the poor girl's father was wounded to-day on the Champ de Mars, and her mother is lying at the point of death at Villers-Cotterets. We must inform her. Will you give us her address?"

"Poor soul! God help her! She is unhappy enough already. She lives on the main street in Ville d'Avray. I can't tell you the number, but it is opposite a fountain."

"Thank you, my friend," said Gilbert, slipping a six-franc piece in the porter's hand.

"Well?" said Gilbert, turning to Pitou.

"I'm off for Ville d'Avray."

"Do you know the way?"

"No, but you can tell me."

"You have a heart of gold and muscles of steel, Pitou," said Gilbert, laughing. "But come and get some sleep first. There is no such urgent haste. Billot's condition is serious, but unless something unforeseen occurs, he is not at death's door. As for Mother Billot, she may live ten days or a fortnight."

"But, doctor, when they put her to bed night before last, she could neither speak nor move. No part of her seemed to be alive except her eyes."

"I know what I am talking about, though, Pitou, and I'll vouch for her living ten days or a fortnight longer, so we had better let poor Catherine have one more night of blissful ignorance. A good night's sleep is a great thing for one who is unhappy, Pitou."

Pitou seemed to feel the force of this argument, for he said:—

"Then where shall we go now, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"To my lodgings, and you shall have your old room; and to-morrow morning at six o'clock the horses will be in readiness to take you to Ville d'Avray."

"Is it such a long distance from Paris to Ville d'Avray?" inquired Pitou.

"Only five or six miles," replied Gilbert, thinking of the long walks he used to take in the woods of Louveciennes, Meudon, and Ville d'Avray, with his old teacher, Rousseau.

"Only five or six miles! Then I don't need any horses. I can walk it in an hour."

"And Catherine, — do you think she can walk it in an hour, and the eighteen leagues between Paris and Villers-Cotterets, too?"

"True! Forgive me for being such a fool, Monsieur Gilbert. By the way, how is Sebastian?"

"Remarkably well. You shall see him to-morrow."

"Is he still with Abbé Bérardier?"

"Yes, and he will be glad to see you, Pitou, for he loves you devotedly."

As the doctor uttered these words, the carriage stopped in front of the door of his lodgings on the Rue St.-Honoré.

Pitou slept as he walked, as he ate, and as he fought, — that is to say, with all his might, — but, thanks to his habit of rising early, he was up at five o'clock.

At six, the carriage was ready.

At seven, he was rapping at Catherine's door.

Catherine herself came to open it, and uttered a cry on perceiving Pitou.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "my mother is dead!" And she turned pale and leaned against the wall for support.

"No," said Pitou; "but if you want to see her before she dies, you must make haste, Mademoiselle Catherine."

This brief interchange of words did away with all preliminaries, and brought Catherine face to face with her trouble at once.

"And there is still another misfortune," continued Pitou.

"What?" asked Catherine, in the almost indifferent tone of a person who has nothing more to dread or fear, having already borne all there is to bear of human woe.

"Your father was dangerously wounded yesterday, at the Champ de Mars."

"Ah!" was her only response.

She was evidently much less affected by this piece of news than by the other.

"So I think, and so does Dr. Gilbert," continued Pitou, "that Mademoiselle Catherine had better stop and

see Monsieur Billot at the hospital before starting for Villers-Cotterets."

"And you, Pitou?"

"I? Well, I thought, as you were going to your mother, I ought to stay here and help Monsieur Billot to get well. I always stay with those who have nobody else, you know, Mademoiselle Catherine."

Pitou uttered the words with perfect ingenuousness, not dreaming that the history of his whole life was embodied in them.

Catherine held out her hand to him.

"You have a noble heart, Pitou," she said. "Come and see my poor little Isidore."

She led the way into the house, for this conversation had taken place at the street door. She was more beautiful than ever, poor Catherine, clad in mourning though she was, and this fact made Pitou sigh a second time.

Catherine ushered him into a small bedroom overlooking the garden. In this chamber, which, with a small kitchen and dressing-room, composed Catherine's entire lodgings, stood a bed and a cradle, — the bed for the mother, the cradle for the child. The child was asleep; and Catherine raised a gauze curtain, and stepped aside so that Pitou could look down into the cradle.

"Oh, the beautiful little angel!" exclaimed Pitou, clasping his hands; and, kneeling, he kissed its hand as if the child had indeed been an angel.

Pitou was speedily rewarded. He felt Catherine's hair float across his face, and two soft lips were pressed upon his brow. The mother was returning the kiss given to her child.

"Thank you, my good Pitou," said she. "Since the last kiss he received from his father, no one else has kissed the poor little thing."

"Oh, Mademoiselle Catherine!" murmured Pitou, quite overcome; and yet the kiss was prompted by all that is noblest and holiest in a mother's heart.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

TEN minutes afterwards, Catherine, Pitou, and little Isidore were rolling along the road to Paris in Dr. Gilbert's carriage.

The vehicle stopped in front of the hospital. Catherine alighted, took her child in her arms, and followed Pitou. At the door of the laundry, she paused.

"You say Dr. Gilbert is with my father," she remarked. "Ask him if he thinks I can go in without exciting father too much."

Pitou stepped inside, but returned almost immediately. "The doctor says the shock was so great that your father recognises no one."

Catherine was about to enter the room with little Isidore still in her arms; but Pitou said:—

"Give me the child, mademoiselle." Then, seeing Catherine hesitate a moment, he added: "Yes, give him to me. It will seem more as if you had never been separated from your father."

"You are right," replied Catherine; and, placing her babe in Pitou's arms with more confidence, perhaps, than if he had been her brother, she entered the room, and walked straight to her father's bedside.

Dr. Gilbert was standing near the wounded man, whose condition had undergone little or no change since the evening before. The doctor was moistening the bandages which held the injured parts in place, with a wet sponge; and at the first sensation of coolness, Billot had babbled a few words and rolled his eyes about, but he

speedily relapsed into that condition which physicians call *coma*, and his eyes closed again.

When Catherine reached her father's bedside, she fell upon her knees, and, raising her clasped hands to Heaven, exclaimed, "O God, I call thee to witness that, from the very bottom of my heart, I implore thee to save my father's life."

This was all the daughter could do for the father who had tried to kill her lover.

At the sound of her voice, a slight shudder seemed to pass through the wounded man's entire frame. His breathing became more rapid, and he again opened his eyes, which, after wandering about awhile as if in search of the person from whom this voice proceeded, fixed themselves upon Catherine's face. Then he made a feeble movement with his hand, as if to drive away some frightful apparition, born, perhaps, of the fever which was beginning to rage in his veins.

The girl's eyes met her father's, and with a sort of terror Gilbert saw two flaming glances meet, — flaming glances of hatred instead of affection.

The daughter rose to her feet, and went out as quietly and deliberately as she had come in; but on seeing her babe, she caught him up and pressed him to her bosom with the passionate love of a lioness rather than a woman, exclaiming, "My child! Oh, my child!"

Pitou wished to accompany Catherine to the diligence office, but she declined his offer with the words, "No; as you so nobly said, your place is beside the one who is left alone: so remain here, Pitou."

And when Catherine spoke, Pitou had no choice but to obey.

As Pitou returned to the patient's bedside, the rather heavy tread of the captain of the Haramont Guard seemed to arouse Billot, and he again opened his eyes. This time an expression of kindness dispelled the look of hatred which had overspread his face like a tempestuous cloud at the sight of his daughter.

Catherine wended her way through the Rue St.-Denis to the inn from which the diligence started. The horses were already harnessed, and the postilion in the saddle; for the diligence started at ten o'clock. There was one seat left inside, and Catherine took it.

Eight hours afterwards—about six o'clock in the afternoon, and while it was still daylight—the diligence paused in the Rue Soissons at Villers-Cotterets.

If Isidore had still been alive, and her mother in good health, a feeling of shame would have made Catherine leave the stage before it entered the village, and take a circuitous route homeward, so as to escape notice; but as a widowed mother, she did not even think that she might be exposed to raillery, and so she left the diligence quietly, but fearlessly; for her mourning and her child seemed to her sufficient protection from either insult or contempt.

Besides, even her best friends were hardly likely to recognise Catherine. She was so pale, and had changed so much, that she scarcely looked like the same woman; but the greatest change, after all, was the air of distinction she had unconsciously acquired by intimate association with a highbred gentleman like Isidore.

One person recognised her, however, though she was some distance from her; and this was Aunt Angelica.

Aunt Angelica was standing in front of the town-hall, talking with two or three people about the oath the priests were required to take, and declaring she had heard Abbé Fortier say that he would never take the oath of allegiance to the Jacobins and the Revolution, and that he would rather die a martyr's death than bow his head to the revolutionary oath.

“Good heavens!” she exclaimed, suddenly interrupting herself in the midst of her discourse; “if there is n't that Billot girl and her child getting out of the diligence.”

“What, Catherine?” cried several voices.

“Yes; look at her, sneaking up that lane, so that nobody shall see her.”

But Aunt Angelica was mistaken. Catherine was not trying to escape notice. She was in a hurry to reach her mother, and so walked rapidly, and chose the lane because it was the shortest way to Pisseleu.

Having heard Aunt Angelica's remark, several children started after the girl to see if it was really Catherine; for she had always been a great favourite with the children of the place.

When they overtook her, they called out: "Yes, it is she! It is Mademoiselle Catherine! How do you do, Mademoiselle Catherine? Good-day, Mademoiselle Catherine."

"Good-day, children," she replied. "Is my mother still living?"

"Oh, yes, mademoiselle," they replied. And one child added, "Dr. Raynal says she's good for eight or ten days yet."

"Thank you, children," said Catherine, giving them a few sous; after which she continued on her way.

The children ran back to the square.

"It is she," cried the children; "for she asked about her mother, and see what she gave us."

"Her goods must bring a good price in Paris for her to be able to give money to all the brats that run after her," growled Aunt Angelica.

Aunt Angelica did not like Catherine Billot. Catherine was young and handsome; Aunt Angelica was old and ugly. Catherine was tall and well shaped; Aunt Angelica was short and lame. Besides, it was at Billot's farm that Ange Pitou had found a shelter when his aunt drove him from her house.

It was Billot, too, who had read the Declaration of Human Rights at the Federation Festival, and had come after Abbé Fortier to compel him to say mass at the patriot altar, — sufficient reasons each and every one of them, combined with her natural acerbity of disposition, to make Aunt Angelica hate the Billots in general, and

Catherine in particular; and when Aunt Angelica hated, she hated vigorously, like all bigots.

So she hurried off to tell the news to Mademoiselle Adelaide, Abbé Fortier's niece.

She found the priest enjoying a fine carp, flanked with a dish of scrambled eggs and a dish of spinach.

It was a fast day, and the priest wore a sanctimonious and truly martyr-like expression.

"What is the matter?" he inquired, hearing the two women talking excitedly in the passage. "Are they coming to try and make me perjure myself?"

"Not yet, my dear uncle," said Mademoiselle Adelaide. "It is only Aunt Angelica" (for everybody followed Pitou's example, and called the old maid by this title) — "it is only Aunt Angelica, who has come to tell me a bit of news."

"We live in a time when the very air seems full of scandal," said Abbé Fortier. "What is this new bit of gossip you have to impart, Aunt Angelica?"

So Mademoiselle Adelaide ushered the old maid into the priest's presence.

"Your servitor, monsieur," said Aunt Angelica.

"Servant, you mean," corrected the priest, who had never quite outgrown the habits of a pedagogue.

"I've always heard people say *servitor*," replied Aunt Angelica; "so I was only repeating what I've heard. Excuse me if I've offended you, Monsieur l'Abbé."

"You don't offend me, but Dr. Syntax, Aunt Angelica."

"I'll apologise to him, then, the first time I see him," replied the old woman, humbly.

"Good, Aunt Angelica, good! Won't you take a glass of wine?"

"Thank you, but I never drink wine."

"Then you make a great mistake. Wine is n't forbidden by the Church."

"Oh, it is n't because wine is forbidden that I don't drink it, it's because it costs nine sous a bottle."

"You are as penurious as ever, I see, Aunt Angelica."

“Penurious! Good heavens! how can poor people help being penurious?”

“You talk about being poor, — you, who pay nothing for the privilege of renting out the chairs in church, when there are plenty of people who would gladly give a hundred crowns for the privilege!”

“How could any one afford to pay that much, Monsieur l’ Abbé, when I can only afford to drink water, though I pay nothing for the privilege of renting the chairs?”

“That’s the reason I ask you to take a glass of wine.”

“Take it, by all means, Aunt Angelica,” urged Made-moiselle Adelaide. “My uncle will feel hurt if you refuse.”

“Do you really think so?” asked Aunt Angelica, who was dying to accept the invitation.

“Really.”

“Then just two fingers, if you please, Monsieur l’ Abbé. I should n’t like to hurt your feelings, I’m sure.”

“Here it is,” responded the priest, pouring out a full glass of excellent burgundy. “Drink that, Aunt Angelica; and the next time you count over your crown-pieces, you’ll think you have twice as many as you really have.”

“My crown-pieces! oh, Monsieur l’ Abbé, don’t say such a thing as that — you — a man of God. People will believe you.”

“Drink your wine, Aunt Angelica, drink it!”

Aunt Angelica just moistened her lips with the wine, as if merely to oblige the abbé; then, shutting her eyes tight, she drank one-third the contents of the glass.

“How strong it is!” she exclaimed. “I don’t see how any one can drink wine clear.”

“And I don’t see how anybody can put water in it; but never mind, that does n’t prevent me from betting that you have a snug little fortune hid away.”

“Oh, Monsieur l’ Abbé, don’t say that. I can’t even pay my taxes, which are only three livres, ten sous¹ a

¹ About seventy cents.

year;" and Aunt Angelica swallowed another third of the contents of her glass.

"Yes, I know you say so; but I'm pretty sure that when the time comes for you to render up your soul to God, if your nephew Ange Pitou hunts carefully he'll find enough to buy the whole of the Rue du Pleu hidden away in an old stocking."

"Monsieur l'Abbé, Monsieur l'Abbé, if you say such things you'll get me murdered by some of those brigands who burn down barns and steal the crops; for they'll think I am rich. And what a terrible thing that would be!"

But, in spite of Aunt Angelica's lamentations, the priest noticed that she swallowed the rest of her wine.

"I see you're getting used to the wine, Aunt Angelica," he remarked teasingly.

"It's awfully strong, though," she protested.

Having finished his supper, the abbé said, "Well, what is this new scandal that is troubling Israel?"

"That Billot girl has just arrived in the diligence, with her child."

"Ah, indeed?" responded the priest. "I supposed she had put it in some foundling asylum before this."

"It would have been a good thing; for then the poor little thing wouldn't have had to blush for its mother."

"You seem to regard those institutions in an entirely new light, Aunt Angelica," remarked the abbé. "Well, what brought her here?"

"She came to see her mother, I suppose; for she asked the children if her mother was still living."

"You know that Mother Billot has n't been to confession for a long time, Aunt Angelica," said the priest, with a rather malicious smile.

"But that is not her fault, Monsieur Abbé. She has n't been quite right for three or four months, it seems; but before her daughter gave her so much trouble, she was a very pious, God-fearing woman, who always hired two chairs of me when she came to church, — one to sit on, and the other to put her feet on."

“And how about her husband?” demanded the priest, his eyes gleaming angrily. “How about Citizen Billot, the taker of the Bastille, — how many chairs did he hire?”

“I don’t know; he never came to church,” answered Aunt Angelica, naïvely. “But as for Mother Billot—”

“Well, well,” said the abbé, “we’ll settle her account when the day comes to bury her.”

Then, making the sign of the cross, he said, —

“Give thanks with me, my sisters.”

And the old maids also made the sign of the cross, and devoutly returned thanks with him.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

MEANWHILE Catherine was wending her way homeward. On leaving the lane, she turned to the left into a narrow foot-path through the woods, that led into the main road.

Nearly every object along this road awakened mournful memories in Catherine's mind. Here was the little wooden bridge where Isidore bade her farewell on the day Pitou found her lying unconscious by the roadside. Near the boundary of the farm stood the hollow tree where Isidore had secreted his letters. As she approached nearer the house, she could discern the little window by which Isidore had always entered her room, and where his career would have been brought to an abrupt termination, one night, if the farmer's gun had not missed fire; and, finally, in the distance, she caught sight of the road leading to Boursonnes, which she had so often traversed, and by which Isidore had been wont to come to the farm.

How often at night, leaning against the window, with her eyes fixed upon the highway, had she awaited her lover's coming with breathless expectancy, and felt a great burden lifted from her heart as she saw him approaching in the gloom, always punctual and always faithful!

Now he was dead, but she could press his babe to her heart. What did people mean by prating about her shame and dishonour? Could such a beautiful child be a disgrace or source of humiliation to any mother?

Swiftly and fearlessly she approached the house. A big dog began to bark; but, suddenly recognising his young

mistress, he bounded forward as far as the length of his chain would permit, and stood upon his hind legs, paws in the air, barking joyfully.

Hearing the dog bark so vociferously, a man came to the door to find out what was the matter. "Mademoiselle Catherine!" he exclaimed in astonishment.

"Father Clouis!" cried Catherine.

"Welcome home, my dear young lady," said the old gamekeeper. "The house needs your presence sadly."

"And my poor mother?"

"Is about the same; rather worse than better. The poor dear soul is sinking, I think."

"Where is she?"

"In her own room."

"Alone?"

"Oh, no, no, my dear young lady; I would not allow that! You must excuse me, mademoiselle, if in your absence I have taken the liberty of superintending things a little. The time you spent in my humble cottage made me feel almost as if I were one of the family. I loved you so much, you and poor Monsieur Isidore."

"You have heard?" faltered Catherine.

"Yes, yes, — killed defending the queen, like poor George. Still, mademoiselle, he has left you this beautiful boy; and though you weep for the father, you must smile upon the child —"

"Thank you, Father Clouis," said Catherine, offering the old gamekeeper her hand; "but my mother —"

"She is in her chamber, as I told you, with Madame Clément, the same nurse who took care of you."

"Is she still conscious?"

"Sometimes we think so; but that is generally when some one mentions your name. We aroused her in that way the day before yesterday; but since that time she has given no sign of consciousness. But step in and see her, mademoiselle," added the old gamekeeper, opening the door into Madame Billot's chamber.

Catherine glanced into the room. Her mother was lying on a tall bedstead with green serge hangings. The room was lighted by one of those old-fashioned lamps with three tubes, such as are still seen occasionally in old-fashioned farm-houses. Poor Mother Billot seemed little changed, except that her skin had taken on an ivory-like pallor. She appeared to be asleep.

"Mother! mother!" cried Catherine, giving the baby to the nurse, and throwing herself on her mother's bed.

The invalid opened her eyes, and turned her face towards Catherine. A gleam of intelligence brightened her eyes, and she made some inarticulate sounds which did not attain to the dignity of speech; then she put out her hand as if to confirm the evidence of her failing eyesight and hearing by the sense of touch; but the effort was futile, the movement a failure. Her eyes closed again, her arm rested a dead weight on the head of Catherine,—who was still on her knees by her mother's bedside,—and she relapsed into the state of insensibility from which she had been aroused momentarily, as if by an electric shock, by the sound of her daughter's voice.

The feelings the sight of Catherine had aroused in her father and mother had been diametrically opposite. Father Billot awoke from his stupor to drive Catherine from him. Mother Billot emerged from her torpor to draw Catherine to her.

The arrival of Catherine revolutionised things at the farm. Billot had been expected, but not his daughter. Catherine related the accident which had befallen Billot, and told them that her father was almost as near death in Paris as her mother was in Pisseleu. She re-assumed the authority with which her father had invested her in days gone by, and Father Clouis, liberally rewarded for his valuable services, went back to his burrow, as he styled his hut in the forest.

The next day Dr. Raynal came to the farm; for he was in the habit of paying a visit there every other day,

from a sense of duty rather than from a hope of doing any good. He knew that no human efforts could save or even prolong Mother Billot's life now.

He was delighted to find the daughter there, and forthwith broached a subject he would not have dared to mention to Billot, — that of the sacraments of the Church.

Billot was known to be an enthusiastic disciple of Voltaire; nor was Dr. Raynal a specially devout man; on the contrary, he was not only deeply imbued with the sceptical spirit of the time, but he was a scientific man; and though the age had only arrived at the stage of doubt, science had already reached the stage of vigorous denial. Still, under such circumstances as these the doctor felt it his duty to speak to the family on the subject.

Pious relatives usually profited by this warning to send for a priest. Those who were not religious gave orders that if the priest should present himself, the door was to be closed in his face.

Catherine was naturally devout. She was ignorant of the causes of disagreement between her father and the abbé, or rather she attached very little importance to them; so she sent Madame Clément to the house of Abbé Fortier to ask the priest to come and administer the last sacrament to her mother. Pisseleu, being too small a hamlet for a separate church and curate, was dependent upon Villers-Cotterets. In fact, it was in the cemetery at Villers-Cotterets that the dead of Pisseleu were buried.

An hour afterwards the bell of the viaticum was heard tinkling at the farm-house door. The advent of the Sacred Host was welcomed by Catherine on her knees. But Abbé Fortier had scarcely entered the sick-chamber, and perceived that the person to whom he had been summoned was speechless, sightless, and voiceless, when he declared that he could grant absolution only to such persons as were able to confess; and, despite the most earnest entreaties, he persisted in his refusal, and departed, taking the pyx with him.

Abbé Fortier was a priest of the most bigoted and fanatical type. In Spain he would have been a Saint Dominic; in Mexico, a Valverde. It was useless to appeal to any other priest. Pisseleu was in his parish, and no other ecclesiastic would dare to encroach upon his rights.

Catherine had a very pious and sensitive heart, but she was also very sensible; hence she regarded the Abbé's refusal as only another sorrow she must bear, and comforted herself with the reflection that God would be much more lenient to the dying woman than his minister; so she continued to discharge the duties of a daughter to her mother, and the duties of a mother to her child, dividing her entire time between the child that was just entering life, and the weary soul that was about leaving it.

For eight days and nights she left her mother's bedside only to go to the cradle of her child.

On the eighth night, while she was watching at the invalid's bedside, the door opened, and Pitou came in.

When she saw him, Catherine trembled. For an instant she felt sure that her father was dead; but another glance convinced her that Pitou could not be the bearer of such tidings. The expression of his face, though by no means gay, was too cheerful for that.

He reported Billot as improving. For several days the doctor had felt confident of his patient's recovery; and on the very morning of his — Pitou's — departure, the farmer had been removed from the hospital to Dr. Gilbert's house. As soon as Billot was out of danger, Pitou had announced his intention of returning to Pisseleu; for he no longer felt anxious on Billot's account, but on Catherine's: for Pitou was sure that as soon as the doctor thought it safe to inform the farmer of his wife's condition, Billot would insist upon starting for home, weak as he was. And what if he should find Catherine there?

The unfortunate effect of Catherine's visit to the hospital was still apparent, for the memory of it seemed still to haunt the wounded man; and as his senses slowly

returned, he cast anxious and sullen glances around him, as if expecting to see that hateful vision reappear.

He never once alluded to the subject, however, nor did he ever utter Catherine's name; but Dr. Gilbert was too close an observer not to perceive the truth, so, as soon as Billot became convalescent, he sent Pitou back to the farm with orders to take Catherine away. Pitou would have two or three days to accomplish this, as the doctor did not think it prudent to risk the painful revelation before the expiration of that time.

Pitou told Catherine all this; but Catherine stoutly declared that she could never leave her mother while she lived, not even if her father killed her by the bedside of her dying parent.

Pitou regretted this determination deeply, but dared not oppose it. Consequently, there was nothing for him to do but hold himself in readiness to interpose between the father and daughter if need be.

Two days and two nights passed, during which Mother Billot's life seemed to wane, breath by breath. For ten days she had taken no nourishment, and life had been sustained only by occasionally introducing a spoonful of brandy into her mouth. During the tenth night, just as her breath had apparently forsaken her altogether, she suddenly revived. Her arms and lips moved, and her eyes opened broad and wide.

"Mother! mother!" cried Catherine; and she rushed to the door to fetch her babe.

One might have supposed that Catherine took her mother's very soul with her, for when she returned with little Isidore in her arms the sick woman endeavoured to turn her head in that direction, and there was a look of welcome in her eyes for her daughter. She even extended her arms towards her, and uttered a faint moan.

Catherine dropped upon her knees by the side of the bed with her child still clasped in her arms.

Then a miracle occurred. Mother Billot raised herself

from her pillow, and placed one hand on Catherine's head, and one on the head of her babe. Then, with such a superhuman effort as the son of Cræsus must have made when he broke the bonds of his dumbness in a moment of frightful peril, the dying mother cried, "I bless you, my children."

Then she sank back on her pillow, with arms inert and voice silenced for ever.

She was dead; but her eyes remained open, as if the poor mother, not having seen enough of her daughter while she lived, longed to still gaze upon her from the other side of the grave.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN WHICH ABBÉ FORTIER CARRIES OUT HIS THREAT.

CATHERINE reverently closed her mother's eyes, first with her fingers, and then with her lips.

Madame Clément had long foreseen this supreme moment, and had provided some candles; so, while Catherine carried her weeping child to her own room and soothed him to sleep upon her breast, Madame Clément placed two candles at the head of the bed, crossed the dead woman's hands upon her breast, placed a crucifix between the lifeless fingers, and set a bowl of holy water on a chair, with a sprig of box saved from the last Palm Sunday.

When Catherine returned, there was nothing for her to do but seat herself beside the dead with her prayer-book in her hands.

Meanwhile Pitou had assumed charge of all the funeral arrangements. Not daring to go to Abbé Fortier, with whom he was not on very good terms, he went to the sexton to order a mass for the dead, and to the gravedigger to tell him to dig the grave; then he hastened to Haramont to inform the lieutenants and thirty-one men of the Haramont National Guards that the interment would take place at eleven o'clock the following day.

Mother Billot had never held any official position in her life; but her husband's devotion to the revolutionary cause was well known. It was known, too, that he was lying on a couch of suffering on account of injuries received in the sacred cause of Liberty; so Pitou's invitation to attend the obsequies was equivalent to a command, and each man promised his chief that he would be punctually on hand.

When Pitou returned to the farm that night, he met the undertaker at the door with the coffin on his shoulder. Now Pitou possessed an intuitive delicacy of feeling rarely met with in peasants, or even in people of a much higher order; so he got the undertaker and the coffin into the carriage-house, and entered the house alone, resolved to spare Catherine the mournful sight, if possible.

Catherine was praying at the foot of her mother's bed, and Pitou, after giving her an account of what he had done, urged her to go out and get a little air; but she refused.

"It will be very bad for your little Isidore if you don't go out," insisted Pitou.

"Then you can take him out, and let him get a little fresh air, Monsieur Pitou," she replied.

And Catherine must have had great confidence in Pitou, or she would not have trusted her child to him, even for five minutes.

Pitou went out as if to comply with these instructions, but came back again almost immediately to say:—

"He won't go with me. He's crying."

And, in fact, through the open doors Catherine could hear her child wailing lustily; so she pressed a kiss upon the brow of her dead mother, and left her to go to her boy. Taking him in her arms, she followed Pitou out into the open air; and as soon as her back was turned, the undertaker entered the house with his burden.

Pitou was anxious to keep Catherine out of the way about half an hour; so, as if by the merest chance, he led her down the Boursonnes road; and this highway was so filled with reminiscences that she walked a long distance without saying a single word to Pitou, so absorbed was she in communing with her own heart.

When Pitou thought it was about time for the undertaker's task to be completed, he remarked, "Suppose we return to the farm now, Mademoiselle Catherine?"

She suddenly aroused herself as if from a dream.

“Oh, yes,” she replied. “How kind you are, Pitou.”

And she immediately turned, and began to retrace her steps.

When they reached the house, Madame Clément made a sign to Pitou to indicate that the undertaker's work was satisfactorily concluded. Catherine went to her own room to put little Isidore to bed; and, that duty performed, she was about to resume her watch over her mother's body, when Pitou prevented her by saying, —

“That is not necessary now, Mademoiselle Catherine, for everything has been attended to during our absence. The —”

“And that is the reason you insisted upon my going out. I understand, my kind friend.”

And Catherine rewarded him with a grateful glance, as she added: —

“One last prayer, and I will come away.”

She walked straight into her mother's room, Pitou following only as far as the doorway. The coffin stood in the middle of the room. On beholding it, Catherine paused, and burst into tears; then she knelt, and pressed her forehead, pale with grief and weariness, against the oak coffin.

Catherine prayed on and on. She did not seem able to tear herself from the coffin. The poor girl knew that after Isidore's death she had but two friends left on earth,— her mother and Pitou.

Her mother had blessed her and bidden her farewell for ever. She was now lying there in her coffin, and to-morrow the grave would close over her. Pitou was consequently her sole dependence now, and it was hard to part with her last friend save one, especially when that friend was her mother.

Pitou felt that he must come to Catherine's aid; so he stepped into the room, and, knowing that words would be useless, he placed his hands under Catherine's arms and tried to raise her from her knees.

"One prayer more, Pitou, just one!" she pleaded.

"You will make yourself ill, Mademoiselle Catherine."

"What of that?"

"In that case I shall have to hunt up a nurse for little Isidore."

"You are right, Pitou, you are right," replied the girl. "How good you are, and how much I love you!"

Pitou staggered, and nearly fell backwards. Tears of joy streamed down his cheek, for had not Catherine said that she loved him? Not that Pitou deceived himself in regard to the nature of the love Catherine felt for him, but the mere fact that she loved him at all was everything to him.

Her prayer ended, Catherine kept her promise by rising and leaving the room. Pitou put his arm around her waist to support her, and she walked slowly towards the door, leaning on his shoulder. On the threshold she paused, and, casting a last glance at the coffin, dimly lighted by the two candles, she exclaimed: "Farewell, mother! Once more, and for the last time, farewell!"

At the door of her own room Pitou checked her; and she had learned to understand him so well that she felt sure he had something to say to her.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Don't you think the time has come for you to leave the farm?" stammered Pitou, much embarrassed.

"I shall not leave the farm until my mother leaves it."

And Catherine uttered the words with so much firmness that Pitou saw her resolution was irrevocable.

"And when you leave it," said Pitou, "you know there are two places within a few miles from here where you are sure of a hearty welcome, — the hut of Father Clouis and Pitou's little house."

"Thanks, Pitou," answered Catherine. Then she entered her room without troubling herself any further about Pitou, who was sure to make himself at home anywhere.

The next morning about ten o'clock the friends and neighbours of the deceased began to assemble for the funeral. All the farmers from Boursommes, Noue, Coyolles, Largny, Haramont, and Vivières were there; and the mayor of Villers-Cotterets, the kind-hearted Monsieur de Longpré, was one of the first to arrive.

At half-past ten, the National Guard of Haramont arrived, with drums beating and colours trailing. Not a single man was absent.

Catherine, clad in mourning, with her babe, who was also dressed in black, in her arms, received each person; and no one evinced anything but respect for this mother and babe in the gloom of their twofold bereavement.

By eleven o'clock, more than three hundred people had assembled at the farm-house; but the priest, the bearers, and the other church officials had not arrived.

They waited a quarter of an hour, but nobody came. Pitou went up to the top of the barn, where he could see a long distance down the road leading to Villers-Cotterets; but, though he had excellent eyes, he could see no one approaching.

He came down, and imparted, not only the result of his observations, but his conclusions to Monsieur de Longpré.

Pitou had heard of his aunt's visit to Abbé Fortier, and of that dignitary's refusal to administer the sacrament to Mother Billot; and, understanding the priest's character, he felt satisfied that Fortier had resolved not to lend the sanction of his priestly presence to the obsequies of Madame Billot, the pretext, not the real cause, being a neglect of the confessional on the part of the deceased.

These surmises communicated by Pitou to the mayor, and subsequently to other guests by the mayor, had a most depressing effect. At first every one was silent; but at last somebody said, "Very well, if Abbé Fortier won't say mass, we can easily dispense with it."

The voice was that of Désiré Maniquet, and Désiré Maniquet's atheistical sentiments were well known.

A dead silence followed. The proposal to omit the funeral service for the dead was evidently considered a bold thing, — an indication, in fact, of adherence to the principles of Voltaire and Rousseau.

“Let us proceed to Villers-Cotterets, gentlemen,” said the mayor. “There everything will probably be explained.”

“To Villers-Cotterets!” cried every one.

Pitou made a sign to four of his men. They slipped the barrels of their guns under the coffin and carried it out in that way past Catherine, who was kneeling near the door, and past little Isidore, whom she had placed on his knees beside her.

After the coffin had been taken out, Catherine stooped and kissed the threshold; for she never expected to enter the farm-house again. Then, turning to Pitou as she rose, she said: —

“You will find us in the cottage at Clouis Rock;” and, crossing the garden, she walked rapidly in the direction of Noue.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN WHICH ABBÉ FORTIER DISCOVERS THAT IT IS NOT
ALWAYS EASY TO KEEP ONE'S WORD.

THE long procession was advancing slowly and decorously, when those in the rear suddenly heard a loud call and turned to see what was the matter.

A man was riding after them at full gallop. He was coming from Ivors, that is to say, down the Paris road. Part of his face was covered with a bandage, and he was waving his hat for the people to wait for him.

Pitou turned, and exclaimed: "Why, it's Monsieur Billot! Whew! I should n't like to be in Abbé Fortier's shoes!"

On hearing Billot's name everybody halted. As soon as he reached the head of the procession, the farmer leaped from his horse, threw the bridle on the animal's neck, and said, in tones that were distinctly audible to every one, "Good-day and thank you, fellow-citizens!" Then he took his place directly behind the coffin, in place of Pitou, who had been acting as chief mourner in the husband's absence.

A stable-boy took the horse and rode it back to the farm.

Every one gazed at Billot with a great deal of curiosity. He was a little thinner and much paler than formerly. Part of his forehead and the flesh around his left eye were still black and blue. His set teeth and knitted brows indicated a sullen wrath that was likely to burst forth at any moment.

"Do you know what has happened?" inquired Pitou.

"I know all," replied Billot, grimly.

As soon as Dr. Gilbert told Billot of his wife's condition, the latter hired a cabriolet, in which he travelled as far as Nanteuil. Then, the horse being unable to go any further, Billot, weak as he was, hired a post horse, changed horses again at Levignan, and reached the farmhouse soon after the funeral procession left it. Madame Clément explained the situation to him in a few words, and Billot immediately remounted. When he turned the corner, he could see the procession moving along the road ahead of him, and shouted to it to stop.

After that, it was he who walked at the head of the funeral cortège, with scowling brow, lips ominously compressed, and arms folded upon his breast, and the little company became even more sad and gloomy than before.

On the edge of the village of Villers-Cotterets they found quite a large assemblage awaiting them. These people took their places in the procession; and, by the time it reached the public square, it numbered fully five hundred persons. The church was plainly visible from the square, and, as Pitou had foreseen, it was closed.

In front of the church the procession came to a halt. Billot's complexion had become livid, and the expression of his face was growing more and more threatening. The church and the town-hall stood side by side; and as the man who played the horn during the church services also acted as janitor at the town-hall, and was consequently dependent in a measure upon the mayor as well as the abbé, the mayor called for him and questioned him.

He reported that Abbé Fortier had expressly forbidden every one connected with the church from having anything to do with the burial. The mayor then asked where the keys of the church were. The keys were at the verger's.

"Go and get them," Billot said, turning to Pitou.

Pitou was off like a shot. In a few minutes he returned, with the announcement that the abbé had taken the keys to his house to prevent any possibility of the church being opened.

"We shall have to go there after them," said Désiré Maniquet, a born advocate of violent measures.

"Yes, yes!" shouted two hundred voices.

"That will take too long!" replied Billot. "When death knocks at the door he is not in the habit of being kept waiting."

He glanced about him. Opposite the church, a house was in process of erection. The carpenters were squaring the end of a beam. Billot walked straight up to them, and with a movement of the hand indicated that he wanted the piece of timber, and the workmen stepped aside.

The timber was resting upon some joists. Billot put his arms around the middle of the beam and raised it; but he had counted upon lost strength. The colossus tottered under this enormous weight, and for a moment it seemed as if he would fall. But that was over in an instant. With a terrible smile, Billot recovered his equilibrium, then he advanced, with the beam under his arm, his step slow but firm. He resembled one of those ancient battering rams with which Alexander, Hannibal, and Cæsar were wont to level opposing walls.

With legs stretched wide apart, Billot planted himself in front of the door, and this formidable engine of destruction began its work. The door was of oak, the locks, bolts, and hinges were of massive iron; but at the third blow, bolts, locks, and hinges flew off, and the door was open.

Billot dropped the beam, and four men picked it up and carried it back to its place.

"Now, Monsieur Mayor, have the coffin of my poor wife, who never harmed a living soul, placed in front of the chancel," said Billot. "Pitou, fetch the beadle, the sexton, the choristers, and altar-boys. I will attend to the priest myself."

Several men wished to accompany Billot, but he said, "No, let me go alone. The consequences may prove serious. Every man should bear the responsibility of his own deeds."

So for the second time the revolutionist and the royalist were to find themselves face to face. Every one remembered what had occurred the first time, and most of them anticipated a similar scene; nevertheless, the people remained in their places shaking their heads ominously, but not moving a step.

“He forbade us to follow him,” they remarked to one another.

The door of the priest’s house was as securely closed as the door of the church. Billot glanced around in search of another beam, but saw only a stone post which had been somewhat loosened by mischievous children, and which now trembled in its hole like a loose tooth in its socket. The farmer walked up to this post, shook it violently, and finally tore it from the earth in which it was imbedded; then, lifting it above his head, like another Ajax or Diomed, he stepped back, and hurled the granite block at the door with as much force as a catapult.

The door was shivered into atoms.

Almost simultaneously a window in the second story was raised, and Fortier appeared shouting with all his might to his parishioners for aid; but the flock did not seem to recognise the voice of their shepherd, or else they preferred to let the wolf and the shepherd fight it out between themselves. It took about ten minutes, perhaps, for Billot to break open the three or four doors which still separated him from the abbé; and as the time passed, the priest’s appeals became more and more frantic, and his gestures more and more excited. It was evident that this increasing agitation was due to the increasingly near approach of danger.

Suddenly Billot’s pale face became visible behind the priest, and a hand was laid heavily on his shoulder. The abbé braced himself against the wooden crosspiece which divided the double window. He, too, was noted for his strength, and it would be no easy task to make him let go his hold. But Billot placed his arms around the priest’s

waist, and braced himself firmly on his legs; then, with a sudden wrench that would have uprooted an oak-tree, he jerked his adversary away from the window with such violence that a part of the shattered cross-bar remained in his hands. Then both the farmer and the priest disappeared from sight; but the cries of the abbé could be heard receding farther and farther, like the bellowing of a bull borne away by some fierce mountain lion.

Meanwhile Pitou had gathered the sexton, verger, altar-boys, and choristers together, and compelled them to put on their cassocks and light the candles on the altar.

They were engaged in making these preparations when Billot was seen coming rapidly down the street, dragging the priest after him.

Billot was more than a man. He seemed to have been transformed into one of those indomitable, irresistible forces of nature, such as a torrent or an avalanche, against which nothing except one of the elements could contend successfully.

When they were about a hundred yards from the church, the priest ceased to struggle. He seemed to be completely cowed. Everybody stood aside to let the two men pass. The terrified abbé cast a startled glance at the shattered door, and when he saw those he had forbidden to set foot in the church standing in their several places, book, halberd, or musical instrument in hand, he shook his head as if he at last realised that an irresistible power was making itself felt upon religion itself as well as its ministers. He entered the sacristy and presently emerged in his ecclesiastical robes with the Holy Eucharist in his hands. He ascended the steps of the altar, placed the pyx on the holy table, and turned to utter the first words of the service; but Billot extended his hand with a gesture of command, and cried:—

“Enough, thou unworthy servant of God. I wished to curb thy pride, that was all. I want people to understand that a good woman like my wife can well dispense

with the prayers of a fanatical, despicable creature like thee."

And as a great hubbub resounded through the church after these words, Billot added: "If this be sacrilege, let the penalty fall upon me."

Then, turning to the crowd, which not only filled the church, but the grounds of the neighbouring court-house, he said:—

"To the cemetery, citizens!"

"To the cemetery!" repeated the crowd.

The four bearers again slipped the barrels of their muskets under the coffin, and resumed their journey to the cemetery, Billot leading the way.

The cemetery was situated at the end of a lane about twenty-five rods from Aunt Angelica's cottage. The gate was locked, and, strangely enough, Billot paused before this slight obstacle. Death respected the dead.

At a sign from the farmer, Pitou ran to the house of the gravedigger, who, of course, possessed a key to the cemetery. Five minutes later, Pitou reappeared, not only with the key, but with two shovels; for Fortier had not only refused the dead woman admission to the church, but to consecrated ground as well, for the gravedigger had been ordered not to dig a grave for her. At this fresh proof of the priest's malevolence a threatening murmur rose from the crowd. In fact, the farmer had but to say the word, and the priest would have suffered the martyrdom which he had loudly invoked on that autumn day when he refused to celebrate mass at the patriot altar.

With a gesture of thanks to Pitou, whose intentions he understood, Billot took the key, opened the gate, let the coffin pass in, and then followed it himself, followed, in turn, by the funeral procession which now included nearly every resident of the neighbourhood.

Only the ultra-royalists and bigots remained at home. It is needless to say that Aunt Angelica, who was one of the last-named class, locked her door in horror, inveighing

loudly against this abomination of desolation, and calling down the wrath of Heaven upon her nephew's head.

But all who were endowed with kind hearts and a strong sense of justice, all who were opposed to the substitution of animosity and hatred for mercy and compassion, that is to say, about three-fourths of the population of the town, were present to protest, not against religion, or against God, but against priestly fanaticism.

When they reached the place where the grave was to have been dug, — for the gravedigger had marked the spot before he received orders not to dig it, — Billot put out his hand, and Pitou placed one of the spades in it.

Then, with heads uncovered, Billot and Pitou, surrounded by a crowd of their fellow-citizens, began to dig a grave for the devout and patient creature who would have been astonished, indeed, had any one told her while she was alive what a scandal her death was destined to create.

The task required an hour of arduous toil, but neither man relaxed his efforts for an instant until the grave was completed.

In the mean time, ropes had been provided, and when the grave was completed the coffin was lowered into it by Billot and Pitou. The two men performed this last sad duty so quietly and naturally that not one of the bystanders thought of offering to assist them. Indeed, they would have deemed it a sacrilege to interfere.

As the first clods fell upon the oak coffin, Billot passed his hand over his eyes, and Pitou wiped away his tears with his coat-sleeve. Then they bravely continued the work of filling up the grave.

When the task was ended, Billot threw his shovel aside and held out his arms to Pitou, who threw himself upon the farmer's breast.

"God is my witness," said Billot, "that I embrace in thee all the greatest and purest of human virtues, — charity, devotion, self-abnegation, fraternity, — and that I henceforth devote my life to the triumph of these virtues."

Then, extending his hand over the grave, he added: "God is also my witness that I swear eternal enmity against the king who tried to have me murdered, against the nobles who brought disgrace upon my daughter, and against the priests who refused my wife burial!"

Then turning to the spectators, who were evidently in full sympathy with this threefold imprecation, the farmer said:—

"My brothers, a new Assembly is to be convened in place of the traitors now assembled there. Choose me as your representative in that Assembly, and you shall see how well I keep my oath!"

A cry of unanimous approval greeted this proposal on the part of Billot; and over the grave of his wife, a grim altar, meet indeed for the terrible oath he had just taken, Billot was chosen as a candidate for the new Legislative Assembly. After which, — the farmer having thanked his fellow-citizens for the sympathy they had manifested towards him, — the spectators all wended their way homeward, each bearing a strong spirit of revolutionary propagandism in his heart, — the priests and nobles and kings in their blindness furnishing the most potent weapons for their own destruction.

CHAPTER XXX.

DEPUTY BILLOT.

THE incidents we have just related made a deep impression, not only upon the residents of Villers-Cotterets, but also upon the farmers of the neighbouring townships.

The farmers were a power in political matters, as each one employed from ten to thirty day-labourers, and the result of an election generally depended upon the rural districts; though at that time there were nominally two kinds of suffrage.

Each of these farmers, as he started for home after the funeral, gave Billot a hearty shake of the hand, and assured him he need have no fears; and Billot did go back to the farm in quite a tranquil frame of mind, for he now saw for the first time an effectual way of avenging the wrong the king and the nobility had done him.

Billot only felt, he never reasoned; and his desire for vengeance was as blind as it was intense.

He returned to the farm without making any allusion to Catherine. In fact, he did not give the slightest sign to indicate that he had even heard of her stay at the farm. He had not mentioned her name for over a year. With him, it was as if his daughter had never existed.

This was not the case with our kind-hearted Pitou. Though he had regretted from the very bottom of his heart that Catherine could not love him, when he compared the handsome, accomplished young man she did love with himself, he could not wonder at the failure of his own suit. So Pitou envied Isidore, but felt no ill-will against Catherine; on the contrary, he loved her as devotedly as ever.

When Isidore was killed at Varennes, Pitou felt only the deepest compassion for Catherine. His feelings were exactly contrary to those of Billot; for he did the young nobleman full justice, remembering all that was good and noble and generous even in his rival. As we have seen, the result of all this was not only that Pitou loved Catherine even more in her affliction than at a time when she was joyous and gay, but also, — though one may hardly believe it possible, — that he found himself loving her poor little fatherless child almost as much as he loved Catherine.

We need not be surprised, therefore, that after having taken leave of Billot, like the others, he did not return to the farm-house, but wended his way towards Haramont.

His neighbours had become so accustomed to his frequent disappearances and reappearances that they had ceased to trouble themselves about them. When he went away, they whispered: "General Lafayette has sent for him." That was all.

When he returned, they always asked him how matters were progressing; and, thanks to Dr. Gilbert, Pitou was generally able to give them the very latest and most reliable intelligence; so, finding his predictions were almost invariably fulfilled, they felt the utmost confidence in him as a prophet, as well as a military leader.

Gilbert understood and appreciated Pitou's trustworthy character perfectly. He knew that if a critical moment should ever come he could safely trust his own life or Sebastian's to this true and honest man's fidelity. Whenever Pitou went to Paris, Gilbert always asked him if he needed anything; but though he invariably answered in the negative, this did not prevent Gilbert from handing Pitou several louis, which the latter quietly put in his pocket. These louis constituted quite a fortune to Pitou, added to the special resources and tithes he managed to derive from the Orléans forest; so he rarely reached the end of his pocketful of money before the worthy doctor replenished his store again.

Considering Pitou's feelings towards Catherine and Isidore, it is not surprising that he left Billot as soon as possible, in order to ascertain how the young mother and her child were progressing. Pitou was obliged to pass the cottage of Father Clouis, in going to Haramont; and a short distance from the hut he met the old gamekeeper, who was on his way home with his bag, for this was hare-day.

Father Clouis informed Pitou that Catherine had returned to her former quarters, and that the poor girl had wept bitterly on re-entering the little room where she had become a mother, and where Isidore had given her such strong proofs of his ardent affection.

When Pitou entered the cottage, he found Catherine with her child in her arms, and her cheeks still wet with tears. Dropping on one knee before Catherine, and kissing the infant's tiny hand, Pitou exclaimed: "Ah, Mademoiselle Catherine, don't worry! I am rich, and little Monsieur Isidore shall never want for anything."

With fifteen louis in his pocket, Pitou considered himself rich. Being unusually kind-hearted and generous herself, Catherine was quick to appreciate all that was noble and generous in others.

"Thank you, Pitou," she replied. "I believe you, and it makes me very happy, for you are my only friend now. If you abandon us, we shall be entirely alone in the world; so you will never desert us, will you?"

"Ah, mademoiselle, don't say anything like that to me!" exclaimed Pitou, fairly sobbing.

"I did wrong to say it, very wrong; forgive me," exclaimed Catherine, deeply touched.

"No, on the contrary, you were quite right. I'm a fool to cry like this."

"I feel as if I needed a little fresh air," said Catherine. "Let us take a short walk in the forest; I think it will do me good."

"And me too, for I feel as if I were suffocating."

Catherine placed her sleeping child on the bed; and five

minutes later they were walking under the lofty trees of the forest, — that magnificent temple reared by the hand of God to Nature, his divine and immortal daughter.

This promenade, with Catherine leaning upon his arm, reminded Pitou of the walk, two years and a half before, when he escorted Catherine to the ball, where, to his great dismay, Isidore had danced with her repeatedly.

How many important events had been crowded into this comparatively brief period! Though he was not a great philosopher, like Voltaire or Rousseau, Pitou realised perfectly that he and Catherine were but atoms circling round in the great whirlpool; but however insignificant these atoms may be, they all have their joys and sorrows just as much as noble lords, or princes, or even famous kings and queens.

Turned by the hand of Fate, the millstones crush thrones and crowns into powder as relentlessly as they crush the happiness of an humble individual like Catherine. Note, too, the difference the Revolution had already effected in Pitou's condition. Two and a half years before, he was only a friendless boy, driven out into the world by Aunt Angelica, sheltered by Billot, befriended by Catherine, and sacrificed to Isidore.

But to-day Pitou was quite a power in the land. He wore a sword at his side, and epaulets on his shoulders, and was called captain; while Isidore was lying in his grave, and he, Pitou, had become the protector of Catherine and her child.

“What is your object in fostering the Revolution?” some one once asked Danton.

“To put down those who are on top, and raise those who are in the mire,” was the reply.

Catherine's appreciation of kindness had been greatly increased by the suffering and sorrow she had undergone. In her prosperous days, Pitou had been merely a good-hearted boy, of very little importance in her estimation; now, she did full justice to his many virtues, and saw in

him the very friend she needed. And as she always welcomed him now with outstretched hands and smiling lips, Pitou began to live a life of which he had had no previous conception, even in his happiest dreams.

Meanwhile Billot, though still silent in relation to his daughter, was busily engaged, not only with his harvest, but with arrangements to insure his election to the office of Deputy. There was but one man who could have entered the field against him with any likelihood of success; but Charny was leading a life of seclusion with Andrée in the château at Boursonnes. Absorbed in his love and his unexpected happiness, the count had become so entirely oblivious to the world that he almost believed the world, too, had forgotten him.

As the idea of becoming a candidate never once occurred to Charny, and as there was little or no opposition to Billot in the canton of Villers-Cotterets, the farmer was elected by a large majority.

Once elected, Billot set about collecting as much money as possible. The year had been a prosperous one, and he settled with his tenants, put aside as much seed-grain as he should need, and as much hay, oats, and grain as his cattle were likely to require. He also put aside the requisite amount of money for his labourers. Then he sent for Pitou. Billot was always gloomy and morose now. No one had seen a smile on the farmer's lips since his daughter left him; but to-day, his face was even more grave than usual.

He offered Pitou his hand; but the hand that Pitou gave him in return he retained in both his own. "You're an honest man, Pitou," he said earnestly.

"Good gracious! I hope so, indeed, Monsieur Billot!" responded Pitou, much astonished.

"And I am *sure* of it."

"You're certainly very kind to say so."

"And I have decided, before I leave, to place you in charge of the farm."

“Me? Impossible!”

“And why impossible?”

“Because there are lots of things that require a woman’s oversight on a farm like this.”

“I know that. Pick out a woman who will share the responsibility with you. I won’t even ask her name. When I intend to return, I’ll notify you a week beforehand, so if the woman does n’t want to see me, or I had better not see her, she can take herself out of the way. You will find all the grain needed for sowing in the granary. All the straw, hay, fodder, and oats you will need for the horses and cattle are in the barn; and in this drawer there is all the money that will be required for wages and the support of the household.”

As he spoke, Billot pulled out a drawer filled with money.

“Stop a minute, Monsieur Billot,” cried Pitou. “How much money is there in that drawer?”

“I don’t know,” replied the farmer, closing the drawer. Then, as he locked it and handed Pitou the key, he added:—

“When you need any more, ask me for it.”

Pitou understood how much confidence this implied, and he sprang forward to embrace Billot; but, suddenly realising how audacious such an act would appear in one of his years, he exclaimed: “I beg a thousand pardons, Monsieur Billot.”

“For what, my friend?” asked Billot, touched by this humility. “Because an honest man opens his arms to embrace another honest man? Come, Pitou, come and embrace me.”

Pitou threw himself into the farmer’s arms.

“But if you should happen to need me down there —” he began.

“I won’t forget you. You need n’t be troubled about that.

“It is now two o’clock,” he added. “At five, I start for

Paris. At six, you must be here with the woman you select to assist you."

"In that case, I've no time to lose. Good-bye, dear Monsieur Billot."

"Good-bye, Pitou."

Pitou hurried off. Billot stood at the window and watched him until he was out of sight.

"Why couldn't my daughter Catherine have fallen in love with a fellow like that, instead of with that villain of a nobleman, who leaves her a widow without being married, a mother without being a wife?" he muttered.

It is needless to say that by six o'clock Pitou, Catherine, and little Isidore were re-installed in the farm-house.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE NEW ASSEMBLY.

THE new Legislative Assembly was to convene on October 1, 1791, but Billot, like nearly all the other deputies, arrived in Paris in the latter part of September.

The new Assembly consisted of seven hundred and forty-five members. Among them were four hundred attorneys and solicitors, seventy-two authors, journalists, and poets, and seventy constitutionalist priests; that is, priests who had taken the oath to support the Constitution. The two hundred and three remaining members were either landowners, or farmers like Billot, or men engaged in mechanical pursuits.

The most noteworthy characteristic of these new deputies was their youthfulness, most of them being not more than twenty-six years of age. Nearly all were well educated persons; the majority of them being poets, lawyers, and writers, as we have said before. They were full of energy, too, and possessed plenty of *verve*, and the courage of their convictions; but they were inexperienced, and knew little or nothing about affairs of State. Though they unquestionably possessed plenty of the material from which excellent debaters and fighters are made, they evidently brought with them much of that great, but terrible element we call the *unknown*.

Now the unknown in politics is always a cause for grave anxiety. Condorcet and Brissot excepted, the same question might be asked concerning every one of these men: Who and what is he?

Where were the great or even the lesser lights of the Constitutional Assembly, — the Mirabeaus, the Sieyès, the

Duports, the Baillys, the Robespierres, the Barnaves? All had vanished.

Here and there one saw a gray head; but all the others were representatives of a new and virile France, — a black-haired France. Fine heads these to cut off during a Revolution; and nearly all met with this fate.

Within the kingdom, there were strong symptoms of a civil war; outside, there were rumours of foreign wars. Consequently these young men were not merely deputies, but fighters as well. The Gironde, a department which offered to send all its men between the ages of twenty and fifty to the frontier in case of war, sent a sort of advance guard to the Assembly, in the persons of Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonné, Fonfrède, and Ducos, — a coterie which was soon known as the Girondists; and which subsequently gave its name to the party which, in spite of its many faults, has always received boundless sympathy, on account of its great misfortunes.

The mere sight of these deputies rushing tumultuously to their seats was sufficient indication of the tempests that were to burst forth on June 20th, August 10th, and January 21st.

A part of the benches were no longer known as the Right. In other words, there were no more aristocrats. The entire Assembly was arrayed against two enemies, — the nobility and the priesthood. If these enemies offered any determined resistance, the deputies were instructed by their constituents to overcome this resistance.

As for the king, the deputies were to deal with him as they saw fit. He was an object of general pity, and people hoped he would escape from the evil influence of the queen, the aristocracy, and the clergy. If he sustained them, he must be crushed with them.

Poor monarch! He was no longer to be called King, or Louis XVI., or even his Majesty, but simply the Chief Executive.

The first thing these deputies did on entering the hall

was to look around them. On each side they saw a private gallery.

"For whom are those seats reserved?" demanded several voices.

"For the outgoing deputies," replied the architect.

"Ah, ha, that means a censorial committee," growled Vergniaud. "Is this the legislative hall of the representatives of the nation, or a schoolroom?"

"Let us wait and see how they behave before we turn them out," cried Hérault de Séchelles.

"Usher!" shouted Thuriot, "you can tell those persons as they come in that there is a man in this Assembly who had the governor of the Bastille hurled from his own walls, and that the name of this man is Thuriot."

Eighteen months afterwards this man styled himself: "Tue-roi" (king-killer).

The first act of the new Assembly was to send a deputation to the Tuileries.

The king committed the terrible blunder of receiving the delegation by proxy, — or rather through one of his ministers, who said, "Gentlemen, it is impossible for the king to see you just at this time. Return at three o'clock."

The delegates returned to the Assembly. Seeing them re-enter the hall, the other members were greatly surprised.

"The king is not quite ready to see us, citizens," explained one of the delegates. "We have three hours to wait."

"Good!" cried Couthon, "let us make the best possible use of those three hours. I move that the title of Majesty be suppressed."

This motion was enthusiastically received. The title of Majesty was suppressed by acclamation, without any demand for a more decisive vote.

"What shall the Chief Executive be called?" asked another voice.

"Let him be called the King of the French," answered another voice. "Monsieur Capet ought to be contented with a fine title like that."

Every eye was turned upon the man who dared to call the King of France Monsieur Capet. It was Billot.

"Let it be King of the French," was the almost unanimous cry.

"Look here!" cried Couthon, "we have two hours left. I have another proposition to make to you. I move that we rise when the king comes in, but that we sit down again and put on our hats when he is seated."

There was a frightful hubbub for several minutes. The shouts of approval were so boisterous that they were very naturally mistaken for cries of opposition. At last, when the commotion subsided, it was discovered that everybody approved; so that motion, too, was adopted.

Couthon glanced at the clock. "We have still another hour yet," he said, "so I'll make another motion. I move that there be no throne for the king, but merely an arm-chair."

Loud applause interrupted the speaker.

"Wait, wait," said Couthon, raising his hand. "I have n't finished yet."

Order was instantly restored.

"I move, too, that the king's arm-chair be placed on the President's left hand."

"Take care," called out a voice. "This motion not only abolishes the throne, but gives the king a subordinate position."

"Very well," said Couthon; "then I move that we not only abolish the throne, but give the king a subordinate position."

This motion, too, was received with the wildest applause. The terrible spirit of June 20th and August 10th was apparent in that frenzied hand-clapping.

"Very well, citizens," said Couthon, "the three hours have slipped away. I am much obliged to the King of the French for having kept us waiting. The time has not been wasted, by any means."

The delegation returned to the Tuileries. The king

received them in person this time, but the fatal step had been taken.

"I cannot go to the Assembly for three days, gentlemen," said the king.

The delegates glanced at each other, and then said:—

"That, sire, will be on the fourth."

"Yes, gentlemen, on the fourth," replied the king, turning his back on them.

On the fourth the king said he was not well. He did not go until the seventh.

The absence of the king on the fourth did not prevent the Constitution of 1791 — that is to say the most important achievement of the former Assembly — from being received with due honours by the new legislative body.

It was attended by an escort consisting of a dozen of the oldest members of the Constitutional Assembly, and borne aloft in triumph by Camus the recorder, who mounted the platform and proudly exhibited it to the assemblage.

"Citizens, here are the tables of the law!" he exclaimed, like another Moses.

Then the ceremony of taking the oath began. All the deputies filed by, sullen and cold in manner. Many of them foresaw that these wholly inadequate provisions would not last a year; but they swore to support it, because it was a form that had been imposed upon them. At least three-fourths of those who took the oath had no intention of keeping it.

The initiatory proceedings of the Assembly were soon known throughout the city. "No more titles of majesty! No more thrones! A plain arm-chair at the president's left hand for the king!" All of which was equivalent to saying, "No more kings!"

As usual, men of finance were the first to take alarm. Government bonds depreciated greatly in value. Bankers began to tremble.

On the ninth of October another important change was made. By the terms of the new law there was no longer

to be one commander of the National Guard. On the ninth, Lafayette was to resign his position, and each of the chiefs of the six legions was to act as commander in turn.

The day for the king's visit came.

Despite all the apparent opposition, a visit from royalty was still considered so great an honour that when the king entered, the deputies not only rose and removed their hats, but even greeted the monarch with loud applause. Cries of "Long live the king!" resounded on every side.

But simultaneously, as if the royalists present were resolved to defy the new deputies, some persons in the galleries cried out:—

"Long live his Majesty!"

It was evident that these cries came chiefly from the seats reserved for the members of the former Assembly.

"All right, gentlemen, we'll attend to your case tomorrow," growled Couthon.

The king began his speech, and every one listened with close attention. The address, composed by Duport du Tertre, was a very able production, and was devoted chiefly to urging the necessity of maintaining order and rallying to the defence of a beloved country. It produced an excellent effect.

Pastorel was presiding over the Assembly, and Pastorel was a royalist.

In his speech the king had remarked that he wished to be loved.

"We too, sire," the president replied, "wish to be loved, and by you."

This response elicited general applause.

The king, in his address, seemed to take it for granted that the Revolution was over. At that time the Assembly was apparently of the same opinion. The good impression made upon the Assembly extended through the city. That night the king attended the theatre with his children, and was greeted with thunders of applause. Many wept; and the king, too, though not easily moved, shed tears.

That night the king wrote to all the European powers, announcing his acceptance of the Constitution of 1791. It will be remembered that once before, in a moment of enthusiasm, he had sworn to support this same Constitution, even before it was completed.

The next day Couthon made good his promise to the members of the Constitutional Assembly. He announced that he had a motion to make. Everybody knew the nature of Couthon's motion, so everybody listened eagerly.

"Citizens," said Couthon, "I move that all privileges be abolished in this Assembly, and that consequently all the galleries shall henceforth be open to the public."

This motion was carried unanimously.

The next day the populace invaded the tribunes heretofore reserved for the former deputies, and the ghost of the Constitutional Assembly faded away for ever.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

As we have previously remarked, the new Assembly had been specially instructed to wage a vigorous warfare on the clergy and nobility.

It was a genuine crusade, only the banners bore the motto, "The people so decree," instead of "God so decrees."

On October 9th a report on the religious dissensions in the Vendée was read by Gallois and Gensonne. It was an able document, very liberal in its tone, and consequently made a deep impression.

We shall soon make the acquaintance of the clever and astute politician who prepared nearly all, if not all, of this report.

The Assembly displayed a very laudable spirit of toleration. Fauchet, one of the members, merely asked that the state should cease to pay such priests as avowed their unwillingness to obey the voice of the nation, though pensions might be paid to aged and infirm priests, even though they continued refractory.

Ducos went even farther, and insisted that priests should be left entirely free to take the oath or not, as they pleased.

The kind-hearted constitutionalist bishop, Torne, went farther still, and declared that this very refusal on their part was a proof of their honesty and disinterestedness.

We shall see presently how much the fanatics at Avignon appreciated this forbearance.

Before this discussion was really ended, the question of emigration, or rather refugeism, was taken up by Brissot.

The stand he took was both liberal and humane. He asked that a distinction should be made between those who left their country from a sense of fear, and those who left it on account of political animosity. For the former he asked indulgence, for the latter severity. In his opinion it was not expedient to endeavour to compel citizens to remain in the kingdom; on the contrary, he thought it advisable to leave every door open for their departure. Nor did he advocate the confiscation of estates, even when these estates belonged to avowed enemies of progressive principles. He only demanded that no money should be paid to persons who had taken up arms against France.

Indeed, it was a remarkable fact that France continued to pay foreigners for the assistance rendered to Condé, Lambesc, and Charles de Lorraine.

We shall soon see how much these refugees deserved this leniency.

Just as Fauchet concluded his speech, important news was received from Avignon. As Brissot concluded his speech, equally important intelligence was received from various European countries. Then the lurid light of a great conflagration reddened the western horizon. This was the news from the West Indies.

Let us begin with the dissensions in Avignon, and briefly relate the history of this second Rome.

Benedict XI. died in 1304 in a mysterious manner. Rumour said he had been poisoned by some figs he had eaten. Philip IV., also known as Philip The Fair, was king of France at the time.

Not many years before, when Boniface VIII. was Pope, Philip the Fair had grossly insulted him through Prince Colonna, who was the friend and ally of France; and in retaliation, Boniface had excommunicated Philip. Now that a new Pope was to be chosen, Philip the Fair kept his eye fixed upon Perugia, where the electoral college was to convene.

For a long time Philip had been very anxious to take

the pontificate away from Rome and establish it in France. One day a messenger arrived at Philip's court, covered with dust and almost speechless from fatigue. He came to tell the king that the French and anti-French factions were so equally balanced in the electoral conclave that no decision could be reached by ballot, and that there was talk of convening another electoral college in some other city.

This suggestion did not please the Perugians, who were anxious for the election to take place in their town; so they resorted to the ingenious device of stationing a guard around the building, so that no food or drink could be conveyed to the cardinals who composed the conclave. The cardinals protested vehemently.

"Elect a Pope, and you shall then have all you want to eat and drink," responded the Perugians.

The cardinals held out twenty-four hours. At the end of that time they decided upon this plan. The anti-French faction was to select three cardinals, and from these three candidates the French party was to choose a Pope.

The anti-French party selected three openly avowed enemies of Philip the Fair; but one of them was Bertrand de Got, Archbishop of Bordeaux, who was known to be even more friendly to his own interests than he was hostile to Philip the Fair.

There was no time to lose, Bertrand de Got must be secured immediately; so Philip despatched a messenger requesting the archbishop to meet the king in the forest of Andelys.

To quiet the archbishop's suspicions, perhaps, the interview began with the celebration of mass. When the moment came for the elevation of the Host, the king and prelate took an oath of secrecy. Then the candles were extinguished, and all the other participants withdrew, leaving the monarch and the archbishop alone together. Who told Villani what we are about to relate? Satan, perhaps, who certainly must have been present at the interview.

"I can make you Pope if I choose," said Philip the Fair; "and that is why I sought this conference."

"What proof can you furnish of the truth of your assertion?"

"This," replied Philip, exhibiting a letter from the cardinals of his own party, in which, instead of announcing their own preference, they asked which of the three candidates the king desired them to vote for.

"What must I do to be elected Pope?" inquired the Gascon, overcome with joy, and throwing himself at Philip's feet.

"Swear to grant me the six favours I shall ask of you."

"Speak, sire," replied Bertrand de Got. "I am your subject, and it is my duty to obey you."

The king lifted him up, kissed him on the lips, and said:—

"The six special favours I ask of you are as follows."

Bertrand listened with all his ears, for he feared, not that the king would demand anything that would endanger his—Bertrand's—salvation, but something it was not in his power to grant.

"The first," said Philip, "is that you admit me into the Church again, and that my offence against Boniface VIII. at Anagni be forgiven."

"Granted," answered Bertrand de Got, promptly.

"Secondly, that the sacred communion be again administered to me and my family."

"Agreed," responded Bertrand, surprised that such trivial rewards should be exacted of him in return for so superb a gift as the papal tiara. Still, there were four other demands yet to come.

"Third, the tithes of the clergy in my kingdom must be given to the Crown, for the next five years, to defray the cost of the war with Flanders."

"Granted."

"The fourth favour is that the bull issued by Boniface, and called *Ausculta fili*, shall be annulled."

“Granted! granted!”

“The fifth is that Marco Jacopo, Pietro di Colonna, and a few other particular friends of mine shall be made cardinals.”

“Granted! granted! granted!”

Then, as Philip said nothing, the archbishop asked anxiously:—

“And what is the sixth favour, your Majesty?”

“The sixth I shall reserve for another time and place; for it is something of great importance, and must also be kept a profound secret.”

“Important and secret?” repeated Bertrand.

“So much so that I want you to swear it in advance on the crucifix,” replied the king, drawing one from his breast, and presenting it to the archbishop.

The latter did not hesitate an instant. This was the last ditch to be crossed. Once over it, he would be Pope.

So he placed his hand on the image of the Saviour, and said in a firm voice, “I swear.”

“It is well,” said the king. “Now, in what city of my kingdom do you wish to be crowned?”

“In Lyons.”

“Then come with me. You are Pope, under the title of Clement V.”

Clement V. followed Philip the Fair, but he felt a little uneasy about the sixth demand his lord and master was holding in reserve; but when the demand was made, he considered it a very trivial matter, and did not make the slightest objection to granting it. This favour was the abolition of the Order of Knights Templar.

Doubtless all this was not quite after God’s own heart, for He manifested His dissatisfaction in a most decided way.

As the procession passed a wall crowded with spectators, on leaving the church after the new Pope’s coronation, the wall gave way, injuring the king, killing the Duke of Brittany, and knocking the Pope down. His triple crown

fell off, and this symbol of papal supremacy rolled in the dirt.

A week later, at a banquet given by the new pontiff, some of his servants got to quarrelling with the attendants of some of the cardinals. The Pope's brother tried to separate them, and was killed.

These were bad omens, and to these bad omens was added a bad example. The Pope fleeced the Church, but a woman fleeced the Pope. This woman was the beautiful Brunessande, who cost Christendom far more than the conquest of the Holy Land had done, if we can believe the chroniclers of the day.

Meanwhile the Pope made his promises good one by one. The pontiff Philip had created was a pontiff after Philip's own heart, — a sort of hen with golden eggs, which the monarch compelled to lay both morning and night by threatening to cut her open if she did not meet his requirements.

Every day, like Shylock in the "Merchant of Venice," he exacted a pound of flesh from his debtor, according to the bond.

Boniface VIII. was declared a heretic and a false Pope, and King Philip was relieved from the ban of excommunication. The clerical tithes were paid over to the Crown for five years. Twelve devoted adherents of Philip the Fair were made cardinals. The Order of Knights Templar was abolished, and the members thrown into prison.

These things having been satisfactorily accomplished, on the first of May, 1308, Albert of Austria died, and Philip the Fair conceived the idea of having his brother, Charles of Valois, elected Emperor, and it was Clement V. who was expected to bring this about; for the bondage of the pontiff continued. Bertrand de Got's wretched soul, saddled and bridled, was being ridden straight to perdition by the king of France.

But at last he mustered up courage to throw his dread rider; for though he wrote urging the claims of Charles of

Valois to the imperial crown, he did everything he could in secret to circumvent him. He fully realised the necessity of getting out of France as soon as possible, feeling that his life was in all the more danger in Philip's territory from the fact that the election of the twelve new cardinals placed the election of the next Pope entirely in Philip's hands. Clement V. remembered the figs eaten by Boniface VIII.

He was at Poitiers, and he managed to make his escape in the night and reach Avignon. To explain exactly what Avignon was, is no easy matter. It was France, and yet it was not France. It was in France, and yet not of it. It was a sort of frontier, a neutral realm, a city of refuge. It was an ancient principality, a republic like San Marino, only it was ruled by two kings, — the King of Naples as Count of Provence, and the King of France as Count of Toulouse. Each of these rulers exercised control over one half of Avignon; yet neither ruler could arrest a fugitive on soil controlled by the other.

Clement V. naturally took refuge in the territory belonging to the King of Naples; but in escaping from the clutches of Philip the Fair, he did not escape the curse of the Grand Master of Templars.

When Jacques de Molay ascended the funeral pyre erected for him in Paris, he adjured his two murderers, Philip the Fair and Bertrand, to meet him before the judgment seat within a year.

Clement was the first to obey the summons. One night he dreamed he saw his palace in flames; and "after that," his biographer states, "his spirits became depressed, and he did not last very long."

Seven months later it was Philip's turn. What was the manner of his death?

There are two conflicting accounts, but both make it appear like the work of God's avenging hand.

The Chronicle, translated by Sauvage, states that he died in the chase.

“The king saw a deer coming towards him, and drew his sword, at the same time pricking his horse with the spur; but instead of striking the deer, as he intended, he was carried by his steed straight against a tree with such violence that he fell to the earth, mortally wounded in the heart, and was straightway taken to Corbeil.”

On the other hand, Guillaume de Nangis thus describes the death of the conqueror of Mons en Puelle:—

“Philip of France had been long afflicted with a malady whose cause, unknown to his physicians, was a source of bewilderment and perplexity to them and to many others, though there was nothing to indicate the near approach of death.

“At last, at his own request, he was transported to Fontainebleau, his birthplace, where, after receiving the holy sacrament with great fervour and reverence, he cheerfully surrendered his soul to his Maker on the eve of the Feast of St. Andrew, and in the thirtieth year of his reign.”

But it was not until Dante's time that a fitting death was found for this man. According to that poet, Philip was disembowelled by a wild boar:—

“He perished by a boar's tusk, this robber we have seen making counterfeit money on the banks of the Seine.”

The Popes who subsequently resided at Avignon—viz., John XXII., Benedict XII., and Clement VI.—were all anxious to purchase Avignon, and at last an opportunity presented itself.

A young girl in her minority, Jeanne of Naples, did not exactly sell Avignon to the pontificate, but relinquished it in return for the papal absolution granted to her lovers for a murder they had committed.

When she attained her majority, she endeavored to reclaim the territory; but Clement VI. held fast to it, and with such success that when Gregory XI. restored the seat of the Holy See to Rome, Avignon was still governed by a papal legate.

This was the condition of affairs in 1791, when the events occurred which render it necessary for us to make this long digression. As at the time when Avignon was divided between the King of Naples as Count of Provence and the King of France as Count of Toulouse, so in 1791 there were two Avignons in Avignon, — the priestly Avignon and the commercial Avignon.

In the priestly Avignon there were one hundred churches, two hundred cloisters, and a papal palace; the commercial Avignon had its river, the Rhone, many silk factories, and its two great highways, one running east and west from Nîmes to Turin, the other running north and south from Lyons to Marseilles. There were also two kinds of French people in this unfortunate town, — the king's French people and the Pope's French people. The French Frenchmen — that is to say, the tradespeople and mechanics — had to devote their entire attention to business, and work hard to maintain themselves and their families. The Italian French — that is to say, the ecclesiastical element — possessed all the wealth and power. There were bishops, archbishops, and cardinals, — audacious, elegant, immoral men, who lorded it over the women of the lower classes, who knelt to kiss their white hands as they passed.

Would you see a type of this kind of priest? Take the handsome Abbé Maury. He was a Franco-Italian of this class, if there ever was one. He was the son of a shoemaker; but he was as much of an aristocrat as Lauzun, as haughty as Clermont-Tonnerre, and as insolent as any lackey.

As a general thing, children love the other children who are growing up around them. It is natural for them to do this, at least until their prejudices and passions are developed, — that is to say, until they become adults; but in Avignon, on the contrary, the children seemed to be born with hatred in their souls.

On September 14, 1791, a royal decree united, or rather reunited, Avignon and the entire county of Venaisin to

the kingdom of France. During the previous year, Avignon had been sometimes in the hands of the French party, and sometimes in the hands of the anti-French party.

In 1790 the tempest burst forth. One night the papists amused themselves by hanging an effigy adorned with red, white, and blue,—the colours of the Revolutionists. All Avignon was in the wildest commotion the next morning, and the patriots were resolved to be avenged. Four papists who were suspected of having a hand in the affair were dragged from their homes and hanged in the same place where the effigy had dangled.

The French party had for its leaders Duprat and Mainvielle, two young men, and an older man named Lescuyer.

Lescuyer was a true Frenchman in every sense of the word. He was a native of Picardy, and an ardent though thoughtful man. These three men raised a small force, and started on an expedition against Carpentras, — an expedition which proved a failure, as a storm of rain and sleet scattered their forces, as the tempest scattered the Invincible Armada which Philip II. of Spain sent against England.

Who caused this miraculous storm? The Virgin, of course.

But Duprat, Mainvielle, and Lescuyer so strongly suspected a Catalan named Patus, whom they had made a general, of having aided the Madonna in her efforts that they gave him most of the credit for the so-called miracle. In Avignon treachery is promptly punished; the traitor is put to death.

Patus was killed.

The army of the French party consisted for the most part of peasants, labourers, and deserters. They looked about in search of a man of the people to command these men of the people, and believed they had found the person they needed in one Mathieu Jouve, who preferred to be called Jourdan. He was born in St. Just, near the town of Puy in Velay, and had been first a muleteer, then a soldier, and subsequently a saloon-keeper in Paris.

He boasted of the number of murders and of crimes that he had committed. He displayed a huge sabre, with which he declared that he had cut off the head of the governor of the Bastille the year before, as well as the heads of two of the royal bodyguard at Versailles on the sixth of October.

Half in mockery, half in fear, the people added the surname of Headsman to the name of Jourdan, which he claimed. Duprat, Mainvielle, Lescuyer, and their general, Jourdan, the Headsman, retained control of the city for some time; but finally a conspiracy was formed against them, — a far-reaching and cunning conspiracy, like all priestly conspiracies. Religious fanaticism must be aroused, to insure success. The wife of a French patriot gave birth to an infant without arms. It was rumoured that the father had broken off the arm of a silver angel he was stealing from a church; and this armless child was, consequently, nothing more or less than a token of the just wrath of Heaven. The father was obliged to flee, or the people would have cut him to pieces, without even stopping to ask what church the angel had been stolen from.

It was the Madonna that protected the royalists everywhere, whether they were the Chouans — as they styled themselves — in Brittany, or the papists in Avignon.

In 1789 the Virgin in a church on the Rue du Bac began to weep.

In 1790 she appeared behind an old oak-tree in a thicket in the Vendée.

In 1791 she scattered the little army of Duprat and Mainvielle by hurling sleet in their faces.

And lastly, in the church of the Cordeliers, she began to blush — with shame, doubtless — at the indifference of the people of Avignon.

Public excitement had been raised to a high pitch by these miracles, when a report of an entirely different character was circulated through the city.

A large chest had been taken out of the town. The

next day it was not one chest, but six. By the day following it was reported that eighteen chests had been carried off.

What did these chests contain? The pledges belonging in the Mont-de-Piété, or government pawnshop. A porter betrayed the secret that the French party intended to leave Avignon, and had planned to take all this valuable property with them.

This news excited a frightful tempest of wrath; for everybody — outside of the ecclesiastical party — was so poor in Avignon that almost every family had some article on pledge in the great pawnshop. However small the amount at stake, each person considered himself ruined. The rich are ruined by the loss of a million; the poor, by the loss of a few rags. Everything is comparative.

This outbreak occurred on the 16th of October, 1791. As it was a Sunday morning, the peasants from the surrounding country had come to the city to attend mass. In those days everybody went armed, so all were ready for a fight. The moment was well chosen.

The game, moreover, had been so cleverly played that it was no longer merely a quarrel between the French and anti-French factions. Public indignation was aroused against a pack of infamous robbers, — robbers guilty of the unpardonable crime of stealing from the poor. The mob rushed to the Cordeliers' church, and demanded that the municipal officers render an account through their agent, Lescuyer.

Why did the wrath of the populace vent itself upon Lescuyer? Nobody knows. But when a life is to be sacrificed, the selection always seems due to the merest chance.

Lescuyer was dragged into the church. He had been seeking a refuge at the town-hall, when he was recognised and arrested, — no, not arrested, but driven to the church with cuffs and kicks and blows.

Once inside the edifice, the unfortunate man, pale, but nevertheless calm and collected, mounted a chair and

endeavoured to justify himself. One would suppose he had but to say, "Open the storehouse, and you will see that all the articles we are accused of having taken away are still there."

On the contrary, he began by saying:—

"My brethren, I consider the Revolution necessary, and have consequently done everything in my power to aid it—"

But he was not allowed to proceed any further. That terrible *zou-zou*—that famous Avignon cry, heard in every outbreak, something between the roar of a tiger and the hiss of a serpent—interrupted him. A man sprang up behind him and knocked him down into the crowd. He was seized, and dragged to the altar. It was there the Revolutionist must be butchered, in order that the sacrifice might be acceptable to the Madonna, in whose name all this was done. In the chancel he escaped from the hands of the assassins, and took refuge in one of the stalls.

Unexpected aid afforded him a short respite. A Breton gentleman who was on his way to Marseilles, and who happened to enter the church, was seized with compassion for the poor victim. With all the courage and audacity of a true Breton, he endeavoured to protect Lescuyer. Two or three times he dashed aside the knives and clubs raised to strike Lescuyer, and called out, "Gentlemen, desist, in the name of the law! in the name of honour! in the name of humanity!"

The knives and clubs were then turned upon the Breton himself; nevertheless, he still shielded poor Lescuyer with his body, and shouted, "Desist, gentlemen; in the name of humanity, desist!"

At last the mob, tired of being kept from its prey so long, seized the gentleman, with the intention of hanging him first; but some men rescued the stranger and shouted, "Let us finish Lescuyer first. We can attend to this man afterwards!"

The rabble seemed impressed by this reasoning, and let

the Breton go, after which his defenders compelled him to flee. This brave Breton's name was Monsieur de Rosély.

In the midst of this tumult, Lescuyer caught sight of a small door behind the altar. If he could reach this door, he might make his escape, after all. He darted towards it, at a moment when everybody supposed him overwhelmed with terror.

This unexpected movement on his part took everybody so by surprise that he almost reached the door; but at the very foot of the altar a man dealt him such a terrible blow with a club that the club was broken in two. Lescuyer fell stunned, fell just where they wanted him to fall, — at the foot of the altar.

Then the women, as if to punish the lips which had uttered those blasphemous cheers for Liberty, cut his lips into shreds, and the men stoned him, and danced on his body.

With his bleeding lips Lescuyer cried:—

“Have mercy, my brothers! Have mercy, my sisters! In the name of humanity, let me die!”

But this was asking too much; for his torturers were resolved he should live on in agony.

This lasted until evening. For five hours the mangled victim lay there in torture at the foot of the altar.

This was the news that reached the Legislative Assembly, as if in answer to Fauchet's philanthropic speech.

It is true that very different news came the next day, however.

Duprat and Jourdan were notified; but for some time they could devise no way of assembling their scattered forces. At last the idea of sounding an alarm on the famous silver bell which is rung only on two great occasions, — the consecration of a Pope, and his death, — occurred to them.

It gave forth a strange, mysterious sound, rarely heard. This sound produced two very different effects: it froze the hearts of the papists; it imparted courage to the hearts of the revolutionists.

At the sound of the bell the country people who were in the city fled to their homes. By means of it, Jourdan was able to get about three hundred of his men together. He then took possession of the gates of the city, and left one hundred and fifty men to guard them. With the one hundred and fifty men remaining, he marched to the scene of the disturbance. He had two pieces of artillery, and he brought these to bear upon the crowd, firing and killing at random.

Then he entered the church.

It was deserted; Lescuyer was still groaning at the feet of the Madonna who had wrought so many miracles, but who had not deigned to stretch out her divine hand to rescue this unfortunate man. It seemed as if he could not die. That bleeding mass of flesh clung to life with frightful tenacity.

As they carried him through the streets, people all along the route closed their windows, shouting:—

“I was not at the Cordelier’s church.”

Jourdan with his handful of men could have destroyed all Avignon with its thirty thousand inhabitants, so great was the terror that prevailed.

They did, on a small scale, what Marat and Panis did in Paris on a large scale on the 2d of September, 1792.

Presently the reader will see why we say Marat and Panis instead of Marat and Danton.

Jourdan and his men drove more than a hundred unfortunates into the pontifical *oubliettes* in the Glacier Tower, the Trouillas Tower, as it is called down there.

This was the news that reached Paris on the following day, and caused Lescuyer’s death to be forgotten in the horrors of such an awful revenge.

As for the *émigrés* whom Brissot had defended so generously, let us see how they were employing themselves in foreign lands.

They had reconciled Prussia with Austria, and converted these born enemies into friends.

They persuaded Russia to forbid the French ambassador to show himself in the streets of St. Petersburg, and to send a minister to the refugees at Coblenz.

They compelled Berne to punish an old Swiss for singing the *Ça ira*.

They persuaded Geneva, the birthplace of Rousseau, who had taken such an active part in bringing about the Revolution, to turn its cannon upon us.

They persuaded the Bishop of Liège to refuse to receive the French ambassador.

All this was the work of the royalist *émigrés*; but the different foreign governments did many things to injure France of their own accord.

Russia and Sweden returned to Louis XVI., with its seal unbroken, the despatch in which he announced his formal acceptance of the Constitution.

Spain, too, refused to receive it, and delivered into the hands of the Inquisition a French Revolutionist, who escaped a death of frightful torture only by committing suicide.

Venice threw into St. Mark's Square at night a man strangled by order of the Council of Ten, with this scroll upon his breast:—

“Strangled as a Freemason.”

The Emperor of Germany and the King of Prussia responded to the French monarch's notification, but they responded with a threat.

We trust this may serve as a warning as to the necessity of preventing the renewal of a state of things which leads to such deplorable results.

In the Vendée a fierce civil war was raging; for the Vendéans, devoted adherents of the old *régime*, had taken up arms against the revolutionary government, and were ably seconded in their resistance by the Chouans, who were smugglers or royalists as best served their purpose.

Almost simultaneously from an island on the opposite side of the Atlantic came the despairing shrieks of a people that were being ruthlessly slaughtered; for the San Domingo negroes were taking a bloody revenge upon their masters.

How had this state of things been brought about?

The new Constitution had promised freedom to the negroes. Ogé, a young mulatto, re-crossed the seas, taking a copy of the emancipation decree with him. Although the official notice of this decree had not yet been sent to the West Indies, Ogé, in his haste for freedom, insisted that the governor proclaim liberty to the oppressed without delay.

The governor ordered Ogé's arrest, and Ogé sought a refuge in that part of the island belonging to Spain.

The Spanish authorities — we know how Spain felt towards the Revolution — the Spanish authorities surrendered him, and he was broken alive on the wheel.

A reign of terror followed. The whites fearing that Ogé had numerous accomplices on the island, the planters constituted themselves judges, and executions followed thick and fast.

One night sixty thousand negroes rose in open revolt. The whites were awakened by an immense conflagration sweeping over their plantations. A week later the fire was quenched in blood.

France, poor salamander, thus encircled with fire, what will she do?

We shall see.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WAR.

IN his eloquent and forcible speech upon the *émigrés*, Brissot had clearly demonstrated the intentions of the various European sovereigns, as well as the fate they were holding in reserve for the French Revolution.

After depicting the attitude of these monarchs,—some of whom were already standing sword in hand, flinging their banners of hatred to the breeze, some of whom were hiding their faces in a mantle of hypocrisy until they felt justified in casting it aside,—Brissot exclaimed:—

“Well, so be it! We not only accept the challenge of monarchical Europe, but we anticipate it. Do not let us wait until we are attacked. Let us make the attack ourselves!”

Deafening applause greeted these words; for they expressed the sentiments of thirty millions of people, who had not yet spoken their minds plainly, perhaps, but who were none the less fully agreed on this subject. And when these words met with such unanimous assent, France was not only able to make the attack, but to conquer. The various details alone remained to be considered.

Our readers have probably discovered before now that this is a historical work, rather than a romance; and as we shall probably never recur again to this famous epoch, we ought to briefly explain the events of the epoch, though we must pass over the minor occurrences as rapidly as possible, in order to reach those in which the chief personages in our story are specially interested.

The news of the events in the Vendée, of the massacre at Avignon, and of the insults from the different European

powers, struck the Legislative Assembly like so many thunderbolts.

On the 20th of October, Brissot merely advocated a slight tax on the property of refugees; but on the 25th the aspect of affairs had undergone such a decided change that Condorcet urged the confiscation of their estates, as well as the exaction of the civil oath. Think of requiring such an oath of men living outside the limits of France, and in arms against her!

This debate brought prominently to the front two new deputies, one of whom was destined to become the Mirabeau of this new Assembly, the other its Barnave. These two men were Vergniaud and Isnard.

A native of Limoges, Vergniaud was mild, tolerant, and affectionate, rather than impassioned. He had held several important positions at Bordeaux. His speeches were much less acrid and powerful than Mirabeau's; but, though rather overweighted with mythological allusions, they were much less prolix, and indicated a less partisan spirit than Barnave's.

One of the strongest characteristics of his eloquence was the humane tone that pervaded his every utterance. In the most heated debates only words of toleration and compassion were heard from his lips. The leader of a boisterous, contentious party, he was always more than equal to the situation. His enemies called him undecided, and even indolent, and asked where his mind was, as it seemed to be ever absent. They were right, for his thoughts and his heart were ever with the beautiful, the good, and the charming Candeille.

Isnard was the direct opposite of Vergniaud. Born at Grasse, he had the rash and choleric temperament of the Mistral, which in the same breath uproots the rocks and caresses the roses.

His voice, never heard before, burst upon the Assembly like one of those tremendous thunder-claps that herald the first storms of summer; and the most indifferent among

his auditors trembled like Samuel when he heard the voice of Jehovah, and like him was ready to exclaim, —

“Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.”

Presently some one interrupted him.

“I ask the Assembly,” he replied, “I ask France, I ask the world, I ask *you*, monsieur,” pointing to the member who had just spoken, — “I ask if there is any one who, in the depths of his inmost heart, believes that the emigrant princes are not conspiring against their native land. And in the second place, I wish to ask if there is any one in this Assembly who dares to assert that the man who conspires against his country ought not to be promptly arrested, tried, and punished. If there be such a one, let him stand forth.”

Then, after an impressive pause, he continued: —

“We are told that it is one of the chief duties of power to be lenient; but I say unto you, Be on your guard. Despotism and monarchism are neither asleep nor dead. If the nation slumbers for an instant, it will wake to find itself in chains. The most unpardonable of crimes is that which aims to restore men to bondage. If the lightnings of Heaven were at man’s disposal, they should certainly be used to strike down the destroyers of popular liberty.”

It was the first time such words had ever been uttered within these walls. Isnard’s impassioned eloquence carried everything before it, as the Alpine avalanche sweeps trees and herds and shepherds and houses along in its downward course; and before the session ended, the following decree was passed:—

“If Louis Stanislaus Xavier, the French prince, does not return within two months, he forfeits his right to the regency.”

On November 8th: —

“Such refugees as do not return by January 1, 1792, will be declared guilty of conspiracy, and will be liable to arrest and to punishment by death.”

On November 29th it was the priests' turn: —

“The civil oath must be taken before the expiration of eight days.

“Those who refuse to take this oath will be suspected of rebellious tendencies, and subjected to the surveillance of the authorities.

“If they reside in a community subject to religious dissensions, the directory of the department may cause their removal. If they refuse to obey, they shall be imprisoned for at least one year. If they incite others to disobey, they shall be imprisoned for two years.

“If an armed force is necessary for the maintenance of order in any community, that community must defray the expense thereof.

“Churches shall be used only for the forms of worship approved by the state. Churches not needed for this purpose may be sold for other religious purposes, but not to persons who refuse to take the oath of allegiance to the Constitution.”

A protest against these edicts was prepared by the Feuillant Club, and signed by the directory of Paris, in which Louis XVI. was urgently requested to veto the decree concerning the priesthood.

It will be remembered that the Constitution endowed the king with this right of veto.

Who signed this protest? The very man who had been the first to attack the clergy, — the Mephistopheles who with his club-foot had broken the ice, Talleyrand. The strong probability of a royal veto was soon announced. The Cordeliers consequently insisted that Camille Desmoulins — that free lance of the Revolution — should prepare a petition; but as he was likely to stutter when he attempted to speak, he asked Fauchet to read it for him.

Fauchet consented, and the document was enthusiastically applauded from beginning to end. He said: —

“We cannot complain either of the Constitution for giving the king the right of veto, or of the king for availing himself of that right; for we recollect the saying of the great Machiavelli: ‘Even if a prince ought to renounce his sovereignty, the nation would be cruel and unjust to blame him for refusing to obey the popular will, inasmuch as it is contrary to nature for a man to voluntarily descend from a high position.’

“Impressed with this truth, and following the example of God Himself, who requires nothing that is impossible of us, we should not exact of our ex-sovereign an impossible desire for popular sovereignty, nor take it amiss of him if he affixes his veto to the wisest decrees.”

There was a great commotion that night at the Feuillant Club. Many members of the club, who were also members of the Assembly, had not been present when the decree was passed. The next morning those who had been absent the previous day were in their seats. They numbered two hundred and sixty, and, amid a storm of yells and hisses, the decree of the day before was annulled.

This meant war to the knife between the Assembly and the Feuillants, and caused the Assembly to depend more and more upon the New Jacobins, represented by Robespierre, and the Cordeliers, represented by Danton.

Danton was becoming more and more popular. He loomed up in the path of royalty, a giant Adamastor, and cried: “Beware! the sea you are navigating may well be called a sea of tempests.”

But, strange to say, the queen suddenly allied herself with the Jacobins, against the Feuillants.

The animosities of Marie Antoinette were to the Revolution what squalls are to the Atlantic.

Marie Antoinette hated Lafayette,—Lafayette, who had saved the royal family at Versailles on October 5, 1789, and sacrificed his popularity for the sake of the court by firing on the populace on July 17, 1791.

Lafayette wished to succeed Bailly as mayor of Paris; but instead of helping Lafayette, the queen urged the royalists to vote for Pétion. Marvellous blindness!—in favour of Pétion, her rough travelling-companion on the return from Varennes.

On December 19th the king visited the Assembly, to announce his veto of the decree against the priests.

There had been quite an exciting scene at the Jacobin Club the evening before.

A Swiss named Virchaux, from Neuchâtel, — the same man who had written the petition for a republic on the Champ de Mars, — offered the society a Damascus sword, to be presented to the first general who should win a victory over the enemies of freedom.

Isnard was present. Drawing the blade from its sheath, he sprang upon the platform, shouting: "Behold the sword of the destroying angel! It will prove victorious! France will lift up her voice, and her people will reply. The earth shall be covered with warriors, and Liberty's enemies shall be blotted from the list of mankind!"

The prophet Ezekiel could not have spoken more impressively or truly.

The sword was not to be returned to its sheath. War was declared almost immediately, both at home and abroad.

The sword of the Neuchâtel republican was to smite, first the king of France, and then the kings of other lands.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A MINISTER AFTER MADAME DE STAËL'S OWN HEART.

GILBERT had not seen the queen since the evening she left him to wait for her in her boudoir while she went to listen to the political advice Monsieur de Breteuil had brought from Vienna.

Six months had rolled away since that time, and it was now the winter of 1791-92; but Liberty had not been forgotten, and foreign sovereigns were evidently arranging to fulfil their promises by preparing for war.

Gilbert was much surprised to see one of the royal valets enter his room one morning. He thought at first that the king must be ill, and had sent for him. But the footman reassured him, and told him he was merely wanted at the palace.

He promptly obeyed the summons, and was ushered into a room on the ground floor, where a lady, who was evidently waiting for him, rose upon his entrance.

The lady was Madame Elizabeth, for whom Gilbert, knowing the angelic goodness of her heart, entertained a profound respect.

Gilbert bowed, comprehending the situation almost instantly. The king and queen, not liking to send for him in their own name, had made a convenience of Madame Elizabeth.

"Monsieur Gilbert," she said, "others may have forgotten the valuable services you rendered my brother on our return from Versailles two years ago, and my sister on our return from Varennes last summer, but I have not —"

"God has seen fit to endow you with all the virtues, madame," replied Gilbert, "even that of gratitude, — so rare in these days, especially in monarchs."

"Surely you are not referring to my brother, Monsieur Gilbert; for he often speaks of you, and attaches great importance to your judgment."

"As a physician?" inquired Gilbert, smiling.

"Yes, as a physician, monsieur; though he seems to think your experience may be of great service both to the welfare of the king and the welfare of the kingdom."

"The king is very kind. May I inquire to which patient I am now summoned, madame?"

"It was I who summoned you, not the king," she replied, blushing a little; for her pure spirit could not brook even the slightest deception.

"You, madame? You need not feel the slightest anxiety about your health, I assure you. Your pallor is due to anxiety and fatigue, not illness."

"You are right, monsieur. It is not about myself that I worry, but about my brother. I feel very anxious indeed about him."

"And so do I," replied Gilbert.

"But our anxiety does not arise from the same source, probably. I am alarmed about his health."

"Is the king ill?"

"Not ill, exactly, but he is depressed and discouraged. For ten days he has scarcely addressed a remark to any one but me. Even in his favourite game of backgammon he does not utter a word that is not essential to the game."

"It is exactly eleven days since he went to the Assembly with that veto," said Gilbert. "Why did he not become speechless that day, instead of losing his tongue the day afterwards?"

"Did you suppose that my brother would sanction such an impious decree?"

"My opinion is, madame, that to put the king in the same boat with the priesthood, in the face of the rising sea

and the impending storm, is merely equivalent to condemning the king and the priesthood to be drowned together."

"If you were in my brother's place, what would you do?"

"There is a political party which is growing as rapidly as the famous genie we read of in the Arabian Nights. He could be placed in a small casket at first, but an hour afterwards, he had increased in stature a hundredfold."

"You refer to the Jacobins, I suppose."

"No, to the Girondists, — so called because their leaders come from the department of France called the Gironde. The Jacobins do not desire war; the Girondists insist upon it, and the people are of the same mind."

"War? War with whom? With our brother, the Emperor? With our nephew, the King of Spain? Our worst enemies are here in France, monsieur, and the proof of it —"

Madame Elizabeth hesitated.

"Go on, madame."

"I scarcely know how to tell you, doctor, though it was this that caused me to send for you."

"You can say anything to me you would say to a man who stands ready to give his life for the king."

"Monsieur, do you believe there is any antidote for poison?"

"Not a universal antidote, madame. Every poison has its own special antidote, though as a general thing these antidotes prove unavailing."

"Oh, my God!"

"In the first place, one must know whether the poison is vegetable or mineral in its nature. Mineral poisons usually affect the stomach and other digestive organs, while vegetable poisons affect the nervous system. Mineral poisons excite and inflame the parts they affect; vegetable poisons usually stupefy. To which kind of poison do you allude, madame?"

"Listen, for I am about to tell you a very important secret."

"I am listening, madame."

"They are trying to poison the king. You know the superintendent of the Civil List, Monsieur Laporte? Well, Monsieur Laporte has warned us that a man in the royal household, who formerly held the position of pastry cook at the Palais Royal, is a frightful Jacobin, and has been heard to say openly that it would be a fine thing for France if somebody would poison the king."

"Persons who contemplate such crimes do not generally boast of them in advance, madame."

"But it would be such an easy matter to poison the king! Fortunately, the man we distrust has charge of the pastry only."

"Have you taken any precautions, madame?"

"Yes. The king eats only roasted meats; all our bread is brought from Ville d'Avray by Monsieur Thierry, the assistant steward, who also furnishes the wines. As the king is very fond of pastry, Madame Campan has orders to purchase it, as if for herself, first at this shop, then at that. We have been advised to be specially on our guard, too, against powdered sugar."

"That is because arsenic can be easily mixed with it without attracting notice."

"Precisely. The queen was in the habit of sweetening her water with it, but we have discontinued this custom entirely. The king and queen and myself eat together. We dispense with the servants' attendance almost entirely. When we want anything we ring for it. While we are at table, Madame Campan brings in the bread and wine and pastry by a private door. We hide these things under the table, and pretend to drink the wine from our own cellar, and to eat the bread and pastry prepared for us in the palace. That is the way we live, and we are in constant terror all the while — the queen and I — lest we should see the king turn suddenly pale, or hear him say he is in pain."

"First let me say that I don't place the slightest credence in these threats of poison," replied the doctor. "Still, I

am entirely at their Majesties' disposal. What does the king desire? Would he like me to have a room here in the palace? I could, and so be at hand at any moment until the king's fears —”

“Oh, my brother feels no apprehensions whatever,” interrupted Madame Elizabeth, quickly.

“I should have said until *your* fears are allayed, madame. I have had a good deal of experience with poisons and their antidotes, and I will hold myself in readiness to fight the poison, whatever its nature may be; but permit me to add that the king, if he chooses, will soon have nothing to fear.”

“And how can that condition of things be brought about?” asked a voice which certainly did not belong to Madame Elizabeth, and whose clear and resonant tones made the doctor start. He was not deceived, — the voice was that of the queen.

“I have heard all,” added her Majesty. “I was anxious to ascertain the state of your feelings towards us, you see.”

“Can your Majesty doubt the sincerity of my attachment?”

“So many heads and hearts have been alienated from us by the reverses we have undergone that one scarcely knows whom to trust.”

“And is it for this reason the queen accepts from the Feuillants a ministry devised by Madame de Staël?”

“You know that?” exclaimed the queen, starting violently.

“I have heard that your Majesty has negotiations pending with Monsieur de Narbonne.”

“And you censure me for it, I suppose.”

“Not at all. You may as well make this experiment as many others. When the king has tried everything else and failed, perhaps he will end by beginning where he ought to have begun in the first place.”

“Are you acquainted with Madame de Staël?”

"I have that honour, madame. When I left the Bastille I was presented to her by Monsieur Necker, her father, from whom I learned that it was at the queen's instigation that I had been arrested."

The queen coloured perceptibly; then she said, with a smile, "I thought we had agreed never to refer to that mistake."

"I did not. I merely replied to the question the queen condescended to put to me."

"What do you think of Monsieur Necker?"

"He is a very worthy man, but a strange compound of the most heterogeneous traits of character, — a person whose eccentricity amounts to positive bombast at times."

"But were you not one of those persons who urged the king to take him into the government service again?"

"Merely because Necker, right or wrong, was one of the most popular men in the kingdom, and I wished the king to profit by that popularity."

"And Madame de Staël?"

"Am I to understand that your Majesty does me the honour to ask my opinion of Madame de Staël?"

"Yes."

"Well, as to her personal appearance, — she has a large nose, very coarse features, and a big waist —"

The queen smiled; for it was not unpleasant to hear that this woman, whose name was on every lip, was not handsome.

"Go on," she said.

"Her complexion is only moderately good. Her gestures are spirited rather than graceful. Her voice is coarse and rather guttural. Sometimes one can hardly believe that it is the voice of a lady. She is about twenty-four or five years of age, and possesses the throat of a goddess, magnificent black hair, superb teeth, and brilliant, speaking eyes."

"But morally and intellectually?" queried her Majesty, eagerly.

“She is very kind-hearted and generous. No one can remain her enemy after hearing her talk a quarter of an hour.”

“But does she possess as much genius as people say? Politics require something more than heart.”

“Madame, a heart is not a bad thing, even in politics. As for that word ‘genius,’ which you uttered just now, one should be chary of its use. Madame de Staël possesses great talent, but it does not amount to genius. When she attempts to soar, something heavy as well as strong weighs her down. Between her and her teacher, Jean Jacques Rousseau, there is the same difference you notice between iron and steel.”

“You are speaking of her now as a writer, I judge. What do you think of her political shrewdness and sagacity?”

“In my opinion, Madame de Staël’s ability in this respect is greatly over-estimated. Since the emigration of Mounier and Lally, her *salon* has become the headquarters of the English party. As she belongs essentially to the middle class, she has a weakness for aristocrats, and admires the English because she considers them an eminently aristocratic people. She is not familiar with the machinery of the government of England. She does not discriminate between persons who have but recently arisen from the lower classes and noblemen whose titles date back to the time of the Crusades.”

“Do you think it is this weakness that induces Madame de Staël to urge Narbonne for a prominent place in the cabinet?”

“In this instance it is a compound of two passions,—love for the aristocracy, and love for an aristocrat.”

“But nobody is less of an aristocrat than Monsieur de Narbonne. His parentage even is unknown.”

“Because nobody dares to look straight at the sun.”

“I am a woman, Monsieur Gilbert, and consequently am fond of gossip. What do people say about Narbonne?”

"That he is brave, clever, and dissipated."

"I am speaking of his birth."

"They say, when the Jesuits were trying to drive Voltaire, Machault, and Argenson away, that they had Madame de Pompadour, too, to fight. They knew the power of paternal love when strengthened by love of another kind; so they chose for their purpose a daughter of the king, and succeeded in inducing her to devote herself heroically to this incestuous task. Hence the birth of this charming cavalier, whose parentage is, as your Majesty says, unknown, — not because it is veiled in obscurity, but because it is as clear as daylight."

"Then you do not believe, like the Jacobins, that Monsieur de Narbonne comes from the Swedish Embassy, of which De Staël is the head."

"Oh, yes; but he comes from the wife's boudoir, not from the husband's cabinet. This is not a piece of diplomatic cunning, it is an example of the blindness of love; for nothing save love could so blind a woman as to induce her to place the ponderous sword of the Revolution in such frivolous and incompetent hands."

"Then you think we make a mistake in accepting Narbonne as minister of war?"

"You would do much better to lose no time in accepting his successor."

"And who may that be, pray?"

"Dumouriez."

"Dumouriez, a soldier of fortune?"

"Madame, that is a grand title, wrongly interpreted; and certainly a most unjust epithet when applied to the person of whom you speak."

"Was not Dumouriez a common soldier once?"

"A provincial gentleman, without the means to purchase a colonelcy, he enlisted as a private in a regiment of hussars. At the age of twenty he allowed himself to be nearly cut in pieces rather than surrender; but in spite of this proof of valour and his remarkable intelligence, he was allowed to vegetate in the ranks."

"His intelligence? Yes, that I suppose was developed by espionage in his service as a spy for Louis XV."

"Why do you employ the words *espionage* and *spy* in connection with him, to indicate the same thing you call diplomacy in others? I happen to know that it was at the request of the prime minister of Louis XV. that Dumouriez entered into a correspondence with the king. What nobleman of the court would not do the same?"

"But he lacks principle, and is utterly devoid of honour. Monsieur de Choiseul himself told me that Dumouriez suggested two plans to him in relation to the Corsicans,—one to subjugate them, the other to set them free."

"True, but Choiseul forgot to tell you that the first plan was considered preferable, and that Dumouriez fought valiantly to insure its success."

"But if we should accept Dumouriez as minister of war, it would be equivalent to a declaration of war against all Europe."

"That declaration of war has been made already in every heart. Do you know the number of men in this department who have enrolled their names as volunteers? Six hundred thousand. In the Jura, the women say all the men may go; for if the women are furnished with pikes, they will defend their homes themselves."

"You just uttered a word that always makes me shudder!" exclaimed the queen.

"Excuse, me, madame, but will you tell me what the word is, so that I may not offend again?"

"That word 'pikes'! Oh, those pikes of '89, monsieur! I can still see the heads of my two faithful guardsmen on the ends of those pikes."

"And yet it is a wife and mother who proposes to open a subscription to have these pikes manufactured."

"Is it also a wife and mother who has persuaded the Jacobins to adopt the red cap?"

"There again I think your Majesty is in error," replied Gilbert. "Some symbol of the idea of Equality was

needed, and as it would be impossible to persuade all the French people to wear the same costume, it was decided to select some one article of dress, — the peasant cap, for instance. And red was the colour chosen, not because it is the hue of blood, but because it is a gay and striking colour, and always a favourite with the masses.”

“Ah, doctor, you are such an admirer of new inventions that I do not yet despair of seeing you feeling the king’s pulse with a pike in your hand and a red cap on your head.”

The queen spoke half bitterly, half jestingly, as she turned to leave the room.

Madame Elizabeth was about to follow her, when Gilbert exclaimed in almost supplicating tones: —

“You love your brother, do you not, madame?”

“It is not love I feel for him, but adoration.”

“And you are willing to transmit a bit of advice to him if it comes from a friend, are you not?”

“Of course, if the advice be really good.”

“In my opinion, it is most excellent.”

“Then speak.”

“Well, when the Feuillant Cabinet goes to pieces, — which it will, in a very short time, — advise him to select a cabinet composed entirely of men who wear the red caps the queen dislikes so much.”

And, bowing low, Gilbert left the room, and afterwards the palace.

CHAPTER XXXV.

DUMOURIEZ.

THE Narbonne cabinet lasted three months.

One of Vergniaud's speeches demolished it.

When the news came that the Emperor of Russia had made a treaty with Turkey, and that Austria and Prussia had signed an offensive and defensive alliance at Berlin, on February 7th, Vergniaud mounted the rostrum and said:—

“As Mirabeau once exclaimed, ‘I see from here the window,’ I, too, can say, — I see from here the palace where they are plotting a counter-revolution, and making plans to deliver us up to Austria. The time has come for you to put an end to such treachery and confound the conspirators. Often enough, in days gone by, have Terror and Dismay stalked forth from the portals of that palace in the names of despotism. Now, let Terror and Dismay re-enter that palace in the name of the Law.”

The downfall of the Narbonne ministry occurred in March, 1792; and barely three months had elapsed after Gilbert's interview with the queen and Madame Elizabeth, when a stranger was ushered into the king's presence. He was a short, active man, rather nervous in his movements, with an intelligent face and remarkably bright eyes. He was really fifty-six years of age, though he looked at least ten years younger. His face was bronzed by exposure to the wind and sun, and he wore a field-marshal's uniform.

“Is this Monsieur Dumouriez?” inquired the king.

The stranger bowed his assent.

“How long is it since you came to Paris?”

"I arrived here early in February, Sire."

"Monsieur de Narbonne sent for you —"

"To tell me that I had been detailed to General Luckner's corps of the Army of Alsace."

"You did not go, however."

"I accepted the commission, but felt it my duty to suggest that as war was imminent and seemed likely to become general, it would be advisable to pay some attention to southern France, which was likely to be attacked at any time, and that consequently it seemed to me necessary that some plan of defence should be decided upon, and a general-in-chief and an army be sent there as soon as possible."

"Yes, and you stated your views to Narbonne, after having first communicated them to Monsieur Genonné and several other Girondists, I believe."

"Genonné is a particular friend of mine, Sire, and a friend of your Majesty's as well, I believe."

"Then I am dealing with a Girondist, am I?" said the king, smiling.

"You are dealing with a patriot and a faithful subject."
The king bit his thick lips.

"And was it to serve your sovereign and your country more efficaciously that you refused the temporary appointment of Minister of Foreign Affairs?"

"I replied, Sire, that I should greatly prefer the military command promised me to a place in the cabinet, for I am a soldier, not a diplomat."

"On the contrary, I am assured that you are both a soldier and a diplomat."

"I am too much honoured, Sire."

"And it is on the strength of this assurance that I insist upon your acceptance of the appointment."

"And if I should continue to refuse it, in spite of my regret at disobliging you?"

"But why should you refuse?"

"Because the situation is extremely critical. Besides, I

am either worth something or nothing. If I am worth nothing, leave me in my obscurity, for who knows to what fate you may be urging me? If I am worth something, do not try to make me the minister of a day, — a fleeting power, — but give me something to depend upon in order that you may be able to depend more securely upon me. A temporary ministry, pardon a soldier's frankness," — no one could really be less frank than Dumouriez, though he liked to appear so at times, — "would be highly displeasing to the Assembly, and destroy my popularity with the members of that legislative body. I will say, furthermore, that this temporary arrangement would also compromise the king, and make it appear as if he were still clinging to his old advisers, and only awaiting a favourable opportunity to reinstate them."

"Do you think such a thing would be possible, even if I desired it?"

"I think it is quite time for your Majesty to break with the past in good faith."

"Yes, and appear before the public in the character of a stanch Jacobin. You said as much to Laporte, I believe."

"Heavens! if your Majesty should do that, you would overwhelm every party with consternation, the Jacobins most of all."

"Why don't you advise me to put on the red cap at once?"

"Ah, well, Sire, if it would help matters any —"

The king glanced for an instant with something not unlike distrust at the man who had just made this reply; then he said: —

"So it is a permanent position you desire, is it, monsieur?"

"I desire nothing. I am ready to obey the king's orders; though I must admit that I should like it much better if the king would send me to the frontier instead of keeping me in Paris."

“And if, on the contrary, I should command you to remain in Paris and assume the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs, what would you think?”

Dumouriez smiled.

“I should think, Sire, that your Majesty had got over your prejudice against me.”

“Well, yes, entirely so, it would seem, as I, here and now, make you my prime minister.”

“Sire, I devote myself to your service, but —”

“What! are you disposed to make conditions?”

“Say rather explanations, Sire.”

“Go on; I am listening.”

“The position of prime minister is not what it was in days gone by. Without being any the less your Majesty’s faithful servant, I become on entering your cabinet the servant of the nation as well. Consequently, you must not expect from me the same language you have been accustomed to hear from my predecessors. I must speak in accordance with the interests of liberty and the Constitution. Engrossed with my official duties, I shall have no leisure to pay court to you, and I shall disregard the demands of etiquette in order that I may be better able to serve the king himself. I shall labour faithfully for his best interests, as well as the interests of the nation, and serious differences and even conflicts are inevitable.”

“And why?”

“Because nearly all your foreign representatives are avowed enemies to the Revolution. I warn you, in advance, that I shall recall them, and I may not please you at all in my selection of their successors. I may even propose to your Majesty as substitutes persons you do not even know by name, and others whom you positively dislike —”

“And in that case?” interrupted Louis, quickly and a little haughtily.

“In that case, if your Majesty’s opposition is too strong, I shall obey, because you are master; but if your opposi-

tion does not emanate from yourself, if it is prompted by those around you, — persons who are resolved to compromise me, if possible, — I shall ask your Majesty to name my successor. Think of the awful dangers that threaten your throne, sire. It can only be sustained by public confidence, and everything depends upon you.”

“I have been aware of these dangers for a long time,” said the king. Then, pointing to the portrait of Charles I., and wiping his face with his handkerchief, he continued: “Even if I should try to forget them, there is a picture that keeps them ever in my mind.”

“Sire!”

“Wait until I have finished, monsieur, if you please. My situation is identical with his. The dangers that surround me are the same; and perhaps the scaffold of Whitehall is even now being erected on the Place de Grève.”

“That is looking too far ahead, Sire.”

“It is not looking beyond the horizon. If my fears are realised, I shall die upon the scaffold, not in so knightly a fashion, perhaps, but at least in a manner befitting a Christian, I trust. Now go on, monsieur.”

Dumouriez hesitated, astonished at this unexpected display of firmness, but presently he said: “Will your Majesty permit me to direct our conversation into a different channel?”

“As you please, monsieur; but I want to convince you that I do not fear the fate with which they are trying to affright me, or that if I do fear it, I am at least prepared for it.”

“And now, Sire, in spite of what I have had the honour to say to you, am I still to regard myself as your Minister of Foreign Affairs?”

“Yes, monsieur.”

“Then at the first cabinet meeting I shall submit four despatches, totally unlike those of my predecessors both in matter and in style; and if my first attempt prove pleasing to your Majesty, I will persevere; if not, my travelling

equipage will be in readiness to convey me where I can serve my king and my country on the frontier. And in spite of all that has been said to your Majesty concerning my diplomatic talent," added Dumouriez, "warfare is really my forte as well as the object of my best endeavours for the last thirty-six years."

Whereupon, he bowed as if about to retire.

"Wait," said the king; "we have come to an agreement on one point, but there are five others to be settled."

"My colleagues, do you mean?"

"Yes. I do not want you coming to me with complaints that you are hampered by this man or that. Select your own cabinet."

"It is a grave responsibility you thrust upon me, Sire."

"I believe I am doing you a favour by insisting, however."

"I know scarcely any one in Paris, sire, except Lacoste, whom I cordially recommend to your Majesty for the Naval Department."

"Lacoste? Is n't he merely an officer in the Commissary Department?"

"Yes, Sire, who tendered his resignation to Monsieur de Boynes rather than be a party to a dishonest transaction."

"That is a good recommendation. How about the others?"

"I must consult with some of my friends."

"May I ask with whom?"

"Brissot, Condorcet, Pétion, Genonné —"

"With all the Girondists, in short."

"Yes, Sire."

"Very well, try the Girondists then. And let us see if they succeed any better than the Constitutionalist and the Feuillants."

"There is another matter, Sire."

"What is that?"

"To ascertain if the four despatches I am going to write will meet with your approval."

"We will settle that to-night."

"To-night, Sire?"

"Yes, for the case is urgent, and we shall have a special meeting of my council, consisting of you, Monsieur de Grave, and Cahier de Gerville, this evening."

"How about Duport du Tertre?"

"He has tendered his resignation."

"I shall be at your Majesty's service this evening;" and again Dumouriez bowed, as if about to take leave.

"No, wait a moment," said the king. "I want you to commit yourself irrevocably."

The words had hardly passed his lips before the queen and Madame Elizabeth entered.

"Madame," the king said, turning to his wife, "this is Monsieur Dumouriez, who has promised to assist us, and with whom we are to form a new ministry this evening."

Dumouriez bowed; and the queen surveyed with evident curiosity this man who was to exercise such an influence over the destinies of France.

"Are you acquainted with Dr. Gilbert, monsieur?" she asked.

"No, madame."

"You had better make his acquaintance. I can recommend him to you as a most excellent prophet. He predicted that you would be Narbonne's successor, three months ago."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

BEHIND THE TAPESTRY.

THAT evening, at the appointed hour, Dumouriez entered with his four despatches. Cahier de Gerville and De Grave were already in the council chamber awaiting the king, who entered almost simultaneously with Dumouriez.

The two ministers rose instantly. Dumouriez was already standing, so he had only to bow. The king responded to their salutations with a slight bend of the head; then, taking an arm-chair at the head of the table, he bade them all be seated.

It seemed to Dumouriez that the door by which the king had just entered had been left slightly ajar, and that the tapestry portière in front of it swayed to and fro a little. Was it the action of the wind, or was it from contact with some person who was listening behind it?

"Are your despatches ready, monsieur?" asked the king, turning to Dumouriez.

"Yes, Sire," and as he spoke, the general drew four letters from his pocket.

"To what foreign Powers are they addressed?"

"To Spain, Austria, Prussia, and England."

"Read them."

Dumouriez cast another quick glance at the tapestry, and another slight movement convinced him that some one was standing behind it.

He began the reading of his despatches in a firm voice. In them, he spoke in the name of the king, but in the spirit of the Constitution, without any tinge of acrimony, but with great decision.

He discussed the real interests of each Power in its relations to the French Revolution; and as each government had good reason to complain of the utterances of sundry Jacobin pamphlets, he attributed these indiscretions to the newly acquired freedom of the Press, which was sure to be productive of rich harvests eventually, though now and then some noxious vermin might be warmed into life. In conclusion, he demanded peace in the name of a free nation, of which the king was the hereditary representative.

The king listened with closer and closer attention to each despatch.

"I never heard anything to compare with this before, general," the king remarked, when Dumouriez had finished.

"Ministers ought always to write and speak in the name of their sovereign," remarked Cahier de Gerville.

"Give me the despatches. They shall be sent to-morrow," said the king.

"The couriers are ready and waiting now in the courtyard below," replied Dumouriez.

"I should like to have copies to show to the queen," remarked the king, with some embarrassment.

"I anticipated this desire on the part of your Majesty, and here are four certified copies."

"Then let the despatches go," said the king.

Dumouriez stepped to the same door by which he had entered. An aide was in waiting, the general gave him the despatches, and in a few minutes the ministers heard several horses galloping out of the courtyard.

"That is done," said the king, as this significant sound died away in the distance. "Now let me see the list of your future colleagues."

"Sire, first of all, I wish your Majesty would persuade Monsieur Cahier de Gerville to consent to remain with us."

"I have attempted to do so already."

"And I regret to say that I feel compelled to persist in my refusal, monsieur. My health is giving way, and rest has become an absolute necessity."

"You hear, monsieur," said the king, turning to Dumouriez.

"Yes, but Monsieur de Grave will consent to remain with us, I trust."

"Sire," responded De Grave, "if the language of Monsieur Dumouriez astonished you just now by its frankness, mine will perhaps astonish you even more by its humility. Here," drawing a paper from his pocket, "is a severe, but just, criticism upon me written by a lady of great ability. Will you have the goodness to read it?"

The king read as follows:—

"De Grave is spoken of for the War Department. He is an insignificant man in every sense of the word. He is naturally timid and mild. Though amiable in disposition, he is rather inclined to be supercilious. The result of his efforts to conciliate everybody is to make him an absolute nonentity.

"I can see him now trotting along behind the king, with his head high in the air, in spite of his puny body, showing the whites of his eyes, which he cannot keep open after dinner without the aid of three or four cups of coffee. He says very little, but tries to make it appear that his silence is due to a prudent reserve, though it is really due to a complete lack of ideas. He will lose his head so completely in the complications which are sure to ensue in his department that he will soon ask permission to retire."

"That is evidently a woman's estimate," remarked the king. "Is it the work of Madame de Staël?"

"No, it is the opinion of a much better judge of human nature, Madame Roland, Sire."

"And you say you think this a fair estimate of your character and ability?"

"In many respects, at least. I will remain until I can initiate my successor into the workings of the department, and then I must ask your Majesty to accept my resignation."

"You were right in declaring that what you had to say would astonish me even more than the utterances of Monsieur Dumouriez. But if you are firmly resolved upon

withdrawal, I should be very glad to have you name your successor."

"I was about to beg your Majesty to permit me to suggest Monsieur Servan, an honest, upright, and strictly moral man, with all the austerity of a philosopher, yet with all a woman's kindness of heart. A clear-headed patriot, too, as well as a brave soldier and painstaking official."

"Servan it shall be. Now we have three secretaries. Servan for the War Department, Dumouriez for Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Lacoste for the Naval Department. Now what shall we do about a Minister of Finance?"

"Take Monsieur Clavières, sire. He is the ablest financier I know," suggested Dumouriez.

"I do not doubt that," replied the king; "but they say he is irascible, and extremely opinionated."

"These are faults common to nearly all able cabinet ministers, sire."

"Let us overlook Monsieur Clavières' faults then, and consider Monsieur Clavières our next Minister of Finance. Now, how about the Department of Justice? Upon whom shall we bestow that?"

"Duranton, a Bordeaux advocate is very highly spoken of."

"By the Girondists, I suppose you mean."

"Yes, Sire. He is a level headed, upright man and most estimable citizen, though rather slow and over cautious. We shall have to supply him with the spirit he lacks."

"One portfolio remains, — that of the Interior Department."

"The unanimous opinion seems to be that this should go to Monsieur Roland."

"To Madame Roland, you mean."

"To both the learned husband and the brilliant wife, then."

"Do you know them personally?"

"No, Sire, but I am told that he strongly resembles one of Plutarch's heroes; while she seems like a woman from the pages of Livy."

"Do you know what they will call your cabinet, general, or rather what they call it already?"

"No, Sire."

"The *Sans-Culotte* ministry."

"I don't object to the appellation in the least, Sire. It will be all the more easy for the nation to see that we are men."

"Are your colleagues ready for work?"

"Half of them are not even aware of their appointment."

"Will they accept?"

"I have no misgivings on that score."

"Very well, then, let us adjourn. Day after to-morrow, we will hold our first cabinet meeting."

"Day after to-morrow, Sire."

The three ministers withdrew; but before they had reached the staircase a valet overtook them and said to Dumouriez: "The king begs you will come back a moment. There is something more that he wishes to say to you."

Dumouriez bade his colleagues farewell, then, turning to the servant, he said: "Is it the king or the queen that desires to see me?"

"The queen, monsieur; but she did not think it advisable to let the other gentlemen know that it was she who sent for you."

"Just what I thought," muttered Dumouriez, shaking his head.

Dumouriez followed the valet through the long corridors to the queen's apartments. The valet did not announce the general by name, but merely said:—

"Here is the gentleman your Majesty wished to see."

Dumouriez entered. Never before had our soldier's heart throbbed so violently, not even in making a dangerous charge or in scaling the enemy's breastworks; for he

realised that never before had he been in the presence of such danger. The path he was about to enter was strewn with dead and living victims, — the bodies of Calonne, Necker, Mirabeau, Barnave, and Lafayette.

The queen was pacing the floor excitedly, and her face was crimson with excitement. Dumouriez paused just inside the door.

The queen advanced towards him with an angry and imperious air.

“You are all-powerful just at the present moment, monsieur,” she said curtly; “but you are so by the favour of the people, and their worship of their idols is short-lived. They say you possess a great deal of talent; but understand once for all that neither the king nor myself will sanction these innovations. Your Constitution is an utter failure; and I have sent for you, before you proceed any further, to tell you that you must choose between us and the Jacobins.”

“I am grieved at this painful announcement on the part of your Majesty, but having detected the presence of the queen behind the curtain, I am not unprepared for this.”

“And in that case you are prepared with your answer, I suppose?”

“Yes, madame. If I am placed in a position in which I have to choose between my king and my country, I can only say that my country must be first.”

“The country! the country!” repeated the queen, scornfully. “The king is nothing, I suppose. Everybody cleaves to the nation, and nobody to the king.”

“Oh, yes, madame, the king is and always will be the king; but he has taken the oath to support the Constitution, and from that day the king became one of the servants of the Constitution.”

“An oath taken under compulsion, and consequently null and void,” cried Marie Antoinette, vehemently.

Dumouriez remained silent for a moment, gazing at the queen with an air of deep compassion, like the clever actor that he was.

Portrait of Necker.

Photo-Etching. — From an old Print.



M.^R NECKER.
Ancien Directeur Général des Finances.

"Madame," he said at last, "permit me to remark that your safety, as well as the safety of the king and of your children, depends upon this Constitution, which you so disparage, but which is abundantly able to save you if you will consent to be saved by it. I should be a most unfaithful servant to you and to the king if I spoke otherwise —"

"Monsieur, you are making a great mistake, I assure you!" exclaimed the queen, silencing him with an imperious gesture. Then, with an indefinable tinge of menace in her tone, she added: "Be on your guard, monsieur."

"I am over fifty years of age, madame," replied Dumouriez, with unruffled calmness, "and my life from childhood has been one of constant danger; but when I accepted the appointment of cabinet minister, I said to myself, my ministerial responsibility was not the greatest danger I incurred, by any means."

"Oh, there is nothing left for you to do now, but to slander me, monsieur!" cried the queen, striking her hands together angrily.

"Slander you?"

"Yes. Do you want me to explain the meaning of your last words?"

"If you please, madame."

"You as much as said that I was quite capable of having you assassinated. Oh, monsieur!" and as she spoke, two big tears fell from her eyes.

Dumouriez had gone as far as possible. He knew now all he desired to know, — that is, if any spark of real feeling still remained in the queen's seared heart.

"Heaven preserve me from so insulting my queen," he said. "Your Majesty's character is too noble to admit of such a suspicion, even on the part of her bitterest enemies. She has given proofs of heroism which have made me one of her most ardent admirers, and —"

"Do you speak the truth, monsieur?" she asked, in tones full of emotion this time.

"Upon my honour, madame. I swear it."

"Then forgive me," she replied, "and lend me your arm for an instant. There are moments when I feel so weak that I seem to be on the point of falling."

She had, indeed, turned pale, and her head fell back, as if she were on the verge of fainting. Was this weakness real, or only one of those bits of acting in which this seductive Medea often indulged?

Cunning as he was, Dumouriez was either deceived by it, or else, being an even more clever actor than the queen, he pretended to be deceived by it.

"Believe me, I have no motive for misleading you, madame; for I abhor anarchy as much as you do, and I speak from my own personal observation, I assure you. I am in a better position to judge of current events and their influences than the queen is. The present state of affairs is not due to an Orléans intrigue, as some persons would have you believe, nor is it due to Pitt's animosity, as you have sometimes imagined. It is the almost unanimous protest of a great nation against shameful abuses. There are violent animosities, I know very well, underlying all this that are quite likely to start a dangerous conflagration. But let us leave miscreants and fools out of the question, and consider the bearings of the Revolution only in connection with our own country and our king. Whatever tends to separate these two lead to mutual ruin. As for me, madame, I am here to do everything in my power to re-unite them. Aid me instead of working against me. You distrust and dislike me. Am I an obstacle to your counter-revolutionary plans? If so, tell me, and I will tender my resignation here and now, and in some obscure spot bemoan the fate of our common country."

"No, no," said the queen. "Keep your office and forgive me."

"I—forgive you? Oh, madame, do not humiliate yourself thus, I beseech you."

"And why not? Am I any longer a queen? Am I any longer a woman, even?"

She walked to the window and threw it open, in spite of the chilliness of the evening air. The moon was already silvering the branches of the leafless trees in the garden below.

"Every one has a right to the fresh air and sunshine. You admit that, I suppose," she said sadly. "They are denied only to me. I dare not show myself at the windows, either on the courtyard or garden side. Day before yesterday, I ventured to look out into the courtyard. One of the guards called me by a foul name, and added: 'Oh, how I should like to have the fun of carrying your head on my bayonet!' Yesterday, I opened one of the windows that overlook the gardens, and on one side I saw a man mounted upon a chair saying all sorts of horrible things about us; on the other side, I saw a priest insulted and beaten and then dragged off to the lake; and all the while people were promenading and playing ball without troubling themselves in the least, as if such scenes were of everyday occurrence. What terrible times these are, monsieur! What a strange state of things! What a strange, incomprehensible people! And you would have me believe myself a queen when I can hardly believe myself a woman!"

The queen threw herself on a sofa and covered her face with her hands. Dumouriez dropped upon one knee, and kissed the hem of her robe respectfully.

"Madame," he said, "as surely as I undertake this struggle, you shall once more become a happy woman and a powerful sovereign, or I will perish in the attempt to make you so."

And, rising, he bowed low to the queen and hurried from the room.

The queen watched his departure with a despairing glance. "A powerful sovereign! That may yet be possible, thanks to the sword!" she murmured. "But a happy woman, never! never! never!"

And murmuring a name which was becoming dearer and sadder to her every day, — the name of Charny, — she buried her face in the sofa-cushions.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE RED CAP.

DUMOURIEZ had hastened from the queen's presence partly because the sight of her despair pained him,—though sentimental ideas made very little impression on him theoretically, he was strongly affected by personal contact, and especially by the sight of human suffering,—and partly because Brissot was waiting to conduct him to the Jacobin Club. He felt no anxiety so far as the Assembly was concerned, for he knew that he was the choice of Pétion, Gensonné, Brissot, and the Girondists generally, but he was not a favourite with Robespierre, Collot d'Herbois, and Couthon,—and they were the men who ruled the Jacobin Club.

His visit was a great surprise to every one. In fact, it was an audacious act in one of the king's ministers to come to the Jacobin Club at all; and as soon as his name was mentioned, every eye was turned upon him.

Robespierre bent forward to catch the name that was passing from lip to lip, then frowned slightly, and again became cool and impassive. A frigid silence spread through the hall, and Dumouriez saw that he must burn his ships behind him.

The Jacobins had just adopted the red cap as a sign of equality; but three or four members had judged, doubtless, that their reputation for patriotism was sufficiently well established without giving this proof of it. One of these few members was Robespierre.

Dumouriez did not hesitate, however. Flinging away his own hat, he snatched the red cap from the head of a

patriot seated near him, and drew it down over his own ears, then ascended the platform, flaunting this emblem of equality.

The entire assemblage applauded loudly; but in the midst of the acclamations a sound not unlike the hiss of a serpent was heard, and the applause instantly subsided. It was a *Sh-h-h* from Robespierre's bloodless lips.

More than once in after days Dumouriez was heard to admit that never did the whistle of a bullet as it passed within a foot of his head make him shudder like that *Sh-h-h* from the lips of the Arras advocate; but he was a hard fighter, this Dumouriez, this soldier and orator in one, and difficult to beat either on the battle-field or in the rostrum.

He waited with a calm smile until perfect order was restored; then, in tones which reached to the furthest corners of the room, he said:—

“Friends and brethren, henceforth every moment of my life shall be devoted to doing the people's will, and deserving the confidence of a constitutional king. In my negotiations with foreign Powers I shall be upheld by the strength of a free people; and these negotiations must speedily end either in lasting peace or decisive war.”

Here the applause burst forth afresh, in spite of Robespierre's *Sh-h-h!*

“If we have war,” continued the speaker, “I will throw aside the pen, and take my place in the ranks to triumph or to die with my countrymen. A heavy burden has been placed upon my shoulders. Help me to bear it, my brethren. I need your counsel. Tell me the truth, the honest truth, always, but turn a deaf ear to calumny, and do not repulse a citizen whom you know to be brave and sincere, and who is devoted body and soul to the revolutionary cause.”

Dumouriez had finished. He sat down amid wild applause. These acclamations incensed Collot d'Herbois, who was himself so often hissed and so rarely applauded.

“Why this applause?” he called out from his seat. “If Dumouriez comes here as a cabinet minister, no answer is needed. If he comes as a brother member, he only does his duty by acquainting us fully with his opinions. In that case, we have but one answer to make: Let him see that he acts as he talks.”

Dumouriez waved his hand and bowed his head, as much as to say: “That is precisely what I intend to do.”

Robespierre arose, with a grim smile upon his lips. Every one understood that he wished to ascend the rostrum, and so made way for him. He began with even more than his customary solemnity of manner.

“I am not one of those who believe it is absolutely impossible for a cabinet minister to be a true patriot,” he said, “and I have listened with pleasure to the assurances Monsieur Dumouriez has just given us. When he accomplishes these good intentions, when he overthrows the enemies whom his predecessors in office and the conspirators who still direct our government have armed against us, then, and not until then, shall I be inclined to sing his praises. And even then I may be of the opinion that any good member of this society is his equal. The nation alone is great and worthy of respect in my eyes; and out of respect for the people, and for the minister himself, I ask that his entrance here shall not be signalised by a display of homage that would indicate a decline of public patriotism. He asks our advice. I, for my part, promise to give him counsel which will not only prove useful to him, but beneficial to the public welfare. So long as Monsieur Dumouriez proves, both by his words and acts, that he is a true patriot and a faithful defender of the rights and interests of the people, he will find nothing save earnest support in this club. I apprehend no danger from the presence of a cabinet minister in this society; but the minute he is treated as if he were the superior of any other honest citizen, I shall demand his expulsion, for no such distinctions can be allowed.”

The crafty orator left the rostrum in the midst of resounding cheers; but a snare was awaiting him on the lower step. Dumouriez was standing there with outstretched arms.

"Virtuous Robespierre! incorruptible citizen! let me embrace you," he exclaimed, with great apparent enthusiasm.

And, in spite of Robespierre's resistance, Dumouriez pressed him to his heart.

The crowd saw only the act, not Robespierre's evident repugnance, and again enthusiastic applause resounded on every side.

"Come, Brissot, let us go," whispered Dumouriez. "I have donned the red cap and embraced Robespierre; now I am doubly sanctified."

At the door a young man clothed with the dignity of an usher exchanged a hasty glance and a still more hasty shake of the hand with the new minister. This young man was the Duc de Chartres.

The clock struck eleven as Brissot was guiding Dumouriez to the door of the Rolands' lodgings.

They were still living on the Rue Guénégaud, and they had been notified the night before, through Brissot, of the general intention to recommend Roland to the king for Minister of the Interior. Brissot had asked Roland if he felt equal to such a task, and Roland, with his usual simplicity, had replied that upon the whole he thought he did.

Dumouriez now came to announce that the selection had been made. After an interchange of the usual compliments, in which Dumouriez assured Roland that it had given him great pleasure to see such a virtuous and enlightened citizen called to take a hand in the affairs of government, the conversation naturally reverted to the king.

"There is the chief difficulty we have to contend with," said Roland, with a smile.

"I do not agree with you," replied Dumouriez. "I believe the king to be an honest man and a true patriot."

Then, seeing that Madame Roland uttered never a word, but merely smiled, Dumouriez asked, —

“Is not that your opinion too, madame?”

“Have you seen the king?”

“Yes.”

“Have you seen the queen?”

This time, it was Dumouriez who made no reply, and had to confine himself to a smile.

An appointment was made for eleven o'clock the next morning, when the new ministers were to take their oaths of office.

It was now nearly midnight. Dumouriez would have remained longer, but this was a late hour for plain people like the Rolands.

Why did Dumouriez wish to remain? The reason was perfectly obvious to any one who knew him well.

In his quick glance at the Rolands on his entrance, Dumouriez had noted the disparity in age between the husband and wife. Roland was only ten years older than Dumouriez, but Dumouriez looked at least twenty years younger. The general had also noted the superb outlines of the young wife's figure; and Dumouriez was one of those men who can never see an old husband without laughing in their sleeves, or a young wife without disobeying the commandment concerning covetousness. His manner was consequently displeasing to both the husband and wife, and it was for this reason they both made an apparently casual allusion to the lateness of the hour.

When the door closed behind the retreating forms of their visitors, Roland remarked to his wife: “Well, my dear, what do you think of our future colleagues?”

“It is not necessary to see some men twice to form a pretty correct idea of their character,” replied Madame Roland, smiling. “This man possesses a crafty nature, an exceeding supple mind, and a cunning eye. He expressed the utmost delight at the judicious selection he came to announce, but I should n't be surprised if he sends you off some day.”

“Nor I,” replied Roland.

Both retired to their couch with their accustomed serenity of mind, neither of them dreaming that the iron hand of Destiny had just inscribed their names in letters of blood upon the tablets of the Revolution.

The next morning, the new ministers took the oath of office in the presence of the National Assembly, and then repaired to the Tuileries.

Roland wore laced shoes, — probably because he had no money with which to purchase buckles, — and a round hat, because he had never worn any other. He went to the Tuileries in his usual attire, and chanced to be last in the line of secretaries.

Monsieur de Brézé, the master of ceremonies, allowed the others to pass in, but stopped Roland.

Not understanding why he was refused admission, Roland exclaimed: “But I too am a minister like the others, — Minister of the Interior!”

The master of ceremonies did not seem convinced, however.

Dumouriez overheard the controversy, and interfered.

“Why do you refuse Monsieur Roland admittance?” he asked.

“But, monsieur, think of it, — a round hat, and no buckles on his shoes!”

“Ah, monsieur, a round hat, and no buckles on his shoes,” responded Dumouriez, coolly; “all is indeed lost!” and as he spoke, he pushed Roland into the king’s cabinet.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS.

THE ministry that had so much difficulty in getting into the king's cabinet might well have been styled the War Cabinet.

On the 1st of March, 1792, the Emperor Leopold of Austria died in his harem, poisoned by the love potions he himself had concocted.

Marie Antoinette, who had read in some Jacobin pamphlet that a piece of pastry would put an end to the emperor some day, stoutly asserted that her brother had been poisoned by his enemies.

With Leopold, Austria's temporising policy also came to an end.

His successor, Francis II., had a mixture of Italian and German blood in his veins, his father being the deceased Leopold, and his mother Maria Louisa of Spain.

Born in Florence, though an Austrian, he was weak, violent, and treacherous in disposition. An honest man in the estimation of the priests, he was unfeeling and bigoted, and concealed the utmost duplicity beneath a placid countenance.

He pursued his career like an automaton, — giving his daughter to his conqueror, in order to save portions of his territory, and yet being the very first to stab him in the back, when the icy winds of Russia compelled him to beat a hasty retreat. It was this tyrant of the dungeons of Spitzberg, and of the Venetian lead-mines, this executioner of Andryane and the prisoner of Silvio Pellico, the Italian

poet, who was the protector of the *émigrés*, the ally of Prussia, and the enemy of France.

Our ambassador at Vienna, Monsieur de Noailles, was, so to speak, a prisoner in his own palace.

Our ambassador at Berlin was preceded by a rumour that he had come to discover the King of Prussia's plans by making love to that monarch's mistresses.

Monsieur de Ségur was presented at one of the monarch's public receptions at the same time with the envoy from Coblenz, and the king turned his back on the French ambassador, and inquired in a loud voice of the prince's representative as to the health of his dear friend the Comte d'Artois.

Prussia, who considered herself at that time, as she considers herself at the present day, the leading representative of German progress, was governed by a sovereign who abetted Turkish insurrections and Polish revolutions on the one hand, while he smothered the liberties of Holland on the other, and who was ever fishing for spoils in the troubled waters of revolutions, hooking out now a bit of Poland or of Pomerania, or a slice of Neuchâtel.

Our two openly avowed enemies were Francis II. and Frederick William; our secret enemies were England, Russia, and Spain.

The chief of this coalition was to be the bellicose King of Sweden, known as Gustavus III., whom Catherine of Russia kept under her thumb.

The accession of Francis II. to the throne of Austria was attended by the accompanying diplomatic communication, evidently issued for the express purpose of humiliating France.

Austria demands: First, satisfaction for the princes holding possessions in the kingdom.

Secondly, the restoration of Avignon.

Thirdly, the re-establishment of the monarchy on the footing of June 23rd, 1789.

It was only too evident that these demands corresponded exactly with the secret desires of the king and queen.

Dumouriez shrugged his shoulders. One might have supposed that Austria had fallen asleep on the 23rd of June, 1789, and awakened after an interval of three years under the impression that only a single night had elapsed.

On the 16th of March, 1792, Gustavus was assassinated at a ball. It was on the second day after his assassination, — the news of which had not yet reached France, — that this diplomatic communication reached Dumouriez, who took it straight to the king.

Marie Antoinette desired war, being convinced that it would be the salvation of royalty; but the king, who was given to temporising and evasion, dreaded a war.

If war was declared, and France proved victorious, the king would be at the mercy of the successful general. In case of defeat, the people would consider the king responsible for it, raise a cry of treason, and make an attack upon the Tuileries.

If the enemy should invade France and succeed in reaching Paris, whom would they bring with them? Monsieur, that is to say, the king's brother, the regent of the kingdom.

The deposal of the king, the indictment of the queen as an unfaithful wife, the charge that the royal children were illegitimate, — such were the possible results of the return of the *émigrés*.

The king trusted the Austrians, the Germans, and the Prussians, but he distrusted the *émigrés*. Still, when the Austrian despatch was read, it became evident that the time for France to draw the sword had come.

On April 20th, 1792, the king and Dumouriez went together to the National Assembly to present the declaration of war against Austria; and this declaration of war excited the wildest enthusiasm.

At this critical moment there are four distinctly defined parties in France, — the Extreme Royalists, of whom the queen is one, the Constitutional Royalists, to which party the king ostensibly belongs, the Republicans, and the Anarchists.

Aside from the queen, the Extreme Royalists have no able leader in France, though they have plenty of representatives in foreign lands in Monsieur, the Comte d'Artois, Prince de Condé, and Duke Charles de Lorraine.

The prominent leaders of the Constitutional party are Lafayette, Bailly, Barnave, and Duport, — in short, the Fenillants.

The Republican leaders are Brissot, Vergniaud, Pétion, Roland, Isnard, Condorcet, and Couthon.

The Anarchist leaders are Marat, Danton, Santerre, Camille Desmoulins, Legendre, Hébert, Fabre d'Eglantine, and Collot d'Herbois.

Dumouriez is willing and anxious to be anything that will best enhance his interests and fame.

Robespierre has retired into the shadow. He is biding his time.

And now to whom shall the command of the Revolutionary army be intrusted? To Lafayette, who is considered accountable for the Champ de Mars massacre? To Luckner, who is known principally by the mischief he did France during the Seven Years' War? To Rochambeau, who desires a defensive war only, and is intensely annoyed to see Dumouriez give his orders direct to his subordinates, without first submitting them to a general of Rochambeau's wide experience?

Lafayette commands the centre. He is to follow the Meuse and drive Givet back to Namur; Luckner guards Franche-Comté; Rochambeau, Flanders.

Reinforced by a detachment which Rochambeau has sent under the command of Biron, Lafayette is to capture Namur, and then march straight on Brussels. Lafayette has a fine chance to immortalise himself. Dumouriez intends the first victory for him, and that victory is to make him commander-in-chief. With Lafayette commander-in-chief, and Dumouriez a successful secretary of war, the Royalists may throw the red cap to the dogs, and then crush the Girondists with one hand, and the Jacobins with the other.

As we have said before, Robespierre had retired into the shadow. Many have even gone so far as to pretend that there was secret communication between Duplay's workshop and the palace inhabited by Louis XVI. Can it be that this had anything to do with the pension which was paid in after years to the Mademoiselle de Robespierre by the Duchesse d'Angoulême?

But this time, too, Lafayette fails to profit by his opportunity.

Take notice, too, that that schemer Dumouriez does not sever his relations with Orléans, — relations which are to prove his ultimate ruin.

Biron is also an Orléanist general. So the Orléanists and the Feuillants, through Lafayette and Biron, are to be the first to wield the sword and sound the fanfare of triumph.

On the morning of April 28th, 1792, Biron captures Quiévrain and marches upon Mons. On the following day Theobald Dillon marches from Lille upon Tornay.

They are both aristocrats, — brave, handsome, dissipated, reckless young fellows of the Richelieu school, — one exceedingly frank in his avowal of his political sentiments, while the other hardly has time to ascertain his opinions before he meets his doom.

As we have previously stated, the dragoons are the chief dependence of the Royalists. Two regiments of dragoons are at the head of Biron's detachment of three thousand men. Suddenly these dragoons, before they have even caught sight of the enemy, begin to shout: "We are betrayed! Let everybody look out for himself!"

Then they wheel around, and with the same frenzied shouts dash through the infantry, who, supposing themselves pursued, flee in their turn. The rout is complete. The same thing happens to Dillon. He encounters about nine hundred Austrians. The dragoons that form his advance-guard become frightened and run away, taking the infantry along with them. Leaving artillery waggons and camp equipments behind them, they do not stop until they reach Lille, whence they started.

There, they lay all the blame of their cowardice upon their leaders, and Dillon and Lieutenant-Colonel Bertois are promptly shot; after which they deliver up the bodies of these unfortunate men to the people of Lille, who hang them, and then dance around their corpses.

Who had planned this defeat, which undoubtedly had for its object the awakening of despondency, or at least hesitation, in the hearts of the patriots, and of confidence in the hearts of the royalists?

The Girondists, who desired war, and who are consequently severely injured by the twofold wound they have received, accuse the Court, that is to say, the queen; and it must be admitted that appearances strongly favour this belief on their part.

They resolve at first to return blow for blow; but they have given royalty time to don a cuirass more substantial than the chain-armour which the queen once gave the king, and which her Majesty tested one night, in company with Andrée, in an obscure nook at Versailles.

For the queen has gradually organised that famous guard authorised by the Constitution, from which it took its name, and it now numbers fully six thousand men.

And such men! Fencing-masters and bullies who insult patriot deputies even in their seats in the Assembly, noblemen from Brittany and La Vendée, fanatics from Nîmes and Arles, stalwart priests who, under the pretext of an unwillingness to take the constitutional oath, have thrown aside their cassocks, and picked up sword and dagger and pistol. In addition to all these there are innumerable knights of the Order of St. Louis, who have come from nobody knows where, and been decorated nobody knows why.

Dumouriez complains of this in his Memoirs, and says:

“Whatever government may succeed the one now in power, it can never restore to honour this beautiful and unfortunate decoration, which is bestowed with such a lavish hand, and of which fully six thousand have been distributed within the past two years.”

It is little wonder that the Minister of Foreign Affairs declines the decoration for himself, and has it bestowed upon Monsieur de Watteville, a major in a Swiss regiment.

The Girondists must begin by taking away this means of protection before they attempt to smite the king and queen.

Suddenly a rumour becomes current that a white flag has been found at the old Military School, and that this flag, which is constantly displayed, was a gift from the king, — all of which naturally recalls the incident of the White Cockade on the 5th and 6th of October.

Everybody, knowing the anti-revolutionary sentiments of the king and queen, wonders that he does not see a white flag floating above the Tuileries, and feels confident he will see it streaming from some of the other public buildings some fine morning.

On hearing of the discovery of the white flag, the populace flock to the barracks. The officers attempt to resist this invasion of their territory, but the soldiers will not aid them in the attempt. A white flag is found, — a flag about as large as your hand, — which had been stuck in a loaf of cake sent to the school by the dauphin.

They also find a number of hymns written in the king's honour, as well as some rather scurrilous songs about the Assembly, and several thousand anti-revolutionary pamphlets.

At the same time Bazire reported to the Assembly that the king's guards had shouted with joy on hearing of the defeats at Tournay and Quiévrain, and had even expressed the hope that Valenciennes would be taken in three days, and a foreign army be inside the walls of Paris within a fortnight.

Nor is this all. A good honest Frenchman named Joachim Murat, who enlisted in this guard under the impression that it was the Constitutional Guard its name signified, having tendered his resignation, an attempt is made to bribe him to secrecy and send him to Coblenz.

These Constitutional Guards are a formidable weapon in the hands of royalty, for may they not march upon the Assembly at any moment, and either make the deputies prisoners or kill them off, one after the other? Or what is there to hinder them from taking the king with them and proceeding to the frontier?

So on May 22nd, that is, exactly three weeks after the double defeat at Tournay and Quiévrain, Pétion, the new Mayor of Paris, elected by the efforts of the self-same queen he had brought back a prisoner from Varennes, — a man she has befriended purely out of animosity against Lafayette, a person who would gladly have permitted her to make her escape, — Pétion sends a communication to the commander of the National Guards, in which he expresses a fear of the king's possible departure, and urges the guards to keep a sharp watch and double the number of patrols.

A sharp watch on what and whom? Pétion does not say. What would be the use of saying the king and the Tuileries in so many words?

What is to be watched? The *enemy*. Around what shall the number of sentinels be double? Around the enemy's camp, of course.

What is the enemy's camp? The Tuileries.

Who is the enemy? The king.

There you have the situation in a nutshell.

It is Pétion, the Chartres pettifogger, who thus arrays himself against the King of France,—against a descendant of Saint Louis, and the great-grandson of Louis the Magnificent.

The King of France grieves, for he knows that this voice is far more potent than his own. He complains in a letter which the Directory of Paris causes to be posted on the walls of the city; but Pétion is in no wise disturbed. He makes no response, but his orders are carried out.

So Pétion is the real king! Do you desire further proof of it?

Bazire, in his report, recommends the disbandment of the King's Constitutional Guard, and the issuing of a warrant for the arrest of Monsieur de Brissac, its commander.

The iron is hot, and the Girondists hammer away upon it, like the sturdy blacksmiths that they are.

It is a question of "To be or not to be," for them.

The vote is taken that same day. The Constitutional Guard is disbanded; the arrest of Monsieur de Brissac is ordered; and the Tuileries is again intrusted to the guardianship of the National Guards.

Oh, Charny, Charny, where art thou? At Varennes, a year ago, thine attempt to rescue the queen with a force of three hundred cavalry failed; but what mightest thou not accomplish at the Tuileries with six thousand men?

But Charny is living a life of bliss, forgetting everything in Andrée's arms.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE RUE GUÉNÉGAUD AND THE TUILERIES.

THE reader may recollect the proffered resignation of De Grave, which the king partially, and Dumouriez positively, declined to accept. The latter was anxious to retain De Grave, as he had him completely under his control, and he did retain him for awhile; but when the news of the double defeat was received, he realised the necessity of sacrificing his Minister of War.

De Grave was consequently thrown over, — a sop to quiet the barking of the Jacobin Cerberus, — and Servan was installed in De Grave's place. But though Dumouriez proposed Servan to the king, he had no suspicion as to the kind of man his new colleague would prove to be, and what a crushing blow he was going to aim at royalty.

While the queen was eagerly scanning the horizon for some sign of the longed-for coming of the Austrians, another woman was also intently watching from the little parlour on the Rue Guénégaud. One typified the Counter-Revolution, the other the Revolution.

We allude, of course, to Madame Roland.

It was she who urged Servan's claims, as Madame de Staël had urged Narbonne's. During those terrible years of 1791, 1792, and 1793, the powerful influence of women was everywhere manifest.

Servan was always to be found in Madame Roland's *salon*. It was even asserted that she was Servan's mistress; and she allowed people to talk on, for, having a clear conscience, she could afford to smile at calumny.

Every day she saw her husband come home worn out with the contest. He felt that he and his colleague Clavières were being swept on to destruction; but as there was no visible proof to offer in support of such an allegation, he could do nothing.

When Dumouriez offered him the position of Minister of the Interior, Roland had imposed certain conditions.

"I have no fortune save my honour," he said, "and I wish to leave the cabinet with my honour unimpaired. I therefore stipulate that a secretary shall be present at all the sessions of the Royal Council, and make a note of each member's action, so that my record may be seen, in case I am ever accused of being wanting in patriotism."

Dumouriez had agreed to this; but Dumouriez was one of those men who are always ready to promise, and then forget, or keep their promises as best suits their convenience.

As Roland could not secure this private record, he had resorted to publicity, and established a journal called "The Thermometer;" but he knew only too well that the disclosure of some of the proceedings of the council would afford treasonable aid to many of his country's enemies.

The presence of Servan was a help to Roland; still, the influence of the new member being neutralised by Dumouriez, the council made very little progress.

When Roland returned home on the evening of May 29th he reported to his wife the news of the disbandment of the Constitutional Guards and of Brissac's arrest.

"What has been done with the discharged guardsmen?" inquired Madame Roland.

"Nothing."

"They are at large, then?"

"Yes, only they have been ordered to lay aside their blue uniforms."

"Take my word for it, by to-morrow they will have on red uniforms, and be stalking about the town as Swiss Guards."

Sure enough, the next day the streets of Paris were dotted with red uniforms. The discharged guardsmen had changed their coats, that was all. They were there in Paris beckoning the invader onward, and standing ready to open the gates of the city to him.

Roland and Servan could see no remedy for this state of things; but Madame Roland put a pen in Servan's hand, and dictated the following order:—

“In view of the approaching festival of the Great Federation and of the Anniversary of the Taking of the Bastille on July 14th, we strongly recommend the establishment of a camp of twenty thousand volunteers near Paris.”

But after writing the first clause, Servan dropped his pen.

“The king will never give his consent to this!” he exclaimed.

“It is not to the king that this measure should be proposed, but to the Assembly. Moreover, it is not as a member of the king's council you are to propose it, but as a private citizen.”

“You are right!” exclaimed Servan. “With this and an edict against the priests we shall be able to hold the king in check.”

“Yes, for the priests form the strongest Counter-Revolutionary factors in family life and society in general,” responded the clear-sighted woman. “The priesthood have added this article to the Creed. *And those who pay their taxes shall be damned.* Within the past six months fifty constitutional priests have been killed, their houses plundered, and their fields devastated. Now let the Assembly issue a strong edict against the rebellious priests. Finish your motion; Roland will prepare the other.”

Servan obeyed, while Roland wrote as follows:—

“Any rebellious priest may be sent out of the kingdom at a month's notice, provided his removal be requested by twenty registered voters and approved by the officers of the district.”

"I will sign my proposal for a volunteer camp as if I were a private individual," remarked Servan.

"And Vergniaud shall propose the decree against the priests," cried the husband and wife almost in the same breath.

The very next day Servan read his motion before the Assembly, and Vergniaud put the other document in his pocket, promising to produce it at the first opportune moment.

The following evening Servan attended the Council as usual. His action in the Assembly was of course warmly discussed. Roland and Clavières approved; Dumouriez, Lacoste, and Duranthon disapproved.

"You have taken a very important step to-day, monsieur," remarked Dumouriez.

"I am perfectly well aware of it," responded Servan.

"Had you any orders from the king to this effect?"

"No, monsieur."

"Did you consult with your colleagues in relation to the measure?"

"No more than with the king, I admit."

"Then what induced you to take this step?"

"Because I had an undoubted right to do so, both as a private individual and as a citizen."

"Then it was as a private citizen you introduced this incendiary motion?"

"Yes."

"Then why did you add the title of Minister of War to your signature?"

"Because I desired to prove to the Assembly that as a public official I was ready to support my demands as a private citizen."

"What you have done is unworthy both of an honest citizen and a royal minister," exclaimed Dumouriez, much excited.

"Permit me to say that I must be my own judge in all matters affecting my conscience," responded Servan. "If

I desire any other judge in such delicate matters, his name will not be Dumouriez, I assure you."

Dumouriez turned pale, and advanced a step towards Servan. Servan placed his hand on the hilt of his sword. Dumouriez did the same.

Just then, the king entered the room. He was still ignorant of Servan's action, and no further allusion was made to it at that time.

The next day, the Assembly began to discuss the motion to establish a camp of twenty thousand volunteers near Paris.

The king was overwhelmed with consternation on hearing this news, and sent for Dumouriez.

"You are a faithful subject, monsieur," he remarked. "I know how faithfully and efficiently you have served the interests of royalty. You are certainly a striking contrast to that despicable Servan in this respect."

"I thank your Majesty," replied Dumouriez. Then, after a moment's pause, he added:—

"Is your Majesty aware that this obnoxious decree has passed the Assembly?"

"No. Still, that does n't matter. I had fully decided to exercise my right of veto in that event."

Dumouriez shook his head.

"You would not advise it?" asked the king.

"Sire," responded Dumouriez, "destitute as you are of all adequate means of resistance, and exposed to the suspicions of the greater part of the French nation, the hatred of the Jacobins, and the crafty policy of the Republican party, such an act on your part would be equivalent to a declaration of war against the Assembly."

"So be it. I have been forced to make a declaration of war against my friends outside; I may as well make one against my enemies in this country."

"Sire, in the one case you have a strong chance of success, in the other, an even stronger chance of defeat."

"Is it possible that you do not understand the object of assembling these twenty thousand men?"

“If your Majesty will grant me five minutes, I hope to prove that I not only know the object of this action on the part of our enemies, but that I also know what the result of it will be.”

“Go on, monsieur; I am all attention.”

“The originators of this movement, Sire, are quite as much the country’s enemies as the king’s.”

“You see that! You admit that!” exclaimed the king.

“I will say even more. The accomplishment of their desires is likely to prove most disastrous to them.”

“Well, then —”

“Permit me, Sire —”

“Yes, yes! go on!”

“The Minister of War did very wrong to suggest the assembling of twenty thousand men near Paris while our armies are so weak, our frontier so unprotected, and our treasury so empty.”

“Wrong! I should say so.”

“It was not only wrong, but the height of imprudence on his part. It will be extremely dangerous to have such a large number of undisciplined troops near the Assembly, — troops that are likely to yield to the influence of the first ambitious person they come in contact with.”

“It is really the Girondists who are acting through Servan.”

“Yes, but the Girondists will not profit by it.”

“Perhaps the Feuillants will, then.”

“No, neither the Feuillants nor the Girondists, but the Jacobins, whose affiliations extend throughout the entire kingdom, and who will find about nineteen out of every twenty of these volunteers members of their society. You may rest assured that the originators of this measure will be ruined by it.”

“If I really thought that, it would console me,” said the king.

“In my opinion you can hardly do otherwise than sanction this edict, which — though instigated by the deepest

malice and fiercely opposed by your friends — has nevertheless been enthusiastically adopted. Every one seems to be blind to the effects of this unfortunate measure; and, even if you vetoed it, it would be carried into execution just the same, and instead of having twenty thousand men assembled according to law, and consequently submissive to authority, at the approaching festival we should have forty thousand exasperated, excited men flocking in from the provinces, — enough to overturn the Constitution, the Assembly, and the Throne itself. If we had been the victors instead of the vanquished in the recent engagements," added Dumouriez, lowering his voice, "and I could thus have had an excuse for making Lafayette commander-in-chief, and placing one hundred thousand men at his disposal, I should not advise you to sanction this decree; but we are worsted at home and abroad, so I strongly advise you to sign it."

At that very moment, some one rapped at the door. "Come in!" said the king.

It was Thierry, one of the king's valets.

"Monsieur Duranthon, the Minister of Justice, desires to confer with you, Sire."

"What can he want? Go and see, Dumouriez."

The instant the minister left the room, the tapestry which concealed the door leading into the queen's apartment was lifted, and Marie Antoinette appeared.

"Be firm, Sire!" she exclaimed. "This Dumouriez is a Jacobin like all the rest. Did n't he put on the red cap at their club? As for Lafayette, you know very well I would rather perish than owe my salvation to him."

And as the sound of the minister's returning footsteps was heard, the tapestry fell, and the vision disappeared.

CHAPTER XL.

THE VETO.

Just as the portière fell, concealing one door, the other opened.

"Sire," said Dumouriez, "the Minister of Justice comes to report that an edict against the priests, introduced by Vergniaud, has just passed the Assembly."

"This is nothing more or less than a conspiracy," cried the king, springing up. "How was this edict worded?"

"Here it is, Sire; Duranthon brought it to you. I thought your Majesty might honour me by giving me your opinion on it before conferring with the entire Council."

"Very well. Give me the paper."

The king read the decree aloud in an agitated voice; then, crumpling it up in his hands and throwing it far from him, he exclaimed:—

"I will never sanction such a measure, never!"

"You must pardon me, Sire, if I say that I am again obliged to differ with your Majesty."

"I may hesitate in political matters, monsieur," responded the king, "but never in religious matters. In political matters, one must decide by means of the intellect, and that is liable to err; but in all religious matters I must decide in accordance with the dictates of conscience, and conscience is infallible."

"But, Sire, more than a year ago you approved the law requiring priests to take the oath to support the Constitution."

"But I was forced to do it."

“That was the proper time to affix your veto, Sire. This edict is only the natural outcome of the first. The first edict has been productive of boundless evil in France; this second edict provides a remedy for those evils. It is severe, perhaps, but not cruel. The first decree was armed against religion, and prevented freedom of thought in matters of worship. The new law is purely political in its nature, and tends to insure public safety and tranquillity. It also protects unperjured priests from persecution. Your veto, instead of protecting them, will deprive them of legal protection, and thereby endanger their lives. I think, Sire, — you will, I am sure, pardon a soldier’s frankness, — I think that, having approved the former decree, which made the oath of allegiance compulsory, your veto of the second decree, which can alone prevent the impending deluge of blood, would make your Majesty responsible for the crimes to which it is sure to lead.”

“And to what greater crimes can it lead than those already committed?” demanded a voice from the farther end of the room.

Dumouriez started, for he recognised the queen’s clear, rather metallic tones.

“Ah, madame, I should have greatly preferred settling this matter with the king,” he exclaimed.

“Monsieur,” the queen responded, with a bitter smile at Dumouriez, and an almost scornful glance at the king, “I have only one question to put to you.”

“And what is that, madame?”

“Do you think that the king ought to submit any longer to Roland’s threats, Servan’s knavery, and Clavières’ insolence?”

“No, madame. I am as indignant on that subject as you can possibly be. I even marvel at the king’s patience; and, as the subject has come up, I earnestly implore the king to make an entire change in his cabinet.”

“Entire?” repeated the king.

“Yes. I strongly advise your Majesty to dismiss all six

of us, and select advisers who are not identified with any particular party, provided such persons can be found."

"No, no," protested the king; "I want you to remain, you and Lacoste and Duranthon, — but pray do me the favour to rid me of those three insolent mischief-makers, for I swear to you my patience is exhausted."

"It is a dangerous undertaking, Sire."

"And you shrink from danger?" asked the queen.

"No, madame; but I must impose certain conditions."

"And what are they?" demanded the queen, haughtily.

"I am the target of the three political factions. The Feuillants, the Girondists, and the Jacobins are all fighting me. I have lost my popularity; and as one cannot hold the reins of government unless one has the support of public sentiment, I can really be of service only under one condition."

"Well?"

"It must be publicly announced, Sire, that I — I and my two colleagues — remain in the Cabinet only to sanction the two decrees which have just passed the Assembly."

"That cannot be!" cried the king.

"Impossible!" cried the queen.

"You refuse?"

"My worst enemy could not impose harder conditions upon me, monsieur," said the king.

"But, upon my word of honour as a gentleman and a soldier, I believe them essential to your safety, Sire."

Then, turning to the queen, he added: "Madame, I do not say this for your own sake, for I know that the brave daughter of Maria Theresa not only scorns danger, but, like her royal mother, is ever eager to welcome it; but pray remember that you are not alone. Think of the king, think of your children, and, instead of pushing them into the abyss, join hands with me in endeavouring to hold his Majesty back from the precipice over which his throne is tottering."

Then, addressing himself directly to the king, he added:

“If I thought your sanction of these decrees advisable before, your desire to dismiss these three secretaries makes your indorsement of these obnoxious measures indispensable. Otherwise, the people will be sure to regard you as an enemy to the Constitution, the discharged ministers will pose as martyrs, and your crown and your life will both be in imminent danger. So far as I myself am concerned, I warn your Majesty that, even to serve you, I cannot go contrary—I will not say to my principles—but to my convictions. Duranthon and Lacoste think exactly as I do, though I am not authorised to speak for them. So far as I myself am concerned, as I said before, sire, I cannot remain in the Cabinet unless your Majesty sanctions both these measures.”

The king made an impatient movement.

Dumouriez bowed, and started towards the door.

The king exchanged a rapid glance with the queen.

“Monsieur Dumouriez!” said her Majesty.

Dumouriez paused.

“Do you realise, monsieur,” she continued, “how hard it is for the king to sanction a decree that brings to Paris twenty thousand miscreants who may murder us?”

“The danger is great, I know, madame. All the more reason we should face, but not exaggerate it. The decree authorises the Executive to select the place of encampment, and permits the Secretary of War to appoint the officers and decide on the mode of organisation.”

“And the Minister of War is Servan?”

“No, Sire. From the moment of Servan’s retirement, the Minister of War will be myself—”

“You?” exclaimed the king.

“You Minister of War!” repeated the queen.

“Yes, madame, and I hope to turn against your enemies the sword now suspended over your heads. Suppose I should select Soissons as the place of encampment, and appoint as commander some firm, wise, loyal lieutenant-general, with two trusty marshals as subordinates. They

could form these men into battalions; and as there would be four or five of these divisions, the Minister of War might take advantage of some of the requests of generals in the field to send more or less of these troops to the frontier. In that event this decree will be of positive service to us, though passed with the intention of injuring us."

"But are you sure of obtaining permission to establish the camp at Soissons?"

"Beyond a doubt."

"In that case, take the War Department."

"As Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sire, the responsibility devolving upon me is comparatively slight; but as Minister of War, it will be very different. Your generals are all bitter enemies of mine. You have just had convincing proofs of their incompetence. I shall be held accountable for all their shortcomings; but as your Majesty's life, as well as the lives of the queen and your children, are at stake, as well as the maintenance of the Constitution, I accept the task. We are entirely agreed concerning the indorsement of the edict assembling the twenty thousand volunteers, I understand."

"As you are Secretary of War, I shall leave that matter entirely to you."

"And how about the decree in regard to the priests?"

"I shall never give my consent to that, as I told you before."

"But your sanction of this decree becomes an absolute necessity, by reason of your sanction of the former edict concerning the priesthood, as I explained a few minutes ago."

"Because I committed one fault, for which I reproach myself severely, — is that a reason why I should be guilty of another even greater than the first?"

"Sire!" exclaimed the queen, warningly.

Louis turned to his wife in evident astonishment.

"You, too, madame?" he exclaimed.

"Sire, I must acknowledge that, after hearing your

minister's explanation, I entirely agree with him on this point," remarked the queen.

"In that case —" said the king.

"Well, sire?" said Dumouriez.

"I consent, but only on condition that you rid me of those three obnoxious ministers as soon as possible."

"Believe me, Sire, I will take advantage of the very first opportunity to do so, and I feel sure this opportunity will soon present itself."

And, bowing low to their Majesties, Dumouriez withdrew. The royal couple gazed after their new Minister of War until the door closed behind him.

"You made me a sign to accede to his proposal," said the king. "Now what have you to say in regard to it?"

"Sanction the military measure first. Let the camp be established at Soissons, then let Dumouriez scatter the men as he suggests. Afterwards, — well, afterwards, we will see what it is best to do about the other decree."

"But he will hold me to my promise, madame."

"In the mean time he will have compromised himself, and you will have him completely in your power."

"On the contrary, it is he who will have me completely in his power, madame. I have given him my word."

"Nonsense! there's a remedy for that when one has been reared by Monsieur de la Vauguyon!"

And, taking the king's arm, she led him into the adjoining room.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE OPPORTUNITY.

As we have previously remarked, the real war now was between the Rue Guénégaud and the Tuileries, — between Madame Roland and the queen.

Strange to say, both these women exerted an influence over their husbands which led all four to their death, though they travelled there by exactly opposite roads.

The events which we have narrated took place on June 10th. On the evening of the following day, Servan entered Madame Roland's little salon in the best of spirits.

"Congratulate me, my friend," he exclaimed. "I have had the honour of being turned out of the Cabinet."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Madame Roland.

"It is a fact. This morning I went to the Tuileries to see the king about several matters connected with my department, and when these had been attended to, I broached the subject of the camp for twenty thousand volunteers; but at the very first word I uttered on that subject his Majesty turned his back on me, and this evening Dumouriez came, in the king's name, to relieve me of the War portfolio."

"Dumouriez?"

"Yes."

"He is playing a despicable part, but that does not surprise me. Ask Roland what I said to him in relation to that man the first evening he called here. Besides, we have it on very good authority that he holds daily conferences with the queen."

"He is a traitor."

"No, but he is exceedingly ambitious. Go and find Roland and Clavières."

"Where is Roland?"

"He is attending to his duties at the interior department."

"And how do you intend to occupy yourself in the mean time?"

"I am going to write a letter which I will show you on your return. Go!"

"You are certainly that famous Goddess of Reason whom philosophers have so long invoked."

"And whom conscientious people have found. Don't come back without Clavières."

"That will probably necessitate some delay."

"I need an hour."

"Take it; and may the Genius of France inspire you!"

Servan departed, and the door had scarcely closed behind him before Madame Roland was at her desk inditing the following letter:—

SIRE :

The present condition of affairs in France cannot last long. The crisis is at hand, and the explosion that is sure to ensue will affect your Majesty as much as the entire country.

Honoured with your confidence and placed in a position where I owe you the truth, I shall venture to speak it. Indeed, this is an obligation which you yourself have imposed upon me.

The French people have had a Constitution bestowed upon them. It makes some persons discontented, and some rebellious; but a majority of the people wish to maintain it, and have sworn to do so at the cost of their lives, if need be. They have even greeted with joy a civil war which seems likely to afford them an effectual means of insuring the maintenance of the Constitution.

Meanwhile, the minority, buoyed up by hope, have strained every nerve to gain the advantage; hence a continual struggle against the laws, and the anarchy which all good citizens deplore, but which opponents of the Constitution have used as a pretext for deriding the new order of things. From this same cause, too, arises the dissensions which are continually showing themselves; for indifference is

nowhere apparent. There is a universal demand for either the abolition or the maintenance of the Constitution.

I abstain from any examination into, or criticism of, the Constitution at this present time, and confine myself simply to the exigencies of the case.

Your Majesty enjoyed certain important prerogatives which you believe rightfully pertain to royalty. Reared with the idea of maintaining these prerogatives, it is naturally unpleasant to you to see them taken away; and a desire for their restoration, on your part, is as natural as your regret at their abolition.

These feelings, which are only natural to the human heart, have entered into the calculations of the enemies of the Revolution, and they have counted upon your secret favour until circumstances permit of open protection. These tendencies do not escape the notice of the nation, and very naturally excite distrust.

Your Majesty has consequently been continually compelled to choose between the two alternatives of yielding to former habits and personal preferences, or of making those personal sacrifices which philosophy prompts and necessity demands. This has caused you to doubt whether it would be better to encourage the malcontents who are disturbing the peace of the nation, or appease the masses by uniting yourself with them. Everything has an end, however, and the end of this uncertainty has come at last.

Now, will his Majesty openly ally himself with those who pretend to desire to amend the Constitution, or generously and unreservedly devote himself to insuring its success? This is the question which inevitably arises from the present condition of things.

The discussion of that profound metaphysical problem as to whether the French people are, or are not, prepared for liberty, is not in order here, for it does not matter so much what our nation may be a century hence, as to discover of what the present generation is capable.

The declaration of human rights has become a political gospel, and the Constitution a religion, for which the people are willing to die. This spirit of enthusiasm has risen to such a pitch that it has sometimes taken the law into its own hands where the law itself was not strong enough to repress disturbers of the peace. In this way, the estates and property of *émigrés*, or of persons known to be in sympathy with them, have been exposed to revengeful ravages; and it is in consequence of this fact that the authorities in many departments have been obliged to deal so severely with priests whom public opinion has proscribed and victimised.

In this shock of conflicting interests, feelings and prejudices have very naturally become intensified, and our country is no longer merely a phrase for the imagination to dwell upon and embellish, but a living, sentient being for which sacrifices must be made, and which becomes all the more dear to us by reason of the very solicitude it arouses in our breasts. The nation has been created by herculean efforts, reared in the midst of anxiety, and loved quite as much on account of all it has cost us as on account of the hopes it embodies. Hence, every attack made upon it only adds just so much more fuel to the popular enthusiasm felt for it.

To what heights will this enthusiasm not arise when the united forces of our foreign enemies combine with internecine conspiracies and intrigues against our nation!

The excitement is intense in every part of the kingdom, and is sure to result in a frightful explosion unless it is quieted by a reasonable amount of confidence in your Majesty's intentions, — a confidence which cannot be established by protestations, but must be based upon irrefutable proofs.

It is evident to the French nation that the Constitution will become an established fact, and the government become endowed with all needful power, as soon as your Majesty is ready to sustain them both to the full extent of your ability as chief executive, to allay the anxiety of the people, and refuse any further aid and encouragement to malcontents.

For example, two important decrees have just been passed by the Assembly, — decrees which intimately affect public tranquillity and the welfare of the State. Your delay in signing these edicts arouses distrust, and, if it be prolonged, is sure to create deep dissatisfaction, which in the present state of perturbation may lead — I feel compelled to say — to frightful excesses.

It is impossible to draw back now, — further temporising is out of the question. The Revolution has gained a powerful ascendancy over our minds, and will become an accomplished fact, even at the cost of rivers of blood, unless your Majesty promptly avails yourself of the means of averting these misfortunes while there is yet time.

I am well aware that many persons are of the opinion that anything can be prevented or accomplished by extreme measures; but if force should be employed to constrain the Assembly, — if a reign of terror should be inaugurated in Paris, — all France would rise in indignation, and, engulfed in the horrors of a civil war, the nation

would develop that gloomy energy — the mother alike of virtues and of crimes — which always proves fatal to those who arouse it.

The welfare of the State and the happiness of your Majesty are closely connected. No human power can separate them. Cruel suffering and dire misfortunes are certain to environ your throne, unless you establish it on a constitutional basis, and strengthen it by the peace and tranquillity the Constitution must eventually secure to us.

It is evident, therefore, that the state of public sentiment, political policy, the general course of events, and your Majesty's own interests, all combine to make it absolutely necessary that you should unite with the Assembly in assenting to the desires of the nation. These same reasons render what conscience sets forth as a duty a necessity as well; but the natural sensibility of an affectionate people is ready and even eager to seize upon any pretext for manifesting its gratitude to you.

You have been cruelly deceived, Sire, by those who have taught you to distrust the people, and have alienated you from subjects so affectionately inclined towards you. It is this distrust on your part, doubtless, that has caused you to adopt a course that creates so much dissatisfaction; but let it be seen that you are determined to do everything in your power to insure the success of that Constitution upon which your subjects set such store, and you will soon become once more the object of their fervent blessings.

The behaviour of the priests in many localities, the pretexts which fanaticism furnishes to disturbers of the public peace, has made it necessary to pass a law against such agitators. Would that your Majesty could see fit to promptly sanction this decree! Public tranquillity imperatively demands it. The safety of the priesthood demands it. If this law is not put into operation, the authorities in the departments will be obliged to adopt violent measures, as has already been done in many places, and the exasperated people will rush into all sorts of excesses.

The efforts of our enemies, the agitation apparent in the capital, the anxiety excited by the conduct of your guards, the satisfaction your Majesty evinces in a proclamation which was certainly extremely impolitic, to say the least, in the face of existing circumstances, the situation of Paris, its close proximity to the frontier, — make the establishment of a military camp in our immediate neighbourhood an imperative necessity.

This measure, whose wisdom and prudence commend it to all sensible persons, still awaits your Majesty's sanction. Why does

delay impart an air of reluctance and regret to this sanction, when a prompt assent would win all hearts?

Already the opposition of the staff officers of the Paris National Guards to this measure has excited the suspicion that this opposition is instigated by those high in authority. If there be much more delay, the disappointed populace will begin to regard their sovereign as the friend and accomplice of conspirators.

Just Heaven! hast thou afflicted the monarchs of the earth with blindness? Will they never accept any counsel but that which leads to ruin?

I know that the stern language of truth is rarely heard and is seldom welcome near the throne. I know, too, that the reason revolutions become necessary is due to this very fact, that the truth is so rarely heard by royalty. I know, too, that I owe it to your Majesty, not only as a private citizen amenable to the laws, but also as a cabinet minister honoured with your confidence, or at least invested with functions which imply this confidence on your part; and I know of nothing that can prevent me from fulfilling the duty my conscience imposes upon me.

It is in this same spirit I reiterate my firm belief in the urgent necessity, as well as the expediency, of complying with the requirements of the law which ordains the appointment of a recording secretary for your Council. It is of the utmost importance that the deliberations of the Council should be characterised by gravity, wisdom, and prudence; and if Cabinet ministers are to be held accountable, their opinions and acts should be duly recorded. Had such a record been kept, I should not be writing to your Majesty at this moment.

Life is of very little consequence to a man who considers his duty of paramount importance; but next to the happiness of feeling that his duty has been fulfilled, is that of being able to prove that it has been faithfully performed; and, in fact, this last may justly be regarded a duty on the part of any public man.

June 10th, 1792,

The Year IV. of Liberty.

Madame Roland was just finishing her letter when Servan, Clavières, and Roland came in.

In a few words she unfolded her plan. The letter which she now proceeded to read to them was to be read to the other three ministers on the following day.

They would either approve it and append their signatures to it, or reject it; and, in the latter case, Servan and Clavières would immediately tender their resignation, impelled to do so by this refusal on the part of their colleagues to sign a letter which seemed to express the real sentiments and desires of the French people.

Then they would lay the letter before the National Assembly, in order that there might be no doubt as to the cause of the withdrawal of these three patriots from the Cabinet.

The letter proved eminently satisfactory to the three friends. There was not a single word that they desired to change; but it was very different when the letter was submitted to Dumouriez, Duranthon, and Lacoste the next day.

All three of them declared that they cordially approved the sentiments therein contained, but differed in regard to the manner of expressing them. At last they declined to sign the letter, on the plea that it would be better to communicate its contents to the king in person.

That same evening Roland sent the letter to the king, signed by himself alone; and almost immediately Lacoste sent Roland and Clavières their dismissal.

The desired opportunity was not long in presenting itself, as Dumouriez had predicted, and the king had not been slow in availing himself of it.

The next day Roland's letter was read in the Assembly, together with the announcement of his dismissal, and that of his two colleagues, Clavières and Servan.

The Assembly declared, by an overwhelming majority, that the three ministers merited the sincere gratitude of their countrymen.

So war was declared both inside and outside of the boundaries of France; and the Assembly was only waiting to learn the king's intentions concerning the two decrees before dealing the opening blows.



Portrait of Jean Marie Roland.

Photo-Etching. — From Engraving by Levachez.



CHAPTER XLII.

MONSIEUR DE LA VAUGUYON'S PUPIL.

JUST as the Assembly was passing a vote of thanks to the three retiring ministers, and issuing an order to have Roland's letter printed and distributed through all the different departments of the kingdom, Dumouriez entered the hall.

His bravery was acknowledged, but no one had supposed he was so audacious.

He had heard what was going on, and had come to take the bull by the horns.

A remarkable report on the condition of the military forces of the kingdom furnished a pretext for his visit. As Minister of War he had prepared this report, with the assistance of the others, in a single night. It was an attack upon Servan; but as Servan had only been Minister of War for ten or twelve days, the blame really fell upon De Grave and his predecessor, Narbonne.

Dumouriez was in the best of spirits. He had just left the king, who had renewed his promise to sanction the two decrees, and had even declared that some of the clergy, whom he had consulted in order to satisfy his conscience, were of the same opinion as Dumouriez in regard to the matter.

So the Minister of War walked straight to the platform in the midst of a frightful hubbub, and coolly demanded a hearing.

It was granted, and the intense curiosity to hear what he had to say produced a calm.

"Gentlemen, General Gouvion has just been killed. God has rewarded him for his courage. He died fighting the enemies of France. He was fortunate, indeed. He was

not a witness of our disgraceful dissensions. I envy him his fate!"

These words, uttered with great dignity and an air of profound melancholy, made a deep impression on the Assembly. Moreover, the announcement of Gouvion's death diverted the attention of the deputies from the topic under consideration. They began to consider what action the Assembly ought to take in the matter, and it was finally decided that the president should send a letter of condolence to the general's family.

After this Dumouriez again requested a hearing, and it was granted him.

He then drew his report from his pocket, but had hardly read the little statement of the War Department before the Girondists and Jacobins began to hoot and yell, in order to prevent him from concluding the document.

But, in spite of the noise and confusion, he read the opening paragraphs in such clear, ringing tones that his audience could not help discovering that this exordium strongly censured party dissensions, and also enlarged upon the respect due a cabinet minister.

Such assurance on his part was well calculated to exasperate his hearers, even if they had not been incensed beforehand.

"Just hear him!" cried Guadet. "He feels his power so much already that he dares to take us to task."

"And why not?" retorted Dumouriez, coolly, turning and looking his opponent full in the face.

This exhibition of audacity quite vanquished his adversaries, or at least, being anxious to hear what he had to say, they listened.

The report was clear, exhaustive, and able; and, in spite of the prejudice against the minister, he was twice applauded.

As Lacuée, a member of the Committee on Military Affairs, rose to reply, Dumouriez rolled up the report, and seemed about to replace it in his pocket.

The Girondists observed the movement; and one of them called out: "Look at the traitor. He is putting his report in his pocket. He means to run off with it. Let us prevent it. The document will serve to confound him by and by."

On hearing these cries, Dumouriez, who had not made a single movement towards the door, took the report from his pocket, and handed it to an usher.

A secretary took it from him, and glanced over the last page in search of the signature.

"Gentlemen, this report is not signed," he remarked.

"Sign it! sign it!" resounded from all sides.

"That was certainly my intention," responded Dumouriez. "It was drawn up so carefully I feel no hesitancy about signing my name to it. Give me a pen and ink."

Some one offered him a quill wet with ink; and Dumouriez, placing one foot on the steps of the platform, signed the report on his knee.

The usher attempted to take it again; but Dumouriez pushed him aside, and walked up and deposited the report on the presiding officer's desk himself. Then he sauntered out of the hall, pausing occasionally to exchange a few words with friends here and there.

His entry had been greeted with jeers and yells; but his departure was attended with breathless silence, and the spectators in the galleries hurried out to take another look at the man who had dared to defy the entire Assembly.

Several Royalist deputies also left the hall and hastened after Dumouriez. In their opinion, there could not be the slightest doubt that Dumouriez had gone over to their party; and this was precisely what Dumouriez had foreseen, and resolved to guard against when he made the king promise to sign the two edicts.

"Well, general, there's the very devil to pay in there," remarked one of these deputies.

"That's quite proper, as I think it more than likely the devil is at the bottom of it."

"They are even talking of sending you to Orléans to be tried."

"That's all right. I need a rest, and I can take the baths and get plenty of fresh milk and quiet there."

Surrounded by such an escort, Dumouriez repaired to the palace, where the king greeted him most cordially, for the Minister of War had now compromised himself irretrievably.

The new Council was already in session. For Minister of the Interior, Dumouriez had proposed Mourgues, a Protestant, a member of several scientific societies, and a former member of the Feuillant Club; and the king had accepted him.

For Minister of Foreign Affairs, he had proposed Maulde, Sémonville, or Naillac; and the king had selected Naillac.

As Minister of Finance, he had suggested Vergennes, a nephew of the former secretary; but though this nomination was entirely acceptable to the king, that gentleman declined the honour.

It was consequently decided that for a brief period the duties of Secretary of the Treasury should be performed by the Secretary of the Interior, and that, while waiting for the return of Naillac, who was out of the city, Dumouriez should continue in charge of Foreign Affairs.

These four ministers did not attempt to blind themselves to the gravity of the situation, and agreed among themselves that they would resign if, after the dismissal of Roland, Servan, and Clavières, the king did not keep the promise which was the price of this dismissal.

As we have remarked, before the new Council was already in session, and the king knew what had occurred at the Assembly, he congratulated Dumouriez heartily on the firm stand he had taken, and immediately signed the decree for the establishment of a military camp, but announced his intention of deferring his sanction of the edict concerning the priests until the next day, as he still felt some scruples which might be dispelled by his confessor.

The ministers glanced at one another; an unpleasant suspicion flitted through their minds. Still, this delay might really be needed to strengthen the king's rather timid conscience.

The next day the Council again called the king's attention to the matter. The night's reflection seemed to have accomplished its work. The king's will, if not his conscience, had become strengthened, for he announced his intention of vetoing the edict.

One after another, the ministers — Dumouriez first, as it was to him that the royal promise had been personally given — protested strongly, but respectfully.

The king listened with closed eyes, after the manner of a man who has fully made up his mind. When they had all had their say, he replied: "Gentlemen, I have already written to the President of the Assembly, informing him of my decision. One of you will countersign it, and then all four of you will take the letter to the Assembly."

This was an order issued in the manner of the old *régime*, but not much to the taste of ministers made responsible for their every act by the Constitution.

"Sire, have you any other orders to give?" asked Dumouriez, after another interchange of glances with his colleagues.

"No," answered the king, curtly, and then left the room.

The ministers held a hurried conference, and decided to request an audience for the following day, when they would resign in a body, without offering any explanation.

Dumouriez returned home. There he found notes from three different persons announcing dangerous gatherings in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine and secret conferences at Santerre's house; and he immediately wrote to the king warning him.

An hour afterwards he received a note, not signed by the king, but in his handwriting, saying: —

"Do not imagine, monsieur, that I am to be intimidated by threats. My mind is made up."

Dumouriez seized a pen and wrote, in his turn: —

SIRE:

You misjudge me if you suppose me capable of resorting to such means to maintain my position. My colleagues and myself have the honour to request the favour of an audience at ten o'clock to-morrow morning. Meanwhile, I beg your Majesty to have the goodness to accept my resignation, and to select a successor who can take my place within twenty-four hours.

He despatched this note by a messenger in order to make sure of a reply. The messenger left at midnight; half an hour afterwards, he returned with the following note: —

“I will meet my ministers at ten to-morrow, and we will talk over what you have written.”

The Counter-Revolution was evidently progressing fast at the palace. Royalty must feel that it had some reliable support.

First, there was the Constitutional Guard. True, the men had been disbanded, but they were ready to respond to the first call.

Then there were seven or eight thousand Knights of the Order of St. Louis, and three Swiss battalions of sixteen hundred men each,—a formidable body of men, firm as the rocks of old Helvetia.

Better than all was a letter from Lafayette, in which the following paragraph occurred:—

“Stand firm, Sire. Strong in the authority conferred upon you by the National Assembly, you will find all good Frenchmen arrayed in defence of your throne!”

It was evident, therefore, that something might be done to stay the on-rushing tide, after all. The plan was this: to reassemble the Constitutional Guards, and summon the Knights of St. Louis and the Swiss mercenaries; then, on the same day and at the same hour, close the Assembly

and the Jacobin Club, convene all the Royalist members of the National Guard, — about fifteen thousand men, all told, — and then await the arrival of Lafayette, who by forced marches could reach Paris from Ardennes in three days.

But unfortunately the queen would not listen to the idea of Lafayette's assisting them. He was a moderate Revolutionist, and the queen thought a moderate Revolution might establish itself upon a lasting basis, while a Jacobin Revolution was sure to run itself out in a short time.

Oh, if Charny were only there! But no one knew where Charny was, or, if they did, felt that it would be too humiliating to the woman, if not to the queen, to send for him after all that had passed.

The night was spent in heated discussion at the palace. The court had means of defence, and even of attack, but there was no strong, capable hand to direct and arrange.

The next morning, at ten o'clock, the ministers appeared. This was June the 16th. The king received them.

Duranthon acted as spokesman, and respectfully tendered the joint resignations of himself and colleagues.

"I understand," responded the king. "It is a question of accountability."

"Yes, Sire, of royal accountability," responded Lacoste. "You cannot doubt that we are ready and willing to die for your Majesty; but by dying for a pack of mischief-making priests, we should only hasten the downfall of royalty."

"Do you still entertain the same sentiments you expressed in your letter?" asked the king, turning to Dumouriez.

"Yes, Sire."

"Very well," answered the king, gloomily. "If your minds are fully made up, there is nothing for me to do but accept your resignations."

All four bowed respectfully.

There were several courtiers waiting in the anteroom. They watched the ministers as they came out, and saw by the expression of their faces that their reign was over.

Some rejoiced, others were terrified. The atmosphere was heavy, and every one felt that a violent storm was impending.

At the gate of the Tuileries, Dumouriez met Roumainvilliers, the commander of the National Guards. He seemed to be greatly excited.

"I have come for orders, monsieur," he exclaimed.

"I am no longer Minister of War," answered Dumouriez.

"But there are riotous meetings in several of the districts."

"Go to the king for your orders."

"But the case is urgent."

"Make haste, then. The king has accepted our resignations."

Roumainvilliers ran upstairs.

On June 17th, Dumouriez received a visit from Chambonnas and Lajard, who came in compliance with the king's order, — Chambonnas to receive the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, and Lajard, the War portfolio.

On the morning of the 18th, Dumouriez went to the palace to submit the account of secret expenditures in his department. Many persons, on seeing him re-enter the Tuileries, fancied he must have been reinstated, and stepped up to congratulate him.

"Be careful, gentlemen," remarked Dumouriez. "You have to deal, not with a man who is coming in, but going out. I came to submit my accounts."

After that, every one seemed disposed to keep at a safe distance.

Presently an usher entered, and announced that the king would see General Dumouriez in his bed-chamber.

The monarch seemed to have regained his wonted serenity. The examination of the accounts being concluded, Dumouriez rose.

"So you are going to join Luckner?" said the king, turning around in his arm-chair.

"Yes, Sire, I shall be glad indeed to turn my back upon

this detestable city. I have but one regret, — that is to leave you in such peril.”

“I am always in more or less danger, I suppose,” responded the king, indifferently.

“Sire, you must understand that I cannot be actuated by self-interest in what I say to you now. Once out of your Cabinet, I am for ever separated from you. It is from a feeling of the deepest regard and attachment to yourself and from a sincere love of country, — in short, it is for the sake of your crown, your wife, and your children, — it is in the name of all that is dear and sacred to the heart of man, that I entreat your Majesty not to persist in vetoing this bill. Such obduracy on your part will do no good; on the contrary, it will prove your ruin.”

“Say no more,” exclaimed the king, impatiently. “My decision is made.”

“Sire, Sire, you said the very same thing in this very room and in the queen’s presence when you promised to sanction both those edicts.”

“I did very wrong to make such a promise, and I have repented of it.”

“Sire, I repeat — and as this is the last time I shall have the honour of seeing you, you will, I hope, pardon my frankness — that you were *not* wrong when you promised to sanction these decrees, but you are wrong to-day, when you refuse to keep your promise. Your advisers are taking advantage of your conscientious scruples, and are urging you on into a civil war. But you are not strong enough. You will soon be obliged to succumb; and history, while it will pity you, will also reproach you as the cause of our country’s misfortunes.”

“Our country’s misfortunes!” repeated the monarch. “Do you mean to say that I shall be held accountable for them?”

“Yes, Sire.”

“Yet God is my witness that my chief desire in life is for her happiness.”

"I have n't a doubt of it, Sire; but you are accountable to God, not only for the purity, but also for the wisdom of your intentions. You think you are doing religion a service. On the contrary, you are destroying it. Your priests will be massacred; your broken crown will be steeped in your own blood and in the blood of the queen, and perhaps of your children, even! Oh, my king! my king!"

Overwhelmed with emotion, Dumouriez seized the hand which the monarch extended to him and pressed it passionately to his lips.

"You are right, monsieur," the king said, with a perfect dignity and serenity of which one would hardly have believed him capable; "I know that I shall die a violent death, and I forgive my murderers in advance. As for you, you have served me faithfully and well, I esteem you highly, and I am truly grateful to you for the kindly feeling you display, and for your sympathy. Farewell, monsieur."

And, rising hastily, the king retired into the embrasure of a window.

Dumouriez gathered his papers together slowly, in order to have time to compose his countenance; then he walked reluctantly to the door, ready to turn back at the slightest intimation from the king, but none came.

"Farewell, monsieur, may happiness attend you!" exclaimed the king.

After these words there was no excuse for tarrying any longer, and Dumouriez withdrew.

Royalty had thrown aside its sole remaining prop. The king had dropped his mask, and stood with uncovered face before his people.

Now let us see what these people were doing.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A CONFERENCE AT CHARENTON.

ALL day a man dressed in a general's uniform, and mounted on a big Flemish steed, has been riding through the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, kissing the pretty girls, and giving the young men the wherewithal to get a drink.

This man is one of the six officers who have succeeded Lafayette in the command of the National Guards. In short, this man is Santerre.

Near him, likewise mounted on a sturdy horse, is a man whose attire proclaims him to be a patriot from the rural districts. There is a deep scar on his forehead, and his expression is as morose and threatening as Santerre's is frank and genial. "Hold yourselves in readiness, my friends. Traitors are plotting against the nation, but we are on the alert!" so says Santerre.

"But what are we to do, Monsieur Santerre?" query the citizens. "You know we are with you, heart and soul. Where are the traitors you speak of? Let us confront them."

"Wait until the proper moment comes," replies Santerre.

"Is it near at hand?"

Santerre does not know, but he answers at a venture: "Yes, yes, have no fears. You'll be duly notified."

The man following Santerre bends over his horse's neck and whispers in the ear of certain persons with whom he has exchanged certain signs: "The 20th of June."

These men move away with these words on their lips. At a distance of ten, or twenty, or thirty yards groups gather around them, and the same words are passed from lip to lip.

What is to happen on the 20th of June? No one knows as yet; but this much they do know, on the 20th of June *something* is to be done.

Among the men to whom this intelligence is imparted are several who are no strangers to us.

There is Saint-Huruge, whom we saw on his way to Versailles on October 5th, 1789, and who is continually longing to have his revenge on the nobility, and even upon royalty, for his conjugal misfortunes and his illegal incarceration in the Bastille.

You recognise Verrières, too, do you not? You saw him in the wine-shop at the Sèvres Bridge in company with Marat and the Duke of Aiguillon, and again on the Champ de Mars a moment before the firing began.

There is Fournier, too, who fired at Lafayette through the spokes of a carriage-wheel, but whose weapon fortunately missed fire. He promised himself then that he would aim higher than the commander-in-chief of the National Guard next time.

There is Monsieur de Beausire, who has not mended his ways in the least since we relegated him to a place in the background, and since he recovered his Oliva from the arms of the dying Mirabeau.

That short, lame, bandy-legged fellow, almost concealed from sight in the voluminous folds of an enormous tri-coloured sash, is Mouchy.

The man standing near him is Gonchon, the Mirabeau of the people, who was once declared by Pitou to be even more ugly than the Mirabeau of the nobility,—Gonchon, who mysteriously vanishes after each outbreak, exactly as if he were a part of the spectacle, only to reappear afterwards more terrible, more bitter, more venomous than ever, like a demon of whom his author has only momentary need.

Sauntering up and down through the crowd that had assembled around the ruins of the Bastille, as if upon a sort of modern Aventine, is a pale, slender young man,

with smoothly brushed hair and eyes of fire; solitary as the eagle, which he will one day choose as his emblem, acquainted with no one, and a stranger to all.

This is Bonaparte, a lieutenant of artillery who happens to be spending his furlough in Paris; and Cagliostro's strange prediction to Gilbert at the meeting of the Jacobin Club may recur to the reader's mind.

To whom is this excited throng eagerly listening? To a man of powerful frame, with a roaring voice and hair like a lion's mane, — Danton.

It is here and now that this terrible man, hardly known heretofore, except by reason of the commotion he created in the pit of the Théâtre Français during the performance of Chénier's "Charles the Ninth," and his awful eloquence at the Cordelier Club, makes his first real appearance on the political arena.

Whence comes this man's power, which is destined to prove so fatal to royalty? From the queen herself.

She would not have Lafayette for Mayor of Paris, this revengeful Austrian! She preferred Pétion, her surly travelling companion on the journey from Varennes; and he had hardly been installed as mayor before he began his fight with the king by again placing the Tuileries under surveillance.

When he assumed the duties of his new office he appointed his friend Manuel, city solicitor, and Danton, his assistant.

Vergniaud, standing in the rostrum and pointing to the Tuileries, once exclaimed: "Often enough in days gone by have Terror and Dismay stalked forth from yonder palæe in the name of Despotism. Now let Terror and Dismay re-enter it in the name of the Law."

The hour has come when the Girondist orator's grand yet terrible figure of speech is to be literally verified. The terror which reigns rampant in the Saint-Antoine district is hastening with fierce yells and wildly waving arms towards the palæe erected by Catherine de' Medici. And

who can encourage and urge it on as effectually as that dread magician of the revolution, Danton?

Danton has broad shoulders and a heavy hand. On one side, he influences the people through Hébert; on the other, he is in touch with the throne through Orléans,—so he stands midway between the petty booth-keeper on the street corner, and the prince royal on the steps of the throne.

It was very much as if Danton had in front of him an instrument in which each key corresponded with a social fibre. Run your eye over the gamut, which extends over two octaves, and is in full harmony with his powerful voice: Hébert, Legendre, Gonchon, Rossignol, Brune, Huguenin, Rotondo, Santerre, Fabre d'Eglantine, Camille Desmoulins, Dugazon, Sillery, Genlis, Lazouski, Momoro, and the Duke of Orléans.

Note, too, that we define only the visible boundaries of this power; but who shall say to what depths this influence descends, or to what heights it soars, — heights and depths far beyond the range of our vision.

On the 16th of June, Lazouski, a Pole, and one of Danton's warmest friends and admirers, requests, in the General Council of the Commune, permission for the residents of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine and the Faubourg Saint-Marceau to assemble, with their arms, upon the Feuillant Terrace on the Anniversary of the Oath of the Tennis Court, to plant a liberty-tree there, and afterwards present petitions to the king and the Assembly in relation to the veto of the decree for the expulsion of refractory priests.

The Council refuses its sanction.

"We will dispense with it," Danton whispers in Lazouski's ear.

"We will dispense with it, then," Lazouski repeats aloud.

Danton makes an appointment to meet Santerre on the evening of the following day in a small house on the right

bank of the Marne, in Charenton, and there all the arrangements for this great uprising of the people are perfected by the chiefs of the popular movement.

The motives that prompt these men are varied. Some are actuated by a love of liberty. Many, like Billot, are prompted by a desire for revenge. Much the greater number are influenced by hatred, poverty, and evil instincts.

On June 19th groups of people may be seen gathering on the site of the Bastille, in the neighbourhood of the arsenal, and in the Saint-Antoine district.

Suddenly a bold and fearless Amazon appears, clad in vivid scarlet, with a brace of pistols in her belt, and at her side a sword which is destined to seek and find the heart of Suleau.

This is Théroigne de Méricourt. We saw her on the road to Versailles that memorable October day. Where has she been in the mean time?

Liège, her native city, rose in revolt. Théroigne hastened to its aid; but she was arrested *en route* by Leopold's emissaries, and was incarcerated for eighteen months in an Austrian prison.

Did she make her escape secretly, or was she allowed to escape? Did she file her prison bars? Did she bribe her jailer? We cannot say; for everything connected with this woman is as mysterious as the beginning of her life, and as terrible as its ending.

However this may have been, she has returned. The wealthy courtesan has become the prostitute of the masses, and with the gold the nobles have given her she has purchased the finely tempered blade and richly embossed pistols with which she will smite the enemies of the people.

The populace recognise her, and welcome her with enthusiastic shouts.

On the evening of the same day the queen sees her gallop along the Terrace on her way from the Bastille to the Champs Élysées, where the grand patriotic banquet is to be held.

From the upper rooms of the Tuileries the queen can hear the outcries and see the well-spread tables. The wine-cup circulates freely, patriotic songs resound, and as each toast to the Assembly, the Girondists, and Liberty is drunk, the guests shake their fists threateningly at the Tuileries.

Dugazon, the actor, sings couplets ridiculing the king and queen; and from their palace the sovereigns can hear the wild applause that follows each verse.

Who are these feasters? Marseilles Federals led by Barbaroux, who reached Paris the evening before.

The Tenth of August entered Paris on June 18th.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE TWENTIETH OF JUNE.

DAYLIGHT comes early in the month of June. By five o'clock in the morning the battalions had assembled. This time the *émeute* had been so systematically organised that it had almost the appearance of an invasion. The crowd had its recognised leaders; each man, too, had his appointed place, his rank, and his flag.

Santerre was on horseback, attended by many of the prominent citizens of his district. Billot did not leave Santerre's side for an instant. One might have supposed some occult power had intrusted him with the duty of watching over his chief.

There were three divisions, the first commanded by Santerre, the second by Saint-Hurugue, the third by Théroigne de Méricourt.

About eleven o'clock, in obedience to an order brought by some unknown man, the immense throng took up its line of march. When it left the Bastille, the procession numbered about twenty thousand men.

They presented a strange and formidable appearance. Santerre's division made the most respectable showing. A good many of his men wore uniforms and carried muskets and bayonets as weapons; but the other two divisions were essentially an army of the people, ragged, emaciated, and haggard from four years of privation and famine.

They had neither guns nor uniforms. Their waistcoats were in tatters, their blouses torn, their only weapons such as they had been able to seize upon in the first moment of anger, — pikes, pitchforks, shovels, rusty spears, swords

destitute of hilts, knife-blades fastened to long sticks, axes, masons' hammers, and shoemakers' knives.

For a standard, a gibbet with a doll, intended to represent the queen, dangling from it. There was a bull's head, too, with an obscene motto fastened to the horns; and a calf's heart stuck on the point of a spit, with the words: "The Heart of an Aristocrat!"

Then there were flags with such devices as:—

"Approve or Die!"

"Recall the Patriot Ministers!"

"Tremble, Tyrant! Thy Hour Has Come!"

On reaching the corner of the Rue Saint-Antoine, the procession divided.

Santerre and his division marched through the boulevards, Santerre in his uniform as chief of battalion.

Saint-Huruge rode a handsomely caparisoned steed brought to him by some unknown person. Théroigne de Méricourt reclined upon a cannon drawn by bare-armed men. These two divisions proceeded up the Rue Saint Antoine and through the Place Vendôme to the Feuillant Terrace.

For nearly three hours this army marched by, drawing the populace in the districts through which it passed after it. It was like one of those torrents which leap and foam more and more madly as they increase in volume; for though the majority of the people were silent at first, the silence was soon broken at intervals by loud clamours, or by a verse of that famous *Ça ira* which had gradually changed from a song of encouragement to one of menace; and then arose shouts of "Long live the nation! Long live the Sans culottes! Down with Monsieur and Madame Veto!"

When Santerre's division, which carried the poplar-tree that was to be planted on the Feuillant Terrace, reached the Place Vendôme, they encountered a detachment of National Guards placed there to bar their passage. It would have been an easy matter for this multitude to overpower this small body of troops; but no, the people only

wanted to enjoy themselves, to be amused, and to terrify Monsieur and Madame Veto, not to kill anybody, so they abandoned their scheme of planting the liberty-tree on the terrace, and set it out in the courtyard of the old Capuchin Convent, instead.

The Assembly had heard these uproarious sounds nearly an hour, when messengers appeared with the request that the crowd be allowed the favour of passing in review before the National Assembly.

Vergniaud moved that the request be complied with, but at the same time advised sending sixty deputies to protect the palace. Even the Girondists did not wish the king and queen to be harmed, though they were anxious to frighten them a little.

One of the Feuillants opposed Vergniaud's motion, on the plea that such a precaution would be insulting to the people of Paris.

Permission being finally granted, the armed populace of the Faubourgs defiles through the hall. The march begins at noon, and lasts until nearly three o'clock. There are thirty thousand persons in the procession.

The crowd had now obtained a part of what they desired. They had been admitted to the Assembly, and their petition had been read. As the Assembly had received them, there was no reason why the king should not. The king was certainly no greater a man than the president of the Assembly, for when the king came to see the president, he had no better arm-chair than the president's, and even sat at his left hand.

The king expressed his willingness to receive the petition through the hands of twenty delegates, and the crowd at that time had no intention of entering the palace. They thought the committee would go inside while the procession marched by, so that the king and queen could see their banners and their mottoes from the palace windows.

All the gateways leading to the palace were closed, and three regiments of regular troops and several battalions

of the National Guards were stationed in the courtyard and the Tuileries garden, together with four pieces of artillery.

The crowd, still without any evil designs, asked to have the iron grating opened which separated them from the Feuillant Terrace; but the officers on guard refused to comply with this request without an order from the king.

Three municipal officers asked to be allowed to go in and ask the king for such an order. Montjoye, author of "The History of Marie Antoinette," mentions their names. They were Boucher-René, Boucher-Saint-Sauveur, and Mouchet. The latter, a justice of the peace from the Marais district, a crippled dwarf, wearing a big tricoloured sash, acted as spokesman.

"Sire," he said, "the body of men I represent has assembled under the protecting shield of the law. Their acts need excite no uneasiness. As peaceful, law-abiding citizens they desire to present a petition to the National Assembly and the king, and also to celebrate the anniversary of the famous oath taken in the Tennis Court in 1789. These citizens ask permission to enter the Feuillant Terrace. The gates leading into it are not only closed, but a mounted cannon bars the way. We come to ask that these gates be opened and we be allowed a free entrance."

"Monsieur, I judge by your scarf that you are a municipal officer," replied the king, "and, being such, it is your duty to see that the laws are faithfully obeyed. If you deem it necessary for the clearing of the Assembly Grounds, let the gates leading into the Feuillant Terrace be opened, and the crowd pass along the Terrace and out through the stable courtyard. Arrange this with the commander of the National Guards, but see to it that the public peace is not disturbed."

The delegates bowed and withdrew, accompanied by an officer charged with the duty of confirming their statement that the order had been given by the king himself.

The gates were unlocked, and everybody tried to push

through at once. The heat was suffocating. By some oversight, the gate near the stables had not been opened, and the crowd was obliged to turn and march past the long line of National Guards stationed in front of the palace, and out through the gate on the river bank.

If they wished to return to their own homes they would be compelled to recross the palace grounds and traverse the Carrousel.

The wickets opening into the Carrousel were closed and guarded; but these jostled and buffeted people, who were fast losing their temper, grumbled so loudly that it was thought advisable to open the wickets and allow the people to distribute themselves over the square.

There, they began to remember that the principal business of the day, that is to say the presentation of their petition to the king, had not been attended to. So, instead of wending their way homeward, they remained in the Carrousel.

An hour passed; and the populace became more and more sullen, as men moved about from group to group whispering: "Stand your ground! The king will have to do what you ask! Don't go home until the king has approved these edicts, or we shall have to begin all over again."

This seemed to be very good advice, but at the same time the people began to think the king's sanction was a long while coming.

"We are hungry," was the universal cry. The famine was over, but there was a great scarcity both of work and of money, and however cheap bread may be, it cannot be purchased for nothing.

These people had been up ever since five o'clock, many of them leaving pallets on which they had lain down hungry the night before. They had all started out with a vague hope that the king could be persuaded to sign certain decrees, and that everything would then go on smoothly. But the king did not seem at all inclined to approve these

edicts. It was a hot day, and the people were becoming thirsty as well as hungry; and hunger and thirst and heat will make even dogs go mad, and these poor wretches began to hammer on the iron gates of the palace.

A municipal officer came out and harangued the crowd.

"Citizens, this is a royal domicile, and a forcible invasion of it would be a violation of civic rights. The king is willing to receive your petition, but only through the hands of twenty of your representatives."

So the delegates, for whose re-appearance the crowd had been waiting more than an hour, had not yet been admitted into the king's presence.

Suddenly a great uproar was heard on the side next the river. Santerre and Saint-Huruge were there, and Théroigne on her cannon.

"What are you doing there? Why don't you go in?" Saint-Huruge shouted to the crowd.

"Sure enough! Why don't we?" cried several men in the throng.

"But the gate is fastened!" exclaimed several voices.

Théroigne leaped from her cannon.

"It's loaded!" she cried. "Open the gate with a cannon-ball!"

And the cannon was brought to bear upon the gate.

"Wait, wait, no violence!" cried two municipal officers. "The gate shall be opened!"

They opened the gate and the crowd rushed wildly in, carrying the cannon with them across the courtyard and even up the outer steps of the palace.

Some city officers were standing in the doorway.

"What do you intend to do with this cannon?" they asked. "A piece of artillery in the king's palace! Do you imagine you will gain anything by this display of violence?"

"That's true," answered the intruders, amazed to find that they had brought the cannon there. And they attempted to turn it so as to get it down the steps again; but the

axle became somehow jammed against the door-frame, and there the gun remained, with its mouth directed towards the multitude.

“Look! Cannon in the king’s palace!” exclaimed some of the new-comers; for, not knowing how the cannon came to be there, and that it had been Théroigne’s carriage, they believed the king had ordered it aimed at the populace.

Meanwhile, in obedience to Mouchet’s orders, two men began kicking away at the door-frame, in order to release the cannon, so that it might be got out of the way; and the noise they made seemed to indicate that the doors were being broken open.

About two hundred gentlemen had hurried to the palace, not with any hope of defending it, but, thinking the king’s last hour had come, they intended to die with him. —

Among them were the venerable Marshal de Mouchy, Monsieur d’Hervilly, an officer in the disbanded Constitutional Guards, Acloque, a commander of the National Guards, and a man dressed in black who had exposed himself to the assassin’s bullet once before, — a man whose advice had always been spurned, but who was the first to come forward on the day of peril he had endeavoured to avert, and offer himself as a rampart for the protection of the king, — Gilbert.

The king and queen had gradually become accustomed to the uproar outside, and hoped the end of the day would prove as uneventful as the beginning.

All the members of the royal family were together in the king’s chamber, when the sound of the axes rose above the clamour that reminded one of the howling of a distant tempest, and a man rushed in, exclaiming: —

“Sire, do not leave me, and I will be responsible for your safety!”

CHAPTER XLV.

IN WHICH THE KING DISCOVERS THAT A MAN MAY DON
THE RED CAP WITHOUT BEING A JACOBIN.

THIS man was Dr. Gilbert, whom we see only at almost periodical intervals, but who is sure to appear in all the great catastrophes of this important drama which is slowly unrolling itself before us.

"Ah, doctor, is it you? What has happened?" cried the king and queen in the same breath.

"The palace is invaded, Sire, and the noise you hear is made by the populace, who are clamouring for a look at you."

"We will not leave you, Sire," exclaimed the queen and Madame Elizabeth, almost simultaneously.

"Will the king grant me for an hour the same authority that a captain exercises over his vessel in a time of tempest?" asked Gilbert, eagerly.

"I will," responded the king.

Just then Aeloque, an officer of the National Guards, appeared at the door, pale as death, but resolved to defend the king to the last.

"Here is the king, monsieur," cried Gilbert. "He is ready to follow you. I intrust him to your care."

Then, to the king, he added: "Go, Sire, go!"

"But how about me?" cried the queen. "I must accompany my husband."

"And I, my brother," exclaimed Madame Elizabeth.

"Follow your brother, madame," said Gilbert, to Madame Elizabeth; "but you, madame, must remain here," he added, turning to the queen.

“But, monsieur —”

“Sire, Sire, in Heaven’s name implore the queen to be guided by me, or I cannot answer for the consequences.”

“Listen to Monsieur Gilbert and obey his instructions, madame,” said the king; then, turning to Gilbert, he asked: “Will you be responsible for the safety of the queen and the dauphin?”

“Yes, Sire, or die with them. That is all a captain can promise in the midst of such a tempest as this.”

The queen made one more effort to follow her husband, but Gilbert extended his arms to intercept her.

“Madame,” he exclaimed, “it is you, and not the king, who is in real peril. Justly or unjustly, you are blamed for the king’s opposition, so your presence will only expose him to increased danger. Take the office of the lightning-rod upon yourself, and divert the thunderbolt from him if possible.”

“Let the bolt fall upon me alone, then, and spare my children!”

“I have promised the king to save both you and your children. Follow me.”

Then, turning to Madame de Lamballe, who had returned from England a month before, and to the other ladies of the queen’s household, he said: “Follow us.”

These other ladies were the Princesse de Tarente, the Princesse de la Trémouille, Madame Tourzel, Madame de Mackau, and Madame de la Roche-Aymon.

Gilbert was familiar with the interior of the palace, and his plans were soon made.

What he wanted was a large apartment where everybody could see and hear. There, he would establish the queen, her children, and her ladies behind some barrier, and take his own stand in front of it.

He instantly thought of the Council Chamber, which could be reached without passing through the corridors. Fortunately, it was empty. He conducted the party there, and pushed the queen, her children, and Madame de Lam-

balle into the embrasure of a window. Every minute was precious now, for the intruders were already hammering on the door.

He dragged the big council table in front of the window, and the desired rampart was provided.

Madame Royale stood beside her brother, who had perched himself upon the table. The queen stood directly behind them. Innocence was to be the defence of unpopularity.

Marie Antoinette wished to place herself in front of her children, but Gilbert interfered.

"Everything is exactly as it should be," he said authoritatively. "Do not move."

Just then the door was shaken violently, and, hearing the voices of numerous women in the crowd outside, Gilbert drew back the bolt, exclaiming: "Come in, citizenesses. The queen and her children are expecting you."

The flood poured in as if through an opening in a dike.

"Where's that Austrian woman? Where's Madame Veto?" shouted five hundred voices.

It was a terrible moment.

Gilbert saw that the power had slipped from the hands of the men into those of the women.

"Be calm, madame," he whispered to the queen. "I hardly need advise you to be gentle also."

One woman was considerably in advance of the others. Her hair was flying wildly around her face, and she brandished a sabre. She was half frantic with rage, and perhaps with hunger as well.

"Where's that Austrian woman?" she shrieked. "She shall die by no other hand than mine!"

Gilbert took her by the arm and led her directly in front of the queen.

"Here she is!" he said quietly.

"Have I ever injured you personally, my daughter?" asked the queen, gently.

"No, madame," faltered the woman, amazed and bewildered by Marie Antoinette's dignity and sweetness.

"Then why do you wish to kill me?"

"They say you're dragging the country down to perdition," stammered the woman.

"Then you have been shamefully deceived. I am the wife of the King of France, and the mother of the dauphin, — this lad you see here. So can you not understand that I am a Frenchwoman, and that as I shall never see my own country again, I can consequently be happy or unhappy only in France? Alas! when you loved me, I was happy!"

The queen sighed heavily. The woman dropped her sabre, and began to cry.

"Ah, madame, forgive me, I didn't know you," she sobbed.

"Keep on in this way, madame," whispered Gilbert, "and you will not only be saved, but in fifteen minutes you will have all these people at your feet."

Leaving the queen in the charge of several officers of the National Guards and of the Minister of War, Lajard, who had just come in, Gilbert hastened to the king.

His Majesty had just passed through a similar experience.

He had scarcely entered the passage called the *Œil-de-Bœuf* (the Bull's Eye) before the panels of the door gave way under repeated blows, and bayonets, spear-heads, and axe-blades were thrust through the openings.

"Open the door!" cried the king.

"Citizens, you need not break open the door," shouted Monsieur d'Hervilly. "The king orders it to be opened."

And as he spoke, he slipped back the bolt and turned the key.

Monsieur Aeloque and the Duc de Mouchy had barely time to push the king into a recess and pile some benches and chairs in front of him, before the crowd rushed in with such savage yells and imprecations that the king involuntarily called out: "Help, gentlemen, help!"

Four grenadiers drew their swords and rushed to his side.

"Put up your swords, gentlemen," said the king. "Stay by me, that is all I ask."

A minute more, and it would have been too late, for the flash of the swords had seemed like a challenge.

A man clad in rags, with arms bare, and fairly foaming at the mouth with rage, rushed towards the king.

"I have you at last, Veto!" he shouted savagely, striking at the king with a knife fastened to the end of a stick.

One of the grenadiers, who had not yet sheathed his sabre, in spite of the king's order, beat down the assailant's weapon.

By that time, the monarch had recovered his composure, and, pushing the grenadier gently to one side, he said quietly:—

"Stand aside, monsieur. What can I have to fear in the midst of my people?"

And, advancing a step with a dignity of which one would hardly have supposed him capable, Louis XVI. presented his defenceless breast to the numerous weapons directed towards it.

"Silence! I wish to say a few words!" shouted a stentorian voice.

It was the voice of Legendre, the butcher. He approached near enough to the king to touch him. A circle formed around them.

Just then a man appeared on the outer edge of the circle; and directly behind Danton's grim *double*, as Legendre was called, the king saw the pale but serene face of Dr. Gilbert.

The king directed a questioning glance at the newcomer, as if to ask what had become of the queen; and the doctor's reassuring smile indicated that her Majesty was safe.

"Monsieur," began Legendre, addressing the king.

On hearing the word "monsieur," the king turned suddenly, as if stung by an adder.

"Yes, monsieur, Monsieur Veto, it is to *you* I am speaking," continued Legendre. "Pay attention to what I am going to say, for it's your turn to listen now. You're a deceitful man. You have deceived us for years, and you are trying to deceive us now. But take care! We have had about enough of it. The people are tired of being made your playthings and victims."

"Go on, I am listening," said the king.

"So much the better. You know what brought us here, I suppose. We came to demand your signature to the decrees concerning the priests and the volunteer camp, and the recall of your former ministers. Here's our petition."

And, drawing a folded paper from his pocket, he read aloud the same threatening petition which had been presented to the Assembly.

The king listened, with his eyes fixed upon the reader.

When the perusal was ended, he said, without the slightest apparent emotion, "I shall do exactly what the laws and the Constitution bid me do in these matters, monsieur."

"Oh, yes," cried a voice, "that's your great plea, — the Constitution, — the Constitution of '91, that allows you to clog the whole machine, tie France to the whipping-post, and give the Austrians time to come and gobble us up!"

The king glanced in the direction of this new speaker, for he realised that a much more serious attack was imminent from that quarter.

Gilbert, too, made a sudden movement, and placed his hand soothingly on the man's shoulder.

"I have seen you before, my friend," said the king. "Who are you?"

His manner indicated much more curiosity than fear, though the expression of the man's face was very threatening.

"Yes, you have seen me before, Sire. You have seen

me now three times, — once on your return from Versailles on the 16th of July, 1789, again at Varennes, and now, here. Can you not recall my name? It is one of rather grim import. I am called Billot! [the block.]”

The confusion increased. A man armed with a pike attempted to strike a blow at the king, but Billot seized the weapon, wrenched it from the assailant's grasp, and broke it over his knee.

“Stop that!” he cried. “There is but one weapon to be used in a case like this, — that is the Law. They say there was once a king of England who had his head cut off by the people he had betrayed. You ought to know his name, Louis. Keep it in mind.”

“Billot!” murmured Gilbert, warningly.

“Oh, you and plenty of others have done your best, I know,” said Billot, shaking his head. “But that man will be tried as a traitor and convicted, nevertheless.”

“Yes, as a traitor! as a traitor!” shouted hundreds of voices.

Gilbert sprang between the king, and his adversaries.

“Have no fears, Sire,” he exclaimed, “but try to give these people some satisfaction, if you can.”

The king took Gilbert's hand and placed it on his heart.

“You see I feel no fear,” he replied. “I received the sacrament this morning. Let them do what they will with me. As for the outward sign you would have me give, does this satisfy you?”

And the king, snatching a red cap from the head of a *sans-culotte* near him, placed it on his own head.

The crowd applauded uproariously. “Long live the king! Long live the nation!” resounded upon every side.

One man forced his way through the crowd with a bottle of wine in his hand.

“If you love the people as much as you say you do, prove it by drinking to their health,” he said, offering the king the bottle.

"Don't drink it, Sire," cried a voice; "perhaps the wine is poisoned."

"Drink it, Sire, I'll answer for it," said Gilbert.

The king took the bottle. "To the health of the people!" he exclaimed, and drank.

Loud cheers for the king again resounded.

"Sire, you have nothing more to fear. If you will allow me, I will return to the queen," whispered Gilbert.

"Go," said the monarch, pressing the doctor's hand warmly.

As Gilbert left the room, Isnard and Vergniaud came in.

"Where is the king?" they asked anxiously.

Gilbert pointed him out, and the two deputies hastened towards him.

To reach the queen, Gilbert had to pass through several rooms, among them the king's bed-chamber. Several persons had taken possession of it.

"Heavens! Fatty Veto has a bed that beats ours all to pieces!" exclaimed a man, seating himself on the royal couch.

There was nothing alarming about this kind of talk, however.

As Gilbert re-entered the apartment where he had left the queen he cast a hasty glance around him, and then drew a long breath of relief.

Marie Antoinette was still standing in the same spot; and the little dauphin had a red cap on his head, like his father.

A hubbub in the next room attracted Gilbert's attention to the door. The commotion was caused by the approach of Santerre. The giant entered the Council Chamber.

"Ah, ha, so the Austrian woman is here!" he exclaimed.

Gilbert crossed the room diagonally, thus intercepting the new-comer.

"Monsieur Santerre!" he said.

Santerre turned. "Ah, it's Dr. Gilbert!" he said pleasantly.

“Who has not forgotten that you once helped to open the doors of the Bastille for him. Allow me to present you to the queen, Monsieur Santerre.”

“To the queen? Present me to the queen?” growled the brewer.

“Yes, to the queen. Do you decline?”

“No, by no means. I was going to introduce myself, but as you are here —”

“I am acquainted with Monsieur Santerre already,” said the queen. “I know that he fed half the Saint-Antoine Faubourg during the famine.”

Santerre paused in astonishment, then, glancing in a rather embarrassed way at the dauphin, and seeing the perspiration streaming down the little fellow’s cheeks, he called out to those standing around the table: “Take that cap off the boy’s head. Don’t you see you’re smothering the poor little chap?”

The mother thanked him with a look, and, leaning over the table, the worthy Fleming said in a low tone:—

“You have some very indiscreet friends, madame. I know those who could serve you much better.”

An hour afterwards, when the crowd had dispersed, the king, accompanied by his sister, entered the room.

The queen ran to meet him and threw herself at his feet. The children grasped his hands. They embraced each other like a family rescued from shipwreck.

Not until then did the king recollect that he still had the red cap on his head.

“I had forgotten it,” he exclaimed, plucking it off and casting it from him.

A young artillery officer barely twenty-two years of age had witnessed this entire scene, leaning against a tree on the border of the lake. Through the window he had seen all the perils to which the king had been exposed, and all the humiliations heaped upon him. But when he saw the incident of the red cap, he could contain himself no longer.

“Oh! if I only had twelve hundred men and a couple of cannon, I would soon rid the poor king of these scoundrels,” he muttered.

But as he had neither the twelve hundred men nor the two pieces of artillery, and could no longer endure this repulsive spectacle, he walked away.

This young officer was Napoleon Bonaparte.

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