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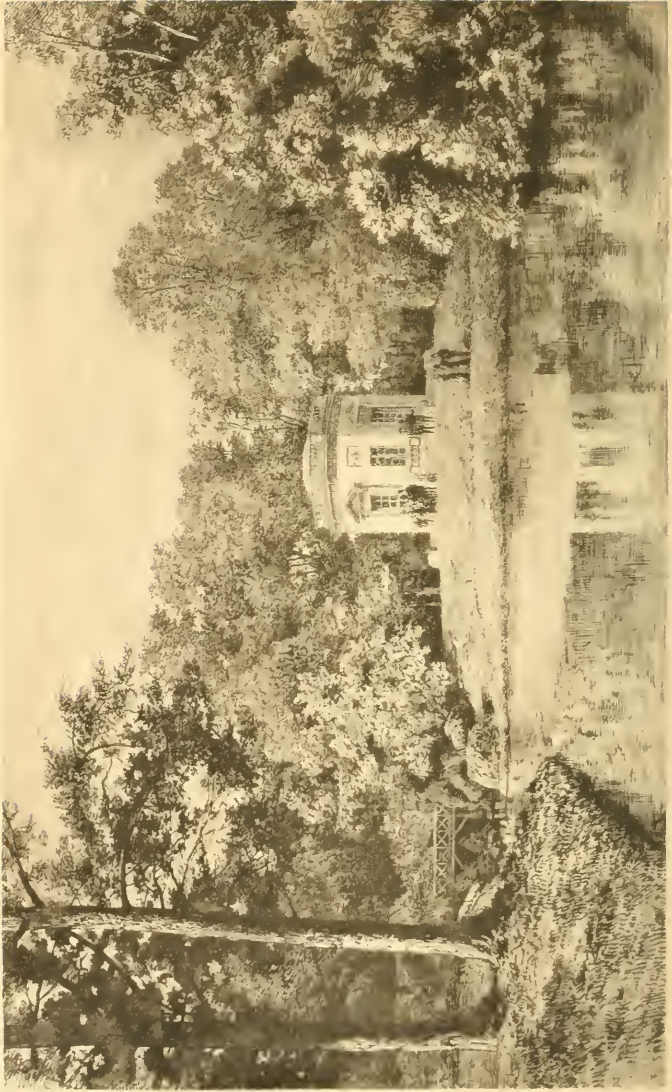


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Garden of the Trianon, Versailles.

Photo-Etching. — From Drawing by E. Sadoux.

Illustrated Holiday Edition

*COMTESSE DE
CHARNY*

VOLUME I

*BY
ALEXANDRE DUMAS*



*BOSTON
DANA ESTES & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS*

LA COMTESSE DE CHARNY.

VOLUME I.

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LA COMTESSE DE CHARNY.



CHAPTER I.

THE SÈVRES BRIDGE TAVERN.

IF the reader will take up our romance called "Ange Pitou," and glance over the chapter entitled "The Night of the Fifth and Sixth of October," he will find there sundry facts which it is important for him to be cognisant of before beginning this book, which opens on the morning of the sixth day of that same month.

After having quoted a few important lines from this chapter, we will proceed to give, in the fewest possible words, an account of the events which immediately preceded the resumption of our narrative.

The lines referred to are as follows:—

"At three o'clock everything was quiet at Versailles. Even the Assembly, reassured by the reports of its messengers, had adjourned. It was supposed that this tranquillity would be lasting. The belief was ill-founded, however.

"In nearly all the popular movements which pave the way for great revolutions, there is an interval of quiet, when it seems as if everything were over and everybody might sleep in peace; but this is a great mistake.

"Behind the men who instituted the first movements, are others who wait until the first movements are ended, and until those who

took the first steps relax their efforts, either from fatigue or complacency, but evidently with no intention of proceeding a step farther.

“It is then that these unknown men, these mysterious agents of fatal passions, glide about through the crowd, taking up the cause where it has been abandoned, and pushing it to its farthest limits; appalling those who inaugurated it, but who subsequently dropped asleep midway on the journey, believing the object attained and the aim accomplished.”

We have mentioned three of these men in the book from which we have just quoted these few lines.

We will now introduce upon the scene — in other words, upon the threshold of the Sèvres Bridge Tavern — another person whose name has not yet been mentioned, but who played a no less important *rôle* on that terrible night.

He was a man from forty-five to forty-eight years of age, dressed like a working-man, — that is to say, in drab velveteen breeches protected by a leather apron with pockets like those worn by blacksmiths and locksmiths. He wore gray hose, and shoes with copper buckles, and on his head was a fur cap shaped like a lancer’s helmet cut in twain. A mass of gray hair escaped from this cap, and hung down to his bushy eyebrows, shading large, alert, and intelligent eyes, which changed so swiftly in colour and expression that it was difficult to determine whether they were green or gray, blue or black. The rest of his face was composed of a rather large nose, thick lips, white teeth, and a complexion embrowned by the sun.

Though not large, this man was admirably proportioned. He had lithe limbs and a small foot. His hand, too, was small and even delicate in contour, though it did not lack the bronze tint common to workers in iron. But, glancing from the hand to the elbow, and from the elbow up the arm revealed by his rolled-up shirt-sleeve, one could hardly fail to notice that the skin, in spite of the strongly developed muscle, was fine, soft, even aristocratic in texture.

This man standing in the doorway of the Sèvres Bridge Tavern had a double-barrelled gun in his hand, richly

mounted in gold, and bearing the name of Leclère, the armourer just then fashionable with the Parisian aristocracy.

Some one may ask how so fine a weapon chanced to be in the possession of a plain working-man; but in days of political turmoil — and we have seen not a few of them — it is not always in the whitest hands that the costliest weapons are found.

This man had arrived from Versailles about an hour before, and was apparently well posted in regard to all that was going on there; for in reply to the innkeeper's questions on serving him with a bottle of wine which he had not even tasted, he announced that the queen was on her way to Paris with the king and the dauphin, that they had left Versailles about noon, that they had at last concluded to take up their abode in the palace of the Tuileries, and that in future Paris would doubtless not lack for bread, as she would have the baker, the baker's wife, and the baker's boy in her midst, and that he himself was now waiting to see the *cortège* pass.

This last assertion might be true. Nevertheless, it was easy to see that the man's gaze was directed more anxiously upon the road from Paris than upon the road from Versailles; so it is more than probable that he did not feel obliged to render a very strict account of his intentions to the worthy but perhaps too inquisitive innkeeper.

After a few moments the stranger's watchfulness seemed to be rewarded; for a man dressed very much like himself, and apparently a follower of the same craft, appeared on the top of the hill which bounded the horizon in that direction. This man walked with a dragging step, like one who had already travelled a long distance. As he drew nearer, his features and age became discernible. His age corresponded very nearly with that of the Unknown, — that is to say, he was on the shady side of forty, — and his features were those of a person of plebeian origin with uncultivated even vulgar tastes.

The Unknown gazed intently and with evident curiosity

at the new-comer, as if he were desirous of estimating the man's corruptibility and baseness at a single glance.

When the workman had approached within about fifty yards of the man who was standing in the doorway, the latter re-entered the tavern, and poured some wine into one of the two glasses standing on the table; then, returning to the door glass in hand, called out: "Ah, comrade, the day is cold and the road long. Let us take a glass of wine together to strengthen and warm us."

The workman glanced around, as if to see if it were really to him that this tempting invitation was addressed.

"Are you talking to me?" he asked.

"To whom else, pray, as you are alone?"

"And you offer me a glass of wine?"

"Why not? Do we not follow the same trade?"

"Everybody may follow the same trade, but it is important to know if a person is a fellow workman or a master."

"Oh, well, we can settle that question while we have a little chat over our wine."

"So be it," responded the mechanic, stepping over the threshold.

The Unknown pointed to a table, and handed his guest the glass. The workman scrutinised its contents with a rather suspicious air; but this apparent distrust vanished when his entertainer poured out a second glass and placed it beside the first.

"Well," queried the new-comer, "is some one too proud to drink with the man he invites?"

"No; quite the contrary. To the Nation!"

The workman's gray eyes gazed straight into those of the person who had just proposed this toast; then he replied, —

"To the Nation! That is well said." Then, emptying his glass at a single draught and wiping his mouth on his sleeve, he added, "Ah, this is Burgundy!"

"And old Burgundy at that. The brand has been highly recommended to me, and I thought I would drop

in and try it, as I passed, and I'm not sorry. But sit down, my friend, there is still some left in the bottle; and when this bottle is gone, there are others in the cellar."

"What brought you here?" inquired the second mechanic.

"I have just come from Versailles, and am now waiting here for the procession, to accompany it to Paris."

"What procession?"

"Why, that of the king and queen and dauphin, who are returning to Paris in company with the market-women and two hundred members of the Assembly, and under the protection of our National Guard and of Lafayette."

"The Citizen has decided to go to Paris, then?"

"He was obliged to."

"I suspected as much when I left for Paris at three o'clock this morning."

"What! you left Versailles like that, at three o'clock in the morning, without feeling any curiosity to find out what was going on there."

"Oh! I should have liked very well to know what was going to become of the Citizen, especially as I can say with truth that I have some acquaintance with him. But business must come first, you know. When a man has a wife and children, he must look out for them, especially as the Royal Forge is now a thing of the past."

"It was urgent business that took you to Paris, then, I suppose."

"Yes, and it paid me well," replied the mechanic, jingling some coins in his pocket, "though I was paid through a servant, — which was not very polite, — and even through a German servant who did n't seem to know a single word of French."

"And you don't object to a little chat now and then, I judge."

"What's the harm if you don't speak ill of anybody?"

"And even if we do?"

Both men laughed, — the Unknown displaying white

regular teeth; his companion, uneven and discoloured ones.

“So you have just been employed on an important job, eh?” queried the Unknown, like one who was cautiously feeling his way.

“Yes.”

“And a difficult one, probably?”

“Yes.”

“A secret lock, perhaps?”

“An invisible door. Picture to yourself a house within a house. Some one must be very anxious to hide himself, don't you think so? Well, he is there and he is not there. You ring. A servant opens the door. ‘Is Monsieur at home?’ ‘He is not.’ ‘Yes, he is.’ ‘Very well, look and see for yourself.’ You search, but all in vain. Good evening. Ah, well, I defy you to find Monsieur. There's an iron door, you see, cleverly concealed in a panel you would swear was old oak.”

“But suppose you should rap upon it?”

“Bah! there's a layer of wood on the iron, — thin, to be sure, but thick enough to make the sound the same. When the work was finished, I could n't tell where the door was, myself.”

“But where did you do all this?”

“That is the question.”

“You mean that you don't care to tell?”

“I mean it is something I can't tell, for the very good reason that I don't know myself.”

“What! were your eyes bandaged?”

“That's it exactly. A carriage was awaiting me at the barrier. Some one asked, ‘Are you so and so?’ I answered, ‘Yes.’ ‘Very good, it is for you we are waiting; get in.’ ‘Must I ride?’ ‘Yes.’ I got in. They bandaged my eyes. The carriage rolled along about half an hour, I should say; and then a gate, a very wide gate, opened. I stumbled up a flight of stone steps, — ten steps, I counted them, — and entered a vestibule. There I met a

German servant who said to the others: 'Dat is vell. Go vay now; ve need you no more.' They went. The bandage was removed from my eyes, and I was shown what I had to do. I set to work in earnest, and in an hour the job was done. They paid me in shining gold pieces. My eyes were rebandaged; I was again placed in the carriage. They bade me *bon voyage*, — and here I am!"

"Without having seen anything, even out of the corner of your eye? Surely the bandage was n't so tight that you could n't peep out one side or the other."

"You're right."

"Then tell me what you saw," said the Unknown, eagerly.

"Well, when I stumbled going up the steps, I took advantage of the opportunity to make a gesture, and in making the gesture I managed to disarrange the bandage a little."

"And what did you see?" inquired the Unknown, with flattering interest.

"I saw a row of trees on my left, which convinced me that the house was on one of the boulevards; but that was all."

"All?"

"Upon my word of honour."

"That is not very definite."

"I should say not, as the boulevards are long, and there is more than one house with a big gateway and long flight of stone steps between the Café Saint-Honoré and the Bastille."

"Then you would n't know the house if you should see it again?"

The locksmith reflected a moment. "No, upon my word, I should n't."

The Unknown, though his face was not wont to reveal his feelings, appeared much gratified by this assurance.

"Well, it seems strange," he exclaimed suddenly, as if passing to an entirely different train of thought, "that,

as many locksmiths as there are in Paris, people who want secret doors should have to send to Versailles for men to make them."

As he spoke, he poured out another glass for his companion, pounding on the table with the empty bottle so that the proprietor of the establishment would bring a fresh supply of the beverage.

CHAPTER II.

MASTER GAMAIN.

THE locksmith raised his glass to a level with his eye, and contemplated the contents with great satisfaction. Then sipping a little, and smacking his lips, he remarked, "There are, of course, plenty of locksmiths in Paris; there are even many masters of that trade there," here he took another sip; "but there are masters *and* masters, you know."

"Oh yes, I see," laughed the Unknown. "You are not only a master, but a master of masters."

"And what are you?"

"A gunsmith."

"Have you any samples of your work about you?"

"You see this gun."

The locksmith took it from the hand of the Unknown, examined it carefully, nodding his head approvingly the while; then, seeing the name on the barrel and on the plate, he exclaimed: "Leclère? Impossible! Leclère is not more than twenty-eight, and both of us are near fifty, — I mean no offence, I'm sure, though."

"That is true. I am not Leclère, but that makes no difference."

"And why?"

"Because I am his master."

"Good!" exclaimed the locksmith, laughing heartily. "That is very much as if I should say, 'I am not the king, but it amounts to the same thing.'"

"And why?"

"Because I am *his* master."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the Unknown, rising, and making a military salute; "then it is to Monsieur Gamain I have the honor of speaking?"

"The same; and he is quite willing to serve you if he can," responded the locksmith, evidently delighted with the effect his name had produced.

"Zounds! I had no idea I was talking to such an important personage. By the way, it must be a very trying thing to be the king's master."

"Why?"

"Because it must be such an awful bother to say 'Good morning' or 'Good evening' properly, and always to remember to say 'Sire' and 'Your Majesty,' when you want to tell him to take the key in his left hand and the file in his right."

"Oh no, indeed. That is the great charm about him, — he is really such a very good fellow at heart. When you see him at the forge with his shirt-sleeves rolled up and his apron on, you would never take him for the eldest son of Louis the Saint."

"You are right. It is really extraordinary how much a king resembles any other man."

"Yes, isn't it? Those around him found that out long ago."

"It wouldn't matter if it was only those right around him who had found out this fact; but unfortunately outsiders are beginning to find it out too," responded the Unknown, with a peculiar laugh.

Gamain looked at his companion with considerable astonishment; but the latter, who had almost forgotten his *rôle* for a moment, did not give him time to weigh the meaning of the words he had just uttered, but suddenly changed the subject by adding, —

"Yes, you're right. I think it is very humiliating for one man to be obliged to call another man who is no better than himself, 'Sire' and 'Your Majesty.'"

"But I was n't obliged to. Once at the forge he did n't

require or expect it. I called him Citizen, and he called me Gamain. But I did n't thee and thou him as he did me."

"Yes; but when the hour for breakfast or dinner came, Gamain was sent to dine with the servants."

"Oh no, no, indeed! he never did that. He always had a table brought into the shop; and very often, especially at breakfast, he sat down with me, and said, 'I won't breakfast with the queen this morning, for in that case I should have to wash my hands.'"

"I can't understand it."

"You can't understand that when the king came to work at the forge with me he had hands like the rest of us? — though that does n't prevent us from being honest people, even though the queen might say to him, with that stuck-up air of hers, 'Fie! your hands are dirty, sire!' As if a man could have clean hands while he was working at the forge! To tell the truth, I don't believe the king ever really enjoyed himself except while he was working with me, or while he was in his geographical cabinet with his librarian. I do believe he liked me the best, though."

"Still, it can't be a very nice thing to teach a bad pupil."

"Bad? Why, he is n't bad. You should not say that. Of course it is a very unfortunate thing for him that he was born a king, and so has to attend to a lot of stupid matters instead of making some progress in his trade. He will never make a good king, — he's too honest; but he would make a splendid locksmith. There's one man I hated like poison on account of the time he made him waste. That was Necker. Oh, heavens, to think of the time he made him lose!"

"Over his accounts, I suppose you mean?"

"Yes, over his accounts on paper, — his accounts in the air, I used to call them."

"You must have found teaching such a pupil a paying job?"

"No, indeed. You're very much mistaken. I swear to you that though people think me as rich as Cræsus on

account of what I've done for your Louis XVI., your saviour of the French nation, I'm really as poor as Job."

"You poor? What does he do with his money, then?"

"Oh, he gives half of it to the poor and the other half to the rich; so he himself never has a penny. The Coignys, the Vaudreuils, and the Polignacs are always at the poor dear man. One day he tried to reduce Monsieur de Coigny's salary. Coigny came and called him out of the shop. In about five minutes the king came back again, white as a sheet. 'Upon my word! I thought he was going to beat me!' he exclaimed. 'And how about his salary, sire?' I asked. 'Oh, I had to let it alone. I could n't do anything else!' Another day he tried to say something to the queen about Madame de Polignac's *layette* that cost three hundred thousand francs. What do you think of that?"

"A very neat little sum, I should say."

"Yes; but it was n't enough. The queen made him give five hundred thousand. So all these Polignacs, you see, who had n't a penny ten years ago, will be worth their millions when they leave France. If they were persons of talent, one would n't mind it so much; but give them a hammer and an anvil and they could n't make so much as a horseshoe. But, being fine talkers, they have urged the king on, and now leave him to get out of the scrape as best he can with Messrs. Bailly, Lafayette, and Mirabeau; while I—I, who have always given him the best of advice—have to be content with the fifteen hundred crowns a year he allows me,—me, his instructor, his friend, the person who first put a file in his hand."

"But you can count upon a handsome present now and then, when you are working with him, of course."

"What! do you think I work with him now? In the first place, I should compromise myself too much by doing it. I have n't set foot in the palace since the storming of the Bastille. I've met him once or twice since. The first time there was a crowd in the street, and he merely bowed to me. The second time it was on the road to Satory.

There was no one about, and he stopped the carriage. 'Good-morning, Gamain,' he said with a sigh. 'Things are not going to your liking, I see very plainly,' I began; 'but this will teach you —' 'And your wife and children, are they well?' he interrupted me by saying. 'Perfectly; they've got infernal appetites, that's all!' 'Wait!' exclaimed the king, fumbling in his pockets. 'Here, take them this little gift from me. It's all I happen to have about me, but I'm ashamed to make you such a shabby present.' And a shabby present it was, there's no doubt about it. Think of a king having only nine louis in his pocket, — a king who makes a comrade, a friend, a present of nine louis! So —"

"So you refused it?"

"No. I said to myself, 'I'd better take what I can get, for he'll soon meet some one less proud who will accept it.' But he need n't trouble himself any more. I sha'n't set foot in the palace again, no matter how often he sends for me."

"Grateful creature!" muttered the Unknown.

"What did you say?"

"I merely remarked that such devotion as yours to a friend in misfortune is really touching, Master Gamain. One more glass to the health of your pupil!"

"He don't deserve it. Still, that does n't matter. Here's to his health, all the same."

He drained his glass; then he added: "And to think that he had in his cellars ten thousand bottles of wine worth ten times as much as this, and never once said to one of his footmen, 'Here, you fellow, get out a basket of wine, and take it to my friend Gamain's house!' He preferred to see his body-guard, his Swiss soldiers, and his regiment from Flanders drink it."

"What else could you expect?" answered the Unknown, sipping his wine leisurely. "Kings are always ungrateful. But hush! we are not alone."

Three persons had just entered the tavern, two men and

a woman, and seated themselves at a table opposite the one where the Unknown had just finished his second bottle of wine in company with Master Gamain.

The locksmith scrutinised the new-comers with a curiosity that made his companion smile; and in fact the new-comers seemed worthy of attention. One of the two men was all body; the other all legs. As for the woman, it was hard to decide what she was.

The man who was all body was almost a dwarf, being scarcely five feet tall, though he may have lost an inch or two in height by reason of a bend in his knees, which touched on the inside in spite of the unusual distance between his feet. His face, instead of lessening this deformity, seemed to render it more noticeable. His grey and greasy hair was plastered down upon his low forehead; the growth of his eyebrows seemed to have been left entirely to chance. His eyes were generally glassy and dull, like those of a toad; but in moments of anger they emitted a gleam like that which radiates from the contracted pupil of a venomous reptile. His flat and crooked nose increased the excessive prominence of his high cheek-bones, and, to complete this hideous combination, his contorted and jaundiced lips disclosed to view only broken, discoloured, straggling snags of teeth.

A person glancing at him would instinctively have felt that this man's veins were filled with gall instead of blood.

The other man reminded one of a heron mounted upon a pair of stilts; and the resemblance was the more marked from the fact that, being a humpback, his head was almost hidden between his shoulders, and could be distinguished only by his eyes, that looked like two splotches of blood, and a long hooked nose, like a beak! At the first glance one felt almost sure that he would stretch out his neck with a sudden jerk and peck out the eyes of any one who was unfortunate enough to excite his wrath. His arms, in fact, were endowed with the elasticity which had been denied his neck; for, seated as he was, he had only to stretch out

his hand, without bending his body in the least, to pick up a handkerchief he had dropped after wiping his forehead, which was wet with rain and sweat.

The third member of the party was an amphibious being, whose sex seemed to be shrouded in mystery. This was a man, or woman, about thirty-four years of age, attired in a costly fishwife's costume, with gold chains and earrings and a lace headdress and kerchief. The features, as far as one could distinguish them through a thick coating of powder and rouge and the numerous patches of every shape and size that studded this red and white surface, were of that vague, uncertain type one sees in degraded races. On seeing this strange creature, the beholder waited impatiently for the lips to open, in the hope that the sound of the voice would determine the sex of its possessor. But this was not the case. The voice, which seemed to be a soprano, left the observer still more deeply in doubt. The eye did not assist the ear, in this case, nor the hearing aid the sight.

The stockings and shoes of the two men, as well as of the woman, indicated that their wearers had been tramping through the dusty road for a long time.

"It is strange, but it seems to me that I know that woman," remarked Gamain.

"Very possibly; but when those three persons get together, they mean business," said the Unknown, picking up his gun, and pulling his cap down over his eyes; "and when they mean business, it is best to leave them alone."

"You know them, then?"

"Yes, by sight. And you?"

"I think I've seen the woman somewhere, as I said before."

"At court, perhaps?"

"That's likely! A fishwoman at court!"

"They've been at court quite often of late, it strikes me."

"Tell me who the men are, if you know them. That may help me to recognise the woman."

"Which shall I name first?"

"The bandy-legged one."

"Jean Paul Marat."

"Ah, ha! Now the hunchback."

"Prosper Verrières."

"Oh, ho!"

"Does that give you any clue in regard to the fishwife? Think a minute."

"My memory seems to have gone to the dogs."

"Very well; the fishwife —"

"Wait! — but, no; it is impossible —"

"Yes, it does seem so; but —"

"Is it —"

"I see you 'll never muster up courage to name him, so I shall have to do it. The fishwife is the Duc d'Aiguillon."

At the sound of this name, the fishwife started and turned; her two companions did the same. Then all three rose, as before a superior to whom they wished to show marked deference; but the Unknown placed his finger warningly on his lip, and passed out.

Gamain followed; it seemed to him he must be dreaming.

At the door they were jostled by a man who was rushing wildly along, followed by a crowd shouting, —

"The queen's hairdresser! the queen's hairdresser!"

In this crowd were two men, each carrying a bloody head on the end of a pike.

These were the heads of the unfortunate guardsmen, Varicourt and Deshuttes.

"Hold on, Monsieur Léonard!" Gamain called out to the man who had jostled him.

"Hush! don't call me by that name!" cried the hairdresser, rushing into the tavern.

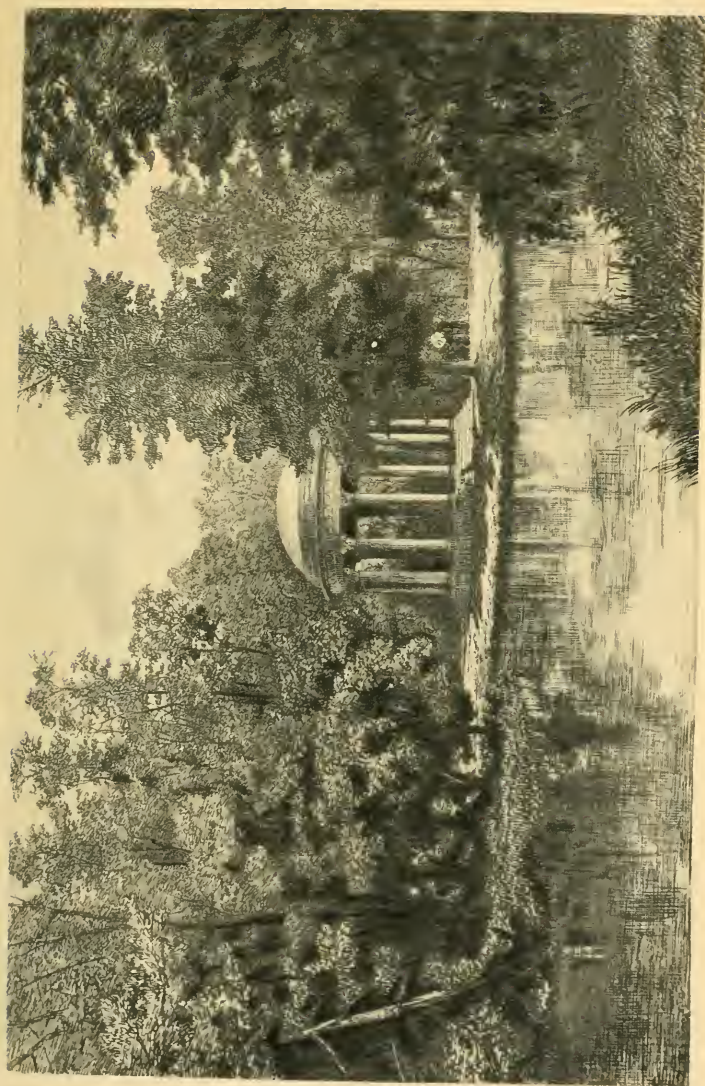
"What do they want with him?" asked the locksmith.

"Who knows?" responded the Unknown. "They want him to curl the hair of those poor devils, perhaps. People get strange ideas into their heads in times like these."

He disappeared in the crowd, leaving Gamain, from whom he had probably extracted all the information he wanted, to make his way back to his workshop at Versailles as best he could.

The Temple of Love, Versailles.

Photo-Etching. — From Drawing by E. Sadoux.



CHAPTER III.

CAGLIOSTRO.

THE crowd was so great that it was an easy matter for the Unknown to become swallowed up in it.

The throng was the advance guard of the royal procession which had left Versailles at the appointed hour, — about one o'clock in the afternoon.

The queen, the dauphin, the princess royal, the Comte de Provence, Madame Elizabeth, and the Comtesse de Charny were in the king's coach.

A hundred carriages held the members of the National Assembly, who had declared themselves inseparable from the king.

The Comte de Charny and Billot had remained at Versailles to render the last services to Baron George de Charny, killed, as we have before related, on that terrible night of the fifth and sixth of October, and to prevent the body from being mutilated, as the bodies of Varicourt and Deshuttés had been.

This advance guard above mentioned, which had left Versailles about two hours before the king, but was now only about a quarter of an hour in advance of him, consisted of a crowd of half-intoxicated ragamuffins, — the scum that always floats upon the surface of any flood either of water or lava.

Suddenly there was a great commotion in the throng; they had caught sight of the bayonets of the National Guard and the white steed of Lafayette, who rode immediately in front of the king's carriage.

Lafayette liked popular assemblies very much, — that is, among the inhabitants of Paris, whose idol he was; but he did not like the populace, — for Paris, like Rome, had its *plebs* and its *plebecula*, its common people and its rabble.

He was also particularly averse to the summary executions performed by such mobs as this, and he had done everything in his power to save Flesselles, Foulon, and Berthier de Sauvigny.

It was to conceal these bloody trophies from him, and at the same time preserve these emblems of their triumph, that this advance guard had marched ahead; but now, encouraged by the triumvirate they met at the tavern, they found a means of circumventing Lafayette, by saying that, as her Majesty had declared that she would not be separated from her faithful guards, they would await her Majesty's coming, and constitute themselves a part of her escort.

This mob, which swept along the road from Versailles to Paris like a seething torrent, bearing along on its foul black surface the occupants of a palace it had demolished in its mad career, — this mob had on each side of the road a sort of eddy, composed of the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, who had come to see what was going on. A few of these people mingled with the crowd, thus swelling the king's escort; but by far the greater number stood on the roadside, silent and motionless. The reader should not suppose from this fact that they were in sympathy with the king and queen. Quite the contrary; for everybody in France, except the nobility, was suffering greatly from the terrible famine that prevailed in the land, and though they did not openly insult the royal family, they were silent, — and the silence of a crowd is more insulting, perhaps, than abusive words.

On the other hand, they shouted with all the strength of their lungs, "Long live Lafayette!" whereupon the general, lifting his hat with his left hand, saluted the crowd with his right; or "Long live Mirabeau!" as that

famous orator now and then thrust his head out of his carriage window in order to secure the full amount of fresh air his powerful lungs required.

Thus the unfortunate king, before whom all kept silence, heard them applauding in his very presence Popularity, the thing he had lost, and Genius, a thing he had never possessed. Doctor Gilbert marched along with the crowd near the right door of the royal coach, — that is, on the side next the queen.

Marie Antoinette, who had never been able to understand this sort of stoicism in Gilbert, in whom American coolness was combined with a strange gruffness, gazed with amazement at this man, who, feeling neither love nor devotion for his sovereigns, was nevertheless ready to do for them all that love and devotion could do, though he was actuated solely by a sense of duty. Moreover, he was even ready to die for them; and the greatest love and devotion could do no more.

On both sides of the royal coach, beyond the line of attendants, who had stationed themselves close to the carriage, — some out of curiosity, others with the intention of protecting the august travellers in case of need, — floundering through mud at least six inches deep on the edges of the road, walked the market-women, and moving along in the midst of them was a gun-carriage, or caisson, crowded with women, who were singing and yelling at the top of their voices. What they were singing was the old familiar verse, beginning, —

“The baker’s wife, she has some crowns
That did not cost her dear.”

What they shouted was their new formula of hope, —

“We shall not lack bread any longer; for we are bringing the baker, the baker’s wife, and the baker’s boy back with us!”

The queen seemed to hear all this without understanding it in the least. She was holding on her lap the little

dauphin, who surveyed the crowd with that frightened air with which royal children gaze at the populace in troublous times, and with which we ourselves have seen the King of Rome, the Duc de Bordeaux, and the Comte de Paris gaze at it; only the rabble in these days is more disdainful and more magnanimous, because it is more powerful, and knows that it can afford to be gracious.

The king gazed around him with dull and weary eyes; he had slept but little the night before, and had eaten only a few mouthfuls of breakfast. He had not had time to have his hair repowdered and dressed; his face was unshaven, his linen soiled and rumpled, — trifles, maybe, but trifles which placed him at a great disadvantage. The poor king, alas! was not the man for an emergency; in fact, he always bowed his head before an emergency. Only once did he raise it, — that was on the scaffold, the very moment that it fell.

Madame Elizabeth was the angel of sweetness and resignation that God had placed near these two unfortunates, — first, to console the king in the Temple in the queen's absence, and subsequently to console the queen in the Conciergerie, after the death of the king.

The Comte de Provence wore his usual crafty expression. He knew that he was in no danger, at least for the time being; that he was, in fact, the only popular member of the family. Why, it is hard to say; perhaps because he remained in France when his brother the Comte d'Artois left it. But if the king could have read his brother's heart, he would have known that his warm gratitude for what he interpreted as brotherly devotion was entirely uncalled for.

The Comtesse de Charny seemed to be made of marble. She had slept no better than the queen, and eaten no more than the king; but privations of any kind seemed to have little or no effect upon her. She, too, had had no time to arrange her hair or change her clothing; but not a hair of her head was out of place, not a fold of her dress was rumpled. She reminded one of a statue around which the

waves were rolling wildly, without even attracting her attention, and with no other effect than to make her appear even more white and placid. It was evident to a close observer that in this woman's head or heart was a single, ever-present, all-powerful, luminous thought, towards which her whole soul gravitated as the magnetic needle gravitates towards the polar star. A sort of ghost among the living, only one thing proved that she was really alive, — the involuntary light that flashed from her eyes whenever her gaze met Gilbert's.

About one hundred yards from the little tavern to which we have alluded, the procession came to a halt, and the shouts and yells all along the line became still louder.

The queen leaned a little way out of the window; and this movement, which might have been mistaken for a salutation on her part, elicited a confused murmur from the throng.

“Monsieur Gilbert!” she said.

Gilbert approached the carriage window. He was holding his hat in his hand, as at Versailles; so he was not obliged to remove it as a mark of respect to his sovereign.

“Madame?” he replied.

The peculiar intonation in which this single word was uttered indicated that Gilbert was entirely at the queen's service.

“Monsieur Gilbert,” she repeated, “what are your people singing, what are they saying?”

“Alas, madame, these people whom you call *my* people were once your people. It is barely twenty years ago that Monsieur de Brissac — a charming man, by the way, for whom I now look around in vain — showed you to these same people from the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville, — to these same people, who were then enthusiastically shouting, ‘Long live the princess!’ — and said to you, ‘Madame, you see before you two hundred thousand lovers.’”

The queen bit her lip. It was impossible to take this man to task for rudeness or lack of respect.

“That is true,” responded the queen. “It only shows how fickle the people are.”

This time Gilbert bowed, but did not answer.

“I asked you a question, Monsieur Gilbert,” continued the queen, with the persistence she always displayed, even in matters of a disagreeable nature.

“Yes, madame; and as your Majesty insists, I will answer it. The people are singing, —

‘The baker’s wife, she has some crowns
That did not cost her dear.’

You know who it is that the people call the baker’s wife, do you not, madame?”

“Yes, monsieur; I know they do me that honour. I am quite accustomed to these nicknames already. Awhile ago, they called me Madame Deficit. Is there any connection between the first name and the second?”

“Yes, your Majesty; and to satisfy yourself of the fact, you need only think over the two lines I have just repeated to you.”

“‘Some crowns that did not cost her dear,’” repeated the queen. “I do not understand.”

Gilbert was silent.

“Do you not see that I quite fail to comprehend the meaning of the lines?” said the queen, impatiently.

“And your Majesty still insists upon an explanation?”

“Most assuredly.”

“The song means, madame, that your Majesty has had some very obliging ministers, especially ministers of finance, — Monsieur de Calonne, for example. The people know that you have only to ask for him to give; and as it is not much trouble to ask if one is a queen whose wish is equivalent to a command, the people sing, —

‘The baker’s wife, she has some crowns
That did not cost her dear, —’

that is to say, which cost you only the trouble of asking for them.”

The queen clinched the white hand resting on the red velvet cushion.

“So that is what they are singing,” she said haughtily. “Now, Monsieur Gilbert, as you understand their thoughts so well, you will, I am sure, have the goodness to explain what they are shouting.”

“They are saying, ‘We shall not want for bread hereafter, as we are bringing the baker, the baker’s wife, and the baker’s boy back with us.’”

“You can explain this second insult as clearly as you did the first, can you not?”

“Ah, madame, if you will consider, not the words, perhaps, so much as the real feelings of the people, you will see that you have not so much to complain of as you imagine,” replied Gilbert, with the same gentle melancholy.

“Let us see about that. You know that I ask nothing better than to be enlightened on these points, monsieur. Go on; I am listening.”

“The people have been told, madame, that a big speculation in wheat has been carried on at Versailles, and that that is why there is no flour coming to Paris. Who feeds the people? The baker and the baker’s wife of the neighbourhood. To whom do the father, husband, and son raise their beseeching hands when the child, wife, or father is dying of hunger? To the baker and the baker’s wife. To whom do men pray, next to God? Is it not to those who distribute bread? Are not you, madame, and the king, and this royal child, really the distributors of God’s bread? Do not be surprised, then, at the name the people have bestowed upon you, but be thankful for the hope they feel that when the king, queen, and dauphin are in the midst of these twelve hundred thousand famishing creatures, they will want for nothing.”

The queen closed her eyes for an instant, and one could detect a movement of her mouth and throat, as if she were trying to swallow her hatred along with the acrid saliva that burned her mouth.

“So that is what these people in front of us and behind us are shouting. We ought to thank them for the nicknames they bestow upon us, as well as the songs they sing for us, I suppose.”

“Oh, yes, madame, and most sincerely, because their songs are only the expression of their good humour, and their nicknames only a sign of their hopes.”

“But they are shouting, ‘Long live Lafayette and Mirabeau!’”

“Yes, madame; because, if they live, Lafayette and Mirabeau, who are now separated from each other by a broad abyss, may become united, and by thus uniting save the country.”

“You mean, then, I suppose, that the monarchy has sunk so low that these two men alone can save it?”

Gilbert was about to reply, when cries of terror mingled with peals of laughter were heard, and a movement in the crowd pushed him closer to the carriage door, to which he clung stoutly, feeling sure that something was about to occur which would make it necessary for him to use his voice or his strength in the queen’s defence.

The commotion was caused by the two pikemen before mentioned, who, having compelled the unfortunate Léonard to curl and powder the heads that crowned their weapons, were now determined to exhibit their ghastly trophies to the queen, as others — or, possibly, these very men — had exhibited Foulon’s head to Berthier, his father-in-law.

The cries came from the crowd, which, at the sight of the bleeding heads, recoiled upon itself, thus opening a passage for the two wretches.

“For Heaven’s sake, do not look to your right, madame!” exclaimed Gilbert.

But the queen was not the woman to heed such an injunction without first ascertaining the cause of it; so her very first movement was to turn her eyes towards the forbidden spot, and, as she did so, she uttered a terrified cry.

But suddenly her eyes wandered from the ghastly sight

as if they had just encountered one still more terrible, and had riveted themselves upon it as if upon a Medusa's head, from which they were unable to detach themselves.

But the head in this case was that of the Unknown, whom we saw talking and drinking in company with Master Gamain at the Sèvres Bridge Tavern, but who was now standing with folded arms, leaning against a tree.

For an instant the queen clutched Gilbert's shoulder with a violence that almost buried her nails in his flesh.

Gilbert turned, and saw that the queen was as pale as death, that her lips were trembling and bloodless, and her eyes fixed.

He would have attributed this nervous paroxysm to the sight of the two heads, however, if Marie Antoinette's eyes had been fixed upon either of them; but she was gazing horizontally before her at about the height of a man's head from the ground.

Gilbert turned his eyes in the same direction, and he, too, uttered a low cry; but in his case it was one of astonishment.

Then both murmured simultaneously, "Cagliostro!"

The man leaning against the tree had an unobstructed view of the queen and her attendant, and he made a motion with his hand to Gilbert as if to say, "Come here!"

Just then the *cortège* started again; and with an involuntary and perfectly natural impulse, the queen pushed Gilbert away, so that he might not be crushed by the wheel.

He thought she was pushing him toward Cagliostro; but whether she pushed him or not, as soon as he recognised the man, he felt that he was no longer his own master, and that he should have obeyed the summons in any event.

So, stepping aside, he allowed the procession to pass him; then, following the Unknown, who turned now and then to see if he was obeyed, he walked up a narrow lane leading to Bellevue, and disappeared from sight behind a wall at the very moment the royal coach and its escort were lost to view over the brow of the steep hill on the road leading to Paris.

CHAPTER IV.

FATE.

GILBERT followed the Unknown, who walked about twenty yards in advance of him, about half-way up the hill and until he found himself in front of a large and handsome house. The man who was ahead of him had taken a key from his pocket, and entered the house by a small side door, evidently constructed so that the master of the establishment could come and go without the knowledge of his servants.

He left this door ajar, which showed plainly enough that he expected Gilbert to follow; which he did, closing the door behind him, — and it swung so noiselessly upon its hinges, and fastened itself so softly, that one could not hear even the click of the bolt. In short, it was a lock that would have excited even Master Gamain's admiration.

Once inside, Gilbert found himself in a spacious hall, the walls of which were covered to the height of about six feet — so that the eye might lose none of the marvellous details — with bronze panels copied from those with which Ghiberti has enriched the Baptistery in Florence.

The floor was covered with a rich, soft Turkish carpet.

There was an open door on the left; and Gilbert, thinking that this too had been left open purposely, entered the apartment to which it gave access. The room was hung with rich India satin, and the furniture was covered with the same material. One of those fantastic birds such as the Chinese paint and embroider covered the ceiling with its blue and gold wings, and supported in its talons the chandelier which, together with several magnifi-

cently wrought candelabra representing huge bunches of lilies, lighted the apartment.

There was but one picture in the room, and this hung directly opposite the large mantel mirror. It was one of Raphael's Madonnas.

Gilbert was gazing admiringly at this *chef d'œuvre*, when he heard, or rather *felt*, a door open behind him, and, turning, he saw Cagliostro emerging from a sort of dressing-room.

This brief interval had sufficed to enable him to remove the stain from his arms and face, to rearrange his hair, and effect an entire change of clothing. He was no longer the rough mechanic with toil-stained hands, muddy shoes, and shabby garments, but the elegant nobleman whom we have already introduced to our readers, first in "The Memoirs of a Physician," and subsequently in "The Queen's Necklace." His garments covered with rich embroidery, and his hands sparkling with diamonds, contrasted strikingly with Gilbert's simple black suit, and the plain gold ring — a gift from Washington — which he wore on his finger.

With a smiling face Cagliostro advanced, opening his arms. Gilbert rushed into them.

"My dear master!" he exclaimed.

"One moment!" cried Cagliostro, laughing. "You have made such progress since we parted, especially in philosophy, that it is you who are now the master, while I am scarcely worthy to be called your pupil."

"I thank you for the compliment; but even if I have made any such progress, how have you become aware of the fact? It is eight years since we met."

"Do you imagine, my dear doctor, that you are one of those persons who are forgotten merely because they are absent? It is true that I have not seen you for eight years, but I can tell you what you have been doing each day for the past ten years."

"Can you really?"

"Are you still sceptical concerning my powers?"

“I am a mathematician—”

“And consequently incredulous. Let us see, now; you came to France first on family matters. Your family matters do not concern me; and therefore—”

“No, no; go on!” said Gilbert, thinking to embarrass Cagliostro.

“Very well, then; you came to see about the education of your son Sebastian, being anxious to place him in some small town eighteen or twenty leagues from Paris, and to settle some business matters with your agent, a very worthy man whom you had kept in Paris sorely against his will, and who for many reasons ought to have been at home with his wife.”

“Really, you are a wonderful man!”

“Wait a moment. The second time, you came to Paris because political matters brought you. You had prepared several pamphlets and sent them to Louis XVI.; and as there is still a good deal of the old Adam left in you, you valued the approbation of a king more than that of your former teacher Jean Jacques Rousseau, who, if he were living now, would be considered greater than any king. You were anxious to know what the grandson of Louis XIV. thought of Doctor Gilbert. Unfortunately, there was a little fracas which you had not anticipated in the least, but which caused me to find you one day with a bullet-hole in your breast in a grotto in the Azores Islands, where my vessel chanced to touch. This affair concerned Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney, now the Comtesse de Charny, an important personage in close attendance upon the queen; and as the queen could refuse the woman who had married the Comte de Charny nothing, she asked and obtained a warrant for your secret imprisonment. On your way from Havre to Paris you were arrested and taken to the Bastille, where you would be to this day, my dear doctor, if the people had not taken it into their heads to demolish that ancient edifice one fine morning. Then, like the stanch royalist that you are, my dear Gilbert, you

hastened to espouse the cause of the king, who made you one of his attendant physicians. Last night, or rather this morning, you rendered the royal family an invaluable service by rushing to arouse Lafayette, who was sleeping the sleep of the just; and just now, believing that the life of the queen, — whom, by the way, you thoroughly detest, — believing, I say, that her life was in danger, you were ready to convert your own body into a rampart for your sovereign's defence. Am I not right? But don't let me neglect to mention one incident of no slight importance, — the recovery of a certain casket which had been seized through the agency of a certain Padeloup. Tell me, now, if I have made a single mistake, and I stand ready to make my humble apologies."

Gilbert was overwhelmed with astonishment by these revelations on the part of this extraordinary man, who seemed not only to be endowed with a strange sort of prescience concerning all that was going on throughout the entire world, but also to be able to read the very hearts of men.

"Yes, you speak the truth," said he. "You are still Cagliostro the magician, the sorcerer, the enchanter."

Cagliostro's smile indicated no little satisfaction. He was evidently proud of having made such an impression on Gilbert by this display of his powers.

"And now, as I am quite as fond of you as you are of me, my dear master," continued Gilbert, "and as I am correspondingly anxious to know what has befallen you since we parted, will you think me too inquisitive if I ask in what part of the world you have been displaying your genius and exercising your powers?"

"I, too, have associated with kings, and many of them, but with an entirely different object. You approach them to sustain them; I, to dethrone them. You are trying to establish a constitutional king, and you will not succeed; I endeavour to make king and princes philosophers, and I attain my object."

“Indeed!” ejaculated Gilbert, with a sceptical air.

“Yes. It is true that Voltaire, D’Alembert, and Diderot paved the way for this new order of things, however. Is it necessary for me to remind you of Joseph II., brother of our beloved queen, who has suppressed at least three-fourths of the monasteries and confiscated the ecclesiastical benefices of the King of Deumark,—that precocious youth who said, when only seventeen, ‘It is Voltaire who has taught me to think, and who has made a man of me;’ of the Empress Catherine, who made such gigantic strides in philosophy, even while she was dismembering Poland, that Voltaire wrote, ‘Diderot, D’Alembert, and myself are erecting altars to you;’ of the King of Sweden; and of many other great princes and potentates?”

“There seems to be nothing left for you to do but convert the Pope to your way of thinking; and as nothing seems to be impossible to you, I feel quite sanguine of your success even in that quarter.”

“I’m afraid you ask too much of me this time. I have but just escaped from the Holy Father’s clutches. I was in the Castle of Saint Angelo six long and dreary months.”

“But I thought that once inside the Castle of Saint Angelo, one could n’t get out.”

“Nonsense! How about Benvenuto Cellini?”

“Did you too get a pair of wings, like a modern Icarus, and fly across the Tiber?”

“That was impossible, I regret to say, inasmuch as I was lodged in a dungeon that was both deep and dark.”

“But you managed to make your escape from it eventually, it seems.”

“Yes, here I am, as you see.”

“You bribed your gaoler, I suppose.”

“I was indeed unlucky. I stumbled upon an incorruptible gaoler.”

“Incorruptible? The deuce!”

“Yes; but fortunately he was not permitted to live for-

ever. Luck, or what a more devout believer than myself would call Providence, so arranged it that he died the day after his third refusal to open my prison doors."

"He died suddenly?"

"Yes."

"Ah!"

"It was necessary to find some one to take his place. They did so."

"And his successor did not prove incorruptible?"

"The very day he entered upon his duties, he remarked to me when he brought in my supper, 'Eat a good meal, for we have a long journey before us.' The brave fellow told the truth. That same night we each ruined three horses and travelled a hundred miles."

"And what did those in authority say when your flight was discovered?"

"Nothing. They dressed up the other gaoler, who had not been buried, in some garments I left behind; then they fired a pistol-shot in his face, let the weapon fall by his side, and declared that I had secured a pistol in some mysterious manner and blown my brains out. I was publicly declared to be dead, and the gaoler was interred under my name. So you see, my dear Gilbert, that I am, to all intents and purposes, dead; and even if I should claim to be alive, I should probably be confronted by my record of decease, and my death be thus established incontestably. But there is no need of that; for it suits me to disappear from the world just at this time, or rather to reappear in it under another name."

"And what do you call yourself now, may I ask?"

"Baron Zannone. I am a Genoese banker. And, by the way, are you in need of money, my dear Gilbert? You know my brain and purse are at your disposal now, as always. Remember this too, my friend, if you should need money at any time, you will always find a very considerable amount here in my secretary. Take whatever you want, whether I am here or not. I will show you how to

open it. Press this spring, — see, in this way. You will always find about a million here.”

“You are a wonderful man, truly,” said Gilbert, laughing; “but with my income of twenty thousand crowns, I am as rich as a king, and richer. But do you not fear you may be arrested here in Paris?”

“What! on account of that necklace affair? They would not dare. In the present state of public feeling, I have only to say a word to create a riot. You forget, too, that I am on the best of terms with the idols of the day, — Lafayette, Necker, Mirabeau, and yourself.”

“What is your object in coming to Paris?”

“That is hard to say. The same you had in going to America, perhaps, namely, the establishment of a republic.”

“But France has no inclination that way.”

“We will make her a republic, nevertheless.”

“The king will resist.”

“Very possibly.”

“The nobility will take up arms.”

“That is quite probable.”

“Then we shall not have a republic, but a revolution; and if we come to that, it will be a terrible state of things.”

“Terrible, indeed, if we have many men of your ability to contend with.”

“I am not a clever man, I am only honest.”

“So much the worse for us; and that is why I must convince you.”

“I am convinced already.”

“That you ought to prevent us from accomplishing this work?”

“That we should at least attempt to do so.”

“You are wrong, Gilbert. You do not understand the true mission of this country. France is the brain of the world; hence France must think, and think liberally, in order that the world, too, may be liberal in thought and in action. Do you know what caused the destruction of the Bastille, Gilbert?”

“The people.”

“You are wrong. You mistake the effect for the cause. For five hundred years counts, barons, and princes were confined in the Bastile, and it remained intact; but one day a foolish king conceived the unfortunate idea of incarcerating Thought there, — Thought, which requires boundless space, infinity; and Thought forced its way out of its prison-house, and the people rushed in through the breach thus made.”

“That is true,” murmured Gilbert, thoughtfully.

“Do you recollect what Voltaire wrote to Chauvelin on the second of March, 1764, nearly twenty-six years ago?”

“Repeat it, if you please.”

“Voltaire wrote as follows: ‘Everything I see is putting forth the seeds of a revolution which is sure to come, but which I shall not have the gratification of witnessing. The French are slow, but they are sure to reach the goal at last. The light is approaching nearer and nearer. The young are, indeed, fortunate, for they will see wonderful things.’ What do you think of the riots of yesterday and to-day, eh?”

“They were terrible.”

“Well, this is only the beginning, Gilbert. A few days ago I was with a famous physician, a philanthropist. You cannot imagine what he was doing.”

“Trying to discover some remedy for an incurable disease, probably.”

“Oh, no. Knowing of the plague, the cholera, yellow fever, small-pox, apoplexy, and five hundred other maladies which are deemed incurable, besides ten or twelve hundred others which may prove so if not skilfully treated, to say nothing of the cannon, gun, sword, dagger, water, fire, the gibbet and the rack, he had nevertheless come to the conclusion that there are not enough ways of destroying life; so he was engaged in inventing a machine which he contemplates to offer to the nation, and which will put fifty, sixty, and even eighty persons to death in less than an hour.

Now, my dear Gilbert, do you suppose that a distinguished physician and philanthropist like Doctor Guillotin would busy himself over such a machine unless the need of such a machine was making itself felt? I tell you that the nobility and royalty are marching side by side to the tomb, in this land of ours."

"I have abandoned the cause of the nobility, my dear count, or, rather, they abandoned their own cause on the famous night of the fourth of August; but let us preserve royalty, for it is the palladium of the nation."

"That is very fine talk, Gilbert; but did the palladium save Troy? Preserve royalty! Do you think that an easy matter with such a king?"

"But he is the descendant of a great race."

"Yes, a race of eagles ending in a paroquet. In order that Utopians like yourself may be able to save royalty, royalty must first make an effort to save itself. You have seen Louis XVI., you see him every day; and you are not the man to see anybody or anything without studying it carefully. Well, now, tell me the truth. Can royalty long survive, represented by such a king? Is he your idea of a sceptre-bearer? Do you suppose that Charlemagne or Philip Augustus or Francis I. or Henry IV. or Louis XIV. had his flabby flesh and hanging lips and dull eyes and halting gait? No; they were men. There was blood and nerve and sinew and vitality under their royal mantles. To preserve some species of animals, and even vegetables, in health and vigour, nature itself ordains an intermixture of species and diverse families. As grafting in the vegetable kingdom is the chief preserver of the goodness and beauty of the different species, so it is with man. Marriages between relatives is almost certain to result in the deterioration of individuals. Nature languishes and degenerates after several generations have been produced from the same blood. On the other hand, nature is vivified, regenerated, and strengthened when a foreign element is introduced into the line. Think of Henry III., the last of the Valois;

Gaston, the last of the Medicis, and Charles VI., the last of the Hapsburgs! The chief cause of their degeneracy was unquestionably due to the constant intermarriages in their families. Of the thirty-two great-great-grandmothers and grandfathers of Louis XV., six were members of the house of Bourbon, five of the house of Medicis, eleven of the Austrian house of Hapsburg, three of the house of Savoy, and three of the house of Stuart. Subject the best dog in the world to such a test, and you will have a worthless cur. How can we expect to resist such influences, — we who are but men? What do you say to my theory, my dear doctor?"

"I can only say that it frightens me, and makes me feel even more certain that my place is by the king's side."

Gilbert turned, and was moving towards the door, when Cagliostro stopped him.

"Listen, Gilbert," he said. "You know that I love you, that I would endure torture to spare you pain. Well, let me give you one word of advice."

"What is it?"

"If the king would save himself, he should leave France while there is yet time. In a year, in six months, in three months perhaps, it will be too late."

"Would you advise a soldier to desert his post because it would be dangerous for him to remain?"

"If the soldier were already surrounded and disarmed, so that there was no possibility of defending himself, and above all if, by risking his life, he should imperil the lives of half a million other men, I would certainly advise him to flee. You will give the king this same piece of advice some day, Gilbert, but it will be too late. Do not wait; tell him now. Do not wait until evening; tell him this very hour."

"I am something of a fatalist, count, as you know. Come what may, as long as I have any influence with the king, the king will remain in France, and I shall remain with him. Farewell, count; we shall meet in the fray, and perhaps sleep side by side on the field of battle."

"As you will," murmured Cagliostro. "It has been said that no man, however clever he may be, can escape his evil destiny; I tried to find you in order to say this to you, and I have said it. You have listened; but my warning, like Cassandra's, has proved useless. Farewell."

"Tell me, count," said Gilbert, gazing searchingly at Cagliostro, "do you still claim, as you did in America, to be able to read a man's future in his face?"

"Yes, as surely as you can trace the course of the planets in the firmament above, though the majority of men consider them either immovable or erratic in their movements."

"Well, then — But wait, there is some one at the door."

"That is true."

"Well, tell me the fate of this person who is now rapping at the door, whoever he may be. Tell me when and in what manner he will die?"

"So be it. Let us admit him ourselves."

Gilbert walked to the door at the farther end of the hall and threw it open. His heart throbbed wildly with suppressed excitement, though he told himself that it was absurd to attach any importance to this charlatanism.

A tall, distinguished-looking man, with an expression of indomitable will imprinted upon his features, entered, casting a quick and rather anxious glance at Gilbert as he crossed the threshold.

"Good day, marquis," said Cagliostro.

"Good day, baron."

Then, as Cagliostro noticed that the new-comer cast yet another glance at Gilbert, he said, "Marquis, allow me to introduce Doctor Gilbert, a friend of mine. My dear Gilbert, the Marquis de Favras, one of my clients."

The two men bowed. Then, addressing the new-comer, the host added, —

"Marquis, if you will have the kindness to step into the next room, I will be at your service in a second or two."

The marquis bowed a second time as he passed the two men on his way out of the room.

"Well?" demanded Gilbert.

"Do you insist upon knowing what death the marquis will die?"

"Did you not promise to tell me?"

A peculiar smile flitted across Cagliostro's face. Then, after glancing around as if to satisfy himself that no one could overhear them, he asked, —

"Did you ever see a nobleman hanged?"

"No."

"It is an unusual sight, but you will be in the Place de Grève the day the Marquis de Favras is hanged."

Then, as he escorted Gilbert to the outer door, he added, —

"One moment, my friend. When you wish to see me privately, without being seen yourself and without seeing any one else, push this knob from right to left, and then down. Excuse this haste, but those who have not long to live must not be kept waiting."

He turned away, leaving Gilbert marvelling at this prophecy, which excited his astonishment without overcoming his incredulity.

CHAPTER V.

THE TUILERIES.

MEANWHILE the king, queen, and other members of the royal family were continuing their journey to Paris; but their progress, retarded by their boisterous and unwieldy escort, — the guards marching afoot, the fishwives mounted on their horses, the market men and women riding on the gaily decorated cannon, the long line of deputies' carriages, and two or three hundred waggons loaded with wheat and flour, appropriated at Versailles, and covered with autumn leaves, — was so slow that the royal coach did not reach the gates of the city until six in the evening.

During the journey the little dauphin became hungry, and asked for something to eat. The queen glanced around her. It might have seemed an easy matter to procure a little bread for him, for almost every man in the crowd had a loaf on the point of his bayonet; but the queen could not bear the idea of making such a request of these men, whom she regarded with such loathing. She looked for Gilbert, but he had followed Cagliostro; so she pressed the lad to her bosom, and said to him, with tears in her eyes, —

“My child, I have no food to give you now; but wait until evening, perhaps we shall have some then.”

The child pointed to the men who were carrying the loaves on their bayonets, and exclaimed, —

“Those people have some.”

“Yes; but it is theirs, not ours. They came to Versailles for it because — at least, so they say — they have had none for three days.”

"For three days? They have had nothing to eat for three days?"

"No, my child."

"In that case they must indeed be hungry," said the boy; and, ceasing his complaints, he tried to go to sleep.

Poor child of royalty! More than once before death came, as come it did, he begged in vain for bread.

At the city gates the procession again came to a halt, not to rest this time, but to celebrate their arrival.

The fishwomen dismounted from their horses, — or rather, from the horses of the guardsmen, — and the market men and women got down from the cannon, making the portentous character of their equipages frightfully apparent.

Then they all formed a circle around the king's coach, separating it entirely from the deputies and the National Guard, — an omen maybe, of what was to come. This ring, with the well-meant intention of manifesting its joy, sang and capered and danced and shouted, the women embracing the men, and the men pulling and dragging the women about in the roughest and coarsest manner.

After a half hour of this singing and dancing in the mud, the crowd gave a resounding hurrah! and everybody who had a gun fired it in the air, without any concern about the bullets, which came down again an instant afterwards, splashing into the puddles of water like immense hailstones.

The dauphin and his sister wept bitterly; they were so frightened they forgot all about their hunger.

The procession then made its way along the quays to the Hôtel de Ville, where the troops were formed into a hollow square, to prevent any one not belonging to the royal household or the Assembly from entering the building.

The queen saw Weber, her confidential servant and foster brother, trying to break through the line and enter the Hôtel de Ville with her. She called to him, and he hastened to her. Seeing that the National Guard had the

place of honour that day, Weber, too, had arrayed himself in the same uniform, thinking this disguise might enable him to be of service to his royal mistress.

“You can be of no assistance to me here, Weber,” said the queen, “but you can do me a valuable service elsewhere.”

“And where, madame?”

“At the Tuileries, where no preparations have been made for our reception, and where we shall find neither bed nor food.”

“That is a happy thought of yours, madame,” exclaimed the king.

The queen had spoken in German; and the king, who understood German, but who did not speak that language, had replied in English.

The people, too, had heard, but did not understand; and this foreign tongue, of which they had an instinctive horror, created a murmur of dissatisfaction, which threatened to become a roar of anger, around the carriage, when the hollow square opened in front of the royal party and then closed in again behind it.

Bailly, one of the prime favourites of the hour,—Bailly, whom we met on the king’s first journey, when bayonets, muskets, and cannon were concealed from view by flowers which were forgotten on this second journey,—Bailly was awaiting the king and queen at the foot of a throne hastily improvised for their reception,—a poorly constructed, shaky throne, that creaked loudly under the velvet that covered it,—a throne, in fact, well suited to such an occasion.

The mayor’s words of welcome were almost precisely the same as on the former occasion.

The king’s response was brief.

“It is always with pleasure and confidence that I come among the people of my good city of Paris,” he said.

The king spoke in a voice much weakened by fatigue and hunger. Bailly repeated the words in a much louder

tone, so that every one could hear; but, either intentionally or unintentionally, he omitted the words "and confidence."

The queen noticed it; and she was not sorry, perhaps, to find an opportunity to give vent to her bitterness.

"Pardon me, Monsieur Mayor," she remarked, in a tone sufficiently loud for every one near her not to miss a single word or syllable; "either you did not hear correctly, or your memory is at fault. The king said it is always with pleasure *and confidence* that he returns to the people of his good city of Paris. As many may feel inclined to doubt if he returns with pleasure at this present time, it would perhaps be well for them to know that he at least returns with confidence."

She then ascended the steps of the throne, and seated herself beside the king, to listen to the address of the electors.

Meanwhile Weber, thanks to his uniform, had succeeded in making his way on horseback through the crowd to the Tuileries. This Royal Lodge of the Tuileries, as it was formerly called, built and temporarily occupied by Catherine de Medici, but afterwards abandoned by Charles IX., had been considered for many years merely as a sort of appendage to the other royal palaces, and was now occupied exclusively by persons connected with the court, neither the king nor the queen having probably ever set foot in it before.

Knowing the habits of the king and the queen, Weber selected the suite of apartments occupied by the Comtesse de la Marck and those belonging to Marshals de Noailles and Mouchy.

Those occupied by Madame de la Marck had the advantage of being ready for the queen's reception; Weber having purchased the furniture, linen, curtains, and carpets of the former occupant.

About ten o'clock the sound of carriage wheels was heard in the courtyard. Everything was in readiness; and as he ran to receive his august employers, Weber called out to the other servants to serve supper at once.

The king, queen, Madame Royale, the dauphin, Madame Elizabeth, and Andrée entered, Monsieur de Provence having returned to the Luxembourg.

The king glanced anxiously around; but seeing through the open door leading into an adjoining room a well-spread table, and hearing an usher announce almost at the same moment, "His Majesty is served," his face brightened.

"Weber is a man of resources!" he exclaimed delightedly. "Say to him for me that I am much pleased with him."

"I will not fail to do so, sire," responded the queen, with a sigh, as she followed the king into the dining-room.

Covers had been laid for all the members of the party except Andrée; and the king was too hungry to notice this omission, — which was no slight, but strictly in accordance with the laws of court etiquette. The queen, however, whose quick eye nothing ever seemed to escape, perceived the fact at a glance, and said, —

"The king will permit the Comtesse de Charny to sup with us? Is it not so, Sire?"

"Why, certainly!" cried the king. "We are dining *en famille* to-day, and the countess is quite one of the family, you know."

"Am I to regard this as a command from the king?" asked the countess.

"Not as a command, but merely as a request which the king makes to you."

"In that case, then, I will beg the queen to excuse me, as I am not hungry."

"You are not hungry?" cried the king, who could not understand how a person who had not eaten anything from ten o'clock in the morning until ten at night could fail to be hungry, especially after such a fatiguing day.

"No, sire."

"Nor am I," said the queen.

"Nor I," said Madame Elizabeth.

"You all make a great mistake," answered the king;

“for the condition of the rest of the body, and even of the mind as well, depends upon the condition of the stomach. Besides, this soup is perfect. Why is this the first time I ever tasted it?”

“Because you have a new cook, sire,—the cook of the Comtesse de la Marck, whose apartments we are now occupying.”

“Retain him in my service. Really, this Weber of yours is a most remarkable man, madame.”

“Yes,” murmured the queen, sadly. “What a pity it is that you cannot make him a Cabinet Minister!”

The king did not hear, or did not wish to hear; but noticing that Andrée was still standing and that she looked very pale, he turned to her and said, “Though you are not hungry, I am sure you cannot deny that you are greatly fatigued; so I trust you will not refuse to rest, even if you refuse to eat.” Then, addressing the queen, he added: “I beg you will give the Comtesse de Charny permission to retire. I trust the servants have not forgotten to prepare a chamber for her.”

“Oh, sire! how can you trouble yourself about my comfort in such a time of distress?” exclaimed Andrée. “An arm-chair will suffice.”

“No, indeed. You slept very little last night, and you must have a good night’s rest. The queen not only needs all her own strength, but that of her friends as well.”

Soon one of the footmen, who had gone out to make inquiries, returned and said: “Monsieur Weber, knowing the great favour with which Madame la Comtesse is honoured by the queen, feels sure he has anticipated her Majesty’s wishes by reserving a chamber adjoining her Majesty’s for the countess.”

The queen started as the thought occurred to her that, if there was but one chamber for the countess, there could consequently be but one chamber for the countess and the count.

Andrée noted the start, slight as it was. No sensation

or emotion that one of these women experienced seemed to escape the other.

"I will accept of it for to-night, and for to-night only, madame," she said. "The apartments of her Majesty are too contracted for me to be willing to have my lodgings here, at the expense of her comfort. There must be some little corner for me in a big palace like this."

"You are right, countess," said the king. "The matter shall be attended to to-morrow, and you shall be lodged as comfortably as possible."

The countess bowed respectfully to the king, queen, and Madame Elizabeth, and left the room, preceded by a lackey.

The king followed her with his eyes, his fork suspended in mid-air the while.

"A charming creature truly!" he remarked. "How fortunate Comte de Charny was to find such a treasure at court!"

The queen turned her face away to conceal her pallor, — not from the king, who would not have noticed it, but from Madame Elizabeth, who would certainly have been alarmed by it.

Portrait of Madame Elizabeth.

Photo-Etching. — From Painting by Vestier.



CHAPTER VI.

THE FOUR CANDLES.

As soon as the children had finished eating, the queen asked permission to retire to her chamber.

"Most assuredly, madame," replied the king, "for you must be fatigued; but as you are certain to be hungry before morning, you had better have something prepared for you."

Once in her own room, the queen felt that she could breathe again. None of her women had followed her to Paris, as she had given them orders to remain at Versailles until they were sent for; so she looked about for a large sofa or arm-chair for herself, intending to put the children in the bed.

The poor little dauphin was already asleep, but Madame Royale was not. In fact, had it been necessary, she could easily have kept awake all night. There was a good deal of the queen in Madame Royale.

The queen stepped to a door; but as she was about to open it, she heard a slight sound on the other side. She listened, and heard it again. Bending, she looked through the keyhole, and saw Andrée kneeling in prayer.

The queen retreated on tiptoe, with a strange expression on her face.

Opposite this door was another; the queen opened it, and found herself in a warm, pleasant room, lighted by a shaded lamp, and containing two clean white beds.

The heart of the queen melted within her, and a tear moistened her burning eyes.

"Oh, Weber," she murmured, "the queen told the king just now it was a pity he could not make you a Cabinet

Minister; but the mother feels that you deserve much more than that!"

As the little dauphin was asleep, she wished to begin by putting Madame Royale to bed; but the latter, with the devotion she always displayed towards her mother, asked permission to assist her, so that she could retire sooner herself. The queen smiled sadly at the idea that her daughter could think it possible for her to sleep after such a day and night of anguish and humiliation; but she said nothing, and they put the dauphin to bed. Then Madame Royale, according to her usual habit, knelt at the foot of her bed to pray.

She remained there a long time motionless. The queen waited.

"It seems to me your prayer is longer than usual to-night, Theresa," remarked the queen, when her daughter arose.

"That is because my brother, poor child, fell asleep without saying his; so I said his after mine, so that there might be nothing lacking in our petition to God."

The queen pressed the young princess to her heart, and after the child was in bed the mother remained standing beside her couch, motionless as a statue of Maternity, until she saw the young girl's eyes close, and felt the hand that clasped hers relax in slumber; then, dropping a soft kiss upon the sleeping brow of the future martyr, she returned to her own room.

This room was lighted by a candelabrum containing four candles. It stood upon a table which was covered with a red cloth.

The queen seated herself in front of this table, and, placing her elbows upon it, she rested her drooping head upon her clenched hands. In this position she could see nothing but the red covering on the table in front of her, and two or three times she shook her head, as if the bloody hue was distasteful to her.

As she sat there, her whole life passed before her mental vision as if in a moving panorama.

She recollected that she was born on the 8th of November, the day of the great Lisbon earthquake, which destroyed more than fifty thousand people, and demolished two hundred churches.

She recollected that in Strasburg, the first French chamber in which she slept was hung with tapestry that represented the Massacre of the Innocents, and that in the dim and flickering light of the night-lamp it seemed to her that blood was flowing from the poor babes' wounds, and that the faces of their murderers assumed such a demoniacal expression that she became terrified and shrieked for help, and gave orders that they should depart at dawn from a city which had left her such a hideous memory of her first night spent in France.

She remembered, too, that while continuing her journey towards Paris she had stopped at the mansion of Baron de Taverny, where she met for the first time that wretch Cagliostro, who had exerted such a terrible influence over her destiny since through the affair of the necklace, and who, on the occasion of their first meeting, had shown her in a vessel of water a new and awful machine, and at its base a head severed from the body,—and that face and head were hers.

She remembered, too, that when Madame Lebrun painted that charming portrait of her as a young, beautiful, and still happy wife, she had represented her—inadvertently, of course; still, the omen was a terrible one—in the very same attitude as that of Henrietta of England, wife of Charles I., in her portrait.

She recalled, too, that, on the day she entered Versailles for the first time, and, alighting from the carriage, set foot upon the floor of the Marble Court, in which she had witnessed such scenes of violence the evening previous, almost simultaneously a tremendous clap of thunder shook the palace, preceding such a terrific flash of lightning that even the Maréchal de Richelieu, who was not a man to be easily frightened, shook his head and exclaimed: "A bad omen!"

As all these things recurred to her mind, a red mist, which seemed to grow thicker and thicker, swam before her eyes. The room, too, seemed to become so much darker that the queen looked up to ascertain the cause, and perceived that one of the candles had gone out, without any apparent reason.

As the queen gazed at the candelabrum in astonishment, it seemed to her that the light of the next candle was becoming fainter, — that the white flame gradually turned red, and then blue. Then it became thinner and longer, then it wavered an instant, as if agitated by an invisible breath, and then went out.

The queen watched the expiring efforts of the candle with haggard eyes and heaving breast, drawing nearer and nearer to the flame as the light became dimmer and dimmer. When it went out altogether, she sank back in her arm-chair, closed her eyes, and pressed her hands to her brow, on which the perspiration stood in big drops.

She remained in this attitude ten minutes or more; and when she opened her eyes again she perceived with positive terror that the flame of the third candle was beginning to change, as the others had done.

She tried to make herself believe that it was all a dream, and that she was only the victim of an hallucination; she attempted to rise, but she seemed to be chained to her chair. She tried to call her daughter, but her voice died in her throat; she tried to turn her head away, but her eyes would remain fixed upon that third flickering candle, in spite of all her efforts. At last the third candle began to change colour as the other two had done, then grew pale, then became longer and longer, swayed from right to left, then from left to right, and then went out.

Her very terror seemed to restore the power of speech to the unhappy queen, and she tried to regain her failing courage with its aid.

“I am not disturbed in the least by what has happened

to these three candles," she exclaimed aloud; "but if the fourth should go out like the others, oh, woe is me!"

Suddenly, without the warning the others had given by a change of colour, without any tendency to elongation, without any flickering, but as if touched by the wing of a passing bird, the fourth candle went out.

The queen uttered a terrible cry, sprang up, turned around and around, beating the air with her hands, and then fell senseless upon the floor.

As she fell, a door opened, and *Andrée*, clad in a white cambric dressing-gown, appeared upon the threshold. On seeing the queen lying there like one dead, she stepped back, as if her first impulse had been to retire again; but, controlling herself almost instantly, she came quickly forward, lifted the queen in her arms, and, with a display of strength of which no one would have supposed her capable, carried her to the bed, guided only by the light of the two candles in the adjoining chamber. Then, drawing a bottle of smelling-salts from her pocket, she applied it to *Marie Antoinette's* nostrils.

Gradually the queen began to show signs of returning consciousness. She shivered, and sighed heavily once or twice, then opened her eyes. Recollecting what had occurred, and remembering the terrible omen, it was with a feeling of indescribable relief she realised that a woman was near her; and, flinging an arm around *Andrée's* neck, she cried, "Oh, protect me! Save me!"

"You need no protector, as you are in the midst of friends," replied *Andrée*.

"The *Comtesse de Charny!*" exclaimed the queen, releasing *Andrée* so suddenly that the movement was almost a repulse.

Neither the motion nor the sentiment that prompted it escaped *Andrée's* notice; but she remained perfectly motionless, as well as impassive.

"Does the queen desire me to assist her in undressing?" she asked calmly.

“No, countess; I can undress without any assistance. Go back to your room; you must feel the need of sleep.”

“I will return to my room, not to sleep, madame, but to watch over your Majesty’s slumbers.”

And, bowing low to the queen, she retired to her room with a slow and stately step.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ROAD TO PARIS.

THAT very same evening an exciting occurrence disturbed the quiet of Abbé Fortier's school for boys.

Sebastian Gilbert had disappeared about six o'clock, and at midnight he had not been found, though Abbé Fortier and his sister, Alexandrine Fortier, had searched for him everywhere.

The servants could give no information concerning his whereabouts; but Aunt Angelica, on leaving the church, where she had gone about eight o'clock to arrange the chairs, saw him run up the narrow street between the church and the prison, and then start towards that part of the park known as the Parterre.

This report only increased the abbé's anxiety, however. He was well aware of the strange hallucinations which sometimes took possession of Gilbert, especially when the person he called his mother appeared to him; and more than once during their walks, when he saw the lad rush off into the woods, he had feared the boy would disappear from sight altogether, and had sent the best runners in school in pursuit of him.

Aunt Angelica was right; it was Sebastian Gilbert she had seen running by in the twilight, and making straight for the Parterre. From the Parterre he had gone to the Pheasant Park, and after leaving the Pheasant Park, he darted up the narrow lane leading to Haramont. In three quarters of an hour he had reached that village.

It is an easy matter to guess his motive. He was in search of Pitou.

Unfortunately, Pitou had left the village just as Gilbert entered it; but the latter, being ignorant of this fact, went straight to the cottage.

There was no one in the house; but the door was unfastened, for Pitou never thought it necessary to lock a door, whether the house was occupied or not.

Sebastian was as familiar with the cottage as if it had been his own: so he found the flint and steel, lighted a candle, and waited; but he was too excited to wait quietly, or indeed to wait long.

He walked to and fro from the fireplace to the door, and from the door to the corner of the street; then, seeing no one coming, like Sister Ann, he hurried back to the house to ascertain if Pitou had not returned there in the meantime.

At last, seeing how time was passing, he went to a table, where he found pen, ink, and paper.

On the topmost sheet of paper were inscribed the names and ages of the thirty-three men composing the Haramont division of the National Guard, and commanded by Pitou.

Sebastian laid this sheet carefully to one side. Upon the second he wrote as follows:—

“MY DEAR PITOU, —I came here to tell you that I overheard a conversation about a week ago between the abbé and the vicar of Villers-Cotterets. It seems that the abbé is in communication with some of the Parisian aristocracy, and he told the vicar that preparations for a counter-revolution were being made at Versailles.

“This news, and what we heard in regard to the events that followed the banquet, made me feel very uneasy in regard to my father, but what I heard this evening has alarmed me still more.

“The vicar came to see the abbé again, and as I felt so anxious about my father, I thought there was no great harm in playing eavesdropper after what I heard the other day.

“It seems, my dear Pitou, that the people went out to Versailles and killed a good many persons, and among them was Monsieur George de Charny.

“The abbé added: ‘Let us speak low, so as not to alarm little

Gilbert, whose father was at Versailles, and may have been killed with the others.'

"You can very readily understand that I did not stop to listen any longer.

"I slipped out of my hiding-place, made my escape through the garden, and came here as fast as my legs could carry me, to beg you to take me to Paris, — a thing I am sure you would do very willingly, if you were here.

"But as you are not, and as you may not return for some time, I am too anxious to wait; so I shall start alone.

"You need not be troubled about me. I know the way. Besides, I have two crowns left of the money my father gave me; so I can hire a seat in the first vehicle I meet on the road.

"P. S. I have made my letter rather long, in order that I might explain the cause of my departure, and also because I have been in hopes all the time that you would return before I finished it.

"It is finished now; you have not returned, so I must start. Farewell, or, rather, *au revoir*. If no misfortune has befallen my father, and if he is in no danger, I shall return at once. If he is in danger, I am determined to remain with him.

"Relieve Abbé Fortier's mind in regard to me; but don't do it until to-morrow, when it will be too late for him to overtake me.

"It is very evident that you are not coming, so I will start. Once more, *au revoir*."

Thereupon Sebastian, knowing Pitou's economical habits, extinguished the candle and went his way.

He had grown a good deal since we saw him last, and was now a rather pale lad about fifteen years of age, somewhat delicate in appearance, and a little nervous for one of his years, but almost a man in his feelings and ambitions, as well as in maturity of judgment.

He started off briskly in the direction of Largny, which soon became visible "in the pale light that falls from the stars," as Corneille expresses it, and, passing through that village, soon reached the long ravine which extends from there to Vauciennes, where he took the main road, walking on more tranquilly now that he found himself on the king's highway.

True, he slackened his pace a little further on, when he came to a hill; but this was doubtless due to the fact that a few yards further on the road divided.

On reaching this spot, he suddenly halted. When he came from Paris, he had not noticed which road he took at this point; so he had no idea which road to take on returning.

Was it the one to the left, or to the right? The roads diverged rapidly and visibly; so if he made a mistake, he would go a long way out of his course before morning.

He looked around in the hope of seeing something by which he could determine the route he had formerly travelled; but this clue, which would probably have failed him even in the daytime, could not possibly be detected in the darkness.

Much discouraged, he had seated himself at the intersection of the roads, partly to rest, partly to reflect, when he fancied he heard the ring of horses' hoofs on the road behind him.

The sound came nearer and nearer, and presently two horsemen became distinctly visible even in the dim light that pervaded the landscape. One man was riding three or four yards in advance of the other, so Sebastian very sensibly concluded that the first man was the master, the second his servant, and jumped up to speak to the first horseman; but he, seeing a person suddenly spring out upon him from the roadside, imagined that some danger threatened him, and Sebastian saw his hand seek his holster.

"I am no thief, sir," the boy cried hastily; "I am only a lad on my way to Paris in search of my father. I don't know which of these roads to take, and you will do me a great favour if you will tell me."

The youthful ring in the speaker's voice, which seemed not altogether unfamiliar to the rider, and his well-chosen words, made such an impression that the horseman, in spite of his evident haste, checked his steed.

“Monsieur le Vicomte, don't you see that this is young Sebastian Gilbert, who attends Abbé Fortier's school?” asked the lackey, who had just come up. “The same lad who often comes with Pitou to Mademoiselle Catherine's farm.”

“Is this really you, Sebastian?”

“Yes, Monsieur Isidore,” replied the lad, who, by this time, had recognised the rider perfectly.

“Well, my young friend, tell me how it happens that I find you alone on the road at this hour of the night?”

“I have told you already, Monsieur Isidore; I am on my way to Paris to find out if my father has been killed, or if he is still alive.”

“Alas! my poor boy, I am going to Paris for a similar reason; only there is no possibility of doubt in my case.”

“Yes, I know. Your brother —”

“One of my brothers — my brother — George was killed at Versailles yesterday morning. As our situations are so nearly identical, we had better keep together. You must be in as much of a hurry to reach Paris as I am.”

“Yes, yes, monsieur!”

“You cannot make the journey afoot.”

“I could very easily, but it would take too long; so I intend to hire a seat in the next vehicle I find going in the same direction.”

“But if you should not happen to find one?”

“I shall go afoot.”

“You can do better than that, my dear boy. Jump up behind my lackey.”

Sebastian withdrew his hand from Isidore's grasp.

“I thank you, Monsieur le Vicomte,” he said politely, but coldly.

Isidore saw that he had offended the high-spirited lad, and added hastily, —

“Or rather, now I come to think of it, jump up on his horse, and he can rejoin us in Paris. He can easily ascertain where I am by inquiring at the Tuileries.”

"Thank you, but I will not deprive you of his services," replied Sebastian, in a softer voice, for he appreciated the delicacy of this proposal.

The preliminaries of peace being arranged, a little persuasion was all that was needed, however.

"I believe we can do still better than that, Sebastian. Jump up behind me. It is almost morning now. By ten o'clock we shall be in Dammartin, — that is about half-way. When we reach that town we will leave the two horses there in Baptiste's care, and hire a post-chaise to take us to Paris. That is exactly what I intended to do, so I shall not make any change in my plans on your account."

"Is this really true, Monsieur Isidore?"

"Upon my word of honour it is."

"Then —" The boy still hesitated, though he was dying to accept.

"Jump down, Baptiste, and assist monsieur to mount."

"Thanks, but that is not necessary, Monsieur Isidore," said Sebastian, springing up lightly behind the young viscount.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE APPARITION.

THE three continued their journey on horseback as far as Dammartin, as they had planned. Arriving there about ten o'clock, they all felt the need of something to eat, and it was also necessary to secure a post-chaise and horses. By noon they had breakfasted, and the horses and post-chaise were waiting at the door; but as they were subjected to several vexatious delays *en route*, it was half-past four when they reached the barrier, and fully five o'clock when they reached the Tuileries.

Even then they were obliged to wait some time before they could secure an interview with Lafayette, who had charge of the guards, and who, having made himself responsible to the Assembly for the king's safety, guarded the monarch with infinite care.

Sebastian had begged to be taken to the lodgings on the Rue Saint-Honoré formerly occupied by his father; but Isidore had reminded him that as Doctor Gilbert was one of the king's physicians, the king would be sure to know exactly where he might be found.

A certain amount of court etiquette had already been established at the Tuileries, though the royal family had only arrived there the evening before, and Isidore was conducted up the staircase of Honour and into a large *salon* hung with green, and dimly lighted by two candelabra.

The rest of the palace was so dark that one was obliged to grope one's way about; for, it having been occupied by private individuals, there were none of the large chandeliers which usually illuminate royal abodes.

In about ten minutes the usher returned with the information that the Comte de Charny was with the queen. Doctor Gilbert had not been seen for some time, but it was quite probable, though not at all certain, that he was with the king, as the latter's valet said his Majesty was closeted with his physician; though, as the king had four assistant physicians besides his regular one, he could not say positively whether the one now with his Majesty was Doctor Gilbert or not. If it proved to be Doctor Gilbert, he would be notified that some one was waiting to see him in the anteroom when he left the royal chamber.

Sebastian breathed freely once again; he had nothing to fear, — his father was alive and well.

Just then the door opened and an usher called out, —
"Monsieur le Vicomte de Charny."

"I am he," responded Isidore, stepping forward.

"The queen grants you an audience."

"You will wait for me, will you not, Sebastian? that is, unless Doctor Gilbert himself comes for you. Remember, I am responsible to your father for you."

Isidore followed the usher, and Sebastian resumed his seat upon the sofa.

Relieved of all fear concerning his father, and feeling sure the doctor would forgive him for coming to Paris without permission, as he could not fail to regard the journey as a proof of filial devotion on his son's part, his thoughts reverted to the abbé and Pitou, and to the anxiety his flight must have caused them, and he began to wonder why, with all the delays they had encountered on the road, Pitou had not overtaken them before they reached Paris.

By a very natural sequence of ideas, when he thought of Pitou he thought of his usual surroundings, — that is to say, of the gigantic trees, the shady paths and dim vistas of the forest in which so much of his time was spent.

He thought, too, of the beautiful lady he had seen so often in his dreams, — and once, at least, so he believed, in

reality, while walking through the forest of Satory, where she dashed by him in a magnificent open carriage drawn by two superb horses. He recollected, too, the deep emotion the sight of her always excited even in his dreams, and murmured under his breath, —

“My mother! my mother! my mother!”

Suddenly the door which had closed behind Isidore opened again; but this time it was a woman's form that appeared, and it corresponded so exactly with the one which was then engrossing his thoughts that the vision seemed to become suddenly imbued with life. But judge of his astonishment when he became convinced that he not only saw before him the idol of his dreams, but the proud beauty of Satory.

He sprang up, his lips quivered, his eyes grew big with wonder, the pupils dilated, and his chest heaved with emotion.

The lady moved on proudly, majestically, almost disdainfully, without paying the slightest attention to him; but in spite of her apparent calmness, a close observer would have known that she was in a state of intense nervous irritation, by her knitted brows, extreme pallor, and laboured breathing.

She crossed the room and opened a door directly opposite that by which she had entered. This door led into the corridor, and Sebastian suddenly realised that in another moment she would have escaped him. He darted after her; but the corridor was dark, and he feared he should lose sight of her; but, hearing footsteps behind her, she turned her head. Sebastian uttered a low cry of joy. It was she.

The lady had just reached the top of the staircase when she saw the lad rushing after her with outstretched arms, and, unable to understand the meaning of this pursuit, she turned, and began to descend the stairs with all possible speed.

“Madame, oh, madame!” cried the youth, imploringly.

The voice sent a strange thrill through the woman's entire being. An emotion, half sad, half ecstatic, filled her heart; but, unable to comprehend either the appeal or the emotion it excited, she quickened her pace still more, until her descent became almost a flight. But she was not far enough in advance of the boy to escape him. In fact, they reached the foot of the stairs almost at the same time.

The lady darted into the courtyard, where a carriage was awaiting her. A servant was holding the door open when she appeared. She sprang into it, but before the door could be closed, Sebastian was on the step, and seizing a fold of the lady's dress, kissed it passionately, again exclaiming beseechingly, —

“Madame, oh, madame!”

The young woman gazed at the lad who had frightened her so a moment before, and in softer tones than she was wont to use, she asked, —

“Why do you run after me? What do you want with me?”

“I want to see you! I want to kiss you!” panted the boy. Then, so low that only the lady could hear, he added: “I want to call you mother!”

The lady uttered a cry, and, taking the boy's face in her two hands, she pressed a warm kiss upon his forehead. Then, as if fearing some one would come and rob her of the child she had just found, she pulled him into the carriage and closed the door herself; then, lowering the window only just long enough to utter the words, she cried, —

“Home! Number nine, Rue Coq-Héron, the first gateway from the corner of the Rue Plâtrière.”

Then, again turning to the lad, —

“What is your name?” she asked.

“Sebastian.”

“Come here, Sebastian, here to my heart!”

Then sinking back, half fainting, she murmured, —

“This strange feeling, what is it? Can it be what people call happiness?”

CHAPTER IX.

ANDRÉE'S HOME.

So her child, — for the mother's heart never doubted for an instant that this was her child, — the child who had been torn from her one terrible night, a night of anguish and humiliation; this child whose abductor had disappeared, leaving no trace behind him save a footprint in the snow; this child for whom she had searched in vain, and whom her brother had crossed the ocean to find; this child for whom she had mourned fifteen long years, and whom she had despaired of ever seeing again, though at first she cursed and detested him so that she was not even glad to hear his first wail; this child, when she was least expecting it, had been restored to her as by a miracle! By a miracle, too, he had recognised her, pursued her in his turn, and called her mother; this child she held to her heart and pressed to her breast. Here was a child who, without having seen or known her, nevertheless loved her with a filial love.

There must be, then, an all-wise, beneficent, and overruling Providence that guided the affairs of men. The universe was not ruled by mere chance and fatality.

"Number nine, Rue Coq-Héron," had been Andrée's order.

A strange coincidence it was, indeed, that brought this child back after fourteen years to the same house in which he had first seen the light, and from which he had been stolen by his father.

This house, purchased many years before by the elder Taverney, when his circumstances improved by reason of

the favour with which the queen honoured his family, had been kept by Philippe de Taverney, and was cared for by an old concierge, whom the former owners seemed to have sold with the house, which now served as a stopping-place for the young baron when he returned from his travels, or for his sister when she spent a few days in Paris.

So, after the night spent at the Tuileries, Andrée sent a servant to the house on the Rue Coq-Héron, with orders to have the pavilion, consisting of a small reception-room, dining-room, parlour, and bed-room, prepared for her occupancy; for she was resolved to hold herself as much aloof as possible from the rival who kept her sorrows ever in her mind.

She excused herself to the queen for not retaining the room assigned to her, on the plea that her Majesty should have one of her ladies of the bed-chamber near her, instead of one who was not specially attached to her person, and that the apartments allotted to the queen were so few in number that she, Andrée, felt that she had no right to monopolise one.

The queen did not insist upon retaining Andrée, or at least she insisted no more than courtesy required; so the countess had arranged to leave the Tuileries at five o'clock that same afternoon, and it was with that intention she was proceeding to the carriage, ordered for her in advance, when Sebastian followed and made himself known to her.

Everything seemed to combine in her favour that evening, in fact, for she had a house of her own at her disposal, where she could give free vent to her maternal affection without having a single looker-on or eavesdropper to fear; so it was with a feeling of very natural delight that she gave the address which has necessitated this slight digression on the part of the author.

It was six o'clock when the carriage drew up in front of the pavilion. Andrée did not wait for the driver to leave the box, but opened the door herself. Giving the coachman nearly double his fare, she hastened into the house,

holding her son tightly by the hand. Not until she reached the parlour did she pause.

The room was lighted only by the fire in the grate and two candles burning on the mantel. Andrée seated herself on a small sofa, and drew her son down beside her.

"Oh, my child, my child!" she exclaimed. "And here! Only to think of it, here!"

"What do you mean, mother?"

"I mean, my child, that you were born here in this very room fifteen years ago, and I bless the name of the merciful God who has restored you to me so miraculously after these many years."

"Yes, miraculously indeed," replied Sebastian, "for if I had not feared for my father's life, I should not have started alone and by night to Paris; I should not have been in doubt as to which road to take; I should not have questioned Monsieur Isidore de Charny as he rode by, and he would not have offered to take me to Paris with him, nor have brought me to the Tuileries, where I saw and recognised you."

On hearing Sebastian utter the words, "If I had not feared for my father's life," it seemed to Andrée as if a dagger had pierced her heart, and she threw back her head and gasped for breath; but when she heard her son say that it was Monsieur Isidore de Charny who had brought him to Paris, and subsequently to the Tuileries, she experienced a feeling of intense relief, for it seemed, indeed, to be nothing short of a miracle that Sebastian had been restored to her through her husband's brother.

"You have explained your presence in Paris," Andrée exclaimed suddenly, after a short silence, "but you have not explained your recognition of me, nor your chase after me, nor how you came to call me mother."

"How can I explain these things?" replied Sebastian, gazing at Andrée with an expression of unutterable love.

"But something seemed to whisper to you as I passed, 'Child, that is your mother!' did it not?"

“Yes; my heart.”

“Your heart?”

“Listen, mother; I have something strange to tell you. I have known you for ten years, mother.”

Andrée started violently.

“I often had strange dreams, which my father called hallucinations, and in these dreams I have seen you again and again. When I was a child, and when I played with the village children, my feelings and impressions were exactly like theirs; but as soon as I left the village and entered the forest, I seemed to hear strange sounds and voices. I heard a gown rustle past me; sometimes I even stretched out my hands to grasp it, but clutched only the empty air; sometimes I saw a vague and shadowy form gliding along before me,—the form of a woman, who seemed to beckon me on into the dim recesses of the forest. I followed her with outstretched arms, as mute as herself; for when I tried to speak, I could not utter a sound. I hastened on and on, without ever being able to overtake her, until the same power that had made her presence known to me gave the signal for her departure. Then the phantom gradually faded away; but she seemed to grieve over our enforced separation as much as I did, for she gazed after me wistfully as she vanished, while I, overcome by exhaustion when no longer sustained by her presence, fell prone to the earth.”

This double life, these vivid dreams, too much resembled those that Andrée herself had experienced, for her not to recognise herself in her son.

“My poor boy!” she exclaimed, pressing him fondly to her heart; “it was in vain that human hatred and rancour tried to separate us. God was bringing us together without my even suspecting it. But I, less fortunate than yourself, saw you neither in my dreams nor in my waking moments; although when I passed you in the Green Salon, I felt a strange thrill through my entire being, and when you called me mother, I almost fainted at your touch, I knew you!”

"Mother, mother, mother!" repeated Sebastian, three times, as if to console her for not having heard this sweet name uttered for so long a time.

"Yes, yes, your mother," replied the countess, with inexpressible fondness.

"And now we have found each other at last, we will never separate again. Promise me that."

Andrée gave a violent start. Absorbed in the present, she had almost forgotten the past, and had not even thought of the future.

"How I would bless you if you could achieve such a miracle, my poor child," she murmured with a sigh.

"Leave it to me, and I will," responded Sebastian, confidently.

"How?"

"I do not know the causes that have separated you from my father —"

Andrée turned pale.

"But however grave these differences may be, my tears and entreaties will efface them."

"Never! never!" exclaimed Andrée, shaking her head.

"Listen!" urged Sebastian. "My father is devoted to me. I will prepare him for a meeting with you; I will tell him how happy you have made me, and some day I will take you to him and say, 'Here she is! See, father. how beautiful she is.'"

Andrée pushed the lad from her almost roughly.

"Never, never!" she repeated. And this time her tone was a menace, and her face was ghastly in its pallor.

The lad recoiled in his turn.

"And why do you refuse to see my father," he asked, almost sullenly.

"Why! you ask me why?"

"Yes," replied Sebastian, "I ask you why."

"Then I will tell you," answered Andrée, unable longer to control the tempest of wrath that was raging in her heart.

“It is because your father is an infamous wretch, — a villain of the deepest dye.”

Sebastian sprang up from the sofa and confronted Andrée.

“You say this of my father, madame!” he exclaimed, “of my father, that is, of Doctor Gilbert, who reared me so tenderly, and to whom I am indebted for everything, — the parent I have ever known! — for I was mistaken, madame, you are not my mother.”

He started towards the door, but Andrée stopped him.

“Listen!” she exclaimed. “You do not know; you do not understand; you cannot judge!”

“No; but I can feel, and I feel that I do not love you any longer.”

Andrée uttered a cry of despair.

But at that same instant a sound outside made her forget this crushing blow for a moment. The sound was caused by the opening of the outer gate, and by a carriage which had evidently stopped before the door.

“Wait,” whispered Andrée; “wait, and be silent!”

The frightened lad obeyed.

The door of the antechamber opened, and footsteps were heard approaching the *salon*.

Andrée stood silent and motionless, her eyes fixed upon the door, pale and cold as a statue of Suspense.

“Whom shall I announce?” the voice of the old porter was heard to say.

“The Comte de Charny, and ask if madame will do me the honour to receive me.”

“Into that room, child, into that room! He must not see you! He must not even know of your existence!” exclaimed Andrée, in a hoarse whisper.

She pushed the frightened lad into the adjoining room; then, as she was about to close the door upon him, she gasped,—

“Remain there. When he goes, I will tell you all. No, no; no more of that! I will embrace you, and you will know that I am indeed your mother.”

Sebastian replied only by a sort of moan.

Just then the door of the *salon* opened, and the old concierge, cap in hand, delivered the message intrusted to him. Behind him, in the dim light, Andrée's quick eye discerned the shadowy outlines of a human form.

"Show the Comte de Charny in," she said, in the firmest tones she could command.

The porter stepped back, and the count, bowing low, appeared upon the threshold.

CHAPTER X.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

IN mourning for his brother, killed only two days before, the Comte de Charney was dressed entirely in black. His mourning, too, like that of Hamlet, was not confined to his sombre garments, but extended to the inmost depths of his heart, and his pale face testified to the tears he had shed and the grief he had endured.

The countess saw all this in one swift glance. Handsome faces are never so handsome as after a shower of tears, and never had Charney looked so handsome.

She closed her eyes for an instant, throwing back her head as if to inhale a long breath, and pressing her hand upon her heart, which throbbed almost to bursting.

When she opened her eyes again,—it was barely a second after she had closed them,—Charney was still standing in the same place.

Andrée's gesture and look asked so plainly why he had not come in that he said, as if in response to the gesture and glance, —

“I was awaiting your permission, madame.”

He took a step forward.

“Am I to dismiss Monsieur le Comte's carriage?” asked the concierge.

A strange gleam darted from the count's eyes. Andrée closed hers again for an instant, as if dazzled by it, but stood absolutely immovable, as if she had not even heard the question or seen the look.

Charney sought in vain in the face of this living statue for some clue to the answer he was expected to give; then,

as the sudden tremor which seemed to pass over Andrée was quite as likely to arise from a desire that he should go away as that he should remain, he replied, —

“Tell the coachman to wait.”

The door closed, and for the first time, probably, since their marriage, the count and countess found themselves alone together.

It was the count who first broke the silence.

“Pardon me, madame, but is my presence an intrusion? My carriage is at the door, and I can go as I came.”

“No, monsieur,” replied Andrée, quickly. “Quite the contrary. I knew that you were safe and well, but I am none the less glad to see you again after the events of the last few days.”

“You have done me the honour to inquire about me then, madame?”

“Most assuredly. Yesterday and this morning I heard you were at Versailles. This evening, they told me, you were with the queen.”

Did these last words contain a covert reproach, or were they innocently uttered?

The count, not knowing exactly what to think, was silent for an instant; but after an almost imperceptible interval, he said: “A sorrowful duty detained me at Versailles yesterday and to-day, madame; and a duty I consider equally sacred, in the situation in which the queen is now placed, led me to request an interview with her Majesty as soon as I arrived in Paris.”

Andrée tried in vain to grasp the full meaning of the count's concluding words; then, feeling that she ought at least to make some response to his first remark, she said, —

“Yes, monsieur, yes. I have heard of the terrible loss you have sustained, and —”

“Yes, madame, it is, as you say, a terrible loss to me. My sole consolation is the thought that poor George died, as Isidore will die, and as I shall probably die, — doing his duty.”

The words, "as I shall probably die," touched Andrée deeply.

"Ah, monsieur, do you really believe that things are in such a desperate condition that more lives must be sacrificed to appease the wrath of Heaven?"

"I believe, madame, that the monarchy is doomed; and if it is to fall, I think that those who have participated in its splendour should go down with it."

"That is true, and when that day comes, believe me, you will find others who, like yourself, will be capable of any sacrifice."

"You have given too many proofs of your devotion in the past for any one — myself, least of all — to doubt that devotion in the future. Perhaps I have much less cause to doubt your loyalty than my own, inasmuch as I myself have just declined for the first time to obey an order of the queen's."

"I do not understand you, monsieur."

"On arriving from Versailles, I was ordered to present myself at once before her Majesty."

Andrée smiled sadly.

"That is very natural. The queen, seeing signs of serious trouble ahead, wishes to gather around her persons upon whom she can thoroughly rely."

"You are mistaken, madame. It was not to attach me to her household that she sent for me, but to order me away."

"To order you away!" repeated Andrée, advancing a step towards the count; then, perceiving that Charny was still standing near the door, she added, pointing to an armchair:

"Pardon me, I have kept you standing." And as she spoke, she herself sank back on the sofa, really incapable of maintaining an upright position any longer.

"To order you away!" she repeated, with an emotion that was not untinted with joy at the thought that Charny and the queen would be separated. "For what purpose?"

"To fulfil a mission at Turin with the Comte d'Artois and the Duc de Bourbon, who have left France."

"And you have accepted it?"

Charny looked searchingly at Andrée.

“No, madame.”

Andrée turned so pale that Charny made a step towards her as if to support her; but, noting the movement, Andrée summoned up all her strength.

“No?” she faltered. “You have refused to obey an order from the queen, — *you*, monsieur!”

These last two words were uttered in a tone of intense astonishment and incredulity.

“I replied, madame, that I believed my presence much more necessary in Paris than in Turin, just now; that any one could fulfil the mission with which her Majesty proposed to honour me, and that I had another brother who had just arrived from the provinces, and who was ready to go in my stead.”

“And the queen was more than willing to accept him as a substitute, probably,” remarked Andrée, with a bitterness that did not escape the count’s notice.

“No, madame, quite the contrary; for my refusal seemed to annoy her deeply, and I should probably have been obliged to go had the king not happened to come in just at that moment, so I appealed to him.”

“And the king said you were right, monsieur?” responded Andrée, with an ironical smile. “The king thought with you, that you had better remain at the Tuileries. How kind his Majesty is!”

The count did not even wince at this thrust.

“The king said he thought my brother Isidore well adapted for the mission,” he answered quietly, “especially as, having just come to court for the first time, his absence would not be noticed. His Majesty added, too, that it would be cruel in the queen to insist upon my leaving you at such a time as this.”

“Me?” cried Andrée, “the king mentioned me?”

“I repeated his very words, madame. Then, turning from the queen and addressing himself directly to me, he asked: ‘But where is the dear countess? I have not seen

her since yesterday evening.' As the question was put to me, there was nothing for me to do but reply, so I said: 'I so rarely have the pleasure of seeing Madame de Charny that it is impossible for me to say just where the countess is at this moment; but if the king desires any information on the subject, and will apply to the queen, she will probably be able to give it.' I insisted the more because, seeing the frown on the queen's brow when your name was mentioned, I fancied that something of an unpleasant nature must have taken place between her and yourself."

Andrée made no reply, so Charny went on.

"Madame de Charny left the Tuileries about an hour ago, sire,' answered the queen. 'What! the countess has left the Tuileries?' exclaimed the king. 'Yes, sire.' — 'But she will return soon, of course?' — 'I do not think so.' — 'You do not think so? Why, what possible reason could the countess, your best friend —' The queen interrupted him with an impatient gesture. 'The countess did not find her room to her liking, I believe.' — 'Surely we could have found her more spacious quarters, and a room for the count, too. That would be an easy matter, it seems to me. And the countess has gone, where?' — 'I do not know.' — 'What! your most intimate friend leaves you, and you do not even ask where she is going?' — 'When my friends leave me they are at liberty to go where they please. I am never guilty of the indiscretion of asking them where they are going,' retorted the queen. 'A woman's quarrel, I suspect,' said the king in a whispered aside to me. Then aloud: 'I have something I wish to say to the queen, Monsieur de Charny. Go to my rooms and wait for me there. I should like to see your brother too as soon as possible. He must leave for Turin to-night. I am quite of your opinion. I need you here, and I shall keep you.' So I sent at once for my brother, who, they said, was waiting for me in the Green Salon."

On hearing the words "in the Green Salon," Andrée, who had almost forgotten Sebastian, was suddenly reminded

of what had just passed between her and her son, and cast an anxious glance at the door of the room in which she had concealed him.

“Pardon me, madame,” remarked Charny, noting the glance, “I am troubling you with matters which interest you very little, I fear; and probably you are asking yourself what brings me here.”

“No, monsieur. On the contrary, what you have done me the honour to relate excites my liveliest interest. As to your presence here, surely you must know that after the anxiety I have experienced on your account, your presence, which is convincing proof of your welfare — cannot be otherwise than a pleasure and relief to me. So go on with your story, I beg. You were just saying that the king requested you to wait for him in his apartments, and that you notified your brother of his Majesty’s desire to see him also.”

“We went to the king’s apartments, madame, and his Majesty came in about ten minutes afterwards. As the errand to the princes was urgent, the king spoke of that first. He wished their Highnesses to be informed at once of what was taking place here, and my brother left for Turin within a quarter of an hour. I was left alone with the king. His Majesty paced the floor for a while, absorbed in thought; then, pausing in front of me, he asked if I knew what had passed between the queen and my countess. ‘No, sire,’ I replied. ‘Something unpleasant must certainly have occurred,’ he remarked, ‘for the queen is in a frightful temper, and seems to me, too, to be very unjust to the countess, — a very unusual thing with her, for she generally defends her friends valiantly, even when they are in the wrong.’ — ‘I know nothing whatever about the matter, sire,’ I replied; ‘but of one thing I am certain, if there be any just cause of complaint, it certainly did not originate with the countess.’”

“I thank you for having judged me so favourably, monsieur,” said Andrée.

The count bowed, and then resumed his story.

“‘Though the queen may not know where the countess is, you must,’ continued the king. I was no better informed in regard to your whereabouts than the queen, but I replied: ‘The countess has a house on the Rue Coq-Héron, and she has perhaps gone there.’—‘That is probably the case,’ replied the king. ‘Go and see. I will grant you leave of absence until to-morrow, on condition that you will bring the countess back with you.’”

Charny’s eyes were fixed so meaningly on Andrée as he uttered these words that she felt ill at ease; and, unable to evade his glance, she closed her eyes.

“‘You will say to her from the king,’ his Majesty continued, ‘that we will find suitable accommodations for her here, not so spacious as at Versailles, probably, but commodious enough for a husband and wife. Go at once, count. She must be extremely anxious about you.’ So here I am, by order of the king, which you will perhaps consider a sufficient excuse.”

“Do you suppose, monsieur, that any excuse is needed?” cried Andrée, rising hurriedly and holding out both hands to Charny.

The count seized them eagerly, and pressed them to his lips.

Andrée uttered a cry as if his kiss had scorched them, and sank back on the sofa; but her hands were so closely interlocked with those of Charny that she drew the count down with her, so the next moment he found himself seated by her side. But just then Andrée, imagining she heard a sound in the adjoining room, hastily drew herself away; and the count, not knowing what feeling might have prompted this abrupt movement on the lady’s part, instantly rose to his feet.

CHAPTER XI.

MY LADY'S CHAMBER.

CHARNY stood gazing at his wife in silence for a moment; then he sighed heavily. Andrée's head drooped. It would be impossible to describe the feelings that agitated her heart. Married for four years to a man she adored, but whose every thought was apparently given to another, and who seemed utterly unmindful of the terrible sacrifice she had made in marrying him, she had seen and endured everything uncomplainingly, with the abnegation required of her in the twofold character of wife and subject. For some time past, noting the more kindly glances of her husband, and the sharp words of the queen, it had seemed to her that her devotion had not been entirely in vain; and even during the last few terrible days, Andrée's heart had throbbed rapturously more than once when some word, look, or gesture indicated that Charny was thinking of her, — watching for her with anxiety, and meeting her again with delight.

And now, just as this poor lonely creature had recovered her child, the roseate light of love, too, seemed about to suffuse her sombre horizon; only by a strange coincidence, which seemed to indicate that happiness was not for her, the two events were combined in such a fashion that one neutralized the other — that the presence of the child would destroy the growing love of the husband, and that the return of the husband would banish the child.

The count gazed at Andrée with an expression which the young wife could not have mistaken, if she had raised her eyes to his.

"What am I to say to the king, madame?" the count asked at last.

Andréé trembled at the sound of his voice, but, lifting her clear eyes to his face, she said, with a fair semblance of calmness, —

"I have suffered so much since I have been living at court that, as the queen allows me to withdraw from it, I accept her permission with gratitude. I was not born for such a life; for I have always found contentment, if not happiness, in solitude. The happiest days of my life were those I spent in my father's lonely château, and subsequently in the Convent of Saint-Denis, with that noble daughter of France they called Madame Louise. So, with your permission, monsieur, I will remain here in this quiet abode, filled with pleasant though sad memories."

"And this is your fixed determination, madame?"

"Yes, monsieur," responded Andréé, gently but firmly.

"Then I have one request to make of you, madame. May I be permitted to visit you here?"

The eyes Andréé lifted to Charny's were full of surprise and delight.

"Of course, monsieur; and as I shall receive no other visitors, whenever your duties at the Tuileries will allow you to waste a few moments here, I shall always be grateful to you for bestowing them on me, however short they may be."

Never before had Charny seen such a charm in Andréé's glance, or such tenderness in her voice; and a thrill like that which accompanies a first kiss ran through his veins.

He glanced at the vacant place beside Andréé; he would have given a year of his life to seat himself there, unre-pulsed, but he dared not take such a liberty.

As for Andréé, she would have given, not one year, but ten, to have him beside her; but unfortunately neither one of them understood the feelings of the other.

Again Charny was the first to break the silence.

"You say you have suffered much since you came to live

at court," he remarked. "Has not the king always treated you with the greatest respect, and the queen with a tenderness almost amounting to idolatry?"

"The king has been kindness itself to me."

"Will you permit me to say that you have answered my question only in part? Has not the queen been as kind as the king?"

Andrée set her teeth as if her whole nature revolted from answering. Finally, she said, with an evident effort, —

"I have no cause to reproach the queen. I should be unfair if I did not do her Majesty the justice to say that."

"I asked you this question, madame," insisted Charny, "because it has seemed to me for some time past — though I am probably mistaken — that the friendship the queen once entertained for you has cooled very perceptibly."

"That is quite possible; and that may be the reason I desire to leave the court."

"But you will be so lonely here, I am afraid."

"Have I not always been so?" she responded, with a sigh; "as a child, as a maiden, and as —"

She paused suddenly, feeling that she was going too far.

"Finish your sentence, I beg."

"You have guessed what I was about to say, I am sure, monsieur. I was about to add, and as a wife."

"Have I the happiness of hearing you deign to reproach me?"

"Reproach you? Great heavens! what right have I to reproach you? Can you suppose that I have forgotten the circumstances under which we were united? Unlike those who promise mutual love and protection at the foot of the altar, we promised eternal indifference, — entire separation. We have no cause to reproach ourselves unless one of us has forgotten this vow.

Again Charny heaved a deep sigh.

"I see that your mind is made up, madame," he replied; "but you will at least permit me to make some inquiries

into your mode of life here. Shall you not be rather uncomfortable?"

Andrée smiled sadly.

"My father's house was so very plain that this pavilion, bare and comfortless as it must seem to you, is furnished with a luxuriousness to which I have not been accustomed."

"But your charming rooms at Trianon, and at Versailles —"

"Oh, I knew very well that I was only a transient guest."

"But will you have all that is needful here?"

"I shall have all I was accustomed to in former years, and more."

"Let us see," said Charny, wishing to have some idea of the apartments Andrée was to occupy; "you seem to be very modest in your tastes; for the accommodations here must be extremely limited. I passed through a small ante-room; this is the only parlour, I judge, for this door" — opening one on the side of the room — "must lead into the dining-room; and this —"

Andrée sprang between the count and the door towards which he was moving, and on the other side of which she pictured Sebastian standing angry and indignant.

"Not a step further, I beseech you, monsieur!"

"Yes, I understand," said Charny, with a sigh; "it is the door of your sleeping-apartment, I suppose."

"Yes, monsieur," faltered Andrée, in a smothered voice.

Charny looked at the countess; she was very pale, and seemed to be trembling in every limb. Never was abject terror more plainly depicted upon a human countenance than upon her face.

"Ah, madame," he murmured sadly, "I knew that you did not love me, but I had no idea you hated me like this."

He tottered for an instant like a drunken man, then, summoning up all his strength, he rushed out of the room with a despairing groan that pierced Andrée's very soul.

Andrée watched him until he vanished from sight, then listened breathlessly until the sound of his carriage wheels died away in the distance. It seemed to her that her heart would surely break; and, feeling the need of all her maternal affection with which to combat this other love, she rushed into her bedroom, exclaiming wildly, —

“Sebastian! oh, Sebastian!”

But no voice responded. She listened in vain for an answer to her despairing cry. Glancing around, she saw that the room was empty.

But she could hardly believe her eyes; so she called out a second time, —

“Sebastian! Sebastian!”

The same silence reigned. Then, and not until then, did she perceive that the window was open, and that the air from outside was making the light of the night-lamp flicker wildly.

It was the very same window that had been left open fifteen years before, when her child was stolen from her.

“He has fled!” she cried. “Did he not tell me I was not his mother?”

And realising that she had lost both husband and child at the very moment she thought she had regained them, Andrée threw herself despairingly upon the bed, with arms outstretched and hands tightly clenched. Her powers of endurance were exhausted; resignation, or even prayer, was an impossibility now. Her anguish could vent itself only in tears and sobs and moans.

An hour or more passed, and still she remained in this condition of absolute prostration, completely oblivious to everything else in the world; then she suddenly became conscious of a sensation which was even more terrible than her grief, — a sensation she had experienced only three or four times before, and always previous to some great crisis in her life.

She rose to her feet almost without any volition of her own; the power of speech deserted her entirely; her brain

seemed in a whirl. Through the sort of mist that obscured her vision, she fancied she could see that she was no longer alone in the room. As her tears dried, and she could see more clearly, she perceived that a man, who seemed to have just leaped over the window ledge, was standing before her. She tried to call out, to extend her hand towards the bell-rope, but could not. She began to feel that irresistible sensation of torpor which had always warned her of Balsamo's presence in years gone by. At last, in the man who was standing before her, she recognised Gilbert.

How did it happen that Gilbert, the despised and execrated father, was there instead of the child for whom she was yearning?

This is something we will endeavour to explain to the reader.

CHAPTER XII.

FAMILIAR SCENES.

It was Doctor Gilbert who was closeted with the king when Isidore de Charny and Sebastian reached the Tuileries.

As he left the king's apartments, an attendant notified him that he was wanted in the Green Salon, and he was about directing his steps towards that apartment when a neighbouring door opened, giving passage to a young man who paused an instant, as if in doubt whether to turn to the right or the left.

"Monsieur Isidore de Charny!" exclaimed Gilbert.

"Doctor Gilbert!" exclaimed Isidore, equally surprised.

"Was it you who did me the honour to ask for me?"

"Precisely, doctor; I and — and some one else."

"Who?"

"It would be cruel in me to keep you here any longer. Come, or, rather, will you have the goodness to conduct me to the apartment known as the Green Salon?"

"I am not very much more familiar with the interior of the palace than you are, but I will endeavour to act as your guide."

They made their way to the room referred to, but, to Isidore's surprise and consternation, there was no one in the salon. Isidore looked eagerly around for an usher, but there was no such functionary even in the adjoining ante-chamber.

"The man cannot be very far off," remarked Gilbert. "In the mean time, would it be any breach of confidence on your part to tell me who desires to see me?"

"Can't you guess?"

"No."

"It is some one I met on the road, coming on foot to Paris."

"Do you mean Pitou?"

"No, doctor; I mean your son, Sebastian."

"Sebastian! Then where is he?"

"He promised to wait for me here. I cannot imagine where he has gone."

Just then the usher came in.

"What has become of the lad I left here?" asked Isidore."

"What lad?" inquired the usher.

"Think a moment," interposed the doctor. "The lad was my son. He is a stranger in the city, and if he has left the palace he is in great danger of being lost."

"Is it a lad about fifteen years old you are inquiring for?" asked a second usher, who had just come in.

"Yes."

"I saw him in the corridor following a lady."

"Do you know who the lady was?"

"No. Her mantle was drawn up close about her eyes, so I could not see her face. She was almost running, too, and the boy was pursuing her, calling, 'Madame, madame!'"

"Let us go down and question the concierge; perhaps he can give us some information on the subject."

"Yes, I saw a lady answering to that description, and, followed by a boy, get in a carriage here at the door," the concierge replied, on being questioned. "She pulled the boy into the carriage, closed the door, gave the coachman an address, and drove away."

"Do you recollect the address?"

"Perfectly. Number nine, Rue Coq-Héron, near the Rue Plâtrière."

Gilbert gave a violent start.

"Why, that is my sister-in-law's, — the Comtesse de Charny's address!" exclaimed Isidore.

"Fate!" muttered Gilbert.

The world was too philosophical in those days to say *Providence*.

Then he said to himself: "Sebastiau recognised her."

"Let us go and see the countess at once!" cried Isidore.

But Gilbert, realising the trying position in which Andrée would be placed if he presented himself before her in company with her husband's brother, said, —

"My son is perfectly safe with the countess, and as I already have the honour of that lady's acquaintance, it is not necessary for you to take the trouble to accompany me, when there must be so many matters requiring your attention, as, from what I heard in the king's apartments, I infer you are about to depart for Turin."

"If you do not consider it necessary, of course, doctor —"

"I beg you will give yourself no further anxiety. I am sure my son is safe, and that I shall have no difficulty in finding him."

As soon as Isidore had re-entered the palace, Doctor Gilbert hastened to the Rue Coq-Héron. He recognised the house at a glance, and, unable to invent any pretext for entering it, resolved to gain an access in some other way.

He tried the gate, but found it securely fastened. Then he walked along the wall; but that was at least ten feet high, and there was no waggon near which would assist him in scaling it; so he hurried back to the Rue Plâtrière, casting a glance as he passed at the fountain, to which he had often repaired, sixteen years before, to moisten the hard black bread which he had owed to the generosity of the kind-hearted Thérèse and of the famous Rousseau.

They were both dead; he had been successful in life, and had won both fame and fortune: but was he any happier than in those days when, consumed by a mad passion, he came to moisten his crust in the waters of this fountain? A few steps more brought him to a small gate, the upper part of which consisted of an iron grating.

Gilbert recollected that sometimes at night, in years gone by, the occupants of this house had forgotten to draw the latch-string inside; for the house then, as now, was occupied by people too poor to feel any fear of thieves.

He passed his hand over the gate, and, to his great delight, found the string hanging out. He pulled it, the gate opened, and he found himself in a damp, dark alley, with a winding stairway at the farther end of it.

Gilbert groped his way to it. After he had mounted about ten steps, he paused. A dim light struggling through dingy glass showed that there was a window at this point. Gilbert searched for the little bolt that fastened the window, found it, opened the window, and made his way down into the garden below, exactly as he had done twice before.

Despite the many years that had elapsed, Gilbert recognised every nook and corner of the garden, and every little peculiarity in its arrangement, even the vine-clad corner in which the gardener kept his ladder.

He did not know whether or not the doors were fastened at this hour, or whether the count was with his wife; but though he was resolved to regain possession of Sebastian, he felt that he ought not to compromise Andrée, and, consequently, that it was absolutely necessary that he should see her alone.

Suddenly a faint light revealed an open casement not far from him, — a window he recognised, for it was through that very window he had stolen the very child for whom he was now searching.

He stepped aside into the shadow, so that he could see without being seen.

From the spot where he now stood, he could see the open door leading into the brightly lighted parlour; and almost on a line with the door stood a bed, on which a woman with dishevelled hair was lying motionless, though a hoarse, guttural sound, almost like a death-rattle, escaped her lips now and then.

Gilbert crept slowly and cautiously to the window, until his hand rested upon the sill.

The woman was Andréé, and she was alone; but why was she in this agony of grief? Was this grief connected in any way with Sebastian?

He could only ascertain by questioning her; so he climbed noiselessly in at the window, and the two found themselves once more face to face.

CHAPTER XIII.

SEBASTIAN'S ADVENTURES.

ANDRÉE'S first sensation on perceiving Gilbert was not only one of intense terror, but of intense aversion as well.

To her he was still that same wretched little plebeian that had haunted the groves of Trianon, not Gilbert the American, the friend of Lafayette and Washington, ennobled by study and science, and by the power of his own brilliant genius.

Gilbert, on the contrary, though he no longer felt for Andrée that ardent passion which had led him to commit a crime for her sake, still regarded her with that deep and tender interest which impels a man to render a woman a service even at the cost of his own life. He felt, too, that he was the cause of all Andrée's misfortunes, and that he should not atone until he had insured her an amount of happiness equal to the amount of misery she had suffered through him.

On finding this woman he had left years before in such despair a prey to new misfortunes, his heart was moved with compassion; so, instead of making use of the meretric power he had formerly employed with such success, he resolved to talk with her kindly, and not to resort to his former methods unless he found it absolutely necessary to do so.

Andrée was the first to speak.

"What do you desire, monsieur?" she gasped. "How did you gain an entrance here?"

"In the same manner as on a previous occasion; so you need have no fear that any one suspects my presence here.

Why did I come? I came to recover a treasure, valueless to you, but inconceivably precious to me, — my son. I want you to tell me where my son is, — my son, whom you enticed away and brought here.”

“How do I know what has become of him? He has fled from me. You have taught him only too effectually to hate his mother.”

“His mother, madame! Are you really his mother?”

“He sees my grief, he has heard my moans, he has witnessed my despair, and yet he asks if I am a mother?” cried *Andrée*, passionately.

“Then you are really ignorant of his whereabouts?”

“He has fled, I tell you! I left him here in this room; when I returned I found the window open and the chamber unoccupied.”

“Great heavens! where can he have gone?” cried *Gilbert*. “The poor boy knows nothing about Paris, and it is nearly midnight.”

“Do you fear that some misfortune has befallen him?”

“That is what we must find out. That is what you must tell me.”

He extended his hand towards *Andrée*.

“Oh, monsieur, monsieur!” she pleaded, shrinking from him in mortal terror.

“Have no fears, madame; you are sacred in my eyes. It is a mother I am about to question concerning the fate of her son.”

Andrée sighed heavily, and sank into an arm-chair, murmuring *Sebastian's* name.

“Now sleep,” commanded *Gilbert*; “but tell me what you see in your sleep.”

“I am asleep,” answered *Andrée*, dreamily.

“Must I employ all my will power, or will you answer of your own accord?”

“Will you promise that you will never again tell my child that I am not his mother?”

“That depends. Do you love him?”

"Yes, yes! devotedly!"

"Then you are his mother, as I am his father, madame. And you will answer freely?" he added.

"Will you allow me to see him again?"

"Have I not said that you are his mother, madame? You love your child, so you shall see him again."

"Oh, thank you!" exclaimed Andrée, clasping her hands joyfully. "Now question me — I see —"

"You see what?"

"Let me follow him from the moment of his departure, so that I may make no mistake."

"So be it. Where did you see him first?"

"In the Green Salon."

"Where did he overtake you?"

"Just as I was stepping into the carriage."

"Into what room did you take him?"

"Into the parlour there."

"Where did he sit?"

"On the sofa, by my side."

"Did he remain there long?"

"About half an hour."

"Why did he leave you?"

"Because we heard a carriage stop before the door."

"Who was in the carriage?"

Andrée hesitated.

"Who was in the carriage?" repeated Gilbert, in a firmer tone, and with a stronger effort of will power.

"The Comte de Charny."

"Where did you conceal the lad?"

"I pushed him into this bedroom."

"What did he say as he entered?"

"That I was not his mother."

"Why did he say that? Speak, I must know."

"Because I had said to him that —"

"Go on."

"That you were an — an infamous scoundrel."

"Look into the poor boy's heart and see the misery you have caused him, madame."

"Oh, Heaven! Forgive me, my poor child; forgive me!"

"Did the count suspect that the boy was here?"

"No."

"You are sure?"

"Yes."

"Then why did he not remain?"

"The count never remains with me."

"Then why did he come?"

Andrée sat perfectly silent for a moment, with wildly staring eyes, as if trying to see through inky darkness.

"Oh, my God!" she exclaimed suddenly. "Oh, Oliver! dear, dear Oliver!"

Gilbert gazed at her with astonishment.

"Oh, unfortunate woman that I am!" murmured Andrée. "He was beginning to love me. It was to remain near me that he declined that mission. He loves me! he loves me!"

Gilbert was beginning to understand this strange situation.

"And do you love him?" he asked.

Andrée sighed, but did not reply.

"Do you love him?" Gilbert repeated.

"Why do you ask?"

"Read my thoughts."

"I see. Your intentions are good. You would like to make me happy enough for me to forget all the misery you have caused me; but I would rather be wretched all my life than owe my happiness to you. I hate you, and I shall continue to hate you as long as I live!"

"Poor weak human nature!" murmured Gilbert. "Is so much earthly felicity granted you that you can afford to choose which you will accept? Do you love him?" he added.

"Yes."

"Since when?"

"Ever since the first time I saw him, — ever since the

day he drove from Paris to Versailles with the queen and myself."

"Do you know what love is, Andrée?" asked Gilbert, sadly.

"I know that one's ability to love is exactly commensurate with one's capacity for suffering."

"You speak truly. Your words are indeed those of a wife and mother. A rough diamond at first, you are being transformed by the hands of that grim lapidary men call Sorrow. But let us return to Sebastian."

"Yes, yes; let us return to him. Don't let me think of the count, or I shall perhaps follow him instead of my child."

"That is right, wife, forget thy husband; mother, think only of thy child. Where was the boy when you were talking with the count?"

"He was listening there, — at the door."

"How much of the conversation did he overhear?"

"All the first part of it."

"When did he decide to leave the house?"

"When the count —"

Andrée paused.

"When?" demanded Gilbert, pitilessly.

"When Charny kissed my hand, and I uttered a cry."

"You can see him, then?"

"Yes, I can see him with his brow deeply furrowed, his lips compressed, and his clenched hands pressed against his breast."

"Follow him; do not lose sight of him from that moment."

"I see him! I see him!" exclaimed Andrée.

"What is he doing?"

"He is looking around to see if there is not a door leading into the garden. Seeing none, he opens the window, gives a last glance towards the parlour, leaps over the sill, and disappears."

"Follow him out into the night."

"I cannot."

Gilbert came nearer and waved his hand before her eyes.

"You know there is no such thing as darkness for you," he said. "Now look."

"Ah, I see him running through the alley. He reaches the gate, opens it, and slips out into the Rue Plâtrière. He stops to speak to a woman who is passing."

"Listen, and you will hear what he says."

"I am listening."

"What does he ask?"

"He asks her to direct him to the Rue Saint-Honoré."

"That is where I live. He is looking for me. He is waiting for me in my rooms now, perhaps."

"No," replied Andrée; "no —"

"Then where is he?"

"Let me follow him, or I shall lose sight of him. I see him now. He is running across the Place du Palais-Royal. He stops to inquire his way again, then hastens on. He reaches the Rue Richelieu. Now he is at the corner of the Neuve-Rue Saint-Roch. Stop, Sebastian, stop! Don't you see that carriage coming up the Rue de la Sourdière? I do! O God! the horses!"

Andrée uttered a piercing shriek and sprang up; great drops of sweat were rolling down her face.

"God be praised! the chest of the horse strikes him and hurls him to one side, out of the reach of the wheel. He lies there senseless, but he is not dead. Oh, no, no! he is not dead; he is only unconscious. Help, help! It is my child! it is my child lying there!"

And with a heart-rending cry, Andrée fell back half fainting in her chair.

In spite of Gilbert's intense desire to know more, he granted Andrée the moment's rest she so greatly needed. He feared that if he persisted too far, a fibre of her heart would break, or a vein burst in her brain; but as soon as he thought he could question her with safety,—

"Well, what then?" he asked.

"Wait, wait!" replied Andrée. "A crowd has gathered around him. O Heaven! let me pass! It is my son who is hurt. O my God! is there no physician or surgeon in all this crowd?"

"Yes, yes! I will go at once!" exclaimed Gilbert.

"Wait!" cried Andrée, seizing him by the arm. "The crowd opens! Some one is coming. Hurry, hurry, monsieur! You must see that he is not dead, and that you can save him. Oh, oh!" she shrieked, in evident terror.

"Great Heaven! what is it?" asked Gilbert, wildly.

"That man shall not touch my child!" cried Andrée. "He is not a man; he is a demon, a vampire. Oh, horrible, horrible!"

"For Heaven's sake do not lose sight of Sebastian, madame," pleaded Gilbert, shuddering.

"Oh, be calm, be calm! I am," Andrée responded.

"What is the man doing?"

"He is taking Sebastian away. They go up the Rue de la Sourdière and turn into a narrow street on the left. They approach a small door which is standing open, and then descend several steps. He lays Sebastian on a table covered with writing materials. He takes off the boy's coat and rolls up his sleeves. He bandages his arm with rags brought to him by a woman who is as dirty and hideous-looking as himself. He opens a case and takes out a lancet. He is going to bleed him. Oh, I will not see my son's blood! I will not!"

"Then go back and count the steps of the stairway."

"I have. There are eleven."

"Look at the door carefully and see if you notice anything peculiar about it?"

"Yes, there is a small square aperture, with a bar across it."

"That is all I need to know."

"Run, and you will find him exactly where I told you."

"Do you wish to wake at once and remember what you have seen, or sleep until to-morrow morning, when you will have forgotten all about it?"

“Wake me now.”

Gilbert pressed his thumbs upon her eyebrows, and breathed on her forehead, uttering the single word, “Awake!”

The glazed look left Andrée's eyes, and her limbs instantly became supple; but she gazed at Gilbert almost in terror, and repeated the exhortation she had uttered in her mesmeric slumber.

“Run, run!” she cried, “and take him away from that terrible man; I am afraid of him.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MAN OF BLOOD.

GILBERT needed no urging. As it would require too much time to return as he had come, he ran straight to the gateway on the Rue Coq-Héron, opened it unassisted, and darted out into the street.

Remembering perfectly the route described by Andrée, he crossed the Place du Palais-Royal as the lad had done, hastened down the Rue Saint-Honoré as far as the corner of the Rue de la Sourdière, then on to the narrow cross street known as the Rue Saint-Hyacinthe, where he began a careful examination of the dwellings bordering it.

In the third house on the right-hand side he perceived the door with a small square aperture that Andrée had described. This corresponded so perfectly with her description that there could be no mistake. He knocked, but there was no response. He knocked a second time, and fancied he heard some one creeping cautiously up the stairs. He knocked a third time.

“Who’s there?” asked a woman’s voice.

“Open the door! you have nothing to fear. I am the father of the injured lad you brought here.”

“Open the door, Albertine!” said another voice; “it is Doctor Gilbert!”

“My father!” exclaimed a third voice, which Gilbert recognised as that of Sebastian, and heaved a sigh of relief.

The door opened, and Gilbert rushed down the steps. At the bottom he found himself in a basement room lighted by a single lamp which was standing on a table strewn

with written and printed papers, as Andrée had described. On a cot in one corner of the room lay Sebastian. Gilbert's strong paternal love overcame his usual self-control, and he flew to his son and clasped him tenderly in his arms, — taking care, however, not to hurt the bleeding arm or wounded chest.

After a long embrace, Gilbert turned to his host, upon whom he had scarcely bestowed a glance before.

The man was standing with his legs wide apart, and with one hand resting on the table and the other on his hip, apparently enjoying the scene immensely.

“Look, Albertine,” he exclaimed, “and give thanks with me that chance has permitted me to render a service to one of my brother physicians!”

As the man uttered these words, Gilbert turned, and glanced for the first time at the speaker.

There were brilliant green and yellow lights in his grey eyes, which projected from his head like those of a toad; and Gilbert shuddered in spite of himself. It seemed to him that he had already seen this man in some frightful dream, through a bloody veil, as it were.

Gilbert turned again to Sebastian, and kissed him still more tenderly. Then, conquering his repugnance, he walked over to the stranger.

“I beg you will accept the heartfelt thanks of a grateful father, monsieur,” he said earnestly.

“I have done only my duty, monsieur,” responded the surgeon. “‘I am a man, and no human being is a stranger to me,’ as Terence says; besides, I have a very tender heart, and I cannot bear to see even an insect suffer, — much less a human being like myself.”

“May I take the liberty of asking the name of the philanthropist to whom I have the pleasure of speaking?”

“You do not know me?” said the surgeon, with a smile which was intended to be benevolent, but which was only hideous. “Never mind, I know you. You are Doctor Gilbert, the friend of Washington and Lafayette,” — he

seemed to lay special stress upon this last name, — “the honest Utopian who wrote those fine essays on ‘Constitutional Monarchies,’ which you dedicated to his Majesty Louis XVI., — a compliment for which he rewarded you by sending you to the Bastille as soon as you set foot in France. You tried to save him by showing him the drift of public sentiment, and he rewarded you by shutting you up in prison, — another example of royal gratitude, that is all.”

He laughed again, a sneering, menacing laugh this time.

“As you know me so well, sir, it is only the more natural that I should desire the honour of your acquaintance in turn.”

“Oh, we made each other’s acquaintance a long time ago, monsieur,” responded the surgeon. “It was twenty years ago, on a terrible night, — the night of the thirtieth of May, 1770. You were about the age of that lad there when you were brought in wounded and unconscious. You were brought to me by my teacher, Rousseau, and I laid you on a table surrounded with lifeless bodies and amputated limbs. It is a comfort to me now to remember that I was able to save some valuable lives that terrible night, — thanks to a knife which knew how far to cut in order to cure.”

“Then you are Jean Paul Marat, monsieur!” exclaimed Gilbert, recoiling a step, in spite of himself.

“You see how potent my name is, Albertine,” said Marat, with a sinister laugh.

“But why are you here in this dingy room? I thought you were the physician of the Comte d’Artois?”

“His veterinarian, you mean,” responded Marat. “But the prince has emigrated: no prince, no stables, you see; no stables, no veterinary surgeon. I had sent in my resignation, however. I will not truckle to tyrants.”

“But why are you here in this cellar?” insisted Gilbert.

“Because I am a patriot, Mr. Philosopher; because I

make it my business to denounce the ambitious; because Bailly fears me; because Necker hates me; because Lafayette has set a price on my head,—ambitious scoundrel and tyrant that he is. But I defy him. From the grim depths of my cellar I denounce the dictator. Do you know what he is up to now?"

"No."

"He is having fifteen thousand snuff-boxes made, with his portrait upon each one of them. I intend to beseech all good citizens to smash every one they see. They are connected in some way, I am sure, with some royalist plot; for you know how Lafayette is conspiring with the queen, while the poor king weeps over the follies the Austrian makes him commit."

"Conspiring with the queen?" repeated Gilbert.

"Yes, with the queen. You can't deny that she is continually concocting some nefarious plot or other. Why, she has distributed so many white cockades of late that white ribbon has advanced three sous per yard. There can be no doubt that this is true, for I heard it from one of Madame Bertin's workwomen, — Madame Bertin is the queen's milliner, — who told me that she had been hard at work all the morning with her Majesty."

"But where and how do you denounce all this?"

"In my journal, a paper I have recently established, and of which I have published about twenty numbers. 'The Friend of the People,' I call it. A political and strictly impartial newspaper. To pay for the paper and press work, you can see for yourself, as you look around you, that I have sold everything, even to the sheets and coverlets of the bed on which your son is lying."

"And who are your co-labourers in this important enterprise?"

"My co-labourers!" repeated Marat. "Turkeys go in flocks, but the eagle soars alone. My only co-labourers are these," he added, indicating his head and hands.

"You see that table?" he continued; "it is Vulcan's

workshop. It is there he forges his thunderbolts. Every night I write what is to appear in the next day's issue; other journalists write at intervals, and have occasional assistance, at least. I, never! 'The Friend of the People' — a copy of it lies there now — is entirely the work of my hand. It is not merely a journal; it is a personality, it is myself."

"But how do you manage to accomplish such a tremendous amount of work?" inquired Gilbert.

"Ah, that is one of Nature's secrets. Death and I have entered into a solemn compact. I agree to give Death ten years of my life, and he gives me certain days when I require no rest, and certain nights when I require no sleep. I write all day and all night. Lafayette's spies compel me to live in concealment; but this enforced seclusion leaves my mind and time free for my work, and only increases my activity. This life seemed intolerable to me at first; but now I am really beginning to enjoy it. I like to contemplate the world through the dim light of my cellar. From my underground cell I rule the realm of the living. With one hand I demolish Newton, Franklin, Laplace, Monge, and Lavoisier; with the other I overthrow Bailly, Necker, and Lafayette. I demolish them all, as Samson demolished the temple; and though I may be crushed by the falling fragments, I shall perhaps entomb royalty itself in the ruins."

Gilbert shuddered in spite of himself. This man in his rags, in his poverty-stricken abode, was repeating almost the very words Cagliostro, in richly embroidered garments, had uttered in his palace.

"Popular as you are, why have you never endeavoured to secure a nomination to the National Assembly?" asked Gilbert.

"Because the time has not yet come," answered Marat. Then, with an air of regret, he added: "Ah! if I could be at the head of the nation, sustained by a few thousand determined men, I would be willing to guarantee that in

six weeks the Constitution would be perfect; that the political machinery would be working so well that no one would dare to tamper with it; that the nation would be happy and prosperous and powerful; and that it would remain so as long as my life was spared."

The vainglorious creature appeared to undergo a transformation. His eyes seemed filled with blood; his tawny skin was bathed in sweat; the monster was grand in his hideousness, as others are grand in their beauty.

"But I am not the head of the nation," he continued, "and I have not the few thousand supporters that I need. Nevertheless, I am a journalist; I have my desk, my paper, and my pens; I have my subscribers, my readers, to whom I am an oracle, a prophet, a seer. In the first issue of 'The Friend of the People' I denounced the aristocrats, and said that there were six hundred criminals in France who should be hanged without delay. I made a mistake. The fifth and sixth of October have come and gone, and my vision is clearer. It is not six hundred aristocrats that ought to be hanged, but ten, yes, twenty thousand."

Gilbert smiled. When fury reaches a point like this, it seems simply ridiculous.

"Take care; there won't be hemp enough in France for what you want to do, and the price of rope will advance enormously."

"We shall find a substitute, I hope," replied Marat. "Do you know whom I am expecting to-night? It is one of my brother physicians, whom you probably know by name,—Citizen Guillotin. Do you know what his latest invention is? It is a wonderful machine that kills without inflicting the slightest pain; for death should be a punishment, not torture."

Gilbert shuddered. Again this man reminded him of Cagliostro; this machine was undoubtedly the very one to which Cagliostro had referred.

"Some one is rapping now," remarked Marat. "It is he. Open the door, Albertine!" Then, turning to Gilbert,

he added enthusiastically, "You'll now have a chance to see a machine that requires only one man to work it, but that will cut off three hundred heads a day."

"And cut them off without inflicting the slightest pain; causing no other sensation, in fact, than that of a slight coolness around the neck," added a sweet, flute-like voice behind Marat.

"Ah, it is you, doctor!" exclaimed Marat, turning to a small man about forty or forty-five years of age, whose neat dress and mild manner made him a strange contrast to his host, and who carried a box in his hand. "What have you there?"

"A model of my famous machine, my dear Marat. But if I am not very much mistaken, it is Doctor Gilbert I see standing there."

"The same, doctor," answered Gilbert, bowing.

"I am delighted to meet you, monsieur, for I should be charmed to have the opinion of so distinguished a man as yourself in regard to my invention. I must tell you, my dear Marat, that I have found a very skilful carpenter, — one Master Guidon, — who is going to make one of my machines on a large scale. It will be expensive, — he wants five thousand five hundred francs; but no sacrifice is too great for the good of humanity. It will be completed in two months, and I shall then offer it to the National Assembly. I hope you will indorse the proposition in your excellent paper, Marat; though really my machine speaks for itself, as you will see with your own eyes, Monsieur Gilbert: but a few lines in 'The Friend of the People' will do no harm."

"Oh, you may feel easy on that score. It will not be a few lines I shall devote to it, but an entire issue."

"You are very kind, my dear Marat; but I don't want you to go it blind, as the saying is, but prefer you should judge for yourself."

He drew another and much smaller box from his pocket; and a queer noise inside indicated that it was occupied by

some animal or animals that were anxious to escape from their prison house. This sound did not escape Marat's keen ear.

"What have you got in here?" he asked, laying his hand on the box.

"Take care! don't let them out, for we could n't catch them again. They are the mice we are going to decapitate. Why, Doctor Gilbert, you don't intend to leave us?" he remarked, seeing the doctor preparing to take his sleeping son in his arms.

"Yes, very much to my regret," replied Gilbert; "but my son, who was knocked down in the street this evening by a horse, and who was skilfully relieved by Doctor Marat, — to whom I, too, once owed my life, by the way, under similar circumstances, — needs rest and care; so I shall not be able to witness your very interesting experiment."

"But you will promise to be present at our public exhibition of the invention two months from now, doctor?"

"Certainly."

"I shall hold you to your promise."

"Very well."

"I am sure I need not ask you to keep my place of abode a secret, doctor," remarked Marat.

"Certainly not."

"Because, if your friend Lafayette should discover it, he would have me shot like a dog, or hanged like a thief."

"We will soon put a stop to such barbarous deaths as shooting and hanging!" cried Guillotin. "We shall have in their stead a pleasant, easy, instantaneous death, — such a death as men who are disgusted with life, and long to put an end to it, will prefer to a natural death. Come and look at my machine, Marat."

CHAPTER XV.

CATHERINE.

FROM the Rue de la Sourdière to the house where Gilbert lodged, on the Rue Saint-Honoré, was but a step.

The cold air aroused Sebastian, and he insisted upon walking; but his father would not consent.

On reaching his door, the doctor set Sebastian on his feet for a moment, and rapped loudly, so that he should not be obliged to wait long even if the concierge was asleep.

Soon a heavy but quick step was heard.

"Is that you, Monsieur Gilbert?" inquired some one within.

"That is Pitou's voice," cried Sebastian.

"Ah! God be praised! Sebastian is found!" exclaimed Pitou, opening the door. Then, turning towards the stairway, where the light of a candle was dimly visible, he shouted: "Monsieur Billot! Monsieur Billot! Sebastian is found, and uninjured too, I hope! Is it not so?"

"He has sustained no serious injury, I think," replied the doctor. "Come, Sebastian."

And, again taking the boy in his arms, he proceeded to ascend the stairs, closely followed by Pitou. From that young man's mud-stained clothing it was quite evident that he had just completed a long and arduous journey. After conducting Catherine Billot to her home, and hearing from her own lips that her grief was caused by Isidore de Charny's departure for Paris, he returned to Haramont with a heavy heart and a lagging step. There he found Sebastian's letter apprising him of his intended journey; and Pitou, forgetting his own troubles, started off in pur-

suit of the lad. As he encumbered himself with no baggage whatever, and carried his provisions, in the shape of a sausage and a big loaf of bread, with him, he was subjected to no delays, but, staff in hand, walked steadily on, and in eleven hours arrived at the end of his journey.

As he left Haramont at nine in the morning, it was eight o'clock in the evening when he reached Paris.

It was at this very hour that Andrée took Sebastian away with her from the Tuileries, and that Doctor Gilbert was closeted with the king; so Pitou found neither Sebastian nor his father at the doctor's lodgings. He did find Billot, but the latter had heard nothing concerning Sebastian, and did not know when Gilbert would return.

The poor fellow was so miserable that he did not even think to say anything to Billot about Catherine. In fact, his whole conversation was one continuous lamentation over his ill luck in not having been at home when Sebastian came to find him the night before; but his anxiety was at last relieved by seeing the father and son present themselves together.

Gilbert thanked him for his solicitude by a cordial pressure of the hand; then, knowing that the brave fellow must need rest after his long tramp and tedious hours of waiting, he bade him good-night and sent him to bed.

The doctor would not intrust the task of putting Sebastian to bed, and of watching over him, to any one else. He examined the lad's bruises carefully, and tested his lungs several times; but satisfied at last that his respiration was entirely unobstructed, he threw himself on a sofa near his son, who soon fell asleep, though he was still quite feverish.

But soon, remembering how anxious the countess must be, the doctor rose, and after summoning his valet, made him take to the nearest post-office a note containing these words only:—

“Do not be troubled. The child is found, and has sustained no serious injury.”

The next morning, when Billot and Pitou presented themselves before the doctor, that gentleman noticed that Billot's countenance wore an unusually grave and perturbed expression.

"What is the matter, my friend?" inquired Gilbert.

"I want to say, doctor, that it was all very well for you to keep me here while I could be of service to you and to the country, but while I am staying here in Paris, everything seems to be going wrong at home," was the good man's reply.

One might suppose from this that Pitou had revealed Catherine's secret, or told her father of the young girl's infatuation for Isidore; but the honest heart of the commander of the Haramont National Guards revolted against such a breach of confidence. He had merely told Billot that the crops had been a failure, the rye had turned out badly, the wheat had been much damaged by hail, and that he had found Catherine in a swoon on the road between Villers Cotterets and Pisseleu.

Billot was annoyed to hear of the failure of the rye and the destruction of the wheat, but it made him sick at heart to hear of Catherine's fainting fit.

He questioned Pitou closely; but though that young man answered very cautiously, Billot shook his head more than once, and said, "I think it is quite time I was getting away from here."

Gilbert seemed to divine what was passing in his humble friend's mind, however, for he said, —

"Go, go at once, my dear Billot, as your farm and family both seem to require your attention; but don't forget that, if the worst comes to the worst, I shall count upon you."

"You have only to say the word, Monsieur Gilbert, and I will be in Paris within twelve hours."

So they both departed, Pitou taking with him, as a gift from Doctor Gilbert, the sum of twenty-five crowns to aid in arming and equipping the Haramont National Guards.

Sebastian remained with his father.

CHAPTER XVI.

A TRUCE.

A WEEK has elapsed since the events we have just related ; and to-day we again take the reader by the hand to conduct him to the Palace of the Tuileries, which was to be the scene of the great catastrophes which were so fast approaching.

Oh, thou Tuileries ! fatal legacy bequeathed to her descendants and their successors by that dread queen of Saint Bartholomew's day, Catherine de Médicis ! thou Circe-like palace, which dost attract only to devour, what a strange fascination there must be in thy yawning jaws for the would-be kings that rush into them, only to be cast forth one after another, headless corpses or crownless fugitives !

Some curse must lurk in thy walls, sculptured like one of Benvenuto Cellini's *chefs-d'œuvre* ; some fatal talisman must be buried beneath thy threshold. Count the kings thou hast sheltered, and tell us what has become of them !

Out of those five kings, there was but one that went down peacefully to the grave that awaited him among the resting-places of his ancestors. Of the remaining four for which thou art accountable, one died upon the scaffold, and three were sent into exile.

Once an entire assembly resolved to brave thy dangers and establish itself in the place where its monarchs had sat enthroned ; but from that moment madness seemed to seize its members : the scaffold devoured some, some were exiled, and a strange fraternity united Louis XVI. and Robespierre, Collot d'Herbois and Napoleon, Billaud Varennes and Charles X., Vadier and Louis Philippe.

Bold indeed must he be who ventures to cross thy threshold, oh, Tuileries, and enter where Louis XVI., Napoleon, Charles X., and Louis Philippe entered; for sooner or later he will leave it in like manner.

Yet each of these monarchs entered thy precincts amid the acclamations of the people; thy balcony, oh, palace, beheld them, one after another, smile in response to the enthusiastic cheers and protestations of the crowd below: but scarcely was each ruler seated upon the royal dais before he began to labour for his own aggrandisement, and not for the people's interests; and the people, soon discovering this fact, turned their monarchs out of doors like unfaithful stewards.

After that terrible journey through mud and bloodshed and turmoil on the sixth of October, the pale light of dawn found the courtyard of the Tuileries thronged with people clamouring for a look at the king.

All day, while the monarch was receiving the different corporations, the crowd peered through the windows, and those who fancied they caught a glimpse of him, pointed him out to those near them, exclaiming, —

“Look at him! Look at him! There he is!”

At noon, the king was obliged to show himself upon the balcony, and the acclamations were deafening.

In the evening, he went down into the garden, and the people went mad with delight; protestations of devotion resounded on every side, and many were affected to tears.

Madame Elizabeth, affectionate and ingenuous to a fault, remarked to her brother: “It cannot be difficult to reign over such people.” Her apartments were on the ground floor. In the evening, she had the windows thrown open, and ate before the crowd.

Men and women looked on and applauded, and bowed to her through the windows, especially the women, who made their children climb up into the window-sills and throw kisses to the great lady and tell her how beautiful she was.

Portrait of Lafayette.

Photo-Etching. — From Engraving by Hopwood.



Everybody said: "The Revolution is over. The king is freed from the evil influences of his courtiers and counselors. The spell is broken that held royalty captive so long, far from his capital, amid the unwholesome surroundings of Versailles."

The masses, as well as individuals, often deceive themselves, not only as to what they really are, but as to what they will become. The terror excited by the events of the fifth and sixth of October had made many return to their allegiance. The Assembly had been more alarmed when the king was in peril than when its own existence was menaced. It felt then that it was dependent upon the king; but six months had not rolled by before the Assembly felt that, on the contrary, the king was dependent upon it. One hundred and fifty of its members took out passports. The two most popular men in France, Mirabeau and Lafayette, returned to Paris from Versailles — Royalists.

Mirabeau said to Lafayette, "Let us unite, and save the king."

Unfortunately Lafayette, a most honest, but rather narrow-minded man, despised Mirabeau's character and underrated his ability.

Many damaging reports were circulated concerning his Royal Highness the Duc d'Orléans. It was said that during that dreadful night the duke had been seen going about with his hat pulled down over his eyes, urging the crowds in the marble court to pillage the palace, in the hope that pillage would eventually lead to assassination.

Lafayette, instead of coming to an understanding with Mirabeau, went to the duke and told him he must leave France. The duke refused, but Lafayette was virtually king, so the duke had to obey.

"When shall I return?" he asked.

"When I tell you it is time to return," was the response.

"And what if I become tired, and return without your permission?" asked the duke, scornfully.

"Then I hope your Highness will do me the honour to fight with me the day after your arrival."

The duke departed, and did not return until he was sent for.

Lafayette was not much of a Royalist prior to the sixth of October, but after that he became a warm supporter of the monarchy.

There is more pride than gratitude in the human heart, hence we become attached to our friends on account of the services we confer, rather than the favours we receive; and Lafayette had saved the king and protected the queen.

The king and Madame Elizabeth were really touched by the devotion manifested by the masses, though they felt, perhaps, that something terrible lurked beneath it, — something hateful and vindictive, like the wrath of a tiger, that snarls even while it caresses you.

But this was not the case with Marie Antoinette. Her tears were tears of rage and jealousy; they were shed more for the loss of Charny than for that of the sceptre she saw slipping from her hand. So she beheld the people, and listened to their protestations with scornful eyes and an angry heart. When, in the midst of these enthusiastic transports, the king offered his hands to the men, and Madame Elizabeth laughed and wept with the women and children, the queen's eyes remained dry, though she wept bitterly in private over her own personal griefs.

The takers of the Bastile called upon her, but she refused to see them.

Then the market-women came. She received them, but at a distance, separated from them by an imposing array of skirts, her women being ranged around her like an advance guard, to protect her from the slightest contact with these plebeians.

This was a great mistake on Marie Antoinette's part, for the market-women were Royalists.

One woman, bolder than the others, took upon herself the duties of counsellor.

“Madame queen,” she began, “will you permit me to

give you one piece of advice, one that comes from the heart? ”

The queen made an almost imperceptible movement of the head, which the woman did not see, however.

“You do not answer,” she continued. “Never mind, I will give it, all the same. You are here among us now, in the bosom of your real family; so you ought to send away all those courtiers who ruin kings, and bestow a little affection on us poor Parisians, who have seen you only four or five times, perhaps, during the twenty years you have spent in France.”

“You say this, madame, because you do not know my heart. I loved you at Versailles, and I shall love you just the same in Paris.”

This was not promising much.

So another woman exclaimed: “Oh, yes, you loved us at Versailles. It was out of love, perhaps, that you wanted to have our city bombarded on the fourteenth of July; it was love, perhaps, that made you desire to flee to the frontier on the sixth of October.”

“You mean that it was so reported, and that you believed it,” responded the queen. “This is what so often makes trouble between the people and their king.”

Presently a fortunate inspiration came to the poor woman, or, rather, the poor queen.

One of the market-women, an Alsatian by birth, addressed her in German.

“I have become so thoroughly French that I have forgotten my mother tongue,” replied the queen.

It was a charming thing to say, but unfortunately it was not true, and they all knew it.

That evening, the royal family being together, the king and Madame Elizabeth mentioned several cheering episodes which had occurred during the day; the queen, however, merely repeated a remark made by the dauphin.

Hearing the noise made by the market-women, the poor child ran to his mother and exclaimed, —

“Is to-day yesterday, mamma?”

The dauphin was present, and heard what was said of him. Proud, like all children who find themselves noticed, he went up to his father and gazed at him earnestly.

“I want to ask you something, papa,” he said.

“Very well,” responded the king; “what do you want to know? Speak out.”

“I want to know why your people, who used to love you so much, have become so angry with you all at once?”

“Louis!” remonstrated the queen.

“Let me answer him,” said the king.

So, taking his son upon his knee, and bringing the political issues of the day down to a level with the lad’s comprehension, he said:—

“My son, I wanted to make the people happier and more prosperous; I also needed money to meet the expenses occasioned by the wars, and asked for it, just as my predecessors had always done. Some of the members of my parliament were opposed to giving it, and declared that only the entire nation had the right to vote me this money. I assembled the leading men of each town at Versailles. This was what was called the States-General, — *les États Généraux*. When they met, they asked me to do things that I could not afford to do, either for my own sake or yours. Then there were evil-disposed, mischief-making persons who urged the people to rebel. The excesses of the last few days are their work; so, my son, you should not blame the people too severely.”

Marie Antoinette compressed her lips tightly on hearing this concluding injunction. It was very evident that if the training of the dauphin was intrusted to her, forgiveness of injuries would not be very strongly insisted upon.

The next day the officials of the city and the National Guards sent delegations begging the queen to attend a certain theatrical performance, thus showing by her presence, and that of the king, that they were enjoying their residence at the capital.

The queen replied that it would give her great pleasure to accept the invitation of the city of Paris, but she must have time to forget the events of the last few days. The people had already forgotten them, and were astonished that she remembered them.

When she learned that the Duc d'Orléans had left Paris, she was much pleased; but she would not admit that Lafayette had had anything to do with his departure, or, rather, she believed, or pretended to believe, that it was purely a personal matter between the prince and the general; for she was unwilling to acknowledge that they were under any obligation to Lafayette.

A true princess of the House of Lorraine in rancour and haughtiness, she longed for conquest and revenge.

"Queens cannot be drowned," Henrietta Maria of England remarked in the midst of a tempest, — and Marie Antoinette was evidently of the same opinion.

Besides, had not Maria Theresa been much nearer death than she, when she took her child in her arms and showed him to her faithful Hungarians?

This act of heroism on the mother's part probably had its influence on her daughter. This was a mistake, a terrible mistake, on the part of those persons who considered the situations identical or even analogous. Maria Theresa had the people with her; Marie Antoinette had them against her.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PORTRAIT OF CHARLES THE FIRST.

FOR a few days, while the new occupants of the Tuileries were getting themselves comfortably established there, and gradually resuming their usual habits, Gilbert did not think it advisable to present himself; but when his regular visiting day came, he did not consider it advisable to defer his call any longer.

Louis XVI. was a person of too much discrimination not to be able to distinguish his friends from his enemies, and, in spite of the queen's prejudice against Gilbert, he felt that this man, even though he could hardly be called the friend of the king, was the friend of royalty, — something quite as important.

Consequently he, too, had remembered that this was Gilbert's visiting day, and had given orders that the doctor should be admitted immediately upon his arrival, which was done.

The king was pacing the room, so deeply absorbed in thought that he did not notice the doctor's entrance; hence Gilbert remained standing in the doorway, silent and motionless, waiting for the king to become aware of his presence and speak to him.

It was easy to see what was occupying the king's mind, for he paused before it, and gazed at it thoughtfully more than once. It was a full-length portrait of Charles I., painted by Vandyck, — the portrait now in the Louvre, which some Englishman offered to cover with gold pieces if France would consent to part with it.

Everybody has seen this picture, in engravings if not upon canvas.

The king is standing under some sparse, slender trees, like those which grow on the seashore; a page is holding his horse near by. The sea forms the horizon. The monarch's face wears an expression of profound melancholy. Of what is he thinking, this king who had the beautiful and unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots for a predecessor, and will have James II. for his successor?

Or, rather, what was the artist thinking of when he painted the monarch as he would be in the latter part of his reign, — a plain Cavalier, ready to take the field against the Roundheads? Why did he depict him upon the stormy shore of the North Sea, ready for the fray, perhaps, but ready, too, for flight? The warning uttered by this picture must have been loud indeed to be heard by an unsusceptible nature like that of Louis XVI.; but three times he paused in his promenade to gaze at the picture, then, with a sigh, resumed his walk, which seemed always and inevitably to bring him face to face with the portrait again. At last Gilbert realised that there are circumstances under which a person is less indiscreet in announcing his presence than in remaining silent.

So he made a slight movement. The king started, and turned in the direction from which the sound had proceeded.

"Ah! it is you, doctor," he exclaimed. "Come in; I am glad to see you. How long have you been standing there?"

"Several minutes, sire."

"Ah!" said the king, becoming thoughtful again. Then, after a pause, he pointed to Vandyck's masterpiece and asked, —

"Did you ever see that portrait before?"

"Yes, at the house of Madame du Barry; and, though I was only a child at the time, it made a deep impression on me."

"Do you know its history, doctor?"

"Does your Majesty mean the history of the king it represents, or the history of the portrait itself?"

"I mean the history of the portrait."

"No, sire; I only know that it was painted in London about 1645 or '46. I have no idea how it came into the possession of France, nor how it happens to be in your Majesty's chamber just at this time."

"I can tell you how it came into France, but how it happens to be here, I do not know myself. I am almost inclined to think there is a fatality about it."

"Say rather a Providence, if you read its lesson aright, sire. Will your Majesty permit me to ask you a question?"

The king seemed to hesitate.

"Speak, doctor," he said, after a little.

"What does this portrait say to your Majesty?"

"It tells me that Charles I. lost his head for having made war upon his people, and that James II. lost his throne by forsaking it."

"In that case, sire, the portrait speaks the truth, like myself. Now, as the king allows me to question him, I should like to ask what he says in reply to the picture that speaks to him so forcibly."

"I assure you that I have not yet decided what course I shall pursue. I shall be guided by circumstances."

"The people are afraid that their king intends to wage a relentless war upon them."

The king shook his head.

"No, monsieur, no," he replied. "I cannot make war upon my subjects without foreign aid, and I know the condition of Europe too well to depend upon that. The king of Prussia offers me an army of one hundred thousand men, but I understand the ambitious and intriguing spirit of that little kingdom, which tries to make mischief everywhere, in the hope of acquiring another Silesia. Austria, too, places one hundred thousand men at my dis-

posal; but I neither like nor trust my brother-in-law Leopold, a two-faced Janus, a philosophical bigot, whose mother had my father poisoned. My brother offers me the support of Spain and Sardinia; but I trust neither of the powers controlled by my brother Artois. He has with him Monsieur de Calonne, one of the queen's bitterest enemies,—the person who annotated—I saw the manuscript myself—Madame Lamotte's pamphlet against us in that villainous necklace affair. I know all that is going on down there in Turin. In a recent meeting of the Council they discussed the expediency of deposing me, and appointing as regent my other dear brother, the Comte de Provence. At the last, Monsieur de Condé, my cousin, proposed to enter France and march upon Lyons, though he might conclude to assert his claim to the throne. As for the great Catherine, she confines herself to giving advice. She is engaged in devouring Poland just now, and she can't leave the table until after she has finished her repast. She gives me advice which she considers sublime, but which is simply ridiculous. 'Kings,' she writes, 'should move serenely on, without troubling themselves about the clamour of the rabble, as the moon moves serenely on in its orbit, unmindful of the yelping of curs.' Russian dogs may confine themselves to barking, but she had better ask Deshuttés and Varicourt if ours do not bite."

"The people fear, too, that the king contemplates leaving France."

The king made no reply.

"One always makes a great mistake in taking any liberty granted by a monarch literally, sire," continued Gilbert, smiling. "I see that I am indiscreet."

The king laid his hand on Gilbert's shoulder.

"I promised to tell you the truth, and you shall have the whole truth. Such a step has been talked of, and many of my warmest friends urge it very strongly upon me; but on the night of the sixth of October, when the

queen was awaiting death with me, with her children pressed to her bosom, she made me solemnly swear that I would never attempt to leave the country alone; that we would go together, in order that we might be saved or die together. I promised, monsieur, and I shall keep my word. So, as I know it would not be possible for us to flee together without being arrested a dozen times before we reached the frontier, I shall not make the attempt."

"I admire your good sense, sire. Oh, why cannot all France hear and understand you as I hear and understand you! How greatly the hatred against you would be assuaged! How much the dangers that threaten you would be lessened!"

"Hatred?" exclaimed the king. "Do you really think that my people hate me? Dangers? Why, I should say that the greatest dangers were over."

Gilbert gazed at the king with a feeling of profound pity.

"Do you not think so, Monsieur Gilbert;" insisted the king.

"It is my opinion that the battle has not even begun, and that the fourteenth of July and the sixth of October were but the prologue to a terrible tragedy which France is to play before the eyes of other nations."

The king's face paled.

"I hope you are mistaken, monsieur," he remarked.

"I hope that I am; but, alas! I feel sure that I am right."

"But how can you be better posted than I am, when I have both the police and a well-organised detective force to keep me informed of the situation of affairs?"

"I have neither, sire; but circumstances seem to have made me the natural intermediary between the highest and the lowest denizens of the universe. Sire, what we have just experienced is only the premonitory trembling of the earth. The fire and ashes and lava of the volcano we have yet to fight."

"You say '*to fight*,' monsieur; would it not be more correct to say '*to flee from*'?"

“I said ‘to fight,’ sire.”

“You know my opinion concerning foreign intervention,” remarked the monarch. “I shall never call foreign troops into France unless — I will not say to save my own life, for what does my life matter? I am willing to sacrifice that — but unless the lives of my wife and children are in peril.”

“I would gladly kneel at your feet and thank you for the sentiments you have just expressed, your Majesty. No, sire, foreign intervention is not needed. What do you want with that, when your own resources are so far from being exhausted? In my humble opinion, there are two ways of saving both France and the king.”

“Speak out, monsieur, and you will richly deserve the gratitude of both.”

“The first, sire, is to place yourself at the head of the revolutionary party, and so control and direct it.”

“But the revolutionists would drag me along with them, and I am not inclined to follow whithersoever they lead.”

“Then put a bit in the mouth of the revolution, — a bit powerful enough to control it.”

“Of what is this bit to be made?”

“Popularity and genius.”

“And who will forge it?”

“Mirabeau.”

Louis XVI. looked at Gilbert as if he thought he could not have heard him aright.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MIRABEAU.

GILBERT saw that a serious controversy was imminent, but he was prepared for it.

“Yes, sire, Mirabeau,” he repeated.

The king turned to the portrait of Charles I.

“What would you have answered, Charles Stuart,” he exclaimed, “if at such a time as this, when you felt the earth trembling beneath your feet, you had been advised to lean upon Cromwell?”

“Charles Stuart would have refused, and very rightly,” responded Gilbert; “but there is no resemblance whatever between Cromwell and Mirabeau.”

“I do not know how you view these matters, doctor,” responded the king, “but in my eyes a traitor is a traitor, and I see no difference between a big traitor and a petty one.”

“Sire,” replied Gilbert, with profound respect, but with undaunted firmness, “neither Cromwell nor Mirabeau can be called a traitor.”

“Then what are they, I should like to know?”

“Cromwell was a rebellious subject, and Mirabeau is a discontented nobleman.”

“Discontented with what and whom?”

“With everybody and everything, — with his father, who had him incarcerated in the Château d’If and in the donjon at Vincennes; with the courts, which once condemned him to death; with the king, who has underrated his genius, and who still underrated it.”

“A successful political leader must be an honest man rather than a genius.”

“That is a sentiment worthy of Titus, Trajan, or Marcus Aurelius; but unfortunately experience proves just the contrary.”

“How so?”

“Was Augustus Cæsar, who shared supreme authority with Lepidus and Antony, and who exiled Lepidus and killed Antony, in order to have everything himself, an honest man? Was Charlemagne an honest man, who sent his brother Carloman to die in a cloister, and who, to get rid of his enemy Witikind, almost as tall a man as himself, gave orders that all Saxons who were taller than his sword should have their heads cut off? Was Louis XI., who revolted against his own father and attempted to dethrone him, and who, though unsuccessful, inspired poor Charles VII. with such a fear of being poisoned that he starved himself to death, — was he an honest man? Was Richelieu, who concocted plots in the alcoves of the Louvre and on the staircases of the Cardinal’s palace, which he subsequently denounced on the Place de Grève, an honest man? Was Mazarin an honest man when he signed a treaty with the Protector, and not only refused aid to Charles II., but drove him out of France? Was Colbert an honest man, who betrayed, denounced, and overthrew Fouquet, his benefactor, and who, after casting him into a dungeon, from which he never emerged alive, seated himself with marvellous impudence in Fouquet’s still warm chair? And yet neither of these men wronged king or kingdom.”

“But you must see, Doctor Gilbert, that Mirabeau cannot be *my* friend while he is so devoted to the Duke of Orleans.”

“But, now Orleans is in exile, Mirabeau belongs to no one.”

“But how can I place any confidence in a man who is for sale?”

“By purchasing him yourself at a good round price. Can’t you afford to pay more for him than anybody else?”

“A cormorant who would want a million!”

“When Mirabeau sells himself for a million, he gives himself away, sire. Do you consider him worth less than one of those Polignacs?”

“Monsieur Gilbert!”

“The king retracts his promise; I am dumb.”

“No, on the contrary; speak on.”

“I have spoken.”

“Then let us discuss the matter further.”

“Nothing would please me better. I know Mirabeau thoroughly.”

“You are a friend of his?”

“I have not that honour, unfortunately. Monsieur de Mirabeau has but one friend who is at the same time a friend to the queen.”

“Yes; the Comte de la Marek. I know that. We reproach him for it every day.”

“On the contrary, you should forbid him to quarrel with Mirabeau under penalty of death.”

“But what benefit would be derived from having a lordling like Riquetti de Mirabeau meddling with public affairs?”

“In the first place, sire, permit me to say that Mirabeau is a genuine nobleman, not a lordling. There are very few noblemen in France who can trace their lineage back to the eleventh century; for in order to have plenty of noblemen around them, our kings have been indulgent enough to insist only that their families shall date back to 1399. No, sire, he is no parvenu; he is a descendant of the Arrighettis of Florence, one of whom came to France in consequence of the defeat of the Ghibelline faction, and established himself in Provence. A man is not a plebeian because he had a Marseilles merchant among his ancestors, for you know that the aristocrats of Marseilles, like those of Genoa, did not consider that they lowered themselves by engaging in commerce.”

“But he is a spendthrift, a *roué*, a *debauché*.”

“We must take men as nature makes them, sire. The

Mirabeaus have always been dissipated and headstrong in their youth, but they improve with age. Unfortunately, they are what your Majesty says in their early days; but they become haughty and imperious and austere when they become heads of families. The monarch who despises them makes a great mistake, for they have furnished our army with many intrepid soldiers, and our navy with many daring mariners. I know their provincial hatred of centralisation, and their half-feudal, half-republican independence of spirit; I know, too, how often they have seemed to defy the authority of ministers, and even of kings; I know that they have locked up revenue officials who came to appraise their property; I know they regard courtiers and clerks and men of letters with equal contempt, and that they really respect only two things in the world,—the sword and the plough; I know very well that one of them said: ‘Toadyism is as natural to courtiers, with their dough faces and hearts, as puddles are to ducks.’ But all this does not affect their rank in the least.”

“Go on,” said the king, a little petulantly, for he fancied he knew all the prominent men in the kingdom as well or better than any one else did. “You say you know Mirabeau thoroughly, so go on. One likes to understand a man’s character well before enlisting him in one’s service.”

“Yes, sire,” replied Gilbert, urged on by the tinge of irony in the monarch’s voice, “I will tell your Majesty. It was a Mirabeau, a certain Bruno de Riquetti, who, — the day Monsieur de la Feuillades unveiled his statue of Victory, with the four nations, in chains in the public square named for it, — on crossing the Pont Neuf with his regiment, — a regiment of the Guards, sire, — made his men halt in front of the statue of Henry IV., and, doffing his hat, exclaimed: ‘Let us salute this statue, my friends; it is quite as deserving of homage as the other.’ It was a Mirabeau, François de Riquetti, who, on returning from Malta at the age of seventeen, found his mother, Anne de Pontèves, dressed in mourning. He asked her the reason,

as his father had been dead at least ten years. 'Because I have been insulted,' replied the mother. 'By whom, madame?' — 'By the Chevalier de Griasque.' — 'And you have not avenged yourself?' inquired François, who knew his mother well. 'One day I found him alone, and I placed a loaded pistol against his temple, and said to him, "If I were a lone woman, I would blow your brains out, as you see that I can; but I have a son who will avenge me more honourably."' — 'You were right, mother,' replied the young man; and, replacing his hat on his head, and buckling on his sword again, he started out in search of the chevalier, who was a famous fighter and bully. He found him, challenged him, locked himself up with him in a garden, threw the keys over the wall, and killed him. It was another Mirabeau, the Marquis Jean Antoine, a six-footer, as handsome as Antinous and as strong as Milo, — the one to whom his grandmother nevertheless said: 'You Mirabeaus are no longer men, but mere abbreviations of men,' — who, reared by this virago, became one of the most daring and audacious soldiers who ever led a charge. A captain of musketeers at the age of eighteen, his men, who soon became as fierce and indomitable as himself, were called 'those Mirabeaus, that crowd of red devils under Satan himself,' by the other soldiers when they passed."

"It was this same marquis, if I remember right," said the king, "who, after an engagement in which he had distinguished himself, remarked to Lieutenant-General Chamillard, when the general promised to mention him to Chamillard, the minister of war 'Your brother is very fortunate in having you, monsieur, as but for you he would be the biggest fool in the kingdom.'"

"Yes, sire; and when the next promotions were made, Chamillard took good care not to put the marquis's name on the list of field marshals."

"What became of this Condé of the Riquetti family?" asked the king, laughing.

"Intrusted with the task of defending a bridge at the

battle of Cassano, he made his men lie down, while he stood erect, a fine target for the enemy's fire. The bullets fell about him like hail, but he moved no more than a post. One of the bullets broke his right arm; he tied that up in a sling, and took his axe, his usual weapon, in his left hand. He had scarcely done this when a second shot struck him in the neck, severing the jugular vein. This time the trouble was more serious; nevertheless, our Colossus, in spite of his terrible wound, kept on his feet until the blood suffocated him. When he fell, the regiment became demoralised, and fled. An old sergeant, hoping he was not quite dead, threw a light covering over his commander's face as he passed, and the entire army of Prince Eugene, cavalry and infantry, passed over his body in their pursuit of the retreating regiment. When the battle was over, and they began to bury the dead, the magnificent uniform of the marquis attracted attention, and one of the prisoners recognised him. Seeing that life was not entirely extinct, the prince had him taken to the Duc de Vendôme's tent. The famous surgeon, Dumoulin, happened to be there at the time, and, being a man full of theories, he undertook to restore this dead man to life. The wound in the neck had nearly severed the head from the shoulders, leaving them united only by the spinal column and a few shreds of flesh; besides, his whole body, over which three thousand cavalry and six thousand infantry had passed, was covered with wounds and bruises. For three days it seemed doubtful if he would ever regain consciousness, but at the end of that time he opened his eyes. Two days afterwards he was able to move one arm, and in three months he reappeared in public, with his broken arm supported by a black scarf, twenty-seven wounds scattered over his body, and his head sustained by a broad silver collar. The first visit he paid was to Versailles, where the Duc de Vendôme presented him to the king, who asked him how it was that he had never been made a field-marshal, after giving such proofs of his

valour. 'If I had come to court, and bribed some worthless jade, instead of remaining to defend the bridge at Cassano, I should have received my promotion, and fewer wounds,' was his reply. Louis XIV. did not like to be answered in such a fashion, so he turned his back on the marquis. 'After this, I'll show you to the enemy, Jean Antoine, but never to the king,' Vendôme remarked, as he led him out. A few months afterwards the marquis, with his broken arm, twenty-seven wounds, and silver collar, married Mademoiselle Castellane-Norante, by whom he had seven children, in the midst of as many more campaigns. Occasionally, but only occasionally, he referred to the famous conflict at Cassano, and when he did so he usually called it 'that battle in which I was killed.'"

The king was evidently much amused.

"You have told me how the marquis was killed," he remarked, "but you have not told me how he died."

"He died in the Mirabeau stronghold, — a castle built on a precipitous rock barring the entrance to a double gorge, through which the north wind howls incessantly. He was so tyrannical, and brought up his children in such fear and awe of him, keeping them at such a distance, that his eldest son once said, 'I never had the honour of touching my honoured father's hand or lips.' This eldest son was the father of our Mirabeau, whom your Majesty misjudges, because you do not know him. But you will pardon me, I am sure, for saying, sire, that the traits which displease you most in his character are due chiefly to parental and royal tyranny."

"Royal tyranny?" repeated the king.

"Unquestionably, sire. Without the king's consent, the father would have been powerless. What terrible crime had this descendant of a noble race committed, that his father should send him to a reform school at the age of fourteen, where, to humiliate him, he was registered, not as Riquetti de Mirabeau, but as one Buffières? What had he done that his father was able to procure an order for

his secret arrest and subsequent imprisonment on the island of Ré, when he was but eighteen years of age? What had he done that his father should banish him to Manosque a year after his marriage? Why was he transferred to the fortress at Jonx, six months afterwards? Why, after his escape from Jonx, was he again arrested at Amsterdam, and incarcerated at Vincennes in a cell barely ten feet square, — this youth who could hardly find air enough in the whole broad universe, — where for five long years his restless spirit chafed against its bonds, and his intellect grew stronger and stronger as his heart became more and more bitter? I will tell you what he did. He won the heart of Poisson, his instructor, by the ease with which he overcame all obstacles; he had mastered the science of political economy at a glance. Having chosen a military career, he wished to continue it. Reduced to an income of six thousand francs, and burdened with a wife and child, he contracted debts to the amount of thirty thousand francs. He left his place of banishment to chastise an insolent nobleman who had grossly insulted his sister. Finally, — and this was his greatest crime, — captivated by the charms of a young and pretty woman, he carried her off from her morose, jealous, superannuated husband.”

“And then deserted her; so the unfortunate Madame Monnier was forced to commit suicide to escape from her troubles. How will you defend him from this charge?”

“By telling you the truth, sire, — the whole truth. Madame Monnier did not commit suicide because Mirabeau deserted her, for when he left Vincennes his first visit was to her. Disguised as a peddler, he secured an entrance into the convent where she was staying. He found her cold and constrained in manner; an explanation followed, and Mirabeau discovered that Madame Monnier not only loved him no longer, but that she loved some one else, — the Chevalier de Rancourt, — whom she was about to marry, as her husband’s death had set her free. Mirabeau

had left his prison too soon; he yielded his place to his more favoured rival, and Sophie was about to marry Rancourt, when he died very suddenly. The poor woman had staked her all on this last love. A month ago she shut herself up in her dressing-room and asphyxiated herself; whereupon Mirabeau's enemies declared that she had committed suicide on account of the heartless desertion of her first lover, when it was really on account of grief at the loss of her second."

"But what object could any of my friends have in thus traducing Mirabeau?"

"What object, sire? The desire mediocrity always feels to retain its place near the throne. Mirabeau is one of those men who could not enter the Temple without thrusting out the money-changers. Mirabeau's close proximity to you would be the death-knell of all petty intrigues; it would be genius pointing out the path to probity. What does it matter to you, sire, if Mirabeau did live unhappily with his wife? or if he did elope with Madame Monnier? or if he is a half million francs in debt? Pay the half million, sire; add another half million, a whole million, two millions, ten millions, to it, if necessary. Do not let Mirabeau escape you. Make him a cabinet minister. Hearken to what his powerful voice says to you, and repeat it to your people, to Europe, to the whole world!"

"But Monsieur Mirabeau turned draper in order to secure a popular nomination to the Assembly. He cannot betray his constituents by forsaking their party for the court party."

"You do not know Mirabeau, sire; he is a thorough aristocrat at heart. He secured his nomination in this way because the royalists scorned him. He cannot desert the people's party for the court party, you say? Why, are not these two parties one? Mirabeau could unite them. That is exactly what he would do. Take Mirabeau, sire, now you can get him. To-morrow, wounded by your indifference, he may turn against you, and then, — then all is lost!"

“Mirabeau may turn against me, you say. Has he not done so already, monsieur?”

“Apparently, yes; but at heart he is really on your side. Ask La Marck what Mirabeau said to him after that famous session of the twenty-first of June?”

“What did he say?”

“He wrung his hands and exclaimed: ‘It is in this way kings are brought to the scaffold!’ Three days afterwards he added, ‘These fellows do not see what an abyss they are digging under the very steps of the throne. The king and queen will perish in it, and the people will exult over their downfall.’”

The king turned pale, and cast a hasty glance at the portrait of Charles I. He seemed to be on the point of yielding, then said suddenly, —

“I will talk with the queen about it, and she may conclude to speak to Monsieur de Mirabeau. I shall not. I like to be able to shake the hand of the man with whom I talk, Monsieur Gilbert, and I would not press Mirabeau’s to save my throne, my liberty, or my life.”

Gilbert was about to reply, and perhaps to insist still further, when an usher entered and said, —

“Sire, the person your Majesty wished to see this morning is waiting in the ante-chamber.”

The king started slightly, and looked at Gilbert.

“If your Majesty would prefer that I should not see this person, I will pass out by another door,” remarked the doctor.

“No, monsieur, go this way,” replied the king. “You know that I regard you as a friend, and I have no secrets from you. The person to whom I am about to grant an audience is a man who was formerly connected with the household of my brother, who has recommended him to me. Go, now, Monsieur Gilbert, and remember that you will always be welcome, — even when you come to talk to me about Mirabeau.”

“So I am to consider myself completely worsted, sire?”

“I told you that I would confer with the queen — that I would consider the matter. We will decide later.”

“Later, sire! I pray to Heaven that it may not be too late, even now.”

“Do you consider the danger so imminent?”

“Do not have the portrait of Charles Stuart removed from your chamber, sire; it will prove your best counselor,” replied Gilbert; and, bowing low, he turned to leave the apartment, just as the person the king was expecting appeared upon the threshold ready to enter.

Gilbert could not repress an exclamation of surprise on recognising in the visitor the Marquis de Favras, the gentleman whom he had met at the house of Cagliostro a week or ten days before, and whose speedy death by violence had been predicted then and there by the great necromancer.

CHAPTER XIX.

FAVRAS.

As Gilbert withdrew, a prey to terror inspired not so much by the realities of life as by its vague and mysterious possibilities, the Marquis de Favras was ushered into the king's presence.

He advanced, bowing profoundly, but waited respectfully for his sovereign to address him.

Louis XVI. fixed upon him that searching look which seems to be a part of a king's education, but which is more or less superficial, or more or less profound, according to the intellect of the monarch who employs it.

Thomas Mahi, Marquis de Favras, was about forty-five years of age, tall of stature, distinguished in appearance and bearing, and with a frank, genial face.

The examination must have proved satisfactory, for a faint smile flitted over the king's lips.

"You are the Marquis de Favras?" he asked.

"Yes, sire."

"My brother has great confidence in you, I believe."

"I think so, sire; and it is my ardent ambition that your Majesty should share this confidence."

"My brother has known you a long time."

"And your Majesty does not know me—I understand; but if your Majesty will condescend to question me, in ten minutes he will know me as well as his august brother does."

"Speak on, marquis, I am listening," said the king, casting a side glance at the portrait of the English monarch, which seemed to be ever in his thoughts.

"Your Majesty wishes to know —"

“Who you are, and what you have done.”

“Who I am, sire? The mere mention of my name tells you that. I am Thomas Mahi, Marquis de Favras; I was born in Blois in 1745. I joined the musketeers at the age of fifteen, and went through the campaign of 1761 in that corps. I was afterward a captain in the regiment of Belzunce; then a lieutenant in the Swiss guard of the Comte de Provence.”

“And it was while serving in this capacity that my brother became acquainted with you.”

“I had had the honour of being presented to him the year before, so he knew me already.”

“And you left his service when?”

“In 1775, sire, to go to Vienna, where I first met my wife, Prince Anhalt Schauenberg’s only daughter.”

“Your wife has never been presented at court, I believe.”

“No, sire; but she and my eldest son are now enjoying the honour of an audience with the queen.”

“And after that?”

“During the insurrection in Holland I was in command of a company for three years. After assisting in the re-establishment of law and order in that country, it seemed only natural, noting the condition of affairs in France, that I should return to Paris to place my sword and life at the king’s disposal.”

“You have witnessed some very distressing sights.”

“I was an eye-witness of the scenes of the fifth and sixth of October.”

The king seemed anxious to change the subject.

“And you say that my brother, the Comte de Provence, has such confidence in you that he has intrusted you with the negotiation of a very important loan?”

Just then a third person, if there had been a third person present, might have noticed a slight movement of the curtains in a neighbouring alcove, as if some one was standing concealed behind them. Monsieur de Favras, too, started, like a man who was prepared to answer a certain question,

and finds himself suddenly confronted by another and entirely different one.

"Yes, sire, his Royal Highness has honoured me with this mark of his confidence," he stammered.

"And you have succeeded in negotiating this loan?"

"His Royal Highness having been deprived of a great part of his income by recent acts of the Assembly, and thinking that this is a time when princes should have a large sum of money at their disposal —"

"A large sum, you say?"

"Two millions."

"Of whom did you obtain it?"

Favras hesitated a little, then replied, —

"Of Baron Zannone, a foreign banker."

"An Italian?"

"A native of Genoa, sire, I believe."

"And he resides?"

"At Sèvres, sire, immediately opposite the spot where your Majesty's coach stopped on the way from Versailles on the sixth of October, when the party of cut-throats, headed by Marat, Verrière, and the Duc d'Aiguillon, made the queen's hairdresser curl and dress the heads of Vari-court and Deshutttes," answered Favras, as if hoping to urge the king on by this touch of the spur.

Louis XVI. turned pale; and if he had glanced towards the alcove, he would have seen the curtain move to and fro much more perceptibly than before.

It was evident that the conversation annoyed him, and that he was anxious to end it as soon as possible.

"I see that you are a faithful servant of royalty, and I promise you I will not forget it."

As he spoke he made that movement of the head which in princes signifies, "I have done you the honour to listen to you and answer you long enough. You are at liberty to go."

Favras understood it perfectly, but he said, —

"Pardon me, sire, but I thought your Majesty had another question to ask me."

“No,” replied the king, shaking his head, as if mentally asking himself what other question he could wish to propound. “That is all I wish to know.”

“You are mistaken, monsieur,” said a voice that made both the king and the marquis turn towards the alcove. “You were anxious to know how this gentleman’s ancestor managed to save King Stanislaus at Dantzic, and conduct him safely to the Prussian frontier.”

Both men uttered an exclamation of surprise; for this third person, who had so unexpectedly appeared upon the scene, was no other than the queen, and her interruption, and her allusion to the flight of King Stanislaus, were only made to enable the king to hear certain plans for the flight of the royal family, which Favras had come to suggest.

Favras instantly comprehended the method offered him for divulging his plans; and although none of his ancestors or kinsmen had assisted the unfortunate king of Poland in effecting his escape, he bowed, and promptly replied, —

“Your Majesty probably refers to my cousin, General Steinflicht. Your Majesty is doubtless aware that Dantzic was surrounded on all sides by the Muscovite army when the king decided upon immediate flight. Three plans were suggested by his friends, in spite of the great danger attending such an attempt. I say in spite of the danger, as it was very much more difficult for King Stanislaus to get out of Dantzic than it would be for you to leave Paris, for instance, if the whim should seize you; for with a post-chaise your Majesty could easily reach the frontier in a single day, — or if your Majesty wished to leave Paris in state, you would only be obliged to tell some nobleman, honoured with your confidence, to raise thirty thousand men and summon them to the Tuileries. In either case, success would be certain.”

“You know that what Monsieur de Favras says is perfectly true, sire,” remarked the queen.

“Yes; but my situation is by no means so desperate as that of King Stanislaus,” replied the king. “Dantzic was

surrounded by Russians, as the marquis just remarked. Fort Wechselmund, their last fortress, was about to surrender; while as for me —”

“As for you, you are surrounded by Parisians,” interrupted the queen, impatiently, — “Parisians who stormed the Bastille on the fourteenth of July, who tried to assassinate you on the night of the fifth of October, and who the very next day dragged you and your family to Paris, insulting us at every step. Is the situation so delightful that one can consider it much preferable to that of King Stanislaus?”

“But, madame —”

“King Stanislaus had no reason to fear imprisonment, and perhaps death, while you —”

A look from the king checked her.

“Of course you are master here, and it is for you to decide, however,” continued the queen, half reproachfully, half angrily.

“Monsieur de Favras,” she remarked, after a moment’s silence, “I have just had a conversation with your wife and your eldest son. I find them both full of courage and resolution. Whatever happens, they can count upon the queen of France. The queen of France will never desert them; she is the daughter of Maria Theresa, and knows how to appreciate and reward courage and devotion.”

“You remarked just now that there were three plans of escape proposed to King Stanislaus, did you not, monsieur?” asked the king.

“Yes, sire. The first was to disguise himself as a peasant. The Comtesse de Chapska, who spoke German as if it were her mother tongue, offered to disguise herself as a peasant woman, and pass the king off as her foreign husband. This is the plan I would suggest for the king of France, in case it should ever become necessary for him to flee in disguise and at night.”

“And the second?” asked Louis, petulantly, as if he resented any attempt to compare his situation with that of King Stanislaus.

“The second, sire, was to take a thousand men, and endeavour to force his way through the Museovite ranks. I called your Majesty’s attention, however, to the fact that the king of France would have, not one thousand, but thirty thousand men at his disposal.”

“You saw how much use these thirty thousand men would have been to me on the fourteenth of July, monsieur,” replied the king. “Pass on to the third plan.”

“The third plan, and the one which Stanislaus accepted, was to disguise himself as a peasant, and leave Dantzic, not in company with a woman, who might prove a hindrance on the journey, nor with a thousand men, who might one and all be slain without gaining an exit, but with two or three trustworthy men.”

“And this last plan was the one he adopted, you say?”

“Yes, sire; and if any king who finds himself, or even fancies he finds himself, in the situation of the king of Poland, would graciously deign to honour me with the same confidence your august ancestor accorded General Steinflicht, I would answer for his safety with my life, especially if the roads were free from obstructions, like the roads in France, and the king as good a horseman as your Majesty.”

“Certainly,” said the queen; “but on the night of the fifth and sixth of October the king took a solemn oath never to leave France without me, nor even to consider any plan of escape in which I was not included. The king’s word is pledged, and the king never breaks a promise.”

“This renders the journey more difficult, but by no means impossible, madame,” replied Favras; “and if I were allowed the honour of conducting such an expedition, I feel positive I could carry the king and queen and the entire royal family to Montmédy or Brussels, safe and sound.”

“You hear that, sire,” cried the queen. “I myself believe there is everything to hope and nothing to fear with a man like Monsieur de Favras.”

“That is my opinion also, madame,” replied the king; “but the time has not yet come.”

“Remember the fate of the monarch whose portrait is looking down upon us,—the portrait which I felt sure would give you better counsel. Wait until you are forced into a war—wait until you are a prisoner—wait until the scaffold is erected under your window, and then you who now say *Too soon!* will be forced to say *Too late!*”

“The king will find me ready, whatever may be the hour,” responded Favras, bowing. “I have only my life to offer to my king, and I do not even take the liberty of offering him that. I will merely say that he always has had, and always will have the right to dispose of my existence as he thinks best; for it belongs to him.”

“I thank you, monsieur,” said the king; “and in case of failure, I ratify the promise the queen has already made to you in regard to the marquise and your children.”

It was a positive dismissal this time, so the marquis was obliged to withdraw, in spite of his evident desire to urge the matter; for he saw no encouragement except in the eyes of the queen, who watched him until the door closed upon his retreating form.

“Ah, monsieur,” she exclaimed, addressing the king, and pointing to Vandyek’s canvas, “when I had that picture hung in your chamber, I thought it would speak to you more forcibly.”

Then, as if scorning to press the matter further, she walked towards the private door; but, pausing suddenly, she said, “Confess, sire, that the Marquis de Favras is not the first person to whom you have granted an audience this morning.”

“No, madame, you are right. I received Doctor Gilbert before I saw the marquis.”

The queen started. “Ah! I suspected as much. And Doctor Gilbert, it seems —”

“Thinks, with me, that we ought not to leave France.”

“As he is of that opinion, he probably gives some advice that may make it possible for us to remain here.”

“Yes, madame, he does; but, unfortunately, I at least do not find it practicable.”

“Indeed! What is it?”

“He wishes us to purchase Mirabeau for a year.”

“At what price?”

“Six million francs and one of your smiles.”

A thoughtful expression stole over the queen’s face.

“Possibly this might prove a means —”

“But a means of which you will hardly approve. Am I not right, madame?”

“I scarcely know what to say in reply. It is a matter that requires careful consideration. I will think about it. Yes, I will think about it,” she added, under her breath, as she left the room.

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH THE KING OCCUPIES HIMSELF WITH FAMILY, AS WELL AS STATE, MATTERS.

THE king remained silent and motionless for a moment, as if he feared the queen's retreat were only feigned; but after satisfying himself on this point by a glance up and down the corridor, he called one of his attendants.

"Do you know where the Comte de Charny's apartments are, François?" he asked.

"The comte has no apartments in the palace, your Majesty. He has only a mansard room in the pavilion."

"Why was an officer of his rank given a room like that?"

"Better accommodations were offered him, but he refused them, and said this room would answer every purpose."

"Go and find Monsieur de Charny, and tell him I wish to speak with him."

When the count entered the king's apartments, in answer to this summons, he found the monarch at breakfast, with his back turned upon Vandyck's famous picture.

"Ah, it is you, count," he said cordially, on perceiving Charny. "Won't you take breakfast with me?"

"I am compelled to decline the honour, sire, as I have breakfasted already."

"In that case, won't you wait awhile? I want to consult you about a very important matter, and I can't bear to talk business while I am eating. So suppose we discuss something else, — your affairs, for instance. When I asked François just now where you were lodged, he told me you had declined the offer of a suite of apartments, and would only accept of an attic room."

“That is quite true, sire.”

“And why, may I ask?”

“I thought, being quite alone, it was not necessary for me to deprive the governor of the palace of his rooms, as I should have done if I had accepted his offer.”

“But when the countess returns to the palace, what will she do? Such an apartment will not answer for her.”

“I do not think she will return to the palace, unless she is particularly requested to do so by your Majesties.”

“Where is she living? I seem to have been unwittingly conducting myself in a very tyrannical fashion by compelling you to live at the Tuileries, while the countess resides — where did you say?”

“On the Rue Coq-Héron.”

“Is that far from the Tuileries? I am ashamed to say I don't know much more about Paris than if I were a Russian just from Moscow.”

“The Rue Coq-Héron is quite near the palace, sire.”

“So much the better. I suppose that explains why you have only temporary quarters at the Tuileries.”

“On the contrary, I can be found in my present quarters at any hour of the day or night your Majesty does me the honour to send for me.”

“What does this mean, monsieur? Nonsense! you know I'm a good citizen, a model husband and family man above all else. What does it mean that, after barely three years of married life, the Comte de Charny has his permanent home at the Tuileries, and the countess her permanent home on the Rue Coq-Héron?”

“I can only say, in reply to your Majesty, that madame prefers to live alone.”

“But you go there every day, I suppose?”

“I have not had the honour of seeing the countess since your Majesty sent me to inquire about her.”

“Why, that was over a week ago!”

“Ten days ago, sire,” replied Charny, in a voice that faltered slightly.

“Fie, fie, count!” exclaimed the king, in the tone of good-humoured raillery suited to a family man, as he loved to style himself; “this must be all your fault.”

“My fault?” repeated Charny, blushing in spite of himself.

“You may think it is no business of mine, count, but it is. You certainly are not very grateful to this poor Mademoiselle de Taverney, who loves you so much.”

“Who loves me so much! Pardon me, sire; I know it is not considered permissible to contradict a king, but —”

“You may contradict me as much as you please. I know what I am talking about. I know that on that terrible night of the sixth of October the countess never took her eyes off you after you joined us; and once, when the Bull’s Eye was so nearly forced open, I saw the poor lady make a movement as if about to throw herself between the man she loved and the danger that threatened him.”

Charny’s heart throbbed wildly. He, too, had fancied he detected some such impulse in a movement made by the countess on that occasion; but the particulars of his last painful interview with Andrée were too distinct in his mind for him to derive much comfort from these assurances on the part of the king.

“I hope your Majesty’s surmises are correct,” he replied sadly. “Still, I think the king need not trouble himself about Madame de Charny’s great love for me, in case he should desire to send me on any dangerous or important mission. Absence or danger will be equally welcome, as far as I am concerned.”

“But a week ago, when the queen desired to send you on a mission to Turin, you seemed anxious to remain in Paris.”

“I thought my brother could fulfil that mission equally well, and that I had better reserve myself for a more difficult or dangerous one.”

“And very wisely, it seems, my dear count, as that time has now come. This is one reason why I spoke of your wife’s lonely and unprotected condition just now. I should like

to see her with some friend before I send her husband away."

"I will write to the countess, sire, and tell her your wishes."

"*Write* to her! Do you not expect to *see* the countess before your departure?"

"I never intruded upon the countess but once without permission, sire; and, after the manner in which she received me, it will be even more necessary for me to ask her permission in future, unless I go at your Majesty's express commands."

"Well, well, we will say no more about it, then," exclaimed the king, rising from the table. "Come into my study, count. I have something of great importance to say to you."

Though the king had been residing at the Tuileries for a fortnight, only two of his apartments were in complete order. These were his workshop and his office.

Later on, the reader will be introduced into the first-mentioned apartment; but now we had better follow Charny into the king's cabinet, where he takes his stand in front of the desk at which the king has just seated himself.

This desk was thickly covered with maps, geographical works, English newspapers, and sheets of paper, among which those bearing the chirography of Louis XVI. were easily distinguishable by the remarkable closeness of the written lines, which covered the sheet from top to bottom, leaving no margin, even on the sides; for the king was so parsimonious that he would not permit the smallest scrap of paper to be wasted.

As Charny had been living on such intimate terms with the royal couple for two or three years, he was too familiar with such details to take any special notice of those we have mentioned, while he waited for the king to resume the conversation, which he seemed for some reason or other rather loth to do.

As if to give himself a little more time, or perhaps cour-

age, he opened a drawer in his desk and took out several papers, which he laid upon a small table beside him.

"I noticed, Monsieur de Charny," he said at last, "that on the night of the fifth and sixth of October you placed your brother near the queen, and remained with me."

"I am the head of our family, sire, as you are the head of the state; so it was my right to perish near my sovereign, if need be," replied Charny.

"However that may be, the little incident made me feel that if at any time I should require a dangerous or difficult commission executed, I could safely trust in your loyalty as a Frenchman and your affection as a friend," the king said, in a voice full of emotion. "Though you are only thirty-six, you are thoughtful beyond your years, and you can scarcely have witnessed the events which have recently transpired without drawing some conclusion from them. What do you think of the situation, and what means of ameliorating it would you suggest?"

"Sire, I am only a plain rough soldier," replied Charny, with more hesitation than embarrassment, "and such grave matters are entirely beyond my comprehension."

"You are a man, monsieur," responded the king, with quiet dignity, "and another man, who looks upon you as a friend, merely asks you what you, with your honest heart and clear head, would do if you were in his place."

"In a situation quite as grave as this, the queen, too, once did me the honour, sire, to ask my advice, as the king is doing now. It was the day of the storming of the Bastille. Her Majesty wished to send eight or ten thousand foreign troops against the hundred thousand armed Parisians who were crowding the streets and boulevards. If the queen had not understood my feelings so well, if she had not been able to read the respect and devotion that filled my heart, my reply would probably have offended her. Alas, sire, have I not good cause to fear to-day that a truthful answer on my part will offend the king?"

“What did you say in reply to the queen?”

“I said that your Majesty must enter Paris as a father, unless you were strong enough to enter it as a conqueror.”

“Well, was not that the course I adopted?”

“It was indeed, sire.”

“Now it remains to be seen if I acted wisely; for— answer me truly — am I here as a king, or as a prisoner?”

“Will the king permit me to speak with perfect frankness?”

“Of course. When I ask your advice I also ask your honest opinion.”

“Sire, I disapproved of the banquet at Versailles. I begged the queen not to go to the theatre in your absence. Sire, when her majesty trampled the national cockade under foot and displayed the black cockade, — the Austrian symbol, — I was in despair.”

“Charny, do you suppose this was the real cause of the outbreaks on the fifth and sixth of October?”

“No, sire; but it furnished a pretext for them. Sire, you should not blame the people too much. They are not bad at heart; they love you; they are really royalists, but they are suffering terribly. They are cold, they are hungry. There are mischief-makers, above and below, and on all sides of them, urging them on. They are pushing and crowding and overturning things generally, but they have no idea of their power. Once let them loose, and an inundation or conflagration is sure to follow.”

“But suppose, count, I prefer not to be either drowned or burned, what am I to do?”

“Do not give the flood or the fire any excuse to spread itself. But pardon me; I forgot that even at the king’s command —”

“You are speaking at my earnest request, count. Go on, Monsieur de Charny; the king begs you will go on.”

“Well, sire, you have seen the Parisians, so long deprived of their sovereign’s presence, rejoicing like famished men over your return. You saw them at Versailles, cursing,

destroying, murdering, — or rather you thought you saw them, but they were not really the people; you have seen *them* here at the Tuileries, rending the air with shouts of delight on beholding you.”

“Yes, I have seen all this, and hence my doubts. I ask myself again and again which are really the people, those who murder and destroy, or those who caress and applaud.”

“These last, sire, these last! Trust them, and they will protect you from the others.”

“Count, you say almost the very same thing that Doctor Gilbert said to me this morning, scarcely two hours ago.”

“If you have the advice of a man as wise and sensible as the doctor, why do you condescend to ask it of me, a rough soldier?”

“I will tell you. It is because there is a wide difference between you two men. *You* are devoted to your monarch! Doctor Gilbert is devoted only to the monarchy.”

“I do not understand you, sire.”

“I mean that he would gladly abandon the king, if the kingdom — that is, the monarchical principle — were safe.”

“Then there is a wide difference between us; for you are both king and kingdom to me, and it is for this reason I implore you to make use of me if I can serve you in any way.”

“First of all, monsieur, I should like to know whom you would appeal to in this interval of calm, — this brief interval, I fear, between two storms. Who would be able to dispel all traces of the past storm, and avert the hurricane which seems about to burst upon us?”

“If I had the honour, and also the misfortune, to be the king, I should remember the shouts that rent the air during my trip from Versailles, and offer my right hand to Lafayette, and my left to Mirabeau.”

“How can you say this, when you hate the one and despise the other?” exclaimed the king.

“This is not a question of personal likes or dislikes,

sire; it is the safety of the king and the preservation of the monarchy that we have to consider."

"That is precisely what Doctor Gilbert said," muttered the king, as if talking to himself.

"I am glad indeed that my opinion coincides with that of so eminent a man as Doctor Gilbert," responded Charny.

"So you think, my dear count, that the union of these two men would restore peace to our land?"

"I do, sire."

"But if I should bring about this union, and consent to this compact, and yet fail in spite of all my efforts, and the efforts of these two men as well, what then? What is to be done if this ministerial combination should come to naught?"

"I think that when you have exhausted all the means Providence has placed at your disposal, and have fulfilled all the duties devolving upon you, the king would be fully justified in providing for his own safety and that of his family."

"And in such a contingency you would advise flight?"

"I should advise your Majesty to retire to some well-fortified town, like Metz, Nancy, or Strasbourg, with such regiments and gentlemen as you feel that you can trust."

The king's face brightened.

"And among all the generals who have given convincing proofs of devotion, tell me frankly, Charny,—you who know them all,—which one would you intrust with the dangerous duty of receiving and protecting his king?"

"Oh, sire, it is a terrible thing to attempt to advise the king in such a matter. I realise my own ignorance and lack of judgment too forcibly. I really implore your Majesty to excuse me."

"Well, I will relieve your mind on that score," replied the king. "My choice is already made. It has fallen upon a man to whom I propose to send you with a letter you are commissioned to deliver to him. Now tell me, Charny, if you were obliged to confide your sovereign to

the courage, loyalty, and ability of any one man of your acquaintance, what man would you select?"

After reflecting a moment, Charny replied, "I solemnly assure your Majesty that it is not on account of the ties of friendship, and I might almost say relationship, that bind me to him, but there is a man noted for his ardent devotion to the king, — a man who protected our possessions in the Antilles very effectually during the American war, who has since been intrusted with several important commands, and who is now, I believe, military governor of the city of Metz. This is the Marquis de Bouillé. As a father, I would confide my son to him; as a son, I would confide my father to him; as a subject, I would confide my king to him."

Undemonstrative as Louis XVI. was, he had listened to the count's words with evident anxiety, and his face lighted up as he began to perceive what person Charny had in mind. When the count at last mentioned the name, the king could hardly repress an exclamation of delight.

"Here, read the address on this letter!" he cried, "and see if I was not inspired to summon you by Providence itself."

Charny took the letter and read the following superscription: —

"To Monsieur François Claude Amour,
"Marquis de Bouillé,
"Commandant of the City of Metz."

Tears of joy and pride mounted to Charny's eyes.

"Sire," he exclaimed, "after such a coincidence I can say only one thing, — I am ready to die for your Majesty."

"And *I* do not feel that I ought to have any secrets from you after what has just passed between us; so I will say that if that time ever comes, it is to your care, and to yours alone, you understand, that I shall intrust my own person and that of the queen, as well as of our children. Listen now to a plan which has been proposed to me, but to which I have declined to accede.

"This, of course, is not the first time the idea has occurred to me, or has been suggested by those around me. On the night of the fifth and sixth of October I thought of arranging for the queen's flight. A carriage was to take her to Rambouillet. I was to meet her there on horseback, and from that town we could have easily reached the frontier; for the close surveillance to which we are now subjected had not yet been inaugurated. The project failed, because the queen would not consent to be separated from me. Shortly after that, Monsieur de Breteuil opened negotiations with me through Comte d'Innisdale, and about a week ago I received a letter from Soleure."

The king paused; but seeing the count stand silent and motionless, he said, "You make no reply, monsieur."

"I know that Breteuil is the tool of Austria, sire, and I am fearful of wounding the very natural preference the king may feel for his wife's brother, Joseph II., emperor of Austria."

The king seized Charny's hand, and, leaning forward, said, in a whisper, "You need have no fears of that, count, for I like Austria no better than you do. Count, when a man like you is about to risk his life for another, it is only fair that he should thoroughly understand the man to whom he gives this proof of devotion. I do not like Austria. I said so just now, and I repeat it. I did not love Maria Theresa, who kept us for seven years involved in a war which cost us two hundred thousand men, two hundred million francs, and seventeen hundred leagues of territory in America; who called Madame de Pompadour—a harlot—her dear cousin, and who had my sainted father poisoned by Choiseul; who used her daughters as diplomatic agents, and who ruled Naples through the Archduchess Caroline, as she tried to rule France through the Archduchess Marie Antoinette; and now, at this very moment, though Maria Theresa is dead, who influences and advises the queen? Her brother, Joseph II., is, happily, near his end. But who are her counsellors? You

know as well as I do that they are the Abbé Vermond, her former teacher, but in reality an Austrian spy; the Baron de Breteuil; and Mercy d'Argenteau, the Austrian ambassador. Behind these men, who are really only his puppets, stands Kaunitz, the septuagenarian minister of Austria. These men influence the queen of France through Mademoiselle Bertin, her milliner, and Leonard, her hairdresser, who are their paid agents; and into what are they endeavouring to lead her? Into an alliance with Austria, — Austria, who has always been the bane of France either as friend or as foe; Austria, who placed the knife in the hands of Jacques Clement, and the dagger in the hands of Ravailiac; Austria, imprudent Austria, who turns her own sword, Hungary, upon herself; short-sighted Austria, who allows the richest jewel in her crown, the Netherlands, to be stolen from her by Belgian priests; Austria, who turns her back upon Europe, and uses her best troops against the Turks, our allies, for the benefit of Russia! No, no, Monsieur de Charny; I hate Austria, and I do not, I cannot, trust her. These overtures are not the only ones I have received, however. Do you know the Marquis de Favras?"

"Yes, sire."

"What do you think of him?"

"He is a brave soldier and an honest gentleman; but misfortunes have made him restless, and rather too venturesome. Nevertheless, though he may be rather too much inclined, perhaps, to engage in hazardous experiments, he is a man of honour, who would die without a murmur if he had given his word, but hardly the person to select as the leader of such an enterprise."

"But he is not the leader," replied the king, rather bitterly. "It is my brother, Monsieur de Provence, who furnishes the money, — Monsieur de Provence who arranges everything. It is Monsieur de Provence who will remain here when I depart in company with Favras. What do you think of that? This is not an Austrian scheme, but a scheme devised by the princes and by the nobility."

“Excuse me, sire. As I said before, I do not doubt either the baron’s loyalty or courage. Whithersoever he promises to conduct your Majesty, he will do it, or perish in the attempt. But why does not Monsieur de Provence accompany your Majesty? Why does he remain here?”

“Possibly in order that the people may not be obliged to go too far to find a regent, in case they should think it advisable to depose their king,” answered Louis, bitterly.

“Sire, what you say is terrible.”

“I am only telling you what everybody knows, my dear count. In the last council held at Turin, the expediency of deposing me and appointing a regent was discussed, and in that same council my cousin, Monsieur de Condé, proposed to march upon Lyons. You see, therefore, that I cannot depend upon Favras, Breteuil, Austria, or the princes, in my extremity.”

“Is my journey to be kept a secret from every one, sire?” inquired the count.

“It matters very little, my dear count, whether or not people know you are going, so long as they are ignorant of the object of your journey.”

“And that is to be revealed to Bouillé only?”

“To Monsieur de Bouillé only, and then only when you are perfectly sure of his sentiments. The letter you are to deliver to him is merely a letter of introduction. You understand my situation, my hopes, and my fears, better than my wife does, — better, too, than Necker or Gilbert. Act accordingly. I place the thread and scissors in your hand; untie the thread, or cut it, as you think best.”

He handed Charny an open letter, which read as follows: —

“PALACE OF THE TUILERIES, October 29.

“MONSIEUR, — I hope you continue to be pleased with your position as governor of Metz. The Comte de Charny, who is about to pass through your city, will inquire whether you desire that I shall do anything more for you. If so, I shall avail myself of the opportunity to oblige you, as eagerly as I now avail myself of this opportunity to repeat the assurance of my profound esteem and regard.

“LOUIS.”

“Now go, Monsieur de Charny,” said the king. “You are at liberty to make such promises to Monsieur de Bouillé as you see fit, if you think there is any need of promises; only let them be such as you are sure of my ability to keep.”

And he offered his hand to the count a second time.

Charny kissed the hand with an emotion which rendered renewed protestations of devotion unnecessary, and withdrew, leaving the king convinced that he had gained a firmer hold upon the count's heart by this display of confidence than by all the favours and wealth he had bestowed upon Charny in the days of his prosperity.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN HONOUR BOUND.

WHEN the Comte de Charny hastened to his room to make his preparations for departure, he found Weber, the queen's confidential servant, waiting for him at the door to announce that her Majesty desired to see him without delay. There being no possible way to escape this interview, as the expressed wishes of crowned heads are equivalent to commands, Charny ordered his valet to have horses put to his carriage as soon as possible, and then followed Weber to the queen's apartments.

For several days Marie Antoinette had been in a deeply perturbed state of mind. She remembered the count's devotion at Versailles, and felt something akin to remorse at the harshness with which she had then treated him; for the sight of his dying brother, as he lay bleeding in the corridor leading to her chamber, was ever before her.

But could she attribute entirely to fraternal grief the indifference the count had manifested towards her ever since her return to Paris? Possibly this indifference was only feigned, however, and the count's refusal to accept the Turin mission was not due to his desire to remain near his wife, as she had feared. True, Andrée had scarcely left the Tuileries before the count followed her to the Rue Coq-Héron; but his absence had been extremely brief, and as every one knew that Charny had not left the palace since that time, the husband and wife could not have seen each other since that eventful evening.

The queen assured herself that she had been unjust in reproaching Charny because he had remained with the king

instead of with her on that terrible night of the fifth and sixth of June, as well as unkind in not sympathising more deeply with the count's grief at the loss of his brother.

It is ever thus with true love. We condemn our own faults and shortcomings with a rigour commensurate with the indulgence we show towards the object of our love; and the result is that after a separation of eight or ten days, the absent one, no matter how reprehensible his conduct, seems more dear and more indispensable to our happiness than ever,—always provided, of course, that another infatuation has not taken advantage of this absence to usurp the place of the first.

The queen was in this frame of mind when the door opened, and Charny appeared upon the threshold. As he had just left the king, he was in the irreproachable attire of an officer on duty; but there was also in his manner and bearing a profound deference and an intense coldness which made itself instantly felt.

He bowed low, and remained standing just inside the door. The queen glanced around as if to see what prevented him from approaching; then, perceiving that he kept aloof only of his own free will, she said,—

“Approach, Monsieur de Charny; we are alone.”

The count obeyed; then, in a low but perfectly firm voice, in which it was impossible to discern the slightest trace of emotion, he responded,—

“I am here at your Majesty's orders.”

“Count, did you not hear me say that we are alone?” replied the queen, in her most affectionate tones.

“Yes, madame; but I do not see that solitude should change the manner in which a subject should address his sovereign.”

“When I sent for you, count, I sent as one friend sends for another friend.”

A faint but rather bitter smile curved Charny's lips.

“Yes, count, I understand the meaning of that smile, and what you are saying to yourself. You are thinking

that I was unjust to you at Versailles, and that in Paris I have been most capricious."

"Injustice and capriciousness are permissible in any woman, you know, madame, and, of course, doubly so in a queen."

"However that may be, count, you know full well that the queen cannot do without you as an adviser, and the woman cannot do without you as a friend."

As she spoke, she extended her beautiful white hand, still worthy to serve as a model for a sculptor, though now a trifle thin.

"Yes, I have been unjust, even cruel," she continued. "You lost a beloved brother in my defence, count; he died for me, and I ought to have wept his loss with you. But in that terrible hour, terror, love, jealousy — I am but a woman, Charny — checked my tears; but during the ten days that I have scarcely seen you, I have more than atoned for my apparent lack of feeling."

Too little time had elapsed since Charny kissed the king's hand to permit the kiss he now imprinted upon that of the queen to be other than a mere mark of respect.

"Believe me, I am not ungrateful for this kind remembrance of me, madame," he replied, "and for this grief on account of my brother; but unfortunately I have scarcely time to express my gratitude in a proper manner."

"How is that? What do you mean?" asked the queen, in astonishment.

"I mean that I am to leave Paris within an hour, madame."

"Leave Paris?"

"Yes, madame."

"My God! you, too, desert us like all the rest!" cried the queen.

"Alas! your Majesty has just proved by those cruel words that I must, indeed, have been unwittingly guilty of some dire offence."

"Forgive me, my friend, forgive me! But when you told me you were going away — Why are you going?"

"I am going to fulfil a mission which the king has done me the honour to intrust to me."

"And you will be absent some time?"

"I do not know."

"But you refused a similar mission about a week ago, I remember."

"Yes, madame."

"Then why do you accept this one, now?"

"Because many changes may occur in a man's life in that time, and consequently in his plans."

"And you are going — alone?" she asked presently.

"Yes, madame."

The queen seemed to breathe again; then, as if overcome by the effort she had just made, she closed her eyes, and passed her fine cambric handkerchief over her forehead.

"And where are you going?" she asked presently.

"I know that the king has no secrets from your Majesty, and that if the queen will ask him my place of destination, and the object of my mission, he will doubtless inform her," Charny answered respectfully.

Marie Antoinette gazed at the speaker in evident astonishment.

"But why should I apply to him when I can ask you?"

"Because it is the king's secret, not mine."

"It seems to me if the secret is the king's, it is also the queen's," responded Marie Antoinette, haughtily.

"Unquestionably, madame," replied Charny, bowing.

"That is the reason I ventured to assure your Majesty that the king would not hesitate to tell you."

"Does this mission take you to some city in France, or to a foreign land?"

"The king alone has the right to give her Majesty the information she desires."

"If you go away, you are sure to encounter many perils, and yet I shall not know where you are, or what dangers you are incurring," she murmured sadly.

"Wherever I may be, your Majesty will have in me, I swear, a faithful and devoted subject; and any dangers to which I may be exposed will be sweet to me, since they are incurred in the service of the two persons I revere most in this world."

And, bowing again, the count evidently awaited the queen's permission to retire.

Marie Antoinette heaved a sigh that was very like a sob, and pressed her hand upon her throat as if to choke back the tears.

"Very well, monsieur, go!" she said.

Charny bowed again, and walked to the door with a firm step. His hand was upon the knob, when the queen suddenly extended her arms towards him, and called his name.

He trembled and turned. His face was as pale as death.

"Come here," she faltered.

He approached, but with an uncertain tread.

"Come here — nearer still," added the queen. "Look me in the face. You have ceased to love me. Am I not right? You cannot deny it."

Charny felt an icy chill run through his veins; he thought for a moment that he was about to faint. It was the first time this haughty woman, this proud sovereign, had ever humbled herself before him.

At any other time, and under any other circumstances, he would have thrown himself at her feet and implored her forgiveness; but sustained now by the recollection of what had just passed between the king and himself, he summoned up all his strength.

"Madame," he said gently but firmly, "after the kindness and confidence with which the king has just overwhelmed me, I should indeed be a wretch if I showed your Majesty anything but the most profound devotion and respect."

"You are right, count; you are free. Go!"

For one instant Charny felt an almost irresistible desire to throw himself at the queen's feet; but the invincible loyalty that was a part of his nature smothered, even if it

did not entirely quench, the dying embers of his once ardent passion, and he hurried from the room.

The queen followed him with her eyes, hoping he would turn and come back to her; but she saw the door open and then close behind him, and heard the sound of his retreating footsteps become fainter and fainter in the corridor outside. For full five minutes she continued to watch and listen after the sound of his footsteps had entirely died away.

Soon afterward her attention was attracted by a sound in the courtyard, — the sound of wheels.

She rushed to the window, and saw the count's travelling carriage cross the courtyard and enter the Rue du Carrousel.

She summoned Weber. He entered.

"If I wanted to go to the Rue Coq-Héron, what street should I have to take?" she asked.

"First the Rue du Carrousel, then follow the Rue Saint-Honoré as far as —"

"Enough; that will do! He has gone to bid *her* farewell," she added, under her breath.

Pressing her forehead against the cool glass, she continued, hissing out each word between her clenched teeth, "I had better know what is in store for me."

Then she added aloud, —

"Go to the Rue Coq-Héron, Weber, and tell Madame de Charny that I wish to see her this evening."

"Pardon me, madame, but I believe your Majesty has an appointment with Doctor Gilbert already."

"That is true," said the queen, hesitating.

"What does your Majesty decide?"

"Countermand the order for Doctor Gilbert's attendance, and give him an appointment for to-morrow morning instead."

"Politics can wait until to-morrow," she said to herself. "Besides, the conversation I shall have with the countess will not affect my decision in any way."

And with a wave of the hand she dismissed Weber.

CHAPTER XXII.

A GLOOMY OUTLOOK.

THE queen was mistaken. Charny did not go to bid the countess farewell. On the contrary, he went straight to the royal post station to get post-horses for his carriage.

While they were being harnessed, he entered the superintendent's office and wrote a brief note to the countess. This he intrusted to the servant who was to take his own horses back to their stable.

The countess was reading this letter when Weber was ushered into the room with his message from the queen, to which Andrée quietly replied that she was entirely at her Majesty's service.

It was not until several minutes after Weber's departure that Andrée drew the count's letter from her bosom, where she had hastily concealed it on the royal messenger's entrance. When she had finished reading it, she kissed it tenderly, and murmured, with a sorrowful smile: "God keep you, dear soul of my soul; I know not where you are, but God knows, and I will implore His blessing upon you in my prayers."

Then she quietly awaited the hour appointed for her visit to the Tuileries, though she could not imagine why the queen had sent for her.

The queen's manner was characterised by no such tranquillity, however; for she wandered restlessly about, unable to subdue her impatience. Monsieur helped her to pass an hour or two, having come to the Tuileries to find out how Favras had been received by the king. Ignorant of the object of the Comte de Charny's journey, the queen,

anxious to keep this way of escape open, made many more promises in behalf of the king than he would have made himself, and told Monsieur to persevere, and said that when the right time came, there would be no difficulty so far as her husband was concerned.

Monsieur, on his side, was full of confidence. The loan he had effected with the Genoese banker had placed two million francs at his disposal, of which he had only been able to persuade Baron de Favras to accept two hundred crowns for his services as intermediary. Monsieur was to remain ignorant of all the details of the plan; in fact, there was to be nothing to indicate that he had anything whatever to do with it. Indeed, Monsieur had always protested strongly against the flight of his brothers and cousins, as he found this to be a means of increasing his popularity; so it was more than likely that Monsieur would be appointed regent, as Louis XVI. had said, in case the latter left the country.

After Monsieur's departure, the queen spent an hour with the Princesse de Lamballe. This unfortunate lady, who was passionately devoted to the queen, had never been anything more than a convenience for Marie Antoinette, who had abandoned the princess to transfer her favour to Andrée and the Polignacs in quick succession; but the queen knew her, and was well aware that she had to take but a single step towards reconciliation, to have this devoted friend come all the rest of the way with open arms.

Dinner occupied another hour. They dined *en famille* that day, with Madame Elizabeth, Madame de Lamballe, and the children.

The king and queen were both silent and preoccupied. Each had a secret from the other, — the queen about the Favras affair; the king about the Bouillé affair.

Unlike the king, who would have preferred to owe his safety to anything, even to the revolution, rather than to strangers, the queen infinitely preferred foreigners; though the people the French called foreigners were, it

must be remembered, the queen's own people. How could she prefer the ruffians who had killed her faithful guards, the women who had insulted her at Versailles, the wretches who had tried to murder her in her apartments, the crowd that called her *the Austrian woman*, to the kings of whom she was asking succour, to her brother, Joseph II., to her brother-in-law, Ferdinand I., and her cousin, Charles IV.!

We have seen the king lay bare his heart, and know how deeply he distrusted his brother monarchs and princes. Nor was he influenced to any great extent by the queen, as many have supposed. No, the king was influenced chiefly by the priests. He belonged to them.

He ratified all the decrees against kings, princes, and *émigrés*, but vetoed every decree against the priests. For their sake he risked the twentieth of June, endured the tenth of August, and submitted to the twenty-first of January; so the pope, who could not make him a saint, made him at least a martyr.

Contrary to her usual custom, the queen did not remain very long with her children after dinner, but retired to her apartments at an early hour, excusing herself on the plea that she had some writing to do.

The king scarcely noticed her departure, so deeply was he engrossed in pondering over certain events which the chief of police had reported to him, and which seemed to seriously threaten the peace of Paris.

These events may be briefly narrated as follows:—

The Assembly, having declared itself inseparable from the king, had accompanied the king to Paris, where the first thing it did was to change the title, King of France and Navarre, to King of the French.

It had also forbidden the use of the formula, "We by our sovereign knowledge and authority," and prescribed as a substitute for it, "Louis, king by the grace of God and by the constitutional law of the state," which goes to prove that the National Assembly, like many other legislative bodies before and since, gave its attention to the merest

trifles, when it should have been occupied with serious things.

For example, it should have directed its attention to the task of feeding Paris, which was literally perishing with hunger.

The return of the baker, the baker's wife, and the baker's boy, and their installation at Versailles, had not produced the hoped-for effect.

Bread and flour were still scarce. Every day there were crowds at the doors of the bakeries, and these crowds caused serious disturbances. But how were these disturbances to be prevented, while the privilege of public meetings was guaranteed by the Declaration of Equal Rights?

But the Assembly seemed to be ignorant of all this. Its members were not obliged to stand in line at bakery doors; and if any member chanced to become hungry during the session, he was sure of finding some nice fresh rolls not a hundred yards away, at the shop of a baker named François, who lived on the Rue du Marché-Palu, and who, as he baked seven or eight times a day, always kept a little in reserve for the gentlemen of the Assembly.

The chief of police was making his report relative to these disorders, which might develop into a serious riot any fine morning, when Weber opened the door of the queen's cabinet and announced,—

“Madame la Comtesse de Charny.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

SWEETHEART AND WIFE.

THOUGH the queen had sent for Andrée, and had consequently been expecting to hear her announced, the words uttered by Weber made her tremble from head to foot; but at last, extending a hand to her former friend, she said, in a voice that faltered with emotion,—

“You are welcome now, as always, Andrée.”

Self-possessed and resolute as Madame de Charny had been when she presented herself at the Tuileries, this greeting made her tremble in her turn, so strongly did the tone remind her of that which the dauphiness had been wont to use in former years.

“Need I say that if your Majesty had always spoken to me like this, it would never have been necessary to send outside the palace walls when your Majesty desired to talk with me?” responded Andrée, with her usual candour and frankness.

“Alas, Andrée, all women, even those of the loftiest station, do not possess your wonderful serenity,—I, especially, as you well know, since I have so often been obliged to implore your aid.”

“The queen alludes to a time which I have forgotten, and which I thought she, too, no longer remembered.”

“Your retort is severe, Andrée, and perhaps I deserve it. It is true, alas! that while I was happy, I did not reward your devotion; because it is impossible for any human being, however exalted her station may be, to repay a debt like that which I owe to you. You may have thought me ungrateful, but perhaps what you mistook for ingratitude was only inability to requite my obligation.”

“I might have a right to complain, madame, if I had ever desired or asked anything of the queen, and she had refused my request; but why should your Majesty think me inclined to complain, when I have neither asked nor desired anything at your hands?”

“Shall I admit to you, *Andrée*, that it is this marvellous indifference to all sublunary things that makes us all stand in such awe of you? You seem to me superhuman, — an inhabitant of another sphere, who overwhelms us with a sense of our inferiority. At first one is terrified at one’s own weakness when brought face to face with one who never falters, and who seems to be not only superior to all temptation, but to be endowed with a serenity nothing can disturb; but afterwards one finds comfort in the thought that charity and perfection go hand in hand: so in my hour of deepest sorrow it is only natural that I should turn to you for consolation, though I fear your censure.”

“Alas! madame, if this is what you desire of me, I fear your hopes will not be realized.”

“*Andrée*, *Andrée*! you forget under what terrible circumstances you once sustained and consoled me.”

Andrée turned pale, and the queen, seeing her totter and close her eyes as if her strength had suddenly deserted her, attempted to take her hand and draw her down upon the sofa beside her; but *Andrée* resisted the queen’s movement, and remained standing.

“Madame,” she said, “if your Majesty had any compassion on your faithful servant, you would spare her these reminiscences, which she hoped were wellnigh forgotten. Besides, one who, like myself, asks consolation of no one, not even of God, because she feels that even He is powerless to assuage some sorrows, would surely prove a poor consoler to others.”

The queen fixed her eyes searchingly on *Andrée*. “Then you have other sorrows besides those which you have confided to me?” she asked.

Andrée made no reply.

"Listen," continued the queen. "The time has come when there must be a full understanding between us, and I summoned you here for that purpose. Do you love Monsieur de Charny?"

"Yes."

The queen uttered a cry of pain like a wounded lioness.

"I suspected it! I suspected it!" she groaned. "How long have you loved him?"

"Ever since the first hour I met him."

The queen recoiled almost in terror before this marble statue who at last admitted that she possessed a heart.

"And you have kept this love a secret from him?"

"As you have good reason to know, madame."

"But why were you silent?"

"Because I saw that *you* loved him."

"Do you mean to imply that you love him more than I love him, because I have been blind to all this?"

"You were blind to all this because he loved you, madame," said Andrée, bitterly.

"Yes; and I see now, because he loves me no longer. That is what you mean, is it not?"

Andrée remained silent.

"Answer me!" cried the queen, seizing her, not by the hand now, but the arm. "Confess that he loves me no longer."

Andrée replied neither by word nor gesture.

"Truly this is death itself!" exclaimed the queen; "but kill me outright by telling me that he loves me no longer. He loves me no longer, is it not so?"

"The Comte de Charny's love or indifference are his own to divulge or conceal, as he thinks best. It is not for me to reveal them."

"But his secrets are no longer his alone, I presume, as I doubt not he has made you his confidante."

"The Comte de Charny has never said one word to me about either his love for you or his indifference to you."

"Not even this morning?"

"I did not see him this morning."

"Do you mean to tell me that you are ignorant of the count's departure?"

"I did not say that."

"But how did you hear of his departure, if you did not see him?"

"He wrote to tell me of it."

"Ah! he wrote to you!" cried the queen.

And as Richard III. in a supreme moment exclaimed, "My kingdom for a horse!" Marie Antoinette was tempted to exclaim, "My kingdom for that letter!"

Andrée understood this ardent desire on the queen's part, but she could not deny herself the satisfaction of keeping her rival in suspense for a while.

"And this letter the count wrote you on the eve of his departure; you do not happen to have it about you, I suppose?" ventured the queen.

"You are mistaken, madame; here it is."

And drawing the letter from her bosom, Andrée handed it to the queen.

The latter shuddered as she took it. For a moment she looked at Andrée with knitted brows, holding the letter between her fingers the while, as if in doubt whether to keep or return it; but at last, casting aside all scruples, and exclaiming, —

"Oh! the temptation is too great!" she opened the letter, and, leaning towards the light, read as follows:—

"MADAME, — I leave Paris in an hour, in obedience to an official order from the king. I am not at liberty to tell where or why I am going, or how long I shall remain away, — all matters of very little moment to you, probably, but which I should be very glad to tell you, if I had been allowed to do so.

"I thought for an instant of calling on you to announce my departure in person, but dared not do so without your permission."

The queen had learned what she most desired to know, and seemed inclined to return the letter to Andrée; but

the latter, as if it were now her turn to command, and not to obey, said, —

“Read on to the end, madame;” and so the queen read on: —

“I declined the former mission offered to me because I then believed, or rather hoped, poor fool that I was, that some mutual sympathy would detain me in Paris; but since that time, alas! I have had proofs to the contrary, so I accept with joy an opportunity to separate myself from hearts that are indifferent to me.

“If I should meet with George’s fate during my journey, I have made such arrangements as will insure your being the first to hear of the misfortune which has befallen me, and your consequent freedom. Then, and not till then, will you know, madame, the profound admiration your sublime devotion has aroused in my heart, — devotion which has been so poorly rewarded by one for whom you — young, beautiful, and certainly created to be happy — have sacrificed youth, beauty, and happiness.

“Madame, all I ask of God and of you is that you will give an occasional thought to the unhappy man who discovered too late the value of the treasure he possessed.

“With heartfelt respect,

“OLIVIER DE CHARNY.”

The queen tendered the letter to Andrée, who accepted it this time.

“Well, madame, have you been betrayed?” she exclaimed. “Have I failed, I will not say in the pledge I made to you, for I made you no pledge, but in the trust you reposed in me?”

“Forgive me, Andréé, forgive me! I have suffered so much!”

“You have suffered! You dare to say in my presence that you have suffered! What, then, shall I say of myself? — not that I have suffered — I will not employ a word which other women have used to convey the same idea. No, I need a new word to express my misery and describe the tortures I have undergone. You have suffered, you say, madame! Yet have you ever seen the man you

loved indifferent to your love, and kneeling heart in hand to another woman? Have you ever seen your brother, jealous of that other woman, whom he adored in silence as a heathen adores his god, quarrel with the man you loved? Have you ever heard the man you loved, smitten down by your brother with a wound that seemed likely to prove mortal, call in his delirium upon that other woman whose confidante you were? Have you ever seen that other woman glide like a ghost through the corridor which you yourself were haunting, in order to catch those incoherent words which proved that if a mad passion does not outlast this life, it at least accompanies its victim to the very brink of the grave? Have you ever seen this man restored to life by a miracle of nature and science, only to cast himself again at the feet of your rival? — your rival, yes, madame; for great love levels all social distinctions. Did you ever, in your despair, retire to a convent at the age of twenty-five, hoping to extinguish at the foot of the cross the passion that was consuming you? then, one day, after a year of fasting, and anguish, and prayer, have your fortunate rival, who suspected nothing of all this, summon you from your retreat, and for the sake of the old friendship, which all this suffering had not impaired, for the sake of her honour as a wife, and for the sake of compromised royalty, ask you to become the wife — of whom? — of the very man you had secretly worshipped for years; become a screen between the keen eyes of the world and the happiness of another, — as a shroud conceals the corpse from the public gaze? Have you ever heard the priest ask you to take for your husband a man who left your side an hour after the ceremony, never to return, except as the lover of your rival? Ah, madame, these last three years have been years of agony indeed!”

The queen stretched out a trembling hand to take *Andrée's*, but *Andrée* drew hers away.

“As for me, I promised nothing, and yet you see what I have done,” continued the younger woman, becoming

the accuser; "as for you, madame, you promised me two things."

"Andrée, Andrée!"

"You promised never to see Monsieur de Charny again, — a promise which should have been all the more sacred, as I did not exact it of you."

"Andrée!"

"Then, too, you promised, and this time in writing, to treat me as a sister, — another pledge that should have been all the more sacredly kept, from the fact that it was unsolicited."

"Andrée!"

"Must I remind you of the terms of that promise, made at the moment I was about to sacrifice what was far more precious to me than life, — my happiness in this world, and perhaps my salvation in the world to come? for we do not sin in deed alone, madame; and who can promise me that God will pardon my mad desires and impious vows? In that hour of sacrifice you gave me a letter. I can see every word of that letter yet, written as if in flame, before my eyes. Let me recall it to you: —

"Andrée, you have saved me. I owe my honour to you. My life is yours. In the name of that honour which has cost you so dear, I swear that you may call me sister. Do so; you will not see me blush.

"I place this letter in your hands as a pledge of my gratitude, — it is my wedding gift.

"Yours is the noblest of hearts, and it will appreciate the value of that which I freely offer.

"MARIE ANTOINETTE."

The queen heaved a heavy sigh.

"I understand," resumed Andrée. "Because I burned this note, you thought I had forgotten its contents. No, madame, no; I remember every word of it, from beginning to end, though *you* appear to have forgotten every word of it."

“Forgive me, Andrée, forgive me. I thought he loved you.”

“You believed that, because, as he seemed to love you less, madame, you thought he must love another.”

Andrée had suffered so much that she, in turn, was becoming cruel.

“Then you, too, have perceived that he loved me less?”

Andrée made no reply; but as she gazed at the despairing queen, something not unlike a smile of scorn curled her lip.

“What shall I do? My God! what shall I do to regain his love? My life is bound up in it! Oh, Andrée, my friend, my sister, tell me, I implore you!”

“How do I know, madame? — I, who have never been honoured with his love?”

“But you may be some day. Some day he may throw himself at your feet, make full amends for the past, and implore your forgiveness for all he has made you suffer; and suffering is so soon forgotten in the arms of one we love, forgiveness is so gladly granted to those who have made us suffer!”

“In case that misfortune should occur, — for, madame, it would undoubtedly be a misfortune for both of us, — you surely do not forget that, if that day ever comes, I have a secret to reveal to him, — a fatal secret, — which cannot fail to instantly destroy the love you seem to dread so much.”

“Do you mean that you would tell him of the frightful wrong Gilbert did you, — that you would tell him you have a child?”

“For what do you take me that you should express such a doubt?”

The queen seemed to breathe again.

“Then you will do nothing to win Monsieur de Charny’s love?”

“Nothing more in the future than I have in the past.”

“You will not tell him, you will not even allow him to suspect, that you love him?”

“Not unless he comes and tells me that he loves me; no, madame.”

“But if he should swear to me —”

“Madame!” exclaimed *Andrée*, indignantly.

“You are right, *Andrée*, my sister, my friend. I am unjust and unreasonable, — yes, and even cruel; but when everything is failing me, — friends, power, and reputation, — I would at least keep the love for which I have sacrificed so much.”

“Then you have some new commands to transmit to me, madame, I suppose,” said *Andrée*, with that icy composure that had not deserted her for an instant, even while she was describing the tortures she had endured.

“No, I wished to offer you my friendship, and you refuse it. Farewell, *Andrée*; take at least the assurance of my gratitude away with you.”

André made a gesture which seemed to reject even that, and, with a low but chilling bow, left the room as slowly and silently as a spectre.

“You are right, creature of ice, heart of adamant, to accept neither my gratitude nor my friendship,” muttered the queen; “for I know — forgive me for it, O Christ! — that I hate you as I never hated mortal before! If *Charny* does not love you already, he will some day, I am sure of it!”

Then, summoning *Weber*, she said, —

“Tell my ladies I shall retire without their assistance to-night; and as I am greatly fatigued, and in fact almost ill, I do not wish to be disturbed until ten in the morning. The first, and indeed the only, person I shall receive to-morrow will be *Doctor Gilbert*.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

FRANÇOIS THE BAKER.

ABOUT eight o'clock the next morning—that is, about dawn, for it was the gloomy season of the year, when the days are short and dark—the queen left her bed, where she had courted sleep in vain all the early part of the night, though she had fallen into a feverish and troubled slumber towards morning.

Although no one had dared to enter her chamber, on account of the orders she had given, she heard those hurried movements and excited exclamations outside which indicate that something unusual is going on.

Just as the queen finished her toilet the clock struck nine, and amid the confused sounds in the corridor she distinguished Weber's voice enjoining silence.

She called him, and in an instant the hubbub outside ceased, and her faithful attendant entered.

“What is going on in the palace, Weber?” she asked. “What is the meaning of all this commotion?”

“There is a disturbance in the old part of the town, they say, madame.”

“What is it about?”

“Nobody seems to know exactly, madame. They say there is a bread riot, I believe.”

The idea that people could die of hunger would never have entered the queen's mind a short while before; but since the journey from Versailles, when she heard the dauphin ask in vain for bread, she understood better what hunger was.

“Poor creatures!” she murmured, remembering the shouts she had heard on her journey, and Gilbert's ex-

planation of them. "They can see now that it is not the fault of the baker, or the baker's wife, that they have no bread."

Then she asked aloud, —

"Is there any likelihood that this trouble will prove serious?"

"I do not know, madame; the reports are so contradictory."

"Then run to the Cité, Weber, — it is not far from here, — and see for yourself. Then come back and tell me."

"And Doctor Gilbert?"

"Tell Campan or Misery that I am expecting him. One of them can show him in."

Weber left the palace, and, guided by the clamour, darted across the bridge nearest the Louvre, and, mingling with the crowd that was hastening towards the archbishop's palace, where the Assembly was in session, soon reached the open space in front of the cathedral of Notre Dame.

In proportion as he approached this part of the town the crowd became more and more dense, and the uproar grew louder and louder.

High above the tumult resounded such voices as are heard in the sky only in times of tempest, or on earth in times of revolution, and these wild, shrill, discordant voices were shrieking, —

"He's a famine-breeder! Death to the famine-breeder! To the lamp-post with him!"

And Weber saw coming up the Rue Chanoinesse a huge wave of human beings, a living torrent, in the midst of which a poor terrified creature, with a pallid face and torn garments, was wildly struggling.

It was he that this infuriated mob was pursuing; it was against him that these savage yells and threats were directed.

There was but one man who made any attempt to rescue the poor wretch from the mob, but one man who tried to stem this human torrent; and this one man who seemed to

feel a spark of pity was Gilbert. A few persons in the crowd at last recognised him, and began to shout: "It is Doctor Gilbert, a patriot, the friend of Lafayette and Bailly! Listen to the doctor!"

After these outcries there was a brief lull in the storm, and Weber took advantage of it to force his way through the crowd towards the doctor.

"Monsieur Gilbert!" he called out.

The doctor turned in the direction from which the sound proceeded.

"Ah! is it you?" he exclaimed.

Then, beckoning Weber nearer, he said in low tones, "Go and tell the queen I shall probably be late in keeping my appointment, for I am going to try to save this man."

"Oh, yes, yes!" exclaimed the unfortunate man, overhearing these last words, "you will save me, won't you, doctor? Tell them I am innocent; tell them my young wife will soon be a mother! I have n't been concealing bread, I swear I have not, doctor."

But the poor fellow's pleadings only seemed to increase the wrath and animosity of the crowd. The shouts and savage yells began again, and the frantic mob evinced a strong inclination to carry its threats into immediate execution.

"My friends," cried Gilbert, throwing himself between the poor man and his angry pursuers, "this man is a Frenchman and an honest citizen like yourselves. Besides, you surely would not hang a man without granting him a hearing! Take him to the nearest judge, and then we will see."

"Yes, yes, the doctor is right!" shouted several men who knew him.

"Doctor Gilbert, don't give in!" exclaimed Weber. "I'll run to the nearest station-house and notify the police; it is only a few steps from here," and he hurried off, without even waiting for a word of approval.

Meanwhile four or five persons had come to the doctor's aid, and formed a sort of barricade around the unfortunate

man with their bodies. This rampart, weak as it was, kept the assailants back for a while, though their savage yells and imprecations drowned the voices of Gilbert and the kind-hearted persons who had gathered around him. In less than five minutes there was a movement in the crowd, followed by whispers of, "The officers are coming! Here are the officers!"

The tumult ceased, and the crowd divided to let the officers pass. The man was taken to the Hôtel de Ville. He clung to the doctor's arm; he would not let go his hold on it even for a second.

He was a poor baker named Denis François, — the man we have spoken of before, the baker who furnished the gentlemen of the Assembly with crisp white rolls.

That morning an old woman had entered his shop on the Rue du Marché-Palu, just as he had sold out his sixth batch of bread, and asked for a loaf.

"I have n't one left," replied François; "but wait until the next baking comes out of the oven, and you shall be waited on first."

"I want a loaf right away," said the woman. "Here is your money."

"But I tell you I have n't any more."

"Let me see."

"Very well, look for yourself. I've no objection."

So the old woman searched and rummaged about until she found in a cupboard a few stale loaves which the apprentices had reserved for themselves.

She took one of these, and left the shop without paying for it; and when the baker protested, she excited the wrath of the passers-by by declaring that François was a famine-breeder, who kept back half the bread he baked.

This charge was almost certain death to any man in those days.

A recruiting-officer, named Fleur d'Epine, happened to be in a saloon on the opposite side of the street, and in a tipsy voice he repeated the accusation the woman had

just made; whereupon the people who had congregated in front of the shop forced their way into it, and found, in addition to the two loaves of stale bread left by the old woman, several dozen small fresh rolls reserved for the deputies who held their sessions in the archbishop's palace about one hundred yards away.

From that moment the unfortunate man was doomed. It was no longer one voice, but a hundred, two hundred, a thousand, that shouted, "Hang the famine-breeder to the nearest lamp-post! Hang him! Hang him!"

Just then Doctor Gilbert happened to be returning from a visit to his son, whom he had placed at the College of Louis le Grand, and, his attention being attracted by the noise, he hastened to the man's assistance.

François in a few words told him the cause of all this trouble, and the doctor, convinced of the baker's innocence, endeavoured to protect him; but the crowd hustled the victim and his defender along together, heaping the same execrations on both of them, and ready to kill them both with a single blow.

It was at this critical moment that Weber appeared upon the scene, and, recognising the doctor, he hurried off in search of the police, who subsequently conducted the unfortunate baker to the Hôtel de Ville.

When he disappeared within its grim portals, the clamour increased; for the infuriated mob seemed to feel that it had been robbed of its rightful prey.

Unfortunately it was early, and not one of the favourites of the populace was at hand to quiet them, as several sinister-looking men who glided about in the crowd, whispering, "He's a famine-breeder in the employ of the court, — that's the reason they're trying to save him," — were perfectly well aware.

At last, as the accused did not reappear, the cries changed into savage yells, the threats into a frightful roar of baffled rage; and the men to whom we have alluded slipped through the doorway and along the corridors until they reached the room where the unfortunate baker was.

Gilbert was trying his best to establish the poor fellow's innocence, and he was ably seconded by the dispositions of the baker's neighbours, who testified to his zeal and industry. They declared he had often baked as many as ten times a day; that when his fellow bakers were out of flour, he had supplied them; and that, in order to supply his customers more promptly, he had even hired another oven, belonging to a pastry-cook in the neighbourhood, in which to dry his wood.

From the testimony it would have seemed that the man deserved commendation instead of punishment; but in the square outside, in the corridors, and even in the court-room, people continued to shout "Famine-breeder!" and to clamour for the death of the culprit.

Suddenly an unexpected rush was made into the court-room, forcing asunder the line of National Guards that surrounded François, and separating him from his protectors. Gilbert, crowded back against the railing, sees twenty arms outstretched. Seized and pinioned, the prisoner cries out for help; Gilbert makes a frantic but futile effort to reach the poor fellow, but the crowd, through which the victim is dragged, closes in behind him. He struggles for an instant like a swimmer caught in a whirlpool, with hands clasped, despair in his eyes, his voice smothered in his throat; then the wave has covered him, the deep has swallowed him up.

From that moment his fate is sealed. Rolled from the top to the bottom of the stairway, he receives a wound on every step. When he reaches the door, it is no longer life he begs for, but death.

A second more, and the unfortunate man's head is severed from his body, and elevated on the end of a pike.

Hearing the uproar in the street, the rioters in the halls and corridors rush down. They must see the end of the play. A head on the end of a pike is a curiosity. They have not seen one since the sixth of October, and this is the twenty-first.

“Oh, Billot, Billot!” muttered Gilbert, as he hastened across the Place de Grève to escape the dreadful sight, “you are fortunate indeed in being out of Paris!”

He had gone but a little way when he felt some one tap him on the shoulder. He looked up, uttered a faint cry, and was about to stop and speak; but the man who had touched him slipped a note into his hand, placed his finger warningly on his lip, and then hastened on in the direction of the archbishop’s palace.

He evidently desired to preserve his incognito; but a market-woman saw him, and, clapping her hands, called out,—

“Ah, ha! our little Mother Mirabeau!”

“Long live Mirabeau!” shouted hundreds of voices. “Long live the defender of the people! the patriot orator!”

The tag end of the procession which was following the head of the unfortunate baker heard these shouts, and turned back to form itself into an escort for Mirabeau, who was almost invariably attended by an enthusiastic crowd when he repaired to the National Assembly.

For it was Mirabeau, on his way to the Assembly, who, unexpectedly meeting Gilbert, had handed him a note which he had just written in a neighbouring wine-shop, and which he had intended sending to the doctor’s house.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BENEFITS WHICH MAY BE DERIVED FROM A SEVERED
HEAD.

GILBERT hastily glanced over the note Mirabeau had slipped into his hand; then he read it a second time slowly and carefully, put it in his vest pocket, and, calling a cab, bade the coachman drive him to the Tuileries.

On reaching the palace he found all the gates closed, and the guards doubled, by order of Lafayette, who, hearing of the trouble in the old part of the town, had first taken measures to insure the safety of the king and queen, and then hastened to the scene of the disturbance.

By making himself known to the concierge on the Rue de l'Echelle, Gilbert succeeded in securing admission without much difficulty, and was ushered into the presence of the queen almost immediately by Madame Campan.

On seeing Gilbert, the queen uttered a cry of terror; for the doctor's coat and frill had been torn in his attempt to save the unfortunate baker, and there were several spots of blood on his shirt.

"I ask your Majesty's pardon for presenting myself in this condition," he said; "but I had already kept the queen waiting so long that I dared not subject her to any further delay."

"And that poor man?"

"He is dead. He was literally hacked in pieces."

"Was he guilty?"

"No, madame; he was innocent."

"Behold the fruits of your revolutions, monsieur. After gorging themselves with noblemen, public officials, and guardsmen, the people are beginning to devour one another. But is there no way of punishing these assassins?"

“We shall endeavour to do so, madame; but just now it is more important to prevent murders than to punish the murderers.”

“And how can that be accomplished? I am sure the king and myself would ask nothing better.”

“Madame, all these misfortunes arise from the people’s distrust of government officials. Place men in whom the people have confidence at the head of the government, and nothing of this kind will occur again.”

“Oh, yes, Mirabeau and Lafayette, I suppose,” said Marie Antoinette, sneeringly.

“I hoped the queen had sent for me to say that the king had ceased to oppose the combination I suggested to him.”

“In the first place, you are very much mistaken if you suppose I have any influence over the king. If any one can influence him, it is Madame Elizabeth.”

“And yet, if the queen can overcome her repugnance to Monsieur de Mirabeau, I will guarantee that I can induce the king to consent to this arrangement.”

“Would you seriously advise me to trust a man who is responsible for the atrocities of the fifth and sixth of October, — to make overtures to a man who has publicly insulted me from the rostrum?”

“I assure you, madame, that Mirabeau was *not* responsible for the events of the fifth and sixth of October. It was famine and poverty and misery that began their work then; but there is a powerful, mysterious, and terrible arm, that is working by night as well; and perhaps the day will come when you will have to be defended from the evil power that is pursuing, not only you, but all the other crowned heads of Europe. As truly as I have the honour of placing my life at your disposal, and at the disposal of the king, Monsieur de Mirabeau had no hand in those frightful atrocities, and he first learned that the populace were marching upon Versailles through a note delivered to him in the Assembly chamber.”

“But you cannot deny the notorious fact that he has publicly insulted me.”

“Mirabeau is a man who knows his value, madame, and it exasperates him to see his rulers scorn his assistance when he realises how much good he could do, and what important service he could render them. Yes, it is more to call attention to himself that Mirabeau stoops to slander; for he would rather the illustrious daughter of Maria Theresa would look at him wrathfully, than not look at him at all.”

“So you think that this man would consent to espouse our cause, doctor?”

“He is on your side now, madame. When Mirabeau breaks from the royalist ranks he is like a skittish horse, which only needs to feel the rider’s hand and spur to bring him back to his proper place.”

“But as he already belongs to Orleans —”

“You are mistaken, madame. When he heard that the prince had left France, at Lafayette’s request, Mirabeau exclaimed, as he crumpled Monsieur de Lauzun’s note announcing Orleans’ departure: ‘People say I belong to that man! I would not have him for a lackey.’”

“That reconciles me to him a little,” responded the queen, with a faint smile; “and if I thought we could really trust him —”

“The morning after the people brought your Majesty and the royal family from Versailles, I met Monsieur de Mirabeau, madame.”

“Intoxicated by his triumph of the previous day, I suppose.”

“On the contrary, he was greatly distressed at the thought of the dangers which you had incurred, and to which you might still be exposed.”

“Indeed? Are you positive of this?” inquired the queen, doubtingly.

“Shall I repeat his very words?”

“If you will do me the favour.”

“Well, this is what he said, word for word. I engraved them on my memory, hoping that I should have an oppor-

tunity to repeat them to your Majesty some day. 'If you can induce the king and queen to listen to you,' he said, 'persuade them that they and France are both lost unless the royal family leaves Paris. I am even now engaged in devising a plan for their safe escape from the city. You may give them the assurance that they can rely upon me.'

The queen became thoughtful.

"So Mirabeau, too, thinks that we had better leave Paris," she remarked, after a little.

"He thought so at that time."

"But has changed his opinion since, you think?"

"Yes, if I can believe the contents of a note I received from him half an hour ago."

"May I see the note?"

"It was intended for your Majesty," Gilbert replied, drawing the missive from his pocket. "I shall have to ask your Majesty to excuse the appearance of the letter," he added. "It was evidently written on cheap paper upon a shop counter."

"You need not trouble yourself about that. Paper and desk are both in harmony with the politics of the day," responded the queen, disdainfully.

She took the paper and read the following:—

"The event of to-day changes the aspect of things. Great advantage may be derived from that severed head. The Assembly will be alarmed, and insist upon martial law. Monsieur Mirabeau will support and carry the vote for martial law. Monsieur Mirabeau may also insist that the only safety consists in increasing the power of our chief executive.

"Monsieur de Mirabeau can attack Necker on account of his subsidies, and oust him with ease.

"In place of the Necker cabinet, a Lafayette and Mirabeau ministry should be formed, and Mirabeau will be responsible for everything."

"But this letter is not signed," remarked the queen.

"Did I not have the honour of informing your Majesty that Mirabeau himself handed it to me?"

“What do you think of his suggestions?”

“I think that Mirabeau is perfectly right, and that the alliance he proposes is the only thing that can save France.”

“If Mirabeau will send me his views upon the situation, and also the list of names for the new ministry, I will lay them before the king.”

“With your sanction?”

“With my sanction.”

“Meanwhile, as a pledge of his sincerity, shall Mirabeau introduce and support a resolution for instituting martial law, and conferring greater power upon the executive department of the government?” asked the doctor.

“Let him do so.”

“And in case of the downfall of Necker, a Lafayette and Mirabeau ministry will not be regarded with disapproval?”

“Not by me. I am willing, even anxious, to prove that I am ready to sacrifice my personal likes and dislikes for the good of the state; but you must remember that I cannot answer for the king.”

“Will your Majesty authorise me to tell Mirabeau that you desire a full statement of his views, and his plan for the formation of a new cabinet?”

“I will allow Doctor Gilbert to judge for himself how far it is necessary to be on one’s guard in dealing with a man who may be our friend to-day, but our enemy to-morrow.”

“You may rely upon me as far as that is concerned, madame; but as the situation is critical, no time should be lost. If your Majesty will excuse me, I will go to the National Assembly at once, and endeavour to see Mirabeau to-day. If I succeed, your Majesty will hear from me within two hours.”

The queen made a gesture of assent, and Gilbert withdrew.

A quarter of an hour later, the doctor reached the Assembly, which was in a state of great excitement on

account of the outrage committed at its very door, and upon a man who had been, to some extent at least, its faithful servant. The members were moving excitedly about. Mirabeau alone remained in his seat, apparently unmoved, with his eyes fixed upon the gallery reserved for the public. When he saw Gilbert enter it, his leonine countenance lighted up.

Gilbert made a slight gesture, to which Mirabeau responded by a nod of acquiescence; so Gilbert tore a leaf from his note-book, and wrote the following lines:—

“Your suggestions were approved, at least by one of the parties,—the one whom you, and I too, consider the more influential of the two.

“A full statement of policy is requested to-morrow, and the list for a cabinet to-day.

“Secure more power for the executive, and the executive will combine with you.”

He folded this paper in the form of a letter, addressed it to Monsieur de Mirabeau, and intrusted it to the hands of a messenger.

Mirabeau read it with such an air of indifference that no one would have suspected that the contents accorded with his most ardent desires; then, with the same air of indifference, he scrawled a few lines on a scrap of paper which happened to be lying in front of him, and, still with the same apparent carelessness, handed it to the messenger.

“For the writer of the note you just brought to me,” he said carelessly.

Gilbert opened the paper eagerly. It contained these few lines, which might have insured France a very different future, had the plan therein proposed been carried out:—

“I will use my influence. The memorial will be ready to-morrow. Here is the list requested, which can be changed only as far as two or three names are concerned:—

“Necker: Prime Minister.”

This name made Gilbert almost think that the letter he was reading could not be from Mirabeau; but as a parenthetical note followed this name, as well as the others, Gilbert read on:—

“ Necker : Prime Minister. (It will be necessary to render him as powerless as he is incapable, and yet preserve his popularity, on the king’s account.)

“ Archbishop of Bordeaux : Chancellor. (He must be advised to select his assistants with great care.)

“ Liancourt : Minister of War. (He is honorable, firm, and devoted to the king, which will give the latter a feeling of security.)

“ Rochefoucault : Master of the Household. (Thouret with him.)

“ La Marek for the Navy. (He cannot have the War department, which must be given to Liancourt.)

“ The Bishop of Autun : Secretary of the Treasury. (La Borde with him.)

“ Mirabeau : a member of the Royal Council, — no special department. (Petty scruples are out of place just now. The government must loudly proclaim that its chief auxiliaries henceforth are to be honest principles, sound judgment, and talent.)

“ Lafayette : in the Council, and Marshal of France. Generalissimo for a time to reorganise the army.

“ Target : Mayor of Paris.

“ Montmorin : Governor, Duke, and Peer. (His debts to be paid.)

“ Ségur : Minister of Foreign Affairs.

“ Mounier : Royal Librarian.

“ Chapelier : Public Works.”

Below this memorandum was a second:—

“ Lafayette’s Preferences.

“ Minister of Justice : Rochefoucault.

“ Minister of Foreign Affairs : Bishop of Autun.

“ Minister of Finance : Lambert, Haller, or Clavières.

“ Minister of the Navy : ”

“ The Queen’s Preferences.

“ Minister of War or of the Navy : La Marek.

“ Chief of the Council of Instruction and Public Education : Abbé Sieyès.

“ Keeper of the Privy Seal : ”

The second memorandum indicated the changes and modifications which might be made in the proposed cabinet without interfering with Mirabeau's projects and plans.¹

After hastily perusing it, Gilbert tore a fresh leaf from his note-book, and wrote the following lines, which he intrusted to the same messenger:—

“I will return to the mistress of the apartments we wish to hire, and report the conditions under which you will take and repair the property.

“Let me know, at my lodging on the Rue Saint-Honoré, — near the Church of the Assumption, and opposite the shop of a cabinetmaker named Duplay, — the result of the day's session, as soon as it is over.”

Always eager for excitement, hoping, perhaps, to quiet the passions of her heart by political intrigue, the queen awaited Gilbert's return with impatience, listening the while to the terrible sequel to the tragedy of the morning, which Weber had witnessed only a short time before.

Sent back to secure further information by the queen, Weber had reached one end of Notre Dame bridge just as the bloodthirsty mob, bearing aloft the head of François, decorated with a white cap taken from one of his brother bakers, reached the other end.

About a third of the way across the bridge a pale and frightened young woman, who was running swiftly towards the Hôtel de Ville, despite her delicate condition, suddenly paused.

The head, whose features she had not as yet been able clearly to distinguish, had at a distance the effect of an antique carving; but as it came nearer and nearer, it was easy to see by the distortion of visage that this head had not been changed to stone.

When this horrible trophy was about twenty yards from

¹ These notes, found among Mirabeau's papers after his death, have since been incorporated in the work published by Bacourt, and throw a new light upon the last two years of the great orator's life.

her, she uttered a cry, and, throwing up her arms, fell fainting to the earth.

The woman was the wife of François, and she was carried to her home insensible.

“O God!” murmured the queen, “this is a terrible warning Thou hast sent Thy servant, to teach her that, however wretched she may be, there are others even more unhappy.”

Just at that moment Gilbert entered. This time he found, not the queen, but the woman — that is to say, the wife and mother — crushed by the sad story she had just heard. No frame of mind, however, could have been more favourable to the success of Gilbert’s plans, — at least in his opinion, as he came to propose a means of putting an end to all such atrocities.

Drying her eyes, for she had been weeping bitterly, the queen took the list Gilbert had brought.

But before glancing at the paper, important as it was, she said, —

“Weber, if that poor woman does not die, I should like to see her to-morrow; and if she is really *enceinte*, as is reported, I will be godmother to her babe.”

“Ah, madame,” cried Gilbert, “why cannot all Frenchmen see, as I do, the tears that flow from your eyes, and hear the kind words that fall from your lips!”

The queen started violently. These were almost the very words that Monsieur de Charny had addressed to her under no less painful circumstances.

She looked at Mirabeau’s list, but she was too much agitated just at that moment to make any response.

“Very well, doctor, leave this paper with me. I will consider the matter carefully, and give you an answer to-morrow,” she said sadly.

About seven o’clock that evening a servant brought Gilbert the following letter: —

“The session was a heated one. Martial law is decided upon, however.

“Buzot and Robespierre advocated the creation of a higher court.

“ I persuaded the house to decree that all crimes against the nation (*lèse-nation*, a new word that we have invented) shall be tried by the Court of the Châtelet.

“ I declared that the welfare of France depended entirely upon the stability and preservation of the monarchy, and three-fourths of the members applauded me.

“ This is the twenty-first of October. I think royalty has made pretty good progress since the sixth.

“ *Vale et me ama.*”

This missive bore no signature, but was in the same handwriting as the ministerial list, and the note placed in the doctor's hand that morning, which made it absolutely certain that the writer was Mirabeau.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE COURT OF THE CHÂTELET.

IN order that the reader may comprehend the full extent of Mirabeau's triumph, and of royalty's triumph as well, now that the famous orator had constituted himself its representative, we must explain what the Court of the Châtelet was, especially as one of its first decisions furnished the material for one of the most terrible scenes that disgraced the Place de Grève in the year 1790,—a scene which will necessarily figure in this story, as it is intimately connected with our subject.

Ever since the thirteenth century the Châtelet had been of great historical importance, both as a court and a prison, it having received its jurisdiction, which it had exercised for five centuries, from good King Louis IX.

Another king, Philip Augustus, was nothing if not a builder; he erected Notre Dame, or at least the greater part of it; he founded, too, the hospitals of Trinity, Saint Catherine, and Saint Nicholas of the Louvre. He also paved the streets of Paris, which were so thickly covered with mud and filth—at least so the chronicles of that epoch assert—that the inhabitants of the city could not sit at their windows.

Philip Augustus had no difficulty in securing money for these expenditures; but, unfortunately, his successors have exhausted his chief resource, that is to say, the Jews.

In 1189 he was seized with one of the worst follies of the time,—that of wishing to wrest Jerusalem from the Sultan; so he accompanied Richard the Lion-hearted to the Holy Land.

Not desiring his good citizens of Paris to waste their time while he was away, and so, perhaps, dream of revolting against him in their leisure moments, as the subjects, and even the son, of Henry II. of England had done at Philip's own instigation, he left them a plan which was to be carried into execution immediately after his departure.

This work, which was to keep them out of mischief, was the erection of a new wall around the city, — a genuine twelfth-century wall of solid masonry, adorned with massive towers and gates. It was a difficult matter to provide for the future growth of the capital, which had increased very rapidly in size since the reign of Hugh Capet, and which was certain in time to break through this, its third wall, as it had done through the others; so, as a precaution, several small villages or hamlets, likely to become a part of the great whole some day, were included within the new limits. Each of these hamlets, despite its insignificance, had its chief-justice, and these noble judges opposed and contradicted one another on almost every point; so their decisions led to dire confusion in this strange capital.

There was a certain seigneur of Vincennes who fancied he had more reason to complain of this state of things than any one else, so he resolved to put an end to it.

This seigneur was Louis IX.

For it would be well to explain to children, and even to some grown-up people, that when Louis IX. meted out justice under that famous oak-tree, he did it as a justice or seigneur, not as a king. He therefore decreed, as a monarch, that in all cases tried before the justices of the other hamlets, the parties could appeal to *his* court, the Châtelet; and the Châtelet, consequently, became all powerful, there being no appeal from its decisions.

The Court of the Châtelet consequently remained the supreme court until the time when Parliament, encroaching in its turn upon the royal prerogative, declared that it would consider any appeal from the decisions of the justices of the Court of the Châtelet.

But now, at the instigation of Mirabeau, the Assembly had not only restored its former authority to the Court of the Châtelet, but had also invested it with new powers. It was a great triumph for royalty that crimes against the nation should be tried before a royal court.

The first case which came before the Court of the Châtelet was the crime related in the preceding chapter.

The very day this new law went into effect, two of the murderers of the unfortunate baker were hanged in the Place de Grève, without any pretence of a trial save an indictment.

A third, known as Fleur d'Epine, to whom we have also had occasion to refer, was regularly tried, and followed his fellow criminals into eternity by the same road.

Two cases remained, — that of Augeard and the inspector of the Swiss Guards, Pierre Victor de Besenval.

Augeard was accused of having furnished the money the queen's agent paid to the troops assembled on the Champ de Mars in July. Being little known, his arrest did not cause much excitement, nor did his acquittal create much scandal.

But Besenval's case was a very different one, for his name was notorious in the very worst sense of the word. It was he who had commanded the Swiss mercenaries at Réveillon, at the Bastille, and on the Champ de Mars; and the people, knowing he had led the attack upon them in all three instances, were eager for revenge.

Explicit orders were given to the court that under no circumstances would the king and queen allow Monsieur de Besenval to be convicted; but nothing less could have saved him. He himself, in fact, had virtually acknowledged his guilt by taking flight immediately after the fall of the Bastille. Arrested on his way to the frontier, he was brought back to Paris, and when he entered the courtroom, cries of "To the scaffold with him! Hang him to the nearest lamp-post!" resounded upon every side.

It was with the greatest difficulty that any show of order

could be restored and maintained; and even then one of the crowd took advantage of the silence to call out, in a magnificent bass voice: "I demand that his body be cut into thirteen pieces, and that one be sent to each canton."

But in spite of the charges against him, and in spite of the fury of the populace, Besenval was acquitted.

After the trial one of the spectators, apparently a tradesman, by his costume, as he was passing out with the crowd, placed his hand upon the shoulder of another man, though the latter seemed to be a person of much higher rank.

"Well, Doctor Gilbert, what do you think of these two acquittals?" he asked.

The man thus addressed started violently; but on looking searchingly at his interlocutor, and recognising the face as he had recognised the voice, replied, —

"It is *to* you, and not *from* you that this question should come, — you, who know all things, past, present, and future."

"Well, I say that when two such scoundrels are acquitted, woe be to the innocent man whose turn shall come next!"

"And why do you think the next man will be innocent, and yet be punished?"

"Because it is the way of the world to make the good suffer for the bad."

"Good-bye," said Gilbert, offering Cagliostro his hand, for he no longer entertained the slightest doubt of the cynic's identity.

"And why good-bye?"

"Because I have an appointment."

"With whom? Mirabeau, Lafayette, or the queen?"

Gilbert looked at the speaker uneasily.

"You terrify me," he said at last.

"On the contrary, I ought to reassure you."

"And why?"

"Am I not your devoted friend?"

"I hope so."

"You may be sure of it; and if you want a proof of it, come with me."

As he spoke he signalled a cab that was moving slowly along the other side of the quay.

The vehicle drove up, and the two men entered it.

"Where shall I take you, monsieur?" asked the coachman.

"You know," answered Balsamo, making a sort of masonic sign to the driver, who gazed at him a moment in astonishment.

"Pardon me, sir; I did not know you," he replied, answering the sign with another.

"It is not so with me," said Balsamo; "I know all my subjects, from the least to the greatest."

The coachman closed the door, and, starting his horses off at a gallop, drove through a labyrinth of streets, past the Bastille, to the corner of the Rue Saint-Claude.

Here he sprang down to open the door with an alacrity that spoke well for his zeal. Cagliostro motioned Gilbert to step out first; then, as he himself alighted, he turned to the driver and asked, —

"Have you anything to tell me?"

"Yes, monseigneur. I should have come to make my report this evening, if I had not been so fortunate as to meet you."

"Speak on."

Gilbert discreetly moved a little to one side, but not so far that he did not see a smile flit over Balsamo's face as he listened, and overhear the names of Favras and Provence.

When the report was concluded, Cagliostro drew a two-crown-piece from his pocket and handed it to the coachman; but the latter shook his head.

"Monseigneur knows that we are not allowed to receive pay for our reports."

"This is not for your report, but for your fare."

"In that case, I will accept it. Thank you, monseigneur." And, cracking his whip, he drove away, leaving Gilbert completely bewildered by what he had seen and heard.

“Well,” said Cagliostro, who had been holding the door open several seconds for Gilbert to enter, without the latter being even aware of it, “won’t you step inside, my dear doctor?”

“Excuse me,” stammered Gilbert.

And so utterly amazed was he that he staggered like a drunken man as he crossed the threshold.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE HOUSE IN THE RUE SAINT-CLAUDE.

GILBERT was himself again, however, by the time he had crossed the big deserted courtyard.

He had already recognised the mansion as one visited at an epoch in his life which had left an indelible impression on his heart.

In the ante-chamber he met the same German servant he had met there sixteen years before. He was standing in the very same spot, and was wearing the same livery; only, like Gilbert, and like the count, and like the room itself, he was sixteen years older.

Fritz — for Gilbert recollected that this was his name — seemed to understand at a glance exactly where his master desired to conduct the visitor; for, hastily opening two doors, he paused on the threshold of the third, — the door leading into the drawing-room.

Cagliostro, with a wave of the hand, motioned Gilbert to enter; then, dismissing Fritz with another gesture, he added in German, —

“I am at home to nobody until further orders.”

Then, turning to Gilbert again, he added: “It was not to prevent you from understanding me that I spoke to my servant in German, for I know you are familiar with the language; but Fritz, who is a Tyrolean, understands German much better than French. Now be seated; I am at your service.”

Gilbert could not help casting a curious glance around him; and as his eyes rested successively on the pictures and various articles of furniture, each and every one of them seemed strangely familiar to him.

Cagliostro, who was watching Gilbert as Mephistopheles must have watched Faust when that German philosopher was so imprudent as to fall into a reverie in his presence, suddenly exclaimed,—

“You seem to recognise the room, doctor.”

“Yes; and it reminds me of my obligations to you. What a wonderful man you are! If my reason would allow me to place any credence in the marvels described by mediæval poets and historians, I should be inclined to believe that you were really a sorcerer like Merlin, or a manufacturer of gold like Flamel.”

“I may be that to the rest of the world, Gilbert, but not to you. I have never attempted to dazzle you by miracles. Still, having more means at my disposal than the majority of men, it is not strange that I can see better and further than others do. By the way, doctor, how is your fusion cabinet getting on?”

“My fusion cabinet?”

“Yes, your Lafayette and Mirabeau ministry.”

“You must have heard some of the absurd rumours that are rife at this time, and so are trying to find out if there is any truth in them, by questioning me.”

“Doctor, you are scepticism personified; and, what is worse, you doubt, not because you can’t believe, but because you won’t believe. Must I first tell you something you know just as well as I do? Very well. Afterwards I will tell you something I know better than you do.”

“I am listening.”

“A fortnight ago you told the king that Mirabeau was the only man who could save the monarchy. You recollect, possibly, that just as you were leaving the king’s apartments, Monsieur de Favras entered them.”

“Yes, I did say to the king that Mirabeau was, in my humble opinion, the only man who could save the monarchy.”

“I agree with you perfectly, doctor, and it is for this very reason that your combination will come to naught,

though it now promises so well; for the king, deeply impressed by what you said to him, has talked the matter over with the queen, and she is even less averse to the project than her royal spouse. In fact, she sent for you to come and discuss the pros and cons with her, and finally authorised you to negotiate with Mirabeau. Is not what I am saying perfectly true?"

"I must admit that you have not deviated much from the truth thus far."

"Whereupon you came away in a highly elated frame of mind, firmly convinced that the queen's conversion was due to your irrefutable reasoning and irresistible arguments."

Gilbert could not help biting his lip at this ironical speech.

"And to what was this conversion due, if not to my arguments? Tell me, count; for the study of the human heart is much more interesting to me than that of the body."

"I have told you that I have no secrets from you. Very well; the queen yielded, for two reasons. First, because she had experienced a great sorrow the evening before, and this political intrigue served to divert her mind from it, at least in part; secondly, because the queen is a woman, and having heard Mirabeau described as a lion, a tiger, or a bear, she cannot resist such a flattering tribute to her vanity as the taming of this bear or tiger or lion would be. What woman could? She says to herself, 'How wonderful it would be if I could bring this man, who hates me, to my feet; if I could make him apologise to me in public, and from the very rostrum in which he insulted me! I shall see him on his knees before me; that will be my revenge. If this genuflexion results in some good to France and the monarchy, so much the better.' But this last consideration was entirely secondary, you understand. Poor Mirabeau! we may well say, when all the idiots and coxcombs with whom you are associated make you pay with your genius for all the follies of your youth. It is true that all this is providential, as God is obliged to make use of human

agencies. 'The immoral Mirabeau!' says Provence, who is impotent himself. 'That spendthrift Mirabeau!' says Artois, whose debts have been paid three times by his royal brother. Poor man of genius, yes, you might perhaps save the monarchy; but the monarchy should not be saved. 'Mirabeau is a scoundrel!' cries Mably. 'Mirabeau is a conceited boaster!' says Rivarol; 'Mirabeau is an assassin!' says the Abbé Maury; 'Mirabeau is a dead man!' says Target; 'Mirabeau is an orator who is hissed oftener than he is applauded!' says Pelletier; 'Mirabeau should be sent to the galleys!' howls Lambesc; 'Mirabeau deserves hanging!' says Marat. But let Mirabeau die tomorrow, and these very men will apotheosise him, and all the dwarfs above whom he towered head and shoulders, and to whom he was such a torment while he lived, will follow his body to the grave, crying, 'Woe to France, who has lost her greatest orator! Woe to Royalty, who has lost her chief supporter!'

"Are you going to predict Mirabeau's death, too?" exclaimed Gilbert.

"To speak frankly, doctor, how can you anticipate a long life for this man whose blood scorches his veins, whose heart seems to suffocate him, whose genius devours him? Do you not see that power, however gigantic it may be, cannot struggle forever against the current of mediocrity? An undertaking like his is as hopeless as the uphill journey of Sisyphus with his rock. For two years Mirabeau has had this charge of immorality to fight against. Every time he flattered himself that he had reached the summit of the mountain, this charge hurled him down again. When the king had almost made up his mind to make Mirabeau prime minister, somebody rushed to his Majesty and cried, 'Sire, all Paris is ringing with Mirabeau's immorality! France is shocked at his immorality! Europe is horrified at his immorality!' As if God cast great men in the same mould as ordinary mortals! As if, in enlarging it, the circle that embraces the great

talents and virtues must not include great vices as well! Gilbert, you, and two or three other intelligent men, are trying to make Mirabeau prime minister, — that is to say, what that idiot Turgot has been, and that pedant Necker, and that fop Calonne; and Mirabeau will never be a minister, because he has debts to the amount of a few hundred thousand francs, which would be paid without a word if he were the son of some obscure country squire, and because he was once condemned to death for having eloped with the wife of an old imbecile, — a weak creature, who afterwards killed herself for the sake of a handsome captain. What a farce as well as tragedy human life is! I should weep over it, if I had not resolved to see only the absurd side of it. I tell you that Mirabeau the genius, Mirabeau the statesman, Mirabeau the great orator, will wear himself out, and go down into the grave without becoming what he, of all others, should be, — a prime minister. Ah! mediocrity is a great safeguard, my dear Gilbert.”

“Do you mean that the king will reject the plan?”

“He will take good care not to do that. He will have to discuss the matter with the queen, to whom he has *almost* pledged his word. You know the king’s policy is expressed in the word ‘almost.’ He is *almost* persuaded, like a certain king in the Bible, to be a constitutionalist; he is *almost* a philosopher, and he is *almost* popular when he hobnobs with Monsieur de Provence. Go to the Assembly to-morrow, and you will see what you will see.”

“Can’t you tell me in advance?”

“I should only deprive you of the pleasure of a surprise.”

“But to-morrow is such a long way off.”

“Then do something better still. It is now five o’clock; in two hours there will be a meeting of the famous Jacobin Club. Dine with me, and we will then take a cab and drive to the Rue Saint-Honoré. You will find your visit to the old convent extremely edifying, to say the least. Besides, warned in advance, you may be able to avert the catastrophe — perhaps.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE JACOBIN CLUB.

Two hours after the conversation just recorded a carriage drew up in front of the church of Saint Roch, whose façade had not then been disfigured by the long-barrelled rifles used on the thirteenth Vendémiaire.

Two men dressed in black alighted from this vehicle, and walked quietly up the street as far as the modest gateway of the convent of the Jacobins.

“Will you go into the main body of the chapel, or be content with a seat in the gallery?” inquired Cagliostro; for, as our readers have probably imagined, the two men referred to were no other than the great magician and Doctor Gilbert.

“The floor of the chapel is, of course, reserved for members,” said Gilbert.

“Yes; but I belong to every known society,” replied Cagliostro, laughing, “and where I go, my friends can go. Here is a ticket for you, if you want it; as for me, I need none.”

“But they may notice that I am an outsider, and expel me.”

“In the first place, let me tell you something that you do not seem to know. The Jacobin Club, founded only three months ago, already numbers sixty thousand members, and will number four hundred thousand before the year is out.”

“Never mind; I think I like the gallery better, as that will give me a view of the entire assembly; and if there are any present or future notables here, you can point them out to me.”

"To the gallery, then!" said Cagliostro.

The proceedings had not begun, and the members were scattered about the dimly-lighted hall, some conversing together in groups, others promenading to and fro, while others, evidently disposed to hold themselves aloof, remained seated in shadow, or stood leaning against a pillar. It was very evident, even in the dim light, that this was an eminently aristocratic assemblage; for embroidered coats abounded, and the gold and silver lace on the uniforms of army and navy officers filled the place with brilliant scintillations. In fact, there was not a mechanic, or a man of the people, or hardly a tradesman in this aristocratic assembly. For members of inferior rank there was another hall below, opened at a different hour, so that the aristocracy and the common people need not come in contact with one another.

The Jacobin Club at that time was essentially a military, aristocratic, artistic, and literary organisation, for artists and men of letters predominated.

Among these last we may name, La Harpe, the author of "Mélanie;" Chénier, author of "Charles IX.;" Andrieux, Sedaine, and Chamfort, the poet laureate, formerly secretary to the Prince de Condé. Among the artists there was Talma, who had effected a revolution in the drama in his rôle of Titus, and thanks to whom, people were cutting off their hair, while waiting for his colleague, Collot d'Herbois, to cut off their heads; there was David, too, whose mind was already occupied with his great picture, "The Oath in the Tennis Court," and who had already purchased the brush with which he was to paint his grandest but most hideous picture, "Marat Murdered in the Bath;" there was Vernet, too, who had been admitted into the Academy, two years before, on account of his picture called "The Triumph of Paul Émile," and who amused himself by painting horses and dogs. He little suspected that only a few yards from him, leaning on the arm of Talma, was a young Corsican lieutenant, with straight, unpowdered

hair, who was to furnish him with material for five of his finest pictures, — “Napoleon Crossing the Alps,” and the battles of Rivoli, Marengo, Austerlitz, and Wagram.

Gilbert took a long look at the brilliant assemblage, and was considerably comforted by its decidedly royalistic character.

“How many men do you see here who are really hostile to the monarchy?” he asked.

“Am I to look with the eyes of people in general, with those of Necker, or with my own?” asked Cagliostro.

“With your own, of course. Is it not understood that yours are the eyes of a seer?”

“Well, then, there are two.”

“That is not many, out of four hundred.”

“It is quite enough, as one is to be the murderer and the other the successor of Louis XVI.”

Gilbert started violently. “So we have our future Brutus and Cæsar here,” he murmured. “Won’t you have the goodness to point them out to me?”

“Which one do you wish to see first?”

“Brutus.”

“You know that different men proceed to accomplish kindred results by different methods, and our Brutus does not resemble the ancient Brutus in the least,” was the response.

“I am all the more anxious to see him.”

“Very well; then behold him!”

As he spoke, he pointed to a man who was leaning against the chair. The light fell full upon his face, but his body was concealed in shadow.

His face was pale and livid; his eyes alone seemed to be alive, and in them was an expression of almost contemptuous hatred — the expression of a viper that knows a deadly poison is concealed in its tooth — as he watched the noisy and verbose Barnave.

Gilbert shuddered.

“That is not the face of a Brutus, or even of a Cromwell,” he remarked.

“No; it better suits one’s idea of a Cassius. You know what Cæsar said, my friend: ‘I have no fear of gross men, who spend their days at table, and their nights in dissipation, — no; but I fear dreamers with pale faces and meagre bodies.’ Do you know him?”

“Yes, I know him; or, rather, I recognise him as being one of the members of the Assembly.”

“You are right.”

“And one of the most long-winded speakers of the Left.”

“Exactly.”

“I know, too, that no one pretends to listen to him when he speaks.”

“Precisely.”

“A pettifogger from Arras, is he not, called Maximilien de Robespierre?”

“Even so. Now examine his face carefully. What do you see there?”

“Nothing but the spitefulness Mediocrity always feels towards Genius.”

“In other words, you judge him like all the rest of the world. It is true that his voice is thin and rather shrill, and his cheeks are sunken. The skin on his forehead seems to be fastened tight to the bone, and strongly resembles ancient parchment in colour and texture. His glassy eyes occasionally emit a greenish light, but it soon dies out; his careworn face wearies one by its very immobility; his invariable costume is an old-fashioned olive-green coat, threadbare, and too scrupulously brushed. It is not strange that a man like this makes little or no impression in an assembly so rich in orators and so inclined to be critical, accustomed as it is to the leonine countenance of Mirabeau, the audacious impudence of Barnave, the cutting retorts of Maury, the enthusiasm of Cazalès, and the logic of Sieyès. But they cannot reproach this man on the score of immorality, as they do Mirabeau, for he is a strictly moral as well as upright man.”

“Who is this Robespierre?”

“Who is he? Nobody in France knows except myself, I believe. I always aim to know whence the elect come: the knowledge enables me to divine whither they will go, you see. The Robespierres are Irish by descent, and they have been notaries, father and son, for several generations. One branch of the family, the one of which this man is a descendant, established itself in Arras. There were two great lords, or rather two kings, in the town; one, the abbé of Saint Wast, the other, the bishop of Arras, whose palace overshadows half the city. It was there that yonder man was born, in 1758. What he did as a child, what he did as a youth, and what he is doing to-day, I can tell you in a very few words. What he will do hereafter, I have told you already in a single word. There were four children in the household. The head of the family lost his wife; he was an attorney, but he became a victim to melancholia, and ceased to appear in court. Finally he went on a journey for his health, and never returned. At the age of eleven the eldest child, this one, found himself the head of the family, the guardian of a brother and two sisters,—a heavy responsibility at that age. It made a man of him. In twenty-four hours he became what he is now: he has a face that rarely smiles, a heart to which joy is a stranger. He was the best scholar in school, and one of the scholarships which the abbé had at his disposal in the college of Louis le Grand was given to him. He came to Paris recommended to the care of a canon of Notre Dame. That same year the good priest died, and almost at the same time the lad’s youngest and best beloved sister died at Arras. The shadow of the Jesuits still cast its gloom over the walls of Louis le Grand. You know that edifice; its courtyards and corridors, gloomy and dark as those of the Bastille, would steal the colour from the freshest cheek. Those of young Robespierre were pale to begin with; his college life made them livid. The other boys went out sometimes, there were holidays and fête days for them; but to this lonely orphan bursar, all

days were the same. He lived in an atmosphere of solitude, grief, and ennui, — three ill winds that kindle envy and malice in the heart, and rob the soul of its bloom. No one now would ever believe that there was a portrait of Robespierre at the age of twenty-four, holding a rose in one hand, and pressing the other to his breast, with the motto: ‘All for my sweetheart.’ It is true that at the time he chose this device, and had his portrait painted in this attitude, there was a certain young girl who vowed that nothing should ever separate them. He made a similar vow, and he was a man to keep his word; but he went away for three months, and on his return found her married. Meanwhile, the abbé remained his protector, and procured for our hero the position of judge in the criminal court. Soon there was a case to try, an assassin to punish; and Robespierre, filled with remorse for having condemned a fellow creature to death, sent in his resignation. He next turned advocate, for he had to live and support his sister. His brother was at the college of Louis le Grand, the abbé having given him, too, a scholarship there. His name had hardly been entered on the list of advocates before some peasants begged him to act as their counsel in a suit against the bishop of Arras. An investigation satisfied Robespierre that the peasants were in the right, so he pleaded their cause for them, and won it. Very soon afterwards he was elected to the National Assembly. Here he found himself between two hostile fires of malice and contempt, — malice on the part of the clergy towards an upstart who had dared to fight the clergy; contempt on the part of the nobility for a pettifogger reared by charity.”

“Well, what has he accomplished?”

“Do you remember the day the clergy came hypocritically to the Assembly to implore the third estate, kept in suspense by the royal veto, to begin its labours? Well, read the speech he made that day, and see if there is not a carcer for the possessor of an acrid vehemence that amounts almost to eloquence.”

“But since then?”

“Since then? Well, we must jump from the month of May to the month of October. On the fifth of this month, when Maillard, deputed by the women of Paris, came to harangue the Assembly in behalf of his clients, all the members sat silent and motionless in their seats; but this young lawyer proved himself more audacious than any of the rest. All the pretended defenders of the people held their peace; but he spoke twice, — once in the midst of the wildest confusion, the second time in the midst of a breathless silence, and vigorously supported Maillard in his demand for food on account of the famine.”

“Yes; but perhaps he will change his views.”

“You do not know the Incorruptible, as they will call him some day; besides, who will think of such a thing as bribing a petty lawyer that everybody laughs at? Some day this man, mark what I tell you, will be the terror of the Assembly, as he is now its laughing-stock. The Jacobin nobles consider Robespierre the clown of the show, sent there to amuse them and the public generally. His friends laugh in their sleeves when he speaks; his enemies hoot at him. When he speaks, everybody begins to talk. When he makes a speech, — in defence of some principle, always, — you may rest assured some member, upon whom the orator fixes his eye for an instant, ironically requests a printed copy of the discourse. Only one of his colleagues understands him. Can you guess who that is? It is Mirabeau, who said to me only yesterday, ‘That man will succeed, because he believes what he says.’ A strange thing for Mirabeau to say, was it not?”

“I have read this man’s speeches, and they seemed to me extremely dull and commonplace.”

“I do not say that he is a Cicero or a Demosthenes, a Mirabeau or even a Barnave; no, not by any means. Besides, his speeches are treated as unceremoniously in the printing-office as they are in the Assembly. In the tribune they interrupt him; in the printing-office they mutilate

him. The reporters do not even know his name; they call him Monsieur B——, Monsieur N——, or Monsieur ——, as the case may be. Heaven alone knows what an amount of gall is accumulated in that emaciated body, what fierce tempests are raging in that narrow brain; for there are no social diversions, no home comforts or pleasures to make him forget the insults and taunts heaped upon him. In his cold and meagrely furnished lodging on the Rue Saintonge, where he lives upon the salary he receives as a deputy, he is as much alone as he was in the gloomy college halls. You are a clever mathematician, Gilbert, but I defy you to calculate the amount of blood all this will cost the aristocrats who insult him, the priests who persecute him, and the king who ignores him. I promised, did I not, to show you a machine that will cut off heads at the rate of about two a minute? Well, the man who will keep this instrument of death most busily employed will be the petty lawyer of Arras, Monsieur de Robespierre."

"You give one the horrors, count. If your Cæsar is as terrible a personage as your Brutus, I shall give up in despair. But what has become of our Cæsar?"

"He is standing over yonder, talking with a man he scarcely knows as yet, but who will have a great influence over his destiny. This man's name is Barras."

"I don't know whether your predictions will prove true, or not, but at all events you have selected your types very cleverly. Your Cæsar has the very brow to wear a crown. What do you think he is saying to Barras?"

"He is saying that if the defence of the Bastille had been intrusted to him, it would not have been taken."

"Then he is not a patriot?"

"A man like that will never be anything but first and foremost."

"You are amusing yourself at the young lieutenant's expense, I suppose?"

"Gilbert," said Cagliostro, pointing to Robespierre, "as surely as that man will re-erect the scaffold of Charles I.,



Portrait of Bonaparte.

Photo-Etching. — After Painting by Zanerio.



just so surely will that man," pointing to the straight-haired Corsican, "reconstruct the kingdom of Charlemagne."

"Then our struggle for liberty is to prove futile?"

"How do you know but one will do as much for it with his throne as the other with his guillotine?"

"Then he is to be a Titus or a Marcus Aurelius, — a god of peace?"

"He will be an Alexander and a Hannibal at the same time. He will wax great by wars, but war will prove his ruin. I have defied you to calculate the amount of blood Robespierre will shed; but that is nothing in comparison with the sea of blood this man will create, with his armies of five hundred thousand men, and battles three days long."

"And what is *his* name?"

"He calls himself Bonaparte now, but some day he will call himself Napoleon."

Gilbert relapsed into a reverie so profound that he did not even perceive that the meeting had opened, and that a speaker had mounted the rostrum. An hour passed, and he was still sitting there, absorbed in meditation, when a powerful hand was laid heavily on his shoulder.

He turned. Cagliostro had disappeared, and in his place sat Mirabeau, his face dark with wrath.

"What is the matter?" asked Gilbert, gazing at him wonderingly.

"It seems that we are mocked, cajoled, betrayed. It seems that the court will not have me — that it takes you for a dupe, and me for a fool."

"I do not understand you."

"Did you not hear the resolution that has just been passed?"

"Where?"

"Here."

"What resolution?"

"You must have been asleep."

"No, but I have been dreaming."

“ Well, to-morrow, in return for my motion of to-day that cabinet ministers should be allowed to take part in the deliberations of the Assembly, three of the king’s friends are going to demand that no member of the Assembly shall be made a cabinet minister during his term of office. Therefore that carefully planned cabinet combination is broken up by the caprice of his Majesty, Louis XVI.; but as surely as my name is Mirabeau, I’ll get even with him, and he will find that if his breath can overthrow a ministry, mine can overturn a throne.”

“ But you will go to the Assembly, for all that. You will not abandon the scheme without a struggle ? ”

“ I shall go to the Assembly. I shall fight to the last. I am one of those who are buried beneath the ruins.”

The next day, upon the motion of Lanjuinais, and in spite of the superhuman efforts of Mirabeau, the National Assembly decreed by an immense majority that no member of the Assembly should become a minister during his term of office.

“ And I,” cried Mirabeau, “ propose an amendment, which will not alter your law. It is this: “ Any member of the present Assembly may be appointed cabinet minister except Monsieur le Comte de Mirabeau.”

The members gazed at each other, fairly stunned by such audacity. In the midst of a death-like silence, Mirabeau descended from the platform, with the same haughty bearing with which he had marched up to Dreux-Brézé when he said to him, “ We are here by the will of the people, and nothing but the power of the bayonet shall drive us away.”

He left the hall.

Mirabeau’s defeat was like any other man’s triumph.

CHAPTER XXIX.

METZ AND PARIS.

As Cagliostro had predicted, and Mirabeau had surmised, it was the king who had ruined all Gilbert's plans.

In her concessions to Mirabeau, Marie Antoinette had been actuated chiefly by spite at her lover's desertion, and feminine curiosity, rather than queenly policy; so it was with no very great regret that she beheld the downfall of this framework of a constitutional government which had always offended her pride so deeply.

As for the king, his policy was always confined to procrastination, gaining time, and taking advantage of circumstances; moreover, other negotiations were pending, which promised him an opportunity to get safely out of Paris, as well as affording him a residence in a well-fortified town, — a favourite plan with him. The arrangements for the successful execution of one of these schemes had been intrusted to Baron de Favras, the Count de Provence's agent; the other, to Charny, who had been specially deputed by the king.

Charny made the trip from Paris to Metz in two days, and immediately upon his arrival in that city waited upon M. de Bouillé and delivered the king's letter. This missive being only a letter of introduction, as the reader may recollect, Bouillé, though he did not conceal his dissatisfaction and anxiety in regard to the condition of affairs, manifested great reserve at first. In fact, Charny's suggestions interfered very considerably with the commandant's plans, the Empress Catherine having just offered him an important command in her army, which he was on the point of accepting when the king's letter came.

Bouillé was a devoted royalist, however, and so felt extremely anxious to rescue his sovereign from a situation that virtually amounted to imprisonment.

Before coming to any definite understanding with Charny, however, Bouillé, claiming that the count's powers were not sufficiently extended, resolved to send his son, Louis de Bouillé, to Paris to confer directly with the king about the matter.

Charny remained at Metz, partly because he had no special desire to return to Paris, and partly because a rather exaggerated sense of honour made him feel it incumbent upon him to stay in Metz as a sort of hostage.

Count Louis de Bouillé arrived in Paris about the middle of November. At that time the king was carefully guarded by Lafayette, and the count was Lafayette's cousin. To visit the Tuileries, therefore, without the knowledge of Lafayette, was an impossibility, or at least a very dangerous and difficult matter.

On the other hand, as Lafayette must be kept in ignorance of the nature of the young man's errand, the latter might easily secure a presentation to the king through Lafayette himself; and circumstances seemed to favour this plan, for he had been in Paris only three days when he received a letter from the general, saying that he had heard of his arrival in Paris, through the police, and inviting him to call upon him, either at the headquarters of the National Guard or at his private residence.

The young man, delighted at the turn affairs had taken, hastened to headquarters, and found that the general had just gone to the Hôtel de Ville to see Monsieur Bailly, the mayor; but in the general's absence, he was met by Monsieur Romeuf, his aide-de-camp.

Romeuf had served in the same regiment with the young count; and though he belonged to the democracy, and the latter to the aristocracy, the relations existing between them were quite friendly; besides, there was one point upon which they were in perfect accord: both young men

loved and honoured the king, — one after the patriotic fashion, that is to say, on condition that he should swear to support the Constitution; the other after the aristocratic fashion, that is, on condition that he should refuse to take that oath, and call in foreign aid to subdue his rebellious subjects if necessary.

When he said “rebels,” young Bouillé meant three-fourths of the Assembly, the entire National Guard, the electors, etc., etc., — in short, about five-sixths of the people of France.

Romeuf was twenty-six, and Count Louis twenty-two; so it was difficult for the two friends to talk politics long, especially as Count Louis did not wish his companion to suspect that he came to Paris on any business of importance: wherefore he told his friend, as a great secret, that he had left Metz without formal leave, and come to Paris to see a woman he adored.

While he was imparting this secret to the aide-de-camp, Lafayette appeared on the threshold of the open door; but though Count Louis caught sight of the general in a mirror in front of him, he continued his story, and, in spite of his friend's warning signs, raised his voice so that Lafayette could not fail to hear every word.

The general walked slowly up behind the speaker, and when the narrative ended, placed his hand on the young man's shoulder and exclaimed, —

“So, ho, Monsieur Lover! This is the reason you fight shy of your respectable relatives, I suppose.”

For he was no very stern judge or severe mentor, this gay and gallant general of thirty-two, himself a great favourite with the fashionable ladies of the day; and Count Louis did not seem very much afraid of the lecture that was in store for him.

“On the contrary, I was so anxious to see you that I should have done myself the honour of calling upon my most illustrious kinsman this very day, even if I had not received your note,” he replied, laughing.

“Well, after this, will you country gentlemen venture to assert that the Paris police force is poorly organised and inefficient?” asked the general, with a self-satisfied air which showed very plainly that he thought most of the credit belonged to him.

“We know that we have nothing to conceal from the brave general who guards the people’s rights and the king’s welfare so jealously,” was the polite response.

Lafayette bestowed a rather mocking but good-natured side-glance upon his cousin. He knew that the king’s welfare was a matter of great importance to that branch of the family, but that they troubled themselves very little about the rights of the people.

He replied to only half of the compliment, consequently.

“And my cousin, the Marquis de Bouillé,” he said, laying special stress upon the title he himself had renounced since the fourth of August, “has he not charged his son with some commission for the king whose welfare I guard?”

“He charged me to place his homage at his sovereign’s feet, provided General Lafayette did not deem me unworthy of being presented to the king.”

“Presented? and when?”

“As soon as possible, general. As I am here without leave, as I had the honour of telling you or Romeuf—”

“You told Romeuf; but it amounts to the same thing, as I overheard it. Very well; pleasant things should not be postponed. It is now eleven o’clock. I have the honour of an interview with the king and queen every day at noon. Take a bite with me, if you have not breakfasted already, and you can then accompany me to the Tuileries.”

“But am I properly dressed?” queried the young man, glancing over his uniform and his boots.

“In the first place, I must tell you, my poor boy, that the great question of etiquette, which you imbibed with your mother’s milk, has been sick even unto death since your departure: besides, your coat is irreproachable, and your

boots beyond criticism; and what costume could be more suitable for a man eager to die for his king than a military uniform? Come, Romeuf, see if breakfast is ready. I will take Monsieur de Bouillé to the Tuileries immediately after that meal is over."

Half an hour afterwards the sentinels at the gate of the Tuileries presented arms to General Lafayette and the young Count de Bouillé, little suspecting that they were paying military honours at the same time to the revolution and the counter-revolution.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE QUEEN.

EVERY door flew open at Lafayette's approach; the guards presented arms, and the footmen bowed low, recognising in him the king's king, the master of the palace.

Lafayette was first ushered into the queen's presence. The king was at his forge, and some one was sent to inform him of the general's arrival.

It was three years since Count Louis de Bouillé had seen Marie Antoinette.

The queen had reached the age of thirty-four, — "that touching age," as Michelet says, which Vandyck so loved to paint; the age of wifehood and motherhood, and, especially in Marie Antoinette's case, the queenly age.

During those three years the queen had suffered much in heart and mind, in love and self-love as well; and the thirty-four years were consequently plainly written upon her countenance in the dark circles under her eyes that told of sleepless nights and bitter tears.

It was at this age that Marie Stuart, though a prisoner, made her greatest conquests, inspiring Douglas, Mortimer, Norfolk, and Babington with such ardent love that they were eager to die for her.

The sight of this much hated, much slandered, and much threatened queen — the events of the fifth of October had proved that these threats were no idle talk — made a deep impression on young Louis de Bouillé's chivalrous heart.

Women are always perfectly well aware of the effect they produce, and as kings and queens have a specially good memory for faces, — that being an important part of

their education, — Marie Antoinette had scarcely glanced at the young man before she not only recognised him, but felt certain that she should have in him a most devoted friend; so, before Lafayette had time to make the formal presentation, and before they had even reached the foot of the lounge on which the queen was half reclining, she straightened herself up, and, like one greeting an old acquaintance one is glad to meet again, and an adherent upon whose devotion one can thoroughly rely, she exclaimed, —

“Ah, Monsieur de Bouillé!”

Then, without taking the slightest notice of Lafayette, she held out her hand to the young man. The count hesitated an instant, — he had not anticipated this mark of royal favour, — then, falling on his knees, he touched the queen’s hand with trembling lips.

This was a mistake on the poor queen’s part, and she made many like it. She would have won young Bouillé’s heart without this courtesy, and the granting of it to his cousin in the presence of Lafayette, upon whom she had never bestowed such a mark of favour, established a line of demarcation between them, and wounded the man she had most need to conciliate.

So, with that perfect courtesy which he was incapable of forgetting for an instant, but not without a perceptible change of voice, Lafayette exclaimed, —

“Upon my word, my dear cousin, it was I who offered to present you to her Majesty; but it would seem you ought rather to present me.”

The queen was so rejoiced to find herself once more in the presence of a person upon whom she could rely, and the woman was so flattered by the profound impression she had evidently made upon the count, that, feeling suddenly endowed with the glory of a youth she had believed irrevocably lost, she turned to the general with one of those smiles that had been wont to irradiate her face at Trianon and Versailles, and said, —

“Count Louis is no such stern republican as yourself. He comes from Metz, not from America. He has not come to Paris, I am sure, to toil over the Constitution, but to pay his homage to me; so you must not wonder that I — a poor half-dethroned queen — grant him what he, a provincial, may consider a favour, while you —”

The queen concluded the sentence with a half petulant but altogether charming pout and toss of the head that seemed to say, “While you, Monsieur Scipio, while you, Monsieur Cincinnatus, sneer at all such nonsense.”

“I have always proved my devotion and respect to the queen, madame,” replied Lafayette, “without her understanding or appreciating my respect and devotion. This may be unfortunate for me, and perhaps still more unfortunate for her,” he added, bowing low.

The queen looked at him searchingly. Lafayette had used similar words in his conversations with her more than once, and more than once she had reflected upon the words he had uttered; but, unfortunately for her, whenever he spoke in this way she felt an instinctive aversion to the man.

“Ah, general, you must be generous and forgive me,” she exclaimed, but not without an evident effort.

“Forgive you? For what, madame?”

“My enthusiastic welcome to this good Bouillé family, who love me with all their hearts. It was his father, his uncle, his entire family whom I saw when he entered, and who touched my hand with his lips.”

Lafayette bowed again, but in silence.

“And now, forgiveness being granted, comes the pledge of peace,” continued the queen, — “a cordial shake of the hand, after the English or American fashion.”

And she held out her hand, but open, and with the palm uppermost.

Lafayette touched it coldly and half reluctantly.

“I regret that you can never recollect that I am a Frenchman. It is not so very long between the sixth of October and the sixteenth of November, madame.”

"You are right, general," the queen said, controlling herself, and pressing his hand. "It is I who am ungrateful; but this fact ought not to surprise you, knowing how often that fault is imputed to me."

Then, throwing back her head, she asked, —

"Is there anything new in Paris, general?"

Lafayette saw an opportunity to retaliate, and he embraced it.

"Ah, madame, how much I regret that you were not at the Assembly yesterday," he exclaimed. "You would have witnessed a most touching scene, and one that would have interested you greatly. An aged man, the dean, the Nestor of the human race, a peasant from the Jura, one hundred and twenty years old, led by five generations of his descendants, came to thank the Assembly for the happiness he owed to it and to the king, as the Assembly can do nothing without the royal sanction. Think of it, madame, — a man who had been a serf for half a century under Louis XIV., and for seventy years afterwards!"

"And what did the Assembly do?"

"The members all arose, to a man, and compelled him to sit down and cover himself in their presence."

"Ah," said the queen, in a rather peculiar tone, "ah, yes, it must have been extremely touching; but I was not there to witness it, much to my regret. You, of all others, my dear general, must know that I am not always where I would like to be," she added, with a smile as peculiar as her tone.

The general seemed about to say something in reply; but without giving him time to speak, the queen continued:

"I was here, granting an audience to the wife of that unfortunate baker — the Assembly's baker — whom the Assembly allowed to be murdered at its very doors. What was the Assembly doing then, monsieur?"

"You allude, madame, to a calamity which has distressed the representatives of the nation most deeply. Though the Assembly was not able to prevent the murder, it has at least punished the murderers."

“But this punishment has been little or no consolation to the poor wife. If her child lives, I have promised to be its godmother; and in order that the people may see that I am not indifferent to their sorrows, I should like to have the baptism take place in Notre Dame, if it would not cause too much inconvenience.”

Lafayette raised his hand like one who is about to ask permission to speak, and is extremely anxious to have the opportunity granted him.

“This is the second allusion you have made, madame, within a very brief space of time, to the pretended captivity in which some of your devoted followers seem determined to believe I am keeping you. I make haste to say in the presence of my cousin here, and I will repeat it, if need be, in the presence of all Paris and all Europe, and of the whole world, that you are free; and I have but one desire, and only one request to make of you, that your Majesties will prove it,—the king, by resuming his accustomed sports and drives, and you, madame, by accompanying him.”

The queen smiled as if only half convinced.

“As regards acting as godmother for the poor child who will be born in such affliction, the queen, by making this promise to the widow, has only given another proof of the kindness of heart that makes her beloved and respected by those around her. If the queen will select the church where she desires the ceremony to take place, and will make her wishes known, everything shall be in readiness when the appointed day comes. And now,” continued the general, bowing, “I await the orders it may please your Majesty to honour me with to-day.”

“I have but one to-day, my dear general, and that is to ask you, if your cousin remains a few days longer in Paris, to take him with you to one of Madame de Lamballe’s receptions. You know she receives for me.”

“And I will avail myself of the invitation, madame, as much for my own sake as for his. If her Majesty has not

seen me there before, I beg to assure her that is only because she has never before expressed a wish for my attendance."

The queen responded with an inclination of the head and a smile. This was equivalent to a dismissal. Each gentleman accepted what was intended for him, — Lafayette the bow, Count Louis the smile. Then both walked backwards out of the room, — one with increased bitterness, the other with increased devotion, in his heart by reason of this interview.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE KING.

THE two visitors found François Hue, the king's valet, waiting for them at the door leading out of the queen's apartments.

His Majesty sent word that, having begun a very complicated piece of lockwork for his diversion, he should be greatly obliged if General Lafayette would come up to the workroom.

A forge was the very first thing the king inquired about after his arrival at the Tuileries; and learning that this indispensable adjunct had been forgotten in Catherine de Médici's and Philibert de Lorme's plans, he selected a room directly over his bedchamber for his workshop.

In spite of the many doubts and fears which had assailed him during his five weeks' residence at the Tuileries, Louis XVI. had not forgotten his forge for an instant. He had carefully superintended all its arrangements, and had himself indicated the place for the bellows, the fire, the anvil, bench, and vices. The workroom had been completed only the evening before; implements of every sort and kind had been provided; and the king could wait no longer. Ever since morning he had been engaged in this work, which had always proved such a relief to his mind, and in which he would doubtless have excelled if, to Gamain's great regret, such idlers as Turgot, Calonne, and Necker had not diverted his attention from his work by talking, not only about the affairs of France, which might be excusable, but about matters connected with Austria, England, America, and Spain.

All this explains why the king, in his enthusiastic resumption of his favourite occupation, begged Lafayette to come up to his workshop. It may be, too, that, having shown his weakness and incompetency as a monarch to the commander of the National Guard, he was not sorry to have an opportunity to display his skill as a locksmith.

Not knowing Count Louis, the valet turned as he reached the door of the workroom.

"Whom shall I announce?" he asked.

"Announce the commander-in-chief of the National Guard. I myself will present this gentleman to his Majesty."

The king turned as they entered.

"Ah, is it you, Monsieur de Lafayette?" he exclaimed. "I trust you will excuse me for asking you to come up here, but the locksmith assures you of a hearty welcome to his shop. A fellow once said to my ancestor, Henry IV., 'Even a charcoal burner is master in his own house.' I say to you, general, that you are as much master here in the workshop as in the apartments of the king."

So it will be seen that Louis XVI. began the conversation in very much the same way the queen had done.

"Sire," rejoined Lafayette, "under whatever circumstances I may have the honour to present myself before your Majesty, and in whatever apartment or costume you may receive me, the king will always be the king, and the man who now offers you his respectful homage will always be his faithful subject and devoted servant."

"I do not doubt it, marquis. But you are not alone. Have you changed your aide-de-camp, and does this young man take Romeuf's place?"

"This young man — and I ask the privilege of presenting him to your Majesty — is my cousin, Comte Louis de Bouillé."

"Ah!" exclaimed the king, with a slight start, which did not escape the notice of the younger man, "ah, yes, Comte Louis de Bouillé, son of the Marquis de Bouillé, commandant at Metz, I suppose."

“The same, sire.”

“You must excuse me, count, for having failed to recognise you. I am very near-sighted, you know. Have you been absent from Metz long?”

“About five days, sire; and, being here in Paris without a special furlough, though with my father’s permission, I solicited of my kinsman, Monsieur de Lafayette, the honour of a presentation to your Majesty.”

Meanwhile Lafayette was gazing about him with evident curiosity. Many persons were admitted into the king’s office and library, and even into his oratory or private chapel; but few persons were favoured with admission into his workshop, where Louis XVI. was the apprentice, and Master Gamain the real sovereign.

Lafayette was rather in doubt as to what subject to broach to this monarch, who received him with sleeves rolled up, a file in his hand, and a leather apron around his waist.

“Your Majesty seems to have a difficult piece of work in hand,” he ventured at last.

“Yes, general; I have undertaken to make a lock. I tell you, so that if Marat should find out that I have set up my workshop again, and should accuse me of forging fetters for the French people in it, you can assure him to the contrary, if you chance to meet him. You have no knowledge of the trade, I suppose, Monsieur de Bouillé?”

“I am not an expert, by any means; but my nurse’s husband was a locksmith, and I used to amuse myself sometimes by working with him; so, if I can be of any service to your Majesty, I should feel only too greatly honoured, though I rank, I fear, only as a very poor apprentice.”

“An apprentice might be of considerable service to me; but what I need most is an instructor.”

“What kind of a lock is your Majesty making?” inquired the young man, with a *quasi* familiarity fully authorised by the king’s occupation and attire, — “a night latch, a clover-leaf, a spring lock, or a bolt lock?”

“Well, my cousin, I don’t know how much practical knowledge of lock-making you possess,” exclaimed Lafayette, “but you seem well posted theoretically.”

Louis XVI. had listened to the young man’s enumeration of the different locks with evident pleasure.

“No,” said he, “this is simply a mortised lock, with a keyhole on both sides; but I fear I have overrated my ability. Ah! if I only had Gamain here, — Gamain, who calls himself the king of locksmiths, the grand master of his craft.”

“Is the worthy man dead, sire?”

“No,” replied the king, with a quick glance at the young count, which seemed to indicate that there was a hidden meaning in his words; “no, he lives at Versailles, on the Rue des Reservoirs. The dear fellow don’t dare to come to the Tuileries to see me.”

“And why not, sire?” inquired Lafayette.

“For fear of compromising himself. A king of France is a very dangerous acquaintance just now, my dear general. The fact that all my friends have fled to London, Coblenz, and Turin is sufficient proof of that, surely. However, if you see no objection to Gamain and one of his apprentices coming here some day to lend me a helping hand, I’ll send for him, my dear general.”

“Sire, your Majesty knows perfectly well that you are at liberty to summon whomsoever you please.”

“Yes, provided your sentinels can cross-question the visitor, as they do smugglers on the frontier. That is what my poor Gamain is afraid of, as they would probably mistake his kit for a cartridge-box, and his files for poignards.”

“I scarcely know how to apologise to your Majesty, sire; but I am responsible to Paris, to France, and to all Europe for the king’s life, and I feel that I cannot take too many precautions to insure the safety of a thing so precious. As for the worthy man of whom we were just speaking, the king can give him whatever orders he pleases, of course.”

"Thanks, Monsieur de Lafayette, but there is no hurry. Six or eight days hence I may want him," he added, casting a side glance at young Bouillé, — "him, and an apprentice, perhaps. I can send him word through Durey, my valet, who is a friend of his."

"And he will only need to present himself to be admitted to the king; his name will serve as his passport. Heaven preserve me, sire, from deserving the title of gaoler and turnkey that my enemies bestow upon me! Never was the king more free than at this moment. In fact, my business this morning is to implore his Majesty to resume his outdoor sports, — his hunts and drives."

"As to the hunts, no, thank you; I have other things to occupy me just now. As to the drives, my recent trip from Versailles to Paris has cured me of any desire for driving, at least in such a numerous company."

And again the king glanced at the young nobleman, who, by a slight elevation of his eyebrows, indicated that he understood the monarch's covert meaning.

"By the way," the king continued, addressing himself directly to the young count, "do you contemplate a speedy return to your father?"

"I shall leave Paris in a few days, your Majesty, but not to return to Metz. I have an aged relative residing on the Rue des Reservoirs, at Versailles, to whom I must pay my respects. I also have quite an important business matter to attend to, and as I am to see the person from whom I am to receive further instructions about one week from this time, it is not likely that I shall see my father again before the early part of December, — that is, unless the king has some special reason for desiring that I should hasten my departure for Metz."

"No, no! take your time, monsieur. Go to Versailles, and attend to this business matter, too, as your father has advised. Only do not forget, when you again see your father, to say to him that I have not forgotten him, that I know him to be one of my most faithful friends, and that

I shall recommend him to General Lafayette some day for honourable promotion."

Lafayette smiled slightly at this fresh allusion to his omnipotence.

"I should have recommended the gentlemen of the Bouillé family to your Majesty for promotion long ago, sire," he replied, "but for the fact that I have the honour of being related to them. I am not infrequently prevented from doing justice to most deserving men, by a fear lest I shall be accused of directing the king's favour upon my own kinsfolk."

"But the king must allow me to say that my father would consider any advancement a great misfortune, if it deprived him wholly or in part of the power to be of service to your Majesty," interposed the young count.

"Oh, I understand that, count. I shall not allow his present position to be interfered with, unless it is to confer one upon him that is more in accord with his wishes and mine. Leave this matter to the general and me, and go and enjoy yourself,—not forgetting the business matter that will claim your attention, however. Good-morning, gentlemen, good-morning."

The king dismissed his visitors with an air of dignity that contrasted strikingly with his coarse attire. When the door closed upon their retreating forms, he said to himself,—

"I think the young man understood me, and that when Master Gamain comes to see me, a week or ten days from now, he will bring an apprentice with him."

CHAPTER XXXII.

OLD ACQUAINTANCES.

BETWEEN five and six o'clock on the evening of the same day young Louis de Bouillé had the honour of being presented to the king and queen, a strange scene was taking place in the upper story of a small shabby, gloomy house on the Rue de la Juiverie.

In a squalid room on the third floor are three persons, — a man, a woman, and a child. The man is forty-five, and looks fifty-five; the woman is thirty-four, and looks at least forty; the child is five, and looks it, as he is not old enough yet to live two years in one.

The man wears the shabby ragged uniform of a sergeant of the French Guards, — a uniform held in high esteem since the fourteenth of July, when the French Guards joined the populace in firing upon Lambesc's Germans and Besenval's Swiss.

He holds in his hands a complete pack of cards, and he is trying for the hundredth, the thousandth, yes, the ten thousandth time, to devise an infallible combination for breaking a gaming-bank. Beside him reposes a card pricked with as many holes as there are stars in the firmament. We said *reposes*, but we hasten to retract the word. "Reposes" is scarcely the term to employ with reference to a card that is taken up and put down so incessantly; for the gambler — he is unquestionably a gambler — consults it every five minutes.

The woman is attired in an old silk gown; and poverty in her case is all the more terrible from the fact that the remains of luxury are associated with it. Her hair is

twisted into a knot at the back of her head, and held in place by a brass comb which was once gilded; her hands are scrupulously clean, and by reason of this cleanliness have preserved, or rather have acquired, a rather aristocratic appearance. Her nails are carefully trimmed and rounded at the ends; and the old-fashioned, worn-out slippers that cover her feet are of satin, embroidered with gold. She is thirty-four or thirty-five years of age, and if her face were cleverly made up after the fashion of the day, she would look five years younger; for, as Abbé de Celle says, "Women cling desperately to twenty-nine for five or ten years afterwards;" but, deprived of the softening effect of rouge and powder, she looks several years older than she really is.

Haggard as this face is, one somehow fancies one has seen it before, and vaguely wonders in what gilded palace or gorgeous chariot he once beheld a resplendent visage, of which this is but the faded reflection.

The child is five years old, as we have said before. He has the curling hair of one of Carlo Dolci's cherubs; his cheeks are as round as pippins; he has his mother's demoniacal eyes, his father's greedy mouth, and the indolence and capriciousness of both parents.

He is dressed in a threadbare and ragged coat of scarlet velvet, and while he munches a slice of bread thickly covered with jam, he is pulling the tarnished fringe from a tricoloured sash, and dropping it into the crown of an old felt hat.

The child is the first to break the silence, as he tosses his bread over his head upon the bed behind him.

"I'm tired of bread and jam, mamma," he whines.

"What do you want, Toussaint?"

"I want a stick of candy."

"Do you hear, Beausire?" says the woman. Then, seeing that the man is still absorbed in his calculations, —

"Do you hear what the poor child says?" she repeats shrilly.

The same silence!

Raising her foot to a level with her hand, she pulls off her slipper and hurls it straight at the calculator's nose.

"You, Beausire!" she cries.

"Well, what is it?" he asks angrily.

"Toussaint here wants a stick of candy. He's tired of jam, poor child!"

"He shall have one to-morrow."

"I want it now! I want it right away!" cries the boy, in a whine that threatens to become a yell.

"Toussaint, you had better be quiet, or you'll get yourself into trouble," says the father.

The child utters a cry, but it is a cry of wrath rather than fear.

"Touch that child, and you'll have trouble with me!" says the mother.

"Who the devil wants to touch him! You know very well it is only my way of talking, Madame Olivia. Even if a fellow occasionally beats the dust out of the mother's gown, he always respects the child's frock. Come here, Nicole, and kiss your poor Beausire, who'll be as rich as a king in a week."

"When you are as rich as a king it will be quite time enough to kiss you."

"But as I tell you I'm sure of a million, give me a kiss in advance, to bring us good luck."

"I want a stick of candy, I do!" yells the child, in tones that are becoming more and more ominous.

"See here, millionaire, give this child a stick of candy! Do you hear me?"

Beausire makes a movement as if with the intention of putting his hand in his pocket; but the hand makes only half the journey.

"You know very well I gave you my last twenty-four-sous-piece yesterday," he answers sullenly.

"Then you've got some money, ma," whines the child, turning to the woman Beausire sometimes addresses as

Olivia, and sometimes as Nicole. "Give me a sou to buy a stick of candy!"

"Here are two sous, you bad child! Take care and don't fall going down stairs."

As the woman closes the door after the child, she turns and devotes her attention to his father.

"You had better be doing something to get us out of this miserable hole, I think, Monsieur Beausire," she remarks. "If you don't, I'll have to see what I can do, I suppose."

She utters the words in the complacent tone of a woman whose mirror says to her every morning, "Don't be troubled; with a face like yours, no woman need die of hunger."

"I'll see about it presently; I'm busy now."

"Yes, busy moving those cards about, and pricking holes in a bit of pasteboard. Beausire, I give you fair warning, if you don't devise some way to better our condition, I'll think over my old acquaintances, and see if I can't find one who has influence enough to send such an idiot as you are to the Charenton Insane Asylum."

"But I tell you this combination will prove infallible."

"Ah! if Cardinal Richelieu was n't dead!" mutters the woman.

"What did you say?"

"Or if Cardinal Rohan was n't ruined!"

"Eh?"

"Or if Madame de la Motte had n't run away!"

"What?"

"If I could only meet some of my former friends, I shouldn't be obliged to share the poverty of an old simpleton like you," she continues, with a gesture of utter disdain.

"But I tell you we shall be rich soon."

"Worth your millions, I suppose."

"Yes."

"Show me the first ten-crown-piece of your million, and I'll take the rest for granted."

"I'll do it this very evening, for that is the exact amount promised me."

"And you'll give it all to me, my dear Beausire?"

"I'll give you five of it to buy a silk gown for yourself, and a velvet coat for the little one. With the other five — well, with the other five I'll win you the promised million. I've discovered an infallible combination this time, I tell you."

"Yes, the twin sister to the one that ate up the sixty thousand francs paid you after that Portuguese affair."

"Ill-gotten wealth never profits any one," replies Beausire, sententiously.

"Then I suppose the money you are talking about has been bequeathed to you by some uncle who recently died in the Indies or in America?"

"This money, Mademoiselle Nicole Legay, has been earned, not only honestly, but honourably, in an affair in which I, as well as many other noblemen of France, am deeply interested."

"So you belong to the nobility, Monsieur Beausire?"

"Say *de* Beausire, *de* Beausire, Mademoiselle Legay, as stated in the certificate of your child's birth, recorded in the sacristy of St. Paul's church, and signed by your humble servant, Jean Baptiste Toussaint de Beausire, on the day I gave him my name."

"And a fine gift it was!" mutters Nicole.

"And my fortune!" adds Beausire, pompously.

"If the good Lord gives him nothing else, the poor lad is likely to live on charity, and die in an almshouse."

"Really, I can't stand this," is the sullen response. "You are forever complaining."

"Then don't stand it!" she retorts, giving free vent to her long-repressed wrath. "Good heavens! who wants you to stand it? Thank God, I'm not worried on my own account or my child's! From this very night I'll seek my fortune elsewhere!"

Nicole started towards the door, but Beausire barred the way with outstretched arms.

"The money will come this very evening, I tell you. Nicole, are you an atheist?"

She shrugged her shoulders contemptuously.

"Are you a follower of that accursed Voltaire, who denies that there is such a thing as Providence?"

"Beausire, you 're a fool!"

"Springing from the common people, as you do, it is not strange that you entertain such doctrines; but I warn you, they do not become a person of my rank, or harmonise with my political sentiments. As for me, — do you hear? — as for me, I have *faith*; and if anybody should say to me, 'Thy son, Jean Baptiste Toussaint de Beausire, who has gone out to buy a stick of candy with a two-sou-piece, will come back with a purse filled with gold in his hand,' I should reply, 'Very possibly, if it be the will of God,'” and Beausire rolled his eyes piously heavenward.

"Beausire, you 're a fool!" repeated Nicole.

She had scarcely uttered the words before the voice of young Toussaint was heard on the stairs.

"Papa! mamma!" he cried excitedly.

"Papa! mamma!" repeated the voice, coming nearer and nearer.

"What is the matter?" cried Nicole, opening the door with maternal solicitude. "Come here, my child; come here!"

"Papa! mamma!" continued the voice.

"I should not be surprised if the miracle had come to pass, and the little chap had found the purse I was just talking of," said Beausire, noting the exultant ring in the child's tones.

At that very moment the boy rushed into the room, holding his stick of candy in his mouth, and squeezing a bag of sweetmeats against his breast with his left hand, while in the open palm of his right shone a golden louis, which, in the light of the solitary candle, glittered like Aldebaran.

"Good heavens! what has happened to my little dear?"

cried Nicole, leaving the door to take care of itself, and covering the sticky mouth with maternal kisses which shrink from nothing, because they seem to purify everything they touch.

"Here it is!" exclaimed the father, adroitly securing possession of the coin and examining it by the light of the candle, — "a genuine golden louis, worth twenty-four francs."

Then, turning to the child, —

"Where did you find it, you little monkey?"

"I did n't find it; somebody gave it to me."

"Somebody gave it to you?"

"Yes, mamma; a gentleman, a gentleman who came into the grocery shop while I was there, and said, 'Is n't this young gentleman you're waiting on named *de Beausire*?'"

Beausire drew himself up proudly; Nicole shrugged her shoulders.

"What did the grocer answer, my son?"

"He said, 'I don't know about his being a gentleman, but he calls himself *Beausire*.' — 'Does he live near here?' asked the gentleman. 'There, in that house on the left, up three flights.' — 'Give the child all the candy he wants. I'll pay for it,' says the gentleman. Then he says to me, 'See, my dear, here's a louis to buy more candy when this is eaten up;' and he put a louis in my hand, and the grocer gave me this bag of candy, and I ran home. But where is my louis?"

And the child, who had not noticed Beausire's little sleight-of-hand performance, began to hunt about for the coin.

"You have lost it, you little stupid!" said the father.

"No, I have n't! no, I have n't!" shrieked the child.

The controversy might have become serious but for an event that suddenly put an end to it.

While the child, who was still rather in doubt, was searching on the floor for the coin, which was lying snugly ensconced the while in his father's waistcoat pocket, and

while Nicole was wondering who this unknown benefactor could be, the door slowly opened, and a suave voice said, —

“Good evening, Mademoiselle Nicole; good evening, Monsieur de Beausire; good evening, little Toussaint.”

All three glanced in the direction from which the sound proceeded, and saw, standing upon the threshold, an elegantly dressed gentleman, surveying the family group with a smiling face.

“The candy gentleman!” cried the boy.

“Cagliostro!” exclaimed Nicole and Beausire in the same breath.

“You have a charming boy, Monsieur de Beausire. You must be very proud of him.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN CHANGE UNCHANGED.

THERE was a moment's silence after Cagliostro's gracious words; then he walked into the middle of the room and gazed around him as if he desired to satisfy himself fully in regard to the moral and financial condition of these old acquaintances.

The result of this scrutiny must have been sufficiently convincing to a discerning mind like that of the count; for even the most superficial observer could hardly have failed to perceive that the household was reduced to its last twenty-sous-piece.

Of the three persons who were gazing at the count in such profound astonishment, little Toussaint was the first to speak; for, the visitor being associated in his mind only with the events of that evening, his conscience did not reproach him.

"Oh, monsieur, I've lost the gold-piece you gave me!" he exclaimed. "Is n't it too bad?"

Nicole opened her lips to explain the situation, but reflected that her silence might secure the child another louis, which would probably fall into her hands this time; and she was quite right in her suppositions.

"You have lost your gold-piece, my poor child? Never mind; here are two more. Take care of them this time."

And drawing two shining coins from a purse whose rotundity made Beausire's eyes sparkle enviously, he dropped them into the plump hand of the boy, who ran to Nicole, crying, "Look, mamma! here's one for you and one for me."

Cagliostro noticed how pertinaciously the sergeant's covetous eyes followed each movement of the purse, and how heavily he sighed when he saw it disappear in the depths of the count's pocket.

"What, monsieur, still so melancholy?" he exclaimed.

"And you, monsieur, are still a millionaire, I see."

"Good heavens! it seems to me that you, one of the greatest philosophers I ever heard of, either in ancient or modern times, ought to realise the truth of the old adage, 'Money does not bring happiness.' I knew you when you were comparatively rich."

"Yes, I had nearly one hundred thousand francs at one time."

"But had squandered about forty thousand of it when I met you—"

"What is sixty thousand francs in comparison with the wealth at your disposal?"

"Say rather in comparison with the wealth I hold in the capacity of trustee; but if we reckon more accurately, I think it would be another case of Saint Martin and the pauper, only it would be you who would have to give me half your cloak to keep me from freezing. But to return to the circumstances of our first meeting: you had about sixty thousand francs in your pocket; but were you any happier then than you are now? Would you consent to change your present condition, even though you possess nothing but the paltry louis you took from little Toussaint—"

"Monsieur—"

"Don't get angry, Monsieur de Beausire. We quarrelled once, and you were obliged to go out into the street to find your sword, which had flown out of the window, you recollect. You remember it, do you not?" he continued, as Beausire made no response. "Well, now, I ask you again: Even though you possess only the one unfortunate louis you took from little Toussaint,"—the insinuation passed unnoticed this time,— "would you be willing to

exchange your present condition for the much more precarious situation from which I once helped to extricate you?"

"No, Monsieur le Comte, you are right. I would not. Alas! at that time I was separated from my dear Nicole."

"And the police were hunting for you on account of a certain affair in Portugal, — a most villainous affair, too, it was, I remember!"

"It is drowned in oblivion now."

"So much the better; for it must have caused you no little uneasiness. But don't count too surely upon this lapse into oblivion. The police are wonderful divers, and if the net goes to the bottom of the sea, it is as easy to fish up a crime as a fine pearl."

"But for the poverty to which we are reduced, I —"

"You would be happy. In fact, you need only a thousand louis to make your happiness complete."

Nicole's eyes sparkled; Beausire's fairly flamed.

"Yes, if we had a thousand louis, — that is, twenty-four thousand francs, — we could buy a little country place with half of it, invest the rest of the money, and I would turn farmer —"

"Like Cincinnatus —"

"While Nicole could devote herself entirely to the education of our child —"

"Like another Cornelia. Your lives would not only be exemplary, but touching. You hope to get that amount out of the affair you are engaged in just now, I suppose."

Beausire started. "What affair?" he asked, evidently much frightened.

"Why, that in which you figure as a sergeant of the Guards, — that for which you have an appointment to-night under the arcade in the Place du Palais-Royal.

Beausire turned as pale as death.

"Oh, monsieur, don't ruin me!" he cried, clasping his hands imploringly.

“What nonsense you talk! Am I a policeman?”

“I told you that you had some miserable affair on hand,” exclaimed Nicole.

“So you, too, know about this affair, Mademoiselle Legay?”

“No, monsieur; and that’s the very reason I felt sure he was in some scrape or other. When he hides anything from me, it’s bad, — I ’m sure of that.”

“Everything has its bad side and its good side, — good for some, bad for others. No affair can be good for everybody or bad for everybody. For instance, in this case, all the nobility are interested in the success of the enterprise; while it would be greatly to the advantage of the common people to have it fail. Now, if you will take my advice, — which, believe me, is that of a true friend, — you will take sides neither with the nobility nor with the people.’

“Whose part shall I take, then?”

“Your own.”

“Yes, to be sure. You’ve done enough for other people. It is time you thought of yourself.”

“And I,” said Cagliostro, “will merely add — you know I only meddle with matters to play the prophet — I will merely add that, if you become mixed up in this affair, it will not only be at the risk of your reputation and fortune, but of your very life itself. Yes, for you will probably be hanged. In fact, there is very little doubt of it.”

“But they do not hang gentlemen, monsieur,” expostulated Beausire, wiping away the sweat that was rolling down his face.

“That is true; but it would be necessary for you to produce proofs of noble birth, in order to have your head cut off, which would take a good while perhaps, — long enough, at least, to wear out the patience of your judges, who would consequently order you to be hanged provisionally. You will tell me, perhaps, that one should not be ashamed to

suffer in a good cause; that 'Crime makes the shame, and not the scaffold,' as a great poet says."

"But —" faltered Beausire, more and more frightened.

"But you are not so strongly attached to your political opinions that you would sacrifice your life for them; I understand that —"

"I know you have a way of talking that would make the hair of a timid man stand on end."

"I'm sure I have no such intention; besides, you're not a timid man."

"No, not as a general thing; but under some circumstances —"

"Ah, yes, I understand: when one has the galleys threatening him in the rear for theft, as well as looming up in front of him for the crime of treason against the people, or *lèse-nation*,—for that is what a plot which has for its object the abduction of the king would be called now, I presume —"

"Monsieur!" gasped Beausire, utterly astounded.

"Suppose your plot should fail; suppose those two accomplices, the man with the mask and the man in the brown cloak, should be arrested; suppose—one has to suppose all sorts of things in these days—suppose they should even be condemned to death, — Augeard and Besenval were acquitted, it is true, — but suppose these persons should be condemned to death; suppose you should be considered one of their accomplices; suppose the rope were around your neck, and somebody should say to you in answer to your lamentations, 'Poor Beausire! it was all your own fault; for you could not only have escaped this malefactor's doom, but have made a thousand louis, with which to purchase a snug little house in the country, where you could have enjoyed the society of Mademoiselle Olivia and little Toussaint, and also the income from the twelve thousand francs which remained after purchasing the place. Instead of this pleasing prospect, you have the Place de Grève before you, adorned with two or three

gibbets, the tallest of which is destined for you. A grim outlook, my poor Monsieur de Beausire.’ ”

“But how could I have secured the thousand louis?”

“‘Nothing could have been easier,’ the voice would reply. ‘You had only to hunt Count Cagliostro up.’”

“But I did n’t even know that he was in Paris. I did n’t even know that he was still alive.”

“And that is the very reason he came to hunt you up; and when he found you, you see you had no excuse. You could have said to him, for instance, ‘Count, I know how eager you always are for news; I have a nice tit-bit for you. Monsieur, the king’s brother, is engaged in a conspiracy with the Marquis de Favras.’—‘Impossible!’—‘Yes, indeed; I know what I am talking about, for I am one of Favras’ agents.’—‘Indeed? What is the object of the plot?’—‘The abduction of the king, and his removal to Péronne: and, count,—simply for your amusement, of course,—if you so desire it, I will bring you from time to time, or minute by minute, if necessary, news as to how the affair is progressing.’ Then the count, who is a generous-hearted fellow, would say to you, ‘Will you really do this, Beausire?’—‘Yes.’—‘Well, as every kind action deserves to be rewarded, if you keep your word, why, I have twenty-four thousand francs, which I intended to put to some good use, snugly hidden away in a corner of my desk, and the very day the king is carried off, or Monsieur de Favras arrested, you come to me, and, on the honour of a gentleman, these twenty-four thousand francs shall be yours, as these ten louis shall be,—not as an advance, not even as a loan, but simply as a gift.’”

At these words, like an actor who is rehearsing with all the accessories, Cagliostro drew his well-filled purse from his pocket, put his thumb and finger into it, and with a dexterity which testified to his familiarity with this sort of proceeding, took up ten louis exactly,—no more and no less; while Beausire, on his part,—we must do him the justice to say,—entered so well into the spirit of his part that he eagerly extended his hand to receive them.

Cagliostro pushed the hand gently aside.

"Excuse me, but we are dealing only in suppositions, I believe," he said quietly.

"But through theories and suppositions we arrive at facts, as you remarked just now," responded Beausire, his eyes gleaming like coals of fire.

"Have we reached that point?"

Beausire hesitated; but we hasten to say that this hesitation was not due to honesty, or to a regard for his plighted word, but simply to a fear lest Cagliostro should not keep his promise.

"My dear Beausire, I know what is passing in your mind."

"You are right. I hesitate about betraying the confidence an honourable man has reposed in me;" and Beausire rolled his eyes heavenward and shook his head, as much as to say, "What a trial it is!"

"No, it is not," replied Cagliostro. "You are only another illustration of the truth of the wise adage, 'No man knows himself.'"

"What is it, then?" demanded Beausire, flurried by the ease with which the count read his thoughts.

"You are afraid I shall not keep my promise about the money."

"Oh, monsieur!"

"That is only natural; but I offer you a guarantee of my honesty of purpose, — a guarantee that will answer for me personally."

"And that guarantee?" asked Beausire, timidly.

"Is Mademoiselle Nicole Legay."

"Oh, if the count promises anything, it is as good as done!" cried Nicole.

"You see, monsieur, here is proof positive that I scrupulously fulfil my agreements. Once upon a time mademoiselle here was in the very same situation that you are in now, minus this late conspiracy, — that is, the police were in hot pursuit of her. I offered her a shelter in my

house. She hesitated; she feared for her honour; but in spite of all the temptations to which I was subjected, and which you, Beausire, can understand better than any one else, I kept my word. Is this not so, my dear mademoiselle?"

"Yes; by my little Toussaint I swear it."

"You feel sure, then, Mademoiselle Nicole, that I shall keep my word if I promise Beausire to give him twenty-four thousand francs the day the king takes flight, or Favras is arrested? And this, you understand, does not take into account the fact that I shall also untie the knot that threatens to strangle you at any moment, so that there will no longer be any question of rope or gallows for you, at least in connection with that affair. I cannot promise any further than that, you understand, of course. There are vocations —"

"As far as I am concerned, I am as well satisfied as if the notary had signed the papers," responded Nicole.

"Very well, my dear mademoiselle, inspire the heart of Monsieur de Beausire with like confidence, and the business is concluded," said Cagliostro, placing the ten louis in a row on the table, and motioning Beausire to go and talk with Nicole alone.

The conversation lasted only five minutes, but it was of the most animated description.

Meanwhile Cagliostro devoted himself to an examination of the card that was lying on the table, holding it up in front of the candle, and nodding to it as if saluting an old acquaintance.

"Ah, it is Monsieur Law's famous combination you have hit upon," he muttered. "I lost a million myself on that very combination," and he carelessly dropped the card on the table again.

This remark seemed to give a fresh impetus to the conversation between Nicole and Beausire. At last the latter seemed to have made up his mind, for he advanced towards Cagliostro with hand outstretched; but the count drew back, frowning a little.

"Between gentlemen a promise is sufficient," he remarked. "You have mine; give me yours."

"On the honour of a Beausire, I agree to your terms."

"That is enough." Then, drawing a watch, with a portrait of King Frederick of Prussia upon it encircled with diamonds, he added, "It is now a quarter of nine. At nine o'clock precisely some one will be waiting for you under the arcade on the Square Royal, near the Sully Mansion. Take these ten louis, and put them in your waistcoat pocket, button up your coat, buckle on your sword, cross Notre Dame Bridge, and walk up the Rue Saint-Antoine. There is no necessity for you to be late in keeping your appointment."

Beausire did not need to be told twice.

"Where shall I meet you afterwards?" he asked, as he made his preparations for immediate departure.

"In Saint-Jean Cemetery, if you please. When one wishes to talk over an affair like this without being overheard, one had better be among the dead than among the living."

"At what hour?"

"As soon as you are at liberty. The person who gets there first will wait for the other. And now I want to have a little chat with Mademoiselle Nicole."

Beausire seemed inclined to demur.

"Oh, you need have no fears," responded the count. "I respected her honour as a young girl; all the more reason that I should respect her as the mother of a family: so proceed on your way. Beausire, proceed on your way."

Beausire gave Nicole a look, — a look that seemed to say, "Be worthy of the confidence I repose in you, Madame de Beausire," — and with a glance of mingled awe and distrust at the count, took his departure.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LOT AND ŒDIPUS.

It lacked only a few minutes of midnight when a man turned the corner of the Rue Royale and the Rue Saint-Antoine, and walked rapidly down the last-named street as far as Saint Catherine's fountain. There he paused in the shadow to look back and satisfy himself that no one was following him, then continued on his way in a more leisurely fashion until he reached the iron gate of Saint-Jean Cemetery.

There he waited, as if afraid he should see some spectre rise up out of the earth, wiping the sweat from his brow now and then with his coat-sleeve.

At the very instant the clocks began to strike the hour of midnight, something very like a ghost did appear, and, gliding in and out among the yews and cypresses, approached the gate and unlocked it.

As the key grated in the lock, the man outside jumped back.

"Why, Beausire, don't you know me, or have you forgotten your appointment?" asked Cagliostro's mocking voice.

"Ah! is it you?" exclaimed Beausire, like a man from whom a great weight had been suddenly lifted. "I'm glad of it; these devilish streets are terribly dark and gloomy."

"Nonsense! the idea of a brave man like you, with a sword at his side, being afraid anywhere, at any hour of the day or night. You can't make me believe that. But step inside, and you'll feel easier, perhaps, as there is no danger of your meeting any one but me. Now let us follow this path a distance of about twenty yards, and

we'll come to a sort of ruined altar, whose steps will make a very convenient place for us to talk this matter over."

Beausire followed his leader; but after a moment he exclaimed, "Where the deuce are you going? I can't see anything but briars that tear my ankles nearly to pieces, and grass that comes up to my knees."

"This cemetery is one of the worst-kept places I ever saw," replied Cagliostro; "but that is not very surprising, under the circumstances. You know hardly any one is buried here except condemned criminals who have been executed on the Place de Grève, and they show such poor devils little consideration. There are some quite illustrious personages among them, though. If it were daylight, I could show you the place where Montmorency, beheaded for having fought a duel, is buried; and the Chevalier de Rohan, decapitated for conspiring against the government; and Count Horn, broken on the wheel for having assassinated a Jew; and Damiens, quartered for trying to assassinate Louis XV. You do wrong to scorn Saint-Jean Cemetery, Monsieur de Beausire; it is badly kept, but inhabited by quite a distinguished company."

Beausire followed Cagliostro, adapting his step to that of the count as regularly as a soldier in the second rank and file adapts his to the man in front of him.

"Ah! here is a new one," exclaimed Cagliostro, pausing so abruptly that Beausire, not prepared for the sudden halt, came into violent collision with the count's back. "This is the grave of your comrade, Fleur d'Epine, — one of the murderers of François the baker, — who was hanged about a week ago. This ought to interest you, as he was one of your former comrades."

Beausire's teeth fairly chattered. It seemed to him that the briars were so many clenched hands drawing him down to earth, and giving him to understand that Destiny had selected this as the place for his eternal sleep.

"Ah! here we are at last!" exclaimed Cagliostro, paus-

ing, and seating himself on a broken stone, and motioning Beausire to another near by. "Now we can talk at our leisure. Tell me what took place under the arches of the Place Royale. It must have been a very interesting meeting."

"My head seems to be in such a whirl that I think I can do better if you will question me."

"Very well. How many persons were there?"

"Six, including myself."

"Six, including yourself. Now let us see if they were the men I think. There was your friend Tourcaty, a former recruiting-officer."

"Yes."

"And a good royalist named Marquié, formerly a sergeant in the French Guards."

"Yes, Marquié was there."

"Next, Monsieur de Favras."

"Yes."

"Next, the man with the mask."

"Yes."

"Have you any information to give me about that mysterious personage, Beausire?"

"Is he not —" Then he paused, as if fearful of committing a sacrilege if he went on.

"Is he not who?" demanded Cagliostro.

"Is he not —"

"You seem to be tongue-tied, my dear Beausire. You had better attend to it. Knots in the tongue sometimes bring on knots in the throat, which, though removable, are none the less dangerous."

"Is he not Monsieur?" ventured Beausire at last, driven to desperation.

"Monsieur who?"

"Monsieur, Monsieur, the king's brother!"

"It is quite likely that Favras would try to convey the impression that this mysterious personage was the king's brother, as it would be greatly to his interest to have

people believe that he was aided and abetted by a prince of the blood royal; but it seems very strange to me that old stagers like you and Toureaty should allow yourself to be imposed upon in this way, — two old recruiting-officers, too, who are used to measuring with your eye the exact height of every person you happen to meet.”

“What of that?”

“Monsieur is five feet three inches and a fraction in height, while the masked man is five feet six.”

“That is true; I had thought of that before. But if it is not Monsieur, who can it be?”

“Do you know the story of *Œdipus*?”

“Not very well. I saw the piece played once at the *Comédie Française*, but near the end of the fourth act I went to sleep.”

“Well, it had been predicted that *Œdipus* would be the murderer of his father and the husband of his mother; so, believing *Polybius* to be his father, he left home without saying anything about it, and started for *Phocis*. At the intersection of the road leading from *Delphi* to *Thebes*, he overtook a man attended by five slaves. This man was riding in a chariot, and the chariot took up most of the road. Everything could have been amicably arranged, however, if the man in the chariot would have consented to turn a little to the left, and *Œdipus* a little to the right; but both insisted upon keeping the middle of the road. The man in the chariot was hot-tempered, and *Œdipus* was far from patient. The five slaves rushed upon *Œdipus*, one after another, in defence of their master, and *Œdipus* hewed down first one and then another, until at last the master was slain in his turn; then *Œdipus* passed over the six lifeless bodies, and among them was the body of the man who was really his father, so that part of the prophecy was fulfilled. Then *Œdipus* resumed his journey towards *Thebes*. Now, on the road to *Thebes* stands *Mount Phiceo*, and in a path even narrower than that in which *Œdipus* had slain his father, a strange animal, with wings

like an eagle, the body and claws of a lion, and the breast and head of a woman, stopped the way."

"Oh, monsieur, do you really believe that such monsters ever existed."

"I cannot say for a certainty; for when I passed over the same road a thousand years afterwards, in the days of Epaminondas, the creature was dead. He was living at the time of Œdipus, however, and seemed to have a mania for stationing himself on the road and propounding conundrums to travellers, whom he devoured if they failed to answer them. When he saw Œdipus coming, he lifted one paw as a signal for the young man to stop. 'I am the Sphinx, traveller,' he called out, 'placed here to propound enigmas to mortals. If they cannot solve them, they become my property; if they can, why, death will claim me, and I shall have to hurl myself down yonder abyss, where I have thrown the bodies of those who have had the misfortune to encounter me.' Œdipus looked over the edge of the precipice, and saw the bones bleaching below. 'Very well, what is your riddle?' he asked. 'It is this: What animal goes on four paws in the morning, on two at noon, and three at night?' Œdipus reflected a moment; then, with a smile that made the Sphinx feel decidedly uncomfortable, replied, 'If I guess it, you are to throw yourself down yonder abyss?'—'Such is the decree,' answered the Sphinx. 'Well, the animal is *man*,' replied Œdipus."

"*Man?*" exclaimed Beausire.

"Yes, man. In his infancy—that is, in the morning of life—he creeps on both hands and feet; in middle age—that is, at midday—he walks on two feet; in the evening—that is, in his old age—he leans upon a cane."

"That's true!" said Beausire. "The answer must have staggered the Sphinx."

"Yes, staggered him so that he fell headlong down the precipice, and, being too honourable to save himself with his wings,—which you probably think proved him to be an

idiot, — he dashed his brains out on the rocks below. As regards Œdipus, he continued on his way, reached Thebes in safety, met Jocasta, the widow of the man he had killed at the cross-roads, and married her, thus fulfilling both prophecies.”

“But what resemblance do you see between Œdipus and the masked man?”

“A great resemblance. Listen! First, would you like to know his name?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I’ll ask *you* a conundrum, then. I’m a better fellow than the Sphinx, though, and won’t eat you alive if you can’t guess it. Attention, now! What young scion of nobility is it who is his father’s grandson, his mother’s brother, and his sister’s uncle?”

“The devil take me if I know!”

“Think a little.”

“Help me.”

“Willingly. I asked you if you knew the story of Œdipus. Well, as that seems to give you no clue, suppose we pass from profane to sacred history. Do you know what is said of the patriarch Lot?”

“And his two daughters?”

“Precisely.”

“Of course I do. But wait a minute. Yes; what was that they used to say about old King Louis XV. and his daughter, Madame Adelaide?”

“You have hit it.”

“Then the masked man must be —”

“Exactly five feet six inches tall.”

“Count Louis —”

“That will do.”

“Count Louis de Nar—”

“Hush!”

“But you said there was no one here but dead men.”

“But there is grass growing on their graves. Well, this grass, like the weeds of King Midas — did you ever hear the story of King Midas?”

“No.”

“Well, I’ll tell you that some other time. Now to business! The object of these conspirators is to carry off the king, is it not?”

“Yes.”

“And to take him to Péronne?”

“To Péronne.”

“And how about the money to do it with?”

“They have two millions.”

“Borrowed of a Genoese banker; I know him. But money is not all that is needed. They must have men as well.”

“Lafayette has just authorised the raising of a legion to go to the assistance of Brabant.”

“How like that amiable Lafayette!” muttered Cagliostro. Then he added aloud, “So they are to have a legion! But one legion cannot carry out such a project as that; they will need an army.”

“They will have an army. Twelve hundred horsemen are to assemble at Versailles at eleven o’clock at night. At two o’clock in the morning they will enter Paris in three separate columns, — the first by the Chaillot gate, the second by the Barrière du Roule, and the third by the Rue de Grenelle. The Grenelle column will put an end to Lafayette; the Chaillot column will attend to Necker; and the other column will dispose of Bailly. This done, they are to spike the guns, and then the three columns will reunite on the Champs Élysées and march to the Tuileries, which is already theirs.”

“What do you mean? What will the National Guard be doing all this time?”

“Oh, the Brabant volunteers are to attend to them. Assisted by four hundred Swiss and three hundred confederates from the provinces, they are to take possession of the palace inside and out. They will rush in upon the king and exclaim: ‘Sire, the Saint Faubourg Antoine is in open revolt! A carriage is in readiness; you must flee!’

If the king consents, the rest will take care of itself; if he does not, they will take him by force to Saint Denis."

"Good!"

"Where they will find twenty thousand infantry. This force, added to the twelve thousand horsemen, the Brabant volunteers, the four hundred Swiss, the three hundred confederates from the provinces, besides the ten or twenty thousand royalists they expect to gather up *en route*, will make quite a large army to escort the king to Péronne."

"And when they reach Péronne?"

"At Péronne they will find twenty thousand men, who are to arrive there about the same time from Flanders, Picardy, Artois, Champagne, Burgundy, Lorraine, and Alsace. They are also negotiating for twenty thousand more Swiss mercenaries, twelve thousand Austrians, and as many Sardinians. With this army they intend to march on Paris and take possession of the Seine, both above and below the city, in order to cut off all supplies, and thus force the city to surrender. The National Assembly will be dissolved, and the king, no longer a king merely in name, will be re-seated upon the throne of his ancestors."

"Amen!" said Cagliostro.

Then he added, rising, —

"My dear Beausire, your conversation has been not only entertaining, but instructive. Have you any further information to impart?"

"Not at present."

"Very well; when you want another ten louis, as a gift, you understand, come and see me at Bellevue."

"And shall I ask for the Comte de Cagliostro?"

"Cagliostro? Oh, no; they would n't know who you meant. Ask for Baron Zannone."

"Baron Zannone? Why, that is the name of the banker who loaned Monsieur the two millions!"

"Very possibly."

"Very possibly?"

“Yes; though I am doing so much business of that kind just now that one such transaction might easily become confounded with another. That is why I did n’t remember it at first, perhaps; but I think I do recall the fact now. Well, in what direction are you going?”

“And you?”

“In the direction you are *not* going.”

“I am going to the Palais Royal, monsieur.”

“And I towards the Bastile.”

CHAPTER XXXV.

GAMAIN AND HIS APPRENTICE.

THE reader may remember that the king expressed a wish to have his former teacher, Gamain, assist him in a difficult piece of lockwork, and had even added that the aid of a clever apprentice would likewise be welcome; so Lafayette, seeing no objection, had given orders that Gamain and his apprentice should be admitted into the king's presence at any time.

There was consequently nothing surprising in the fact that the locksmith, accompanied by an apprentice, both clad in their working-clothes, should present themselves at the Tuileries a few days after the king's conversation with Lafayette and Comte Louis de Bouillé. To the attendant on duty at the door of the king's apartments, they gave their names as Nicholas Claude Gamain, locksmith, and Louis Lecomte, apprentice.

Though there was nothing specially attractive about these names, as soon as the king heard them he hastened to the door, exclaiming, "Come in, come in!" with evident delight.

"Here we are!" said Gamain, entering, not only with the confidence of a welcome guest, but as if he were really the master there. Perhaps his apprentice was less accustomed to the presence of royalty, however; for he remained standing, cap in hand, near the door.

"I am glad to see you, my dear Gamain," said the king. "I have not had a visit from you for so long, I was afraid you had forgotten me."

"And that's the reason you took up with an apprentice, I suppose. That's all right, however, as I was n't on

hand; but, unfortunately, an apprentice is n't of much use when one gets into a tight place."

The apprentice made an almost imperceptible sign to the king.

"What else could you expect?" asked the king. "I was assured that you would never have anything more to do with me, for fear of compromising yourself."

"Upon my word, sire, you must have seen for yourself that it went hard with your friends at Versailles; besides, I saw with my own eyes the heads of those two guardsmen who happened to be in your ante-chamber when your friends, the Parisians, came out to pay you a visit."

A cloud passed over the king's face, and the apprentice averted his gaze.

"But they say things are going on better since you returned to Paris, and that you can do whatever you please with the Parisians now. That's not very surprising. The Parisians are such asses, and the queen is such a wheedler when she wants to be!"

Louis XVI. said nothing, but a slight flush suffused his cheeks.

As for the young man, he seemed greatly distressed by Gamain's familiarity; and after wiping his brow with a handkerchief much too fine for a locksmith's apprentice, he came nearer and said, —

"Perhaps your Majesty will allow me to explain how it happens that Master Gamain has the honour of seeing your Majesty once more, and how I happen to be with him."

"Yes, my dear Louis."

"There it is! *My dear Louis* to an apprentice whom he has known for a fortnight. What do you call me — me, who have known you for five-and-twenty years — me, who first put a file in your hand? So much for having white hands and a glib tongue!" muttered Gamain, highly indignant.

"I call you *my good Gamain*, and I call this youth *my dear Louis*, not because he washes his hands oftener, or expresses himself more elegantly, but because he devised a

way of getting you here, my friend, when every one told me you would never consent to come again."

"Oh, it was n't my fault that I didn't come, but my wife's. She kept saying to me, 'You are keeping bad company, Gamain; your associates are much too grand for you. It is dangerous to be too intimate with aristocrats in these days. We have n't much property, but we must take care of what we have. We have children, too, and we must look out for them. If the king wants to learn lockmaking, let him call in somebody else. There's no lack of locksmiths in France.'"

The king glanced at the apprentice, and, stifling a half-humorous, half-melancholy sigh, replied, "There are plenty of locksmiths in France, undoubtedly, but not another one like you, Gamain."

"That is exactly what I told the master," interrupted the apprentice, "when I went to see him on your behalf. I told him the king was trying to make a lock, and needed his assistance; but that did no good whatever. He said it was only a trap his enemies had set for him; and it was not until yesterday, when I handed him the twenty-five louis your Majesty had given me for that purpose, that he said, 'This certainly must come from the king himself; I will go to him to-morrow.' So this morning I said to him, 'Come, master, it is time to go;' and though I had some difficulty in persuading him to keep his promise, he finally consented to come; so I tied his apron around his waist, and put his staff in his hand, and here we are."

"And now I've got you here at last, Gamain, let us lose no time."

"I say so too," replied the locksmith; "for I promised Madame Gamain I would be home to-night. Let me see that famous lock."

The king placed a partially completed lock in the master workman's hands.

"Why did you tell me it was a mortised lock, you simpleton?" Gamain exclaimed, turning to the apprentice.

“That kind of a lock has a keyhole on both sides. This is merely a closet lock, and does n’t work very well either. With Master Gamain it will have to work, though. Ah! there it is,” he added, as he turned the key.

“Have you found the defect?”

“I should say so. Just as soon as the key releases the large ridge it should unfasten the bolt, should n’t it?”

“Yes.”

“Then on the second half-turn the key must catch the second ridge as soon as it lets go the first.”

“Yes, yes,” rejoined the king.

“And how can the poor key do that if the space between the two ridges is not equal to the thickness of the wards of the key?”

“Ah! But the mistake can be remedied, can it not?”

“Oh, of course! It is only necessary to sharpen the first ridge a little, increase the width of the shoulder to separate the first ridge a little further from the second, and establish the third ridge at an equal distance from it, and there you are!”

“But it will require a whole day to make all these changes,” remarked the king.

“For any one else; but not for me. For Gamain, a couple of hours will suffice, provided he is let alone and not bothered with comments. The shop seems to be well supplied with tools, and in two hours, if I’m not interrupted, you can return and find the work finished, — that is, if the work is kept suitably moistened,” added Gamain, smiling grimly.

“But suppose you need something?”

“If I do, I’ll call the lackey. Just give him to understand that I am to have anything I want, — that is all.”

The king went to the door himself, and said to the attendant outside: “Remain where you are, François; Gamain, my old teacher, is here correcting a mistake for me. Bring him whatever he calls for, and don’t forget a couple of bottles of good claret.”

"Don't you remember that I like Burgundy much better, sire? The devil take your claret! I'd as soon drink tepid water."

"True; I forgot," said the king, laughing. "Some Burgundy, François, some of the Volnay."

"Good! I remember that name," said Gamain, smacking his lips.

"And it makes your mouth water, does n't it?"

"Don't talk about water. Water! I don't see what use water is, except for tempering iron. Water! pooh!"

"Oh, well, don't get excited! While you are here, you shall not hear the word mentioned. In fact, I think we had better leave you alone, so that the word sha'n't escape us unawares. Send for us when you want us."

"And what are you going to do in the mean time?"

"Fit up the cupboard for which this lock is intended."

"That's work more in your line, I guess. Good luck to you!"

"The same to you!" responded the king; and, nodding familiarly to Gamain, he went out in company with the apprentice, Louis Lecomte, or Count Louis, as the reader may prefer to call him, as he can hardly have failed to recognise the son of the Marquis de Bouillé in the pretended apprentice.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN WHICH LOCK-MAKING PLAYS A MINOR PART.

THE king did not leave his workshop by the outer staircase, but by the staircase which was reserved solely for his own use, and led directly down into his study.

Not until they had reached the bottom of the stairs, and the door was closed behind him and his companion, did Louis XVI. appear to recognise the young man who had followed him, cap in hand.

"At last we are alone, my dear count," he said; "and first of all let me congratulate you on your cleverness, and thank you for your devotion. But we have no time to lose. Everybody, even the queen, is ignorant of your presence here. Nobody is within hearing now, so tell me your errand."

"Your Majesty did my father the honour to send Monsieur de Charny to him with a letter and a message, both of which were delivered."

"Then you understand the situation, I suppose?"

"I know that the king desires to have it in his power to leave France at any time he thinks proper."

"And that he relies upon the Marquis de Bouillé to assist him in this project."

"My father is both proud and grateful for the honour done him."

"But what does he think of the project?"

"That it is a very dangerous, but by no means impracticable one."

"In order that Monsieur de Bouillé's co-operation may prove as efficacious as his loyalty and devotion, would it

not be advisable to extend his jurisdiction so that it shall include several of the neighbouring provinces, and especially the Franche Comté ?”

“That is my father’s opinion precisely, sire; but I am glad that the king mentioned the advisability of such a step first, as the marquis feared such a suggestion might be attributed to personal ambition on his part.”

“Nonsense! I have had too many proofs of your father’s disinterestedness for that. But go on.”

“What my father has the honour to propose to your Majesty is this. But first permit me to ask if the king has decided upon the place to which he wishes to retire. Besançon, Valenciennes, Sedan, and Montmédy are the towns which seem to my father most desirable in the present condition of affairs; or the king might leave the country by the way of Ardennes and Austrian Flanders, returning subsequently to one of the towns controlled by my father, where troops could be gathered in advance.”

“Besançon is too far off, my dear count, and I should run too much risk of being arrested before I reach my destination. Valenciennes would do very well as regards distance, and the inhabitants are devoted to me; but Rochambeau is in command in Harnault, and is consequently at the very gates of Valenciennes. As for leaving the country by way of Ardennes, and appealing to Austria, no, most decidedly no! Aside from my distrust of Austria, which never meddles with our affairs without involving us in much greater difficulties, Austria has quite enough on her hands just now, — what with the illness of the emperor my brother-in-law, the war with the Turks, and the revolt in Brabant, — without having her embarrassment increased by a rupture with France. Besides, I am resolved not to leave France. Once outside the limits of his kingdom, a monarch cannot be sure that he will ever return. Remember Charles II. and James II.: one did not return until after thirteen years had elapsed; the other, never! I prefer Montmédy. Montmédy is at a convenient distance, besides

being in the centre of your father's jurisdiction. Tell the marquis that my choice is made, and that it is to Montmédy I shall retire, in case I should deem a change of residence necessary."

"Then the king has not yet fully decided upon flight?"

"Nothing is decided as yet. Everything will depend upon circumstances. If I see that the queen and my children are likely to be exposed to new perils, like those of that terrible day and night in the early part of October, I shall make up my mind at once; and my decision, once made, will be irrevocable."

"May I be permitted, sire, to give you my father's advice in regard to the arrangements for the journey?"

"Certainly."

"He thinks you would lessen the dangers of the journey by dividing the party; that your Majesty should take one route with Madame Royale, your daughter, and Madame Elizabeth, your sister, and the queen another, with the dauphin, in order that —"

"It is useless to discuss the matter, my dear Louis. The queen and I decided, in a solemn moment, that we would never separate. If we are saved, we must be saved together, or not at all."

The young count bowed.

"When the time comes, the king has only to give his orders, and they will be executed. One thing more, sire. There are two routes to Montmédy. Which does your Majesty propose to take?"

"I have been considering that matter, and have decided upon the Chalons route, passing through Varennes, but avoiding Verdun. You see it marked on this map here," he added, pointing to a large map of France spread out upon a table near by.

"And now that everything is settled, or nearly settled, will your Majesty allow me to repeat a few lines from an Italian writer, which seemed to my father so particularly applicable to the situation that he made me commit them

to memory, in order that I might be able to recite them here?"

"Most assuredly, monsieur."

"'Delays are always dangerous, and circumstances are never entirely favourable to any undertaking; so, if we wait until the time suits perfectly, we shall never undertake anything.'"

"I recognise the words as those of Machiavelli. I shall not forget his counsel, I assure you. But hush! I hear footsteps on the stairs. Gamain is coming down. Let us get ahead of him, so that he shall not notice that we have been occupied with anything but the closet."

The king stepped forward and opened the door of the private staircase.

It was quite time, for Gamain was on the lowest step, lock in hand.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

WHICH SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT THERE IS TRULY A
PROVIDENCE FOR DRUNKARDS.

ABOUT eight o'clock in the evening of that same day a man who was clad in the garb of a mechanic, and who placed his hand every now and then on his waistcoat pocket, as if it contained a considerably larger sum of money than usual, came out of the Tuileries, turned to the left, and walked down the avenue which borders the Seine and forms that portion of the Champs Elysées known as the Queen's Drive.

At the first wine-shop he came to, this man seemed to have a violent struggle with himself to decide whether he should or should not enter it, — a struggle in which he came off victorious.

The door of the second wine-shop was the scene of a like conflict, and a man who had been following him unobserved must have felt confident that he would succumb; for he deviated so much from a straight line that his feet fairly grazed the threshold of the Temple of Bacchus this time.

But again Temperance triumphed; and if he had not encountered a third wine-shop in his path, and if he could not have broken the pledge he had evidently made to himself, without retracing his steps, it is quite possible that he might have continued on his way, not sober, — for he had already partaken of a generous quantity of that liquid which gladdens the heart of man, — but at least in a condition that would have enabled him to direct his course in a tolerably straight line towards the place to which he was journeying.

But, unfortunately, there was not only a third and a fourth, but a twentieth wine-shop on his route; and the temptation being so frequently renewed, his powers of resistance proved unequal to the strain, and after the third struggle he yielded. It is only fair to say, however, that he must have made a sort of bargain with himself at the door; for when he entered, he did not sit down, but remained standing at the counter, and asked for only a single glass.

Meanwhile, the man who had been following him seated himself on the parapet opposite the shop, possibly to enjoy the view; but took up his line of march again after the mechanic emerged from the wine-shop, and continued on his way.

But who can say where a person will stop when he has once tasted the intoxicating cup, and when he perceives, with mingled astonishment and satisfaction, that nothing creates thirst like drinking; for hardly had the workman proceeded a hundred yards before his thirst became so great that he was compelled to stop again and quench it, — only this time he felt that a single glass would not be enough, and so called for a pint bottle.

Still the shadow — which seemed to belong to him now — appeared to feel no annoyance at the frequent delays which this desire for refreshment occasioned; though at the end of another hundred yards his patience was subjected to a still harder test, for when the workman halted a third time, his thirst had become so great that he ordered a quart bottle.

This meant a full half-hour of waiting for the patient Argus who was dogging his steps.

Possibly the loss of these five, fifteen, and thirty minutes in quick succession excited some remorse in the heart of the tippler; for, seemingly anxious to avoid further delays, and at the same time continue his libations, he must have made another bargain with conscience, which resulted in his providing himself with still another bottle as a travelling-companion.

After he had reached the *Barrière*, our man had reason to congratulate himself upon this wise precaution; for, from that point on, the wine-shops were few and far between, and finally disappeared altogether. But what did that matter to our philosopher? Did he not carry not only his fortune, but his happiness, with him, like the classic sage?

We say his happiness, because, when the bottle became about half-empty, the tippler began to sing; and no one can deny the fact that singing, like laughing, is one of the means by which man expresses his joy.

But unfortunately the joy in this case was ephemeral, and the song equally short. It lasted only as long as the wine; and when the bottle became entirely empty, and was several times squeezed in vain, the singing changed to growling, which grew more and more vehement, until it changed into muttered oaths.

These imprecations seemed to be heaped upon some unseen persecutors, of whom he complained most bitterly as he staggered along.

"Contemptible wretches," he snarled, "to give an old friend, and his instructor, too, doctored wine! Ugh! when he sends for me again to patch up his old locks, and by that rascally apprentice who deserted me, I'll just say to him, good-d-day; but your M-m-majesty may just patch up your old l-l-locks yourself. He'll see, then, if-if-if a lock is as easy to make as a m-m-manifesto! I'll m-m-make you a lock with three ridges again! I'll make you a b-b-bolt with three t-t-tumblers! Oh, the wretches, they've p-p-poisoned me, sure!"

And as he uttered these last words, the unfortunate victim fell full length for the third time in the road, which was thickly covered with mud.

Twice before he had been able to get upon his feet unassisted, though not without considerable difficulty; but this third time, in spite of his desperate efforts, he was obliged to admit that the task was beyond his strength, and with a groan he sank back, evidently with the expecta-

tion of accepting the bosom of Mother Earth as his couch for the night.

It was apparently for this state of discouragement and imbecility that the unknown man who had followed the drunkard so perseveringly had been waiting; for, after watching his futile efforts for several moments, he cautiously approached him, made a tour of inspection around his prostrate form, and then hailed a passing cab.

"Stop, friend!" he shouted to the driver; "my companion has just been taken sick. Put him inside your carriage and take him to the Sèvres Bridge Tavern, and I'll give you six francs. I'll ride on the box with you."

This last proposal did not seem at all surprising to the coachman, as both his patrons were apparently very common men; so, with that touching confidence which men of that class repose in one another, he asked, "But where's the six francs?"

"Here, my friend," promptly replied the man who had made the offer, producing the money, without appearing to be in the least offended.

"And there'll be a little drink money, too, when we get there, won't there?" responded the coachman, considerably mollified by the sight of the gold.

"That depends. Put the poor devil in, shut the doors and window carefully, try to keep your old horses on their feet, and when we reach the Sèvres Bridge, we will see. My actions will depend upon yours."

"All right. Climb up here and hold the horses. They smell the stable at this hour of the day, and are in a hurry to get back to it. I'll attend to the rest."

The generous stranger obeyed these instructions, and the unconscious man having been safely deposited in the vehicle, the driver clambered on the box again, turned his team around, and whipped up his bony steeds, which jogged along at the melancholy pace common to these unfortunate quadrupeds, and reached the inn at the expiration of about an hour.

After about ten minutes devoted to unloading Citizen Gamain, — whom the reader has doubtless recognised ere this, — we find the worthy master of masters in the locksmith trade seated face to face with the same armourer and at the same table where we saw him in the first chapter of this story.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THAT WHICH MEN CALL CHANCE.

THE reader may be curious to know how this unloading of Master Gamain was successfully effected, and how he was aroused from the state of stupor in which we left him, and restored to a comparatively sober condition.

Mine host of the Sèvres Bridge inn was abed and asleep, and no ray of light filtered through the cracks of his outside shutters when the lusty blows from the fists of Gamain's philanthropical friend re-echoed through the house. These resounding knocks being given in a manner that did not allow the occupants of the house to flatter themselves that they would be able to sleep on in spite of this assault, the innkeeper very slowly and clumsily and sullenly went to open the door for the intruders, promising himself to give them a rebuke suited to the offence, unless — the game proved to be worth the candle.

It did prove to be, however; for at the first word whispered by the man who had pounded on the door in such an unceremonious manner, mine host doffed his cotton night-cap, and with a profusion of bows ushered Gamain and his unknown benefactor into the same room where we saw them enjoying a bottle of wine together several weeks before.

As the coachman and horses had each done their best, the driver with his whip and the horses with their legs, the Unknown added a twenty-sous-piece to the amount already paid; then, having seen Master Gamain securely established in a chair, with his head resting against the wall and a heavy table in front of him, the stranger ordered

a couple of bottles of wine, and some water, and then proceeded to throw open the windows and shutters to admit some fresh air into the room.

He next proceeded to apply a vial of strong-smelling salts to the nostrils of the master locksmith, who no sooner inhaled the pungent odour than he opened his eyes and began to sneeze furiously. Then he muttered some words, which would have been unintelligible doubtless to any one save the clever philologist who, by listening with the closest possible attention, succeeded in distinguishing the words, —

“The scoundrel! he has poisoned me! poisoned me!”

The listener perceived with no little satisfaction that Master Gamain’s mind was still dominated by the same idea as when he lapsed into a state of unconsciousness, and he again applied the vial to the drunkard’s nostrils. This restored the worthy son of Noah sufficiently to enable him to utter a few more words, and render his denunciation all the more terrible by disclosing an unpardonable breach of confidence and want of heart.

“Poisoned a friend,—a friend!” he muttered.

“How horrible!” commented the Unknown.

“Horrible indeed!” stammered Gamain.

“It was lucky I was at hand to administer an antidote.”

“Lucky indeed,” repeated the locksmith.

“As one dose may not be sufficient to counteract the effects of the poison, you had better take another,” said the Unknown, pouring five or six drops from his bottle of salts into half a tumbler of water.

He put the glass to Gamain’s lips; and the locksmith had hardly swallowed the compound before his eyes seemed about to start from their sockets, and he exclaimed between two startling eructations, “What have you given me, you scoundrel! Pooah! pooah!”

“I’ve given you some liquor that will save your life.”

“You may be right in saying that it will save my life, but you’re certainly wrong in calling that stuff liquor;”

and the locksmith began to sneeze again, pursing up his lips and opening his eyes to their widest extent, like a classic mask of Tragedy.

When Gamain opened his eyes for the second or third time, he looked around him, and, with that prompt recollection of the scene of former libations peculiar to confirmed tipplers, he recognised this as one of his favourite resorts. Indeed, on the frequent trips to Paris which his trade necessitated, Gamain seldom failed to stop at this inn; and in some respects this halt was useful, as well as agreeable, inasmuch as the tavern was about midway between Versailles and the capital.

This recognition on his part produced an excellent effect, as it inspired the master locksmith with confidence, and convinced him that he was in a friendly country, so to speak.

"I've finished half my journey, it appears," he remarked, casting another glance about him.

"Yes, thanks to me," rejoined his companion.

"Why thanks to you?" stammered Gamain, transferring his attention from inanimate to animate things. "Thanks to you! And who are you, pray?"

"That question proves that you have a very short memory, my dear Monsieur Gamain."

Gamain scrutinised his companion more attentively.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "It seems to me I've seen you somewhere before."

"Indeed? That's flattering."

"Yes; but when and where? — that's the question."

"Where, do you ask? Look around you, and perhaps you'll see something to refresh your memory. When? That's quite another thing. Perhaps you'll have to take another dose of the antidote to enable you to tell me that."

"No, thank you. I've had enough of your antidotes. Where have I seen you? Why, dear me, it was here in this very room."

"Right, so far."

"And *when*? Why, it was the day I returned from Paris."

"Well, who am I?"

"Why, the man who paid for the drinks, and consequently a jolly good fellow. Shake!"

"With pleasure. It is only fitting that master locksmith and master locksmith should shake hands."

"Yes, now I remember. It was on the sixth of October, — the day the king returned to Paris. We were talking about him, you remember."

"Yes; and I found your conversation very interesting, — so interesting that I am glad to meet you again. When you recover your memory entirely, I want to ask you how you happened to be lying stretched out full length across the road only about twenty yards from a loaded dray, which might have cut you in two if I hadn't gone to your assistance? Had you resolved to commit suicide, Master Gamain?"

"Commit suicide? Me? Well, I guess not. What was I doing in the middle of the road, you ask? Are you sure I was in the middle of the road?"

"Look at yourself and see."

"Whew! won't Mother Gamain make a row when she sees my clothes. 'Don't put on your new clothes; wear your old blouse; it's plenty good for the Tuileries!' That's what she said to me."

"For the Tuileries! Do you mean to say you were coming from the Tuileries when I met you?"

"Yes, certainly I was coming from the Tuileries," responded Gamain, scratching his head as if trying to recall his scattered wits. "Why not? Everybody knows I was once Monsieur Veto's teacher."

"Monsieur Veto! Whom do you call Monsieur Veto?"

"Well, well! do you mean to tell me you don't know they call the king that? Where have you been, I'd like to know? In China?"

"I attend to my trade, and don't bother myself about politics."

“You’re lucky. I have to give some attention to politics, — my wife makes me do it; but it will be the ruination of me, and I know it;” and Gamain rolled his eyes piously heavenward, and sighed heavily.

“I heard you lamenting the loss of your apprentice, too, awhile ago.”

“You did?” cried the bewildered Gamain, more and more astonished.

“Did n’t you say, ‘It’s all the fault of that stupid’ — I forget what you called him.”

“Louis Lecomte.”

“Yes, that was the name. ‘It’s all the fault of that stupid Louis Lecomte, who promised to go back to Versailles with me,’ — that’s what you said.”

“I may well have said so, for it is only the truth.”

“Then if it’s the truth, why do you try to deny it? Don’t you know that these evasions of yours in times like these would place you in a very dangerous position — with any other man but me?”

“Yes; but with you —” said Gamain, eringingly.

“With *me!* What do you mean by that?”

“I mean that with a *friend* like you, one runs no risk.”

“Ah, yes; you display great confidence in your friend. First you say such and such a thing is true, and then you declare it is not. You told me a fine story when I met you here before, and gave me your word of honour that it was true; but I don’t believe a word of it.”

“What story do you mean?”

“A story about a secret door you had made in the house of some great lord whose name and residence you did n’t even know.”

“Well, you can believe me or not, as you choose; but it was a door this time, too.”

“For the king?”

“Yes, for the king; only instead of its being a secret door, on a stairway, it was the door of a closet.”

“And do you expect to make me believe that the king,

who is a very clever locksmith himself, would send for you just to put a lock on a door. Get out!"

"It is true, nevertheless. Poor man! he thought he should be able to get on without me when he began his lock. 'What's the use of sending for Gamain!' he said. 'As if I could n't get along without Gamain!' But he soon began to get muddled over his bolts and ridges, and had to send for poor Gamain, after all."

"He sent one of his favourite attendants, Hue, or Durey, or Weber, for you, I suppose."

"You're very much mistaken there. He had hired an apprentice, it seems, — a young fellow who knew even less about the trade than he did himself. So one fine morning this young fellow comes out to Versailles and says to me, 'Look here, Father Gamain, the king and I have been trying to make a lock; but, for some reason or other, it won't work.' — 'Well, what do you want with me?' says I. 'We want you to come to Paris and see what is the matter with it,' says he. 'There's not a word of truth in that,' says I. 'The king did n't send you here. You're just trying to get me into a trap.' — 'You're wrong,' says he; 'and here's the twenty-five louis the king commissioned me to bring to you to prove it.' And, sure enough, he had the money right there in his hand!

"Is that the money you have there in your pocket?"

"No; this is another twenty-five. The first twenty-five were only on account."

"Fifty louis for fixing a single lock. There must be something behind all this."

"That's the very thing I said to myself. Besides, that apprentice —"

"Well, what of the apprentice?"

"Oh, he looked like a sham, somehow. I ought to have questioned him more about where he learned his trade, and all that."

"But you're not the person to be deceived when you see a man at work."

“Oh, I don’t say he can’t work. The fellow handled his file and chisel well enough. I’ve seen him cut off a red-hot iron bar at a single blow, and bore an eyelet with a rat-tail as well as he could have done it with a gimlet and a lathe. But he had no sooner finished a bit of work than he’d go and wash his hands; and when he washed ’em they came out as white as snow. A real locksmith’s hands don’t come white like that. I’d have a nice time getting mine clean, I should.”

And Gamain proudly displayed his grimy, callous hands, which seemed to bid defiance to all the almond pastes and soaps in the world.

“And when you got to the palace, what did you do?” inquired the Unknown, reverting to the subject that seemed to interest him most.

“Well, it seems that we were expected; and they took us right up to the workshop, where the king showed me a lock, — not such a bad piece of work, but he had come to grief over the ridges. It was a lock with three ridges, you see. There are not many *locksmiths* capable of making one, — much less kings. I looked at it, and saw what the trouble was the minute I put my eyes on it. ‘Just let me alone for an hour, and I’ll fix it,’ I said to the king; and the king says, says he: ‘Go ahead, my friend. Just make yourself at home. Here are the files and pincers, and while you’re fixing the lock, we’ll go and get the cupboard ready.’ And then he took his scamp of an apprentice and went off.”

“By the main stairway?” asked the Unknown, carelessly.

“No; by the private stairway that leads down into his office. Well, when I’d finished my job, says I to myself: ‘I do believe that closet’s only a blind; I’ll bet them two are shut up together down there hatching some plot or other. I’ll creep downstairs as soft as I can, and open the door into the office quick, and then I’ll find out what they’re up to,’ says I.

“And what were they doing?”

“Doing? Listening, I guess. I ain’t got the foot of a ballet-dancer, you know; and though I tried to step as light as I could, the damned stairs creaked so that they heard me coming, and before I could get my hand on the knob, the door opened. Who got left that time? Gamain.”

“So you did n’t find out anything, after all?”

“Just wait a bit. ‘Ah, Gamain, is it you,’ says the king. ‘Yes, sire,’ says I, ‘I’m done.’ — ‘And we, too, are done,’ says he. ‘But come here! I’ve another little job for you;’ and he led me through his study very quick, but not so quick that I did n’t see a big map spread out on the table, — a map of France, I know, for I saw three *fleurs-de-lis* in one corner.”

“Did you notice anything peculiar about this map of France?”

“Yes, I noticed there were three long rows of pins stuck in it, all running from the centre of the map to one side of it, about equal distances apart. You might have thought they were soldiers marching to the frontier by three different roads.”

“Nothing seems to escape your keen eye, Gamain,” said the Unknown. “Your perceptive powers are really something marvellous. So you think the king and his companion had been studying that map, instead of working on the cupboard.”

“I’m sure of it.”

“You can’t be *sure* of it.”

“But I am, though.”

“And how?”

“Why, all the pins had wax heads, — some black, some blue, and the others red; and the king had a red-headed pin in his hand, and picked his teeth with it, without being aware of it.”

“Ah, Gamain, my friend, if I ever make any important invention in gunmaking, I sha’n’t invite you into my

workshop, or even allow you to pass through it, unless you are blindfolded, as you were the day you were summoned to that great nobleman's mansion ; and even then you discovered that there were ten steps leading up to it, and that the house overlooked the boulevards."

"Just wait a minute!" exclaimed Gamain, delighted with the compliment ; "I'm not through yet. There was a closet, though."

"Ah, where was it?"

"Where? Guess. Hidden in the wall, my friend."

"In which wall?"

"In the wall of the inner passageway that connects the king's chamber with the dauphin's."

"What you tell me is very strange. Is the closet in plain sight?"

"I should say not. I looked with all my eyes, and could n't see a sign of it; so I asked where it was. The king glanced around as if to make sure that there was nobody else there to hear what he said, and then he answered: 'Gamain, I've always trusted you, and I'm going to trust you now, though I should n't like anybody else to know my secret. Look here!' And as he spoke — the apprentice was holding the candle for us, there's no light in the passage — the king moved a panel in the wainscot, and I saw a round hole about two feet in diameter at the opening, not more. Seeing how surprised I was, he said, says he: 'My friend,' — and he winked at the apprentice as he spoke, — 'do you see that hole? I've had it made to keep my money in. This young man helped me make it during the four or five days he spent at the palace. Now I want a lock put on the iron door leading into it, and the lock must be put on in such a way that when the panel is replaced, it will hide it entirely. If you need any help, take this youngster here. He will help you. You don't want him, eh? Then I'll keep him busy elsewhere.' — 'Oh,' says I, 'you know very well that when I can do a job alone, I don't ask anybody's help. Here's a good

four hours' job for anybody else, but I'll do it in three so go about your business, youngster. You can attend to yours too, sire; and if you've got anything you want to lock up in this closet, come back in three hours, and you can do it.' The apprentice must have gone off to do a job somewhere else, as the king said, for I have n't seen him since. At the end of three hours the king came back alone. 'Well, how are you getting on, Gamain?' says he. 'I'm done, sire,' says I, and showed him the door, that moved as if it enjoyed moving, and the lock that worked as smooth as could be. 'A good job!' says the king. 'Now, Gamain, will you help me count the money I want to hide?' says he. Four big bags of gold were brought in by a valet, all in two-louis-pieces. 'Now let's count 'em,' says the king. I counted one million, and he another. There were twenty-five louis over, miscounted, somehow. 'Here, Gamain,' says the king, 'take these twenty-five louis for your trouble;' as if it was n't a shame to make a man count a million louis, — a poor man, too, with five children, — and give him only twenty-five louis for his work. What do *you* think of it?"

The stranger's lips moved.

"It is contemptible, that's a fact," he replied at last; but it is rather doubtful to whom or what he mentally applied the adjective.

"And wait, — that is n't all. I took the twenty-five louis and put them in my pocket, and then I said: 'Thank you, sire, but I have n't eaten anything since morning, and I'm dying with thirst.' The words were scarcely out of my mouth when the queen came in through a concealed door; so she was right in front of me before I knew it. She had a plate in her hand, with a small cake and a glass of wine on it. 'My dear Gamain,' said she, 'you're thirsty, I'm sure, — take a glass of wine; and hungry too, so eat a cake.' — 'It is n't worth while to trouble yourself on my account, Madame Queen,' I said, bowing. Now what do you think of that? One glass of wine for a man who tells you he's

thirsty, and one little cake for a man who declares that he's starving! A single glass of wine! It is contemptible, that's what it is."

"You refused it, then, I suppose."

"I should have done better to refuse it, but I did n't; I drank it. As for the cake, I tied it up in my handkerchief, and said to myself: 'Though it won't do for the father, it may do for the children.' Then I thanked the madame, — though I don't think it was worth while, — and started for home, vowing I'd never set foot in the Tuileries again."

"But why do you say you would have done better if you had refused it?"

"Because they must have put poison in it. I had hardly crossed the bridge before thirst seized me again; and such thirst! It was just where the river runs along on your left, and the wine-shops begin on your right. It was there I first found out what vile stuff they had given me; for the more I drank, the thirstier I became. This sort of thing went on until I lost consciousness. They may rest assured of one thing, — if I am ever called upon to testify against them, I shall swear that they gave me twenty-five louis for four hours' work and for counting a million for them, and then, for fear I should tell where they had concealed their treasure, they tried to poison me like a dog."

This was, in fact, the very charge which this infamous wretch made against the queen afterwards in the presence of the Convention.

"And I can substantiate your testimony, my dear Gamain, by swearing that I administered an antidote that brought you back to life," said the gunsmith, rising.

"Henceforth it shall be friendship until death between us," said Gamain, pressing the stranger's hands gratefully.

And refusing, with Spartan-like firmness, the glass of wine the Unknown urged upon him for the third or fourth time, — for the ammonia had had the twofold effect of sobering him and disgusting him with liquor for twenty-four hours, — Gamain resumed his journey to Versailles, where he arrived

safe and sound about two o'clock in the morning, with the twenty-five louis the king had given him in his waistcoat pocket, and the queen's cake still tied up in his handkerchief.

Left alone in the inn, the pretended gunsmith drew out a set of tortoise-shell tablets inlaid with gold, and wrote the following memoranda upon them:—

“ Behind the alcove, in the dark passage leading from the king's chamber to the dauphin's, — an iron safe.

“ Ascertain if this Louis Lecomte, a locksmith's apprentice, is not Count Louis de Bouillé, son of the Marquis de Bouillé, who arrived from Metz ten days ago.”

CHAPTER XXXIX.

DOCTOR GUILLOTIN'S INVENTION.

Two days afterwards, thanks to the ramifications extending through all classes of society, and even into the royal household, Cagliostro had learned for a certainty that Count Louis de Bouillé had arrived in Paris about the middle of November; that his presence in the city had been discovered by his cousin, General Lafayette, three days afterwards; that he was presented to the king that very same day; that he had offered his services to Gamain on the twenty-second of November, and that four days afterwards he accompanied the locksmith from Versailles to Paris; that they were ushered into the king's presence immediately upon their arrival at the Tuileries; and that the young count returned to his lodgings afterwards, where he changed his clothing, and then started off post-haste for Metz.

The next day after Cagliostro's interview with Beausire, the latter presented himself at the residence of the so-called Baron Zannone at Bellevue, in a terrible state of excitement. Returning from a gaming-house at seven o'clock in the morning, after losing his last penny, Monsieur Beausire found his rooms deserted, Mademoiselle Olivia and young Toussaint having disappeared. It at once occurred to him that Cagliostro had declined to leave the house the evening before, on the plea that he had something of a confidential nature to say to Olivia. This certainly furnished good grounds for suspicion; Olivia must have been enticed away by the count.

On sending in his name, he was promptly received by Cagliostro. Beausire hesitated a little on finding himself

face to face with the count, who seemed such a high and mighty personage that Beausire scarcely dared to call him to account, despite his wrath and indignation. But the count, as if able to read the heart of his visitor, said:

“I have noticed that you have but two passions,—gambling, and Mademoiselle Olivia.”

“Then you know what brings me here?”

“Perfectly. You came for Olivia. She is at my house.”

“What! here with you?”

“No, at my house in the Rue Saint-Claude. She is occupying her old apartments there; and if your conduct is satisfactory, and you bring me some interesting items of news now and then, I shall give you twenty-five louis, so that you can go and play the gentleman at the Palais-Royal, and also purchase a handsome coat in which to play the lover on the Rue Saint-Claude.”

Beausire was strongly inclined to demand his beloved Olivia then and there; but Cagliostro made another allusion to that wretched affair connected with the Portuguese embassy, which seemed to be ever hanging over the ex-sergeant's head like the sword of Damocles; so the irate visitor held his peace.

As Beausire seemed inclined to doubt whether his charming Nicole was really at the house on the Rue Saint-Claude, the count ordered his carriage, and, taking Beausire with him to his city residence, ushered him into the *sanctum sanctorum*, where, by moving a picture aside, he permitted Beausire to see, through a skilfully contrived aperture, his divinity, arrayed like a queen, half reclining in a big armchair, reading one of those naughty books which were so common at that epoch, and which had been one of her chief sources of enjoyment when, as Mademoiselle de Taverney's maid, she had been fortunate enough to get hold of them; while her son Toussaint, dressed like a scion of royalty, in a Henry IV. hat trimmed with plumes, and a sky-blue velvet sailor suit, with a tricoloured sash fringed with gold, was amusing himself with some costly toys.

The heart of the lover and father swelled with joy at the sight, and he was quite willing to promise anything the count asked; so it was finally agreed that whenever Beausire brought the count any important news, he, Beausire, was to be paid, first in gold, and then by the privilege of visiting his charmer.

Everything was progressing as favourably as the heart of man could desire, when, in the month of December, at an absurdly early hour for that season of the year, — that is to say, about six o'clock in the morning, — Doctor Gilbert, who had been hard at work for an hour and a half, was startled by three loud knocks at his door; and feeling certain, from the regular intervals between them, that they had been given by the hand of a brother mason, he hastened to open it, and saw Cagliostro standing there, with a peculiar smile upon his lips.

Gilbert never found himself face to face with this strange and mysterious personage without experiencing a thrill of awe.

“Why, count, is it you?” he exclaimed; then, extending his hand with an evident effort, he added, “Of course you are welcome, at whatever hour you come, and whatever business brings you here.”

“What brings me here this morning, my dear Gilbert, is my desire to have you witness a very interesting experiment, which I had the pleasure of talking to you about some time ago.”

Gilbert endeavoured in vain to recall the experiment to which the count alluded.

“I fail to remember, count.”

“Come with me, all the same, my dear Gilbert. I would not disturb you for any mere trifle, I assure you; besides, you will meet some very distinguished persons at the place to which we are going. But make haste, for we have no time to spare.”

Being dressed already, Gilbert had only to lay down his pen and put on his hat. These simple preparations for departure being concluded, he said, —

"I am at your service, count."

A carriage was in waiting, and the two men entered it. As it started off rapidly, without any order from the count, it was evident that the coachman knew in advance where he was to drive; and in about fifteen minutes the vehicle stopped in a large square courtyard, surrounded with stone walls pierced by two rows of small grated windows; and as he alighted, Gilbert perceived that he was in the courtyard of a prison, which he soon recognised as that called the Bicêtre Prison.

The place, which was gloomy enough at all times, was rendered still more so now by the dull light that pervaded it, and the chilliness of the atmosphere. A fine rain, too, was falling, which imparted a leaden hue to the prison walls.

Under the superintendence of their foreman, but also under the close supervision of a man dressed in black, five or six carpenters were busy setting up a machine of a peculiar and unknown character.

On the arrival of the new-comers, the man in black raised his head; and Gilbert shuddered, for he recognised Doctor Guillotin, whom he had met in Marat's basement-room.

Advancing towards Gilbert and Cagliostro, he said, "Good-morning, Baron Zannone; it is very kind in you to come, and bring the doctor with you. You recollect, perhaps, that we met at Marat's, doctor, and that I then invited you to witness this experiment; but, unfortunately, I forgot your address afterwards. You will see something very curious, — the most philanthropical machine that was ever invented."

Then, suddenly turning to the machine, which seemed to be the object of his every thought, he exclaimed, "Wait, wait, Guidon! what are you about? You're putting that in wrong end foremost!"

And, rushing up the ladder, he was on the platform in an instant, and speedily rectified the mistake which had

been made by the mechanics, who did not yet understand the workings of this new machine.

"There, that's all right!" exclaimed the doctor, with a sigh of relief. "Now the knife must be placed between the grooves. But, Guidon, why are these grooves not lined with copper, as I directed?"

"I thought the wood, being good, well-seasoned oak, would do just as well as copper," replied the head carpenter.

"Oh, yes, there it is again!" responded the doctor, scornfully. "Save, save, even when the progress of science and the good of humanity are involved. Guidon, if this experiment fails, I shall hold you accountable. Gentlemen," he continued, turning to Cagliostro and Gilbert, "I call you to witness that I demanded that these grooves should be lined with copper, and that I protest against the omission; so if the knife catches or slips, it is not my fault. I wash my hands of it."

At last the machine was successfully set up, in spite of these petty annoyances, and assumed a murderous air, which delighted its inventor, but sent a chill through Doctor Gilbert's veins.

First, there was a platform, about fifteen feet square, reached by a short step-ladder. About two-thirds of the way back on this platform, and facing the steps, were two perpendicular posts ten or twelve feet high. In these posts were the grooves which Master Guidon had omitted to line with copper, much to the philanthropical inventor's regret.

Released by means of a spring, a crescent-shaped cutter, or knife, moved up and down in this groove, its force in descending being greatly augmented by heavy weights.

Between the two posts was a small space filled with two sliding boards; and when a person's head was inserted between them, they closed in such a manner as to encircle the neck like a collar.

While the carpenters were putting the finishing touches

to the machine, Cagliostro, in a whispered aside, expressed his doubts as to its really being a new invention, declaring that the Italian *mannaya* and the Toulouse *doloire* used in the execution of Montmorency were identical with it in many respects, and quoting, in support of his assertion, Puysegur, who says, "In this country they use a *doloire*, or knife, inserted in two pieces of wood. When the head is placed upon the block, the knife is released by means of a rope, and the descending blade severs the head from the body."

Meanwhile, several other persons had entered the courtyard, — persons who had also been invited to witness the experiment, doubtless.

The first was an aged man of our acquaintance, a prominent character in our narrative, who, though already stricken with a malady of which he must soon die, had left his chamber in spite of the inclement weather, at Guillotin's urgent request. He was accompanied by Giraud, the superintendent of public buildings in the city of Paris, who, by reason of his public office, had been favoured with a special invitation.

Another group was composed of four plainly dressed men, who entered the courtyard without speaking or being spoken to by any one, and took their places in the furthest corner, where they remained standing, with their hats in their hands, in spite of the rain. One of the party, a tall, benevolent looking man of about fifty years of age, to whom his companions seemed to listen with marked deference, was Charles Simon. He had seen his father cut Damiens in quarters; he had also assisted him when he had the honour of cutting off the head of Monsieur de Lally Tollendal.

He was commonly known as Monsieur de Paris.

The other men were his son — who was to have the honour of aiding him in the decapitation of Louis XVI. — and his two assistants.

The presence of these men proved conclusively that this

experiment was made with the sanction of the government, if not at its instigation.

As the rain began to fall more heavily, Doctor Guillotin, fearing, probably, that the weather might prevent the attendance of some of the invited guests, turned to the most important group, composed of Cagliostro, Gilbert, Doctor Louis, and the architect, Giraud, and, like a manager who suspects that his audience is becoming impatient, remarked, "We are only waiting for Doctor Cabanis, gentlemen. As soon as he comes, we will proceed."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when another carriage rolled into the courtyard, and a man of about forty years of age, with a high forehead, an intelligent face, and quick, searching eyes, alighted from it. It was Doctor Cabanis. He saluted every one with the courteous, affable manner befitting a medical philosopher, and hastened forward to offer his hand to Guillotin, who called out from the platform, "Good-morning, doctor. We were only waiting for you."

At a signal from him a door opened, and two men appeared, each carrying a sack on his shoulders, through which the outlines of a human form were faintly discernible.

Through the gratings of the small windows peered the pale faces of numerous prisoners, whom no one had thought of inviting, but who watched with terrified eyes the grim spectacle, whose object they entirely failed to comprehend.

CHAPTER XL.

A ROYAL RECEPTION.

ON the evening of that same day — that is, on the evening of the 24th of December, Christmas eve — there was a reception in the Pavilion of Flora, in the left wing of the palace of the Tuileries.

The queen not wishing to receive in her own apartments, the Princesse de Lamballe received for her, and did the honours until the queen arrived; after which everything was conducted as if the guests were in the Marsan Pavilion, — the part of the Tuileries occupied by her Majesty.

Young Baron Isidore de Charny had returned from Turin that morning, and immediately after his arrival he was admitted, first into the king's, and afterwards into the queen's, presence.

Both had received him with great friendliness, but the queen's cordiality was especially noticeable. It was due to two causes: first, because Isidore was the Comte de Charny's brother, and secondly, because he came from royal relatives, — the Comte d'Artois and the Prince de Condé, — whose advice and messages harmonised only too well with the most cherished desires of the queen's heart. The princes urged her Majesty to lend a favourable ear to Favras' plans, and to take advantage of that brave nobleman's devotion and join them immediately in Turin. Isidore was also directed to express to Favras their entire sympathy with his plans, their full approval of them, and their earnest wishes for his success.

The queen kept Isidore with her about an hour, invited him to attend the reception in Madame de Lamballe's

apartments that evening, and only permitted him to retire when he asked leave to go and deliver his message to Favras.

The marquis greeted his visitor with a beaming face, for he knew at whose request Isidore had come. The knowledge of the queen's approval, too, filled his heart with joy. Everything promised well. Twelve hundred horsemen were already assembled at Versailles, and each rider would carry a foot-soldier on the crupper behind him, which would make a force of twenty-four hundred, instead of twelve hundred men. The plan for the simultaneous assassination of Necker, Bailly, and Lafayette, had been abandoned, as the marquis thought it would be sufficient if Lafayette was got out of the way. Four men would be enough to accomplish this, and they were to lie in wait for the general's carriage in the evening, at the hour he generally left the Tuileries. One of these men, holding a letter in his hand, would motion to the driver to stop, declaring that he had an important communication for the general. When the vehicle stopped, the general would naturally put his head out of one of the windows to see what the matter was; whereupon one of the two conspirators, who were to be stationed on either side of the street, would blow Lafayette's brains out with a pistol. All the arrangements having been completed, the money disbursed, and the men notified, the king had only to say the word.

There was but one thing that troubled the marquis, — that was the silence of the king and queen concerning the affair. The queen's silence was now broken by her message through Isidore; and vague as were the words thus transmitted, they were invested with great importance in the minds of Monsieur and Madame de Favras, coming as they did from royal lips; and Isidore promised to give renewed assurances of their entire devotion to the king and queen.

About nine o'clock that evening the young baron entered the apartments of Madame de Lamballe. He had never

been introduced to the princess, and she did not even know him by sight; but having been warned of his probable attendance by the queen, she arose when his name was announced, and, with the grace and affability for which she was famous, introduced him at once into the circle of particular friends that had gathered around her.

The king and queen had not yet arrived; but Monsieur de Provence, who seemed rather restless and ill at ease, was conversing a little apart with two particular friends, De la Châtre and D'Avary, while Louis de Narbonne was moving carelessly from group to group, like one who feels himself quite in the bosom of his family.

It is needless to say that as soon as one usher announced the king, and another the queen, all conversation ceased, and a respectful silence followed; for in these days, when a revolutionary spirit had despoiled royalty of so many of its privileges, loyal adherents were all the more lavish in their display of deference. The year 1789 witnessed great ingratitude; 1793, boundless devotion.

Madame de Lamballe and Madame Elizabeth at once joined the queen.

Monsieur walked up to the king to pay his respects, and as he bowed, said to him, —

“My brother, can we not make up a little party, so that, in company with the queen, we can have a little confidential talk under cover of a game of whist?”

“Certainly; arrange it with the queen,” was his Majesty's response.

Monsieur approached Marie Antoinette, to whom Charny was paying his homage, and also saying, in a low tone, “I have seen Favras, and have a very important communication for your Majesty.”

“My dear sister,” Monsieur interrupted, “the king would like a game of whist. We two will play against you, and allow you to choose your own partner.”

“Very well,” answered the queen, suspecting that the game was only a pretext, “my choice is already made.

Baron de Charny, will you join us? and while we play you can give us the latest news from Turin."

"Ah, you are just from Turin, baron?" asked Monsieur.

"Yes, your Highness; and on my way back I passed through the Place du Palais-Royal, where I met a man who is most devoted to the king, the queen, and your Royal Highness."

Monsieur reddened, coughed, and moved away. He was so accustomed to subterfuge himself that a straightforward remark always disconcerted him. He glanced around for De la Châtre, who immediately approached, and who, after receiving a whispered order from the prince, left the room.

Meanwhile the king greeted the gentlemen and the few ladies who were wont to attend these receptions; after which the queen took the king's arm and drew him towards the card-table. After the four had seated themselves, Madame Elizabeth ensconced herself on a small sofa behind the king, and leaned both arms on the back of his chair.

They played two or three hands in silence; then the queen, seeing that respect kept all the other guests at a safe distance, ventured to say, —

"My brother, has the baron told you that he has just returned from Turin?"

"Yes, he mentioned the fact to me."

"Did he tell you, too, that Artois and Condé urge us to join them there?"

The king made a petulant movement.

"I beg you will listen, my brother," whispered Madame Elizabeth, with angelic sweetness.

"Is it possible that you, too, sister —"

"I more than any one else; for I love you more than any one else, and am consequently much more anxious about you."

"I also told Monsieur that I returned by way of the Place du Palais-Royal, and spent an hour at No. 21," remarked Charny.

"At No. 21?" repeated the king. "What is going on there?"

"A gentleman resides there who is most devoted to your Majesty, — as we all are, — and who is ready, like all of us, to die for your Majesty, but who, being more fertile in expedients than we are, has devised a plan."

"What plan, monsieur?" demanded the king.

"If I am likely to displease the king by telling what I know about the project, I will hold my peace."

"No, no, monsieur," interposed the queen, hastily, "go on. There are plenty of people who are conspiring against us; it is well for us to know who are conspiring for us, so that while we are forgiving our enemies we can also remember our friends. Tell us, baron, who this gentleman is."

"The Marquis de Favras."

"Ah! we know him already," replied the queen. "Are you convinced of his devotion, baron?"

"I am positive of it."

"Be careful, monsieur; you are going too far," said the king.

"I would answer for his devotion with my life, sire. As for the practicability of his scheme and its probabilities of success, — that is an entirely different matter. I am too young and too inexperienced to express any opinion on the subject, especially when the safety of the king and queen are involved."

"But what progress has he made in this scheme?" asked the queen.

"All the preparations have been completed. If the king sees fit to say the word, or even make a sign, to-morrow, at this hour, he will be at Péronne."

The king said never a word.

"Do you hear what the baron says, sire?" queried the queen.

"Of course I hear," responded the king, frowning.

"What do you think of the proposal?" asked the queen, turning to Monsieur. "It seems to me sufficiently definite, at least."

“Unquestionably, unquestionably!” replied Monsieur. “Repeat it again, if you please,” he added, turning to Isidore.

“I said that the king has only to say the word, or make a sign, and, thanks to the arrangements made by Monsieur de Favras, he will be in the city of Péronne twenty-four hours afterwards.”

“Does not that sound tempting, sire?” asked Monsieur.

“If I go, will you go with me?” demanded the king, turning abruptly to his brother, and gazing searchingly at him.

“I?”

“Yes, you. You want me to promise to leave Paris. I repeat my question. If I go, will you go with me?”

“But — but — I —” faltered the prince, “I really was not aware — I have made no preparations —”

“Do you mean to say that you were not *aware* of the scheme when you furnished Favras with the money; and that none of your preparations are made, when you have been informed hour by hour how this plot was progressing?”

“This plot?” stammered Monsieur, turning pale.

“Yes, this plot, — or conspiracy, if you prefer to call it by that name; for it is so genuine a conspiracy that if it be discovered, Monsieur de Favras will be cast into prison, tried before the Court of the Châtelet, and condemned to death, unless we can save him by solicitations and bribes, as in Besenval’s case.”

“If the king could save Besenval, he can save Favras too.”

“That does not follow. I may not be able to do for one man what I did for the other. Besides, Besenval was *my* man; Favras is *yours*. Let each look to the safety of his own.”

As he spoke, the king rose; but the queen seized him by the skirt of his coat.

“Whether you accept or refuse, you owe Favras an answer, sire.”

"I?"

"Yes."

"Then this is my answer," responded Louis, disengaging himself from the queen's grasp: "The king of France cannot allow himself to be kidnapped."

"That is to say, if Favras abducts the king without his permission, he is welcome to do so, provided he succeeds; and one who does not succeed is a fool, and fools deserve to be punished," remarked Monsieur.

"Hasten to Favras this evening, at once, and repeat to him the king's exact words: 'The king of France cannot allow himself to be kidnapped.' Favras must put his own interpretation upon these words. Go!" whispered the queen.

The baron, who very naturally considered the king's reply and the queen's order as implying both consent and approval, rushed out, and, jumping into a cab, bade the coachman drive him to No. 21 Place du Palais-Royal, with all possible speed.

CHAPTER XLI.

A DEAD REMINISCENCE.

WHEN the king left the card-table he walked towards a group of young men whose laughter had attracted his attention a short time before.

But at his approach a profound silence fell upon the group; so he said, —

“Well, gentlemen, is the king so unfortunate that he carries gloom with him wherever he goes?”

“Sire —” stammered the young men.

“You were gay enough when we came in a little while ago, the queen and myself.” Then, shaking his head, he added, “Woe to the king in whose presence no one can smile!”

“Sire, the respect we owe —” began Monsieur de Lameth.

“My dear Charles, when you used to come to Versailles to spend your holidays, did you cease to laugh because *I* was there? I said a moment ago, ‘Woe to the king in whose presence no one can smile!’ Now I say, ‘Fortunate is the king in whose presence men can make merry!’”

“The subject of our mirth might not seem particularly amusing to your Majesty,” remarked Monsieur de Castries.

“May I ask the subject of your conversation?”

“The National Assembly.”

“Ah, ha! I don’t wonder you all became serious when you saw me. I cannot allow any one to laugh at the National Assembly under my roof. To be sure, I can hardly say that I am under my own roof now, being in the apartments of Madame de Lamballe; so if you cease to make merry at the National Assembly’s expense, or rather

if you will only laugh at it in a very quiet way, you can tell me what was affording you so much amusement a little while ago."

"Does your Majesty know the topic that was agitating the National Assembly to-day?"

"It had under consideration a new machine for the execution of criminals, I believe."

"Yes, invented by Doctor Guillotin, who is strongly urging it on the acceptance of the nation."

"And you were ridiculing Guillotin, — such a philanthropist as he is, too? You forget that I am something of a philanthropist myself."

"No, sire, indeed we do not; but there are philanthropists and philanthropists. For instance, we have now at the head of the nation a philanthropist who has abolished the examination of prisoners under torture. A philanthropist like that we both love and respect, sire."

And, as if by common consent, all the young men of the party bowed low.

"But," remarked Suleau, "there are other philanthropists, who, although they are physicians, and consequently possess the means of summarily disposing of sick people, are still not content, but must needs set to work devising means of disposing of those who are in health. Upon my word, sire, I wish you would leave all such philanthropists to my tender mercies!"

"And what disposition would you make of them, — behead them with no other sensation of suffering than a slight coolness about the neck?" asked the king, alluding to Doctor Guillotin's claim.

"Yes, sire; I would certainly decree that the inventors of all such machines should be the first to try them. But I have not the honour of being a magistrate; so in the case of this highly respectable Guillotin, I shall probably be obliged to confine myself to the reward I am already preparing for him."

"And what is that, may I ask?"

“Well, the idea struck me that this great benefactor of mankind ought to derive some personal benefit from his invention: so in my sheet, ‘The Acts of the Apostles,’ which is being printed to-night, a christening will take place; for it is only fair that this child of Doctor Guillotin’s, that he publicly acknowledged as his in the presence of the National Assembly to-day, should receive the name of Mademoiselle Guillotine.”

Even the king could not help smiling.

“By the way, the machine was tried at the Bicêtre Prison this very morning, I believe. Were any of you gentlemen present?”

“No, sire, no!” responded a dozen gay voices, simultaneously.

“I was there, sire,” replied a much graver voice.

The king turned, and saw Gilbert, who had entered the room during the conversation, and deferentially approached the group in order to pay his respects to his sovereign, but who had remained silent until the king asked this question.

“You were present, doctor?” the king said, with a shudder.

“Yes, sire.”

“And was the experiment a success?”

“A perfect success in the first two cases, sire; but though the spinal column was cut in the third instance, it was necessary to use a knife to entirely sever the head from the body.”

The young men listened with open mouths and horrified eyes.

“What, sire!” exclaimed Charles de Lameth, evidently speaking for the others as well as for himself, “were three men really executed this morning?”

“Yes, gentlemen,” replied the king; “only the three men were dead men sent from one of the hospitals. Well, what do you think of the machine, Gilbert?”

“I think it a great improvement upon any machine yet

invented; but the accident that happened in the case of the third victim shows that the instrument is not yet perfect."

"How is it constructed?" asked the king.

Gilbert endeavoured to give a description of it; but the king did not seem to obtain a very clear idea of its construction, for he exclaimed, "You draw, I believe, Gilbert? Here are pen, ink, and paper on this table. Come and make me a rough sketch of the machine, and I shall understand it better."

Then, seeing that the young noblemen, restrained by their respect for their sovereign, did not venture to follow uninvited, the king added kindly, "Come, too, gentlemen. This is a subject in which all mankind is interested."

"And who knows how many of us may be destined to have the honour of espousing Mademoiselle Guillotine at some future day!" said Suleau, in a low tone. "Come, gentlemen, and make the acquaintance of your future bride." So they all gathered round the table at which Gilbert had seated himself, in order to make the desired sketch.

The king watched each line with the closest attention as Gilbert proceeded to draw the platform, the stairway leading up to it, the upright beams, the movable boards, the small aperture, and, finally, the crescent-shaped blade.

As the doctor was finishing this last detail the king interrupted him by exclaiming, —

"Indeed, it is not at all surprising that the experiment failed, especially on the third trial."

"And why?" inquired Gilbert.

"Why, on account of the shape of the knife," the king replied. "It was certainly not a very clever idea to give the shape of a crescent to a blade that is likely to encounter any great resistance."

"What shape would your Majesty give to it?"

"Why, that of a triangle."

Gilbert undertook to alter the sketch.

“No, not in that way. Give me the pen!” exclaimed the king, carried away by his fondness for mechanics. “See here! bring the steel to a point, so, — like a wedge. Bevel it so, and I’ll warrant you that it will cut off twenty-five heads without the slightest difficulty.”

He had scarcely uttered these words when a piercing shriek resounded behind him; and, turning, he saw the queen, pale as death, reel, and fall fainting into Gilbert’s arms.

Impelled by curiosity, like the others, she had approached the table just as the king seated himself, and looked over his shoulder as he proceeded to correct the sketch. In the instrument before her she recognised the hideous machine Cagliostro had shown her in a carafe of water at the Château de Taverney twenty years before, and at the sight of it she had only strength to utter a terrified cry; then, as if she were already bereft of life through the agency of this same terrible machine, she fell back unconscious into Gilbert’s arms.

CHAPTER XLII.

A PHYSICIAN FOR THE BODY AND FOR THE SOUL.

SUCH an event, of course, brought the reception to an abrupt termination.

No one could account for the queen's swoon, but the fact could not be contradicted.

Madame Lamballe would not consent to have the queen removed to her own apartments; and, in fact, it would have been a difficult matter, for, as the queen occupied the Marsan Pavilion, it would have been necessary to carry her the whole length of the palace.

The royal sufferer was consequently placed on a couch in Madame de Lamballe's bedchamber; and that lady, suspecting, with a woman's quick intuition, that there was some mysterious cause for this sudden fainting-fit, sent everybody away but the doctor, and then stationed herself at the foot of the couch to await the moment when, thanks to Gilbert's remedies, her Majesty should regain consciousness.

At last the queen moved her head slowly from side to side, like one awaking from an unpleasant dream, then heaved a deep sigh and opened her eyes.

It was evident that life had returned before reason; for she gazed around the room for several minutes with the wondering expression of one who neither realises what has happened, nor where she is: then she uttered a low cry, and placed her hand over her eyes, as if to shut out some terrible vision.

Memory had returned; the crisis was past.

Gilbert, seeing no further need for his services, was preparing to retire; but the queen, as if divining his intention, put out her hand and grasped his arm, and, in a voice as nervous as the gesture that accompanied it, exclaimed, —

“Remain!”

Gilbert paused, greatly astonished; for he was well aware of the dislike the queen felt for him, though he had also noticed the influence he seemed to exert over her.

“I am at the queen’s orders,” he replied; “but I think it would be well to allay the anxiety of the king, and of the other friends who are still in the drawing-room: so if your Majesty will allow me —”

“Thérèse,” said the queen, turning to the princess, “go and tell the king that I am myself again, and see to it that I am not interrupted, for I wish to have a few words with Doctor Gilbert.”

Raising herself upon her elbow, the queen watched her friend’s departure from the room; then turned to the physician, and, fixing her eyes searchingly on his face, asked, —

“What do you think of my illness, doctor?”

“Madame, I am a very precise man, — a scientific man; so will you have the goodness to put your question in a more definite form?”

“I wish to know if you think my swoon was caused by one of those nervous crises to which we poor women are specially subject by reason of our organisation; or do you think it was due to a more serious cause?”

“In answer to your Majesty, I would say that the daughter of Maria Theresa — the woman I saw so calm and courageous on that terrible night in October — is no ordinary woman, and, consequently, not likely to be much affected by any of the causes that unnerve ordinary women.”

“You are right, doctor. Now let me ask you another question. Have you any faith in presentiments?”

“Science rejects all phenomena that tend to reverse the

natural order of things; and yet there are facts which unquestionably give science the lie."

"Perhaps I should have asked if you believe in predictions?"

"I believe the Supreme Being, for our supreme good, hides the future behind an impenetrable veil. Some minds, through a close study of the past, may sometimes be able to lift a corner of this veil; but such exceptions are rare. Nevertheless —"

"Well?"

"Nevertheless, there is a man who has controverted all my reasoning by incontestable facts."

"And that man?"

"I scarcely dare name him to your Majesty."

"That man is Cagliostro, your former teacher."

"Say, rather, my benefactor and preserver; for, with my breast pierced with a bullet, unconscious from loss of blood from a wound which I now, after twenty years of medical research, still consider mortal, he nevertheless cured me in a few days. Hence my gratitude, I may almost say my admiration."

"And you have known this man's predictions to be fulfilled?"

"Yes, in a most strange and incredible manner, madame."

"And if he predicted anything in regard to yourself, you would believe it?"

"I should at least act as if it might come to pass."

"So if he had predicted a premature death for you, — a most terrible and disgraceful death, — you would prepare yourself for that death?"

"After everything else had failed, — after I had endeavoured, by all possible means, to escape it."

"Escape it? No, doctor, no! I see very plainly that I am doomed. The Revolution is a maelstrom that will surely engulf the throne; the populace is a roaring lion that will certainly devour me."

“Ah, madame, the lion which you so dread can be made to lie down like a lamb at your feet!”

“All hope of a better understanding between these people and myself is at an end. They hate me, and I despise them.”

“Because you do not know each other. Cease to be a queen to the people, become their mother. Forget that you are the daughter of Maria Theresa, our former enemy; forget that you are the sister of Joseph II., our unfaithful friend. Become a Frenchwoman, and you will hear the voices of the people uplifted to bless you, and see their hands extended to caress you.”

Marie Antoinette shrugged her shoulders disdainfully. “I know them too well,” she retorted scornfully. “They blessed me yesterday; to-day they caress me; to-morrow they will rend in pieces the very one they have blessed and caressed. Doctor, do you mean to tell me that there is any possibility of bringing about a reconciliation between thirty millions of rebels and their sovereigns?”

“Ah, madame, do not so deceive yourself!” cried Gilbert. “It is not the people who are rebelling against the king and queen; it is the king and queen who are rebelling against the people, by talking continually of the privileges of royalty, while all around them the people are talking of liberty and fraternity. France, the France of to-day, madame, is an infant, — the Christ born in a manger for the salvation of the world. Kings will bend the knee to it, and bring their tributes to it, like the wise men of the East who came to the stable in Bethlehem. Italy, Poland, Ireland, and Spain are looking anxiously to this infant, born but yesterday, but upon which their futures depend. With tearful eyes, and shackled hands outstretched, they cry, ‘France! France! our hope is in thee!’ Oh, madame! madame!” continued Gilbert, beseechingly, “it is not yet too late! Take this infant, born only yesterday, to your breast, and be to it a mother!”

“You forget that I have other children, flesh of my flesh, and that in doing what you ask, I should disinherit them for an alien.”

“If that be so,” answered Gilbert, sorrowfully, “wrap them in your royal mantle, — the war mantle of Maria Theresa, — and take them with you out of France; for you speak the truth, the people will turn upon you and rend you, and your children with you. But there is no time to lose. Make haste, madame, make haste!”

“So you are not opposed to our departure now, monsieur?”

“Far from it. Now I know your real intentions, I will assist you, madame.”

“This kind offer comes at a most opportune moment; for a gentleman, who is thoroughly devoted to us, is even now trying to make arrangements for our safe departure.”

“It cannot be of the Marquis de Favras you speak, madame?”

“Who told you his name? Who has betrayed our plans?”

“Oh, madame, be on your guard! A terrible prediction has been made in regard to him also.”

“By the same prophet?”

“Even so, madame.”

“And what fate awaits the marquis, according to this prophet?”

“An untimely, disgraceful, and terrible death, — like that you spoke of just now.”

“Then you speak truly when you say there is no time to lose if we would disappoint this prophet of evil.”

“Do you intend to notify Favras that you will accept his aid?”

“A messenger has just gone to his house for that purpose, and I am now awaiting his reply.”

At that very moment Madame de Lamballe came in, and whispered a few words to the queen.

“Show him in! Show him in!” exclaimed the queen, eagerly. “The doctor knows all. Doctor,” she continued, “it is Monsieur Isidore de Charny, bringing me the Marquis de Favras’ reply. To-morrow the queen will have left Paris; the day after to-morrow we shall be out of France. Come in, Monsieur de Charny, come in! My God! what is the matter? Why are you so pale?”

“The princess says I can speak before Doctor Gilbert?”

“And she spoke truly. Yes, yes; tell me! You have seen the Marquis de Favras? He is all ready? We accept his offer. We will leave Paris — leave France!”

“The Marquis de Favras has been arrested and taken to the Châtelet!”

The queen’s eyes met Gilbert’s. Hers were wrathful, despairing in their expression; but her whole strength seemed to expend itself in that single glance.

Gilbert approached her, and in tones of deep pity said, —

“Madame, if I can be of any service to you, make use of me, I beg of you. My intellect, my devotion, my life, — I place them all at your feet.”

The queen lifted her eyes slowly to the doctor’s face, and in a calm, almost resigned tone, said, “Monsieur Gilbert, you witnessed the experiment this morning; do you think that death by this frightful machine will be as easy as its inventor claims?”

Gilbert sighed, and hastily covered his face with his hand.

Monsieur, who knew all he wished to know, — as the news of the Marquis de Favras’ arrest had spread through the palace in a few seconds, — Monsieur ordered his carriage with all possible speed, and was about to take his departure without troubling himself to inquire if the queen was better, and almost without taking leave of the king; but Louis XVI. prevented it by saying, —

"You are not in such haste to reach the Luxembourg, my brother, that you haven't time to give me a little counsel, I suppose. What do you think I had better do?"

"Do you mean to ask what I should do if I were in your place?"

"Yes."

"I should swear to support the constitution."

"But how could you swear to support a constitution that is not yet framed?"

"All the more reason why you would not feel obliged to keep your oath afterwards," replied Monsieur, with one of those crafty looks which betrayed the deceitfulness of his heart.

The king remained absorbed in thought for a moment, then he said, —

"So be it; but this need not prevent me from writing to Bouillé that our plan still holds good, though it must be postponed for a time. This delay, however, will afford Charny an opportunity to carefully inspect the route we are to take."

CHAPTER XLIII.

MONSIEUR ABANDONS FAVRAS TO HIS FATE.

THE day after the arrest of the marquis the following circular was scattered broadcast through the city:—

The Marquis de Favras, together with madame his wife, was arrested on the night of the 24th, in consequence of a plot organised to raise thirty thousand men for the purpose of assassinating General Lafayette and the mayor of our city, and afterwards to deprive us of the means of subsistence. Monsieur, the king's brother, was at the head of this conspiracy.

(Signed) BARAUZ.

It is easy to understand the revulsion of feeling produced by such an announcement as this. A train of powder could not have produced a more rapid flame than that which was created by this incendiary document. First, it was in everybody's hands; and two hours afterwards everybody knew it by heart.

On the evening of the 26th, the members of the municipal government being assembled at the Hôtel de Ville to listen to the report of the investigating committee, an usher announced that Monsieur asked to be admitted.

"Monsieur!" repeated Bailly, who was presiding at the meeting, "what Monsieur?"

"Monsieur the king's brother," was the response.

The members gazed at one another in astonishment; for, since the day before, Monsieur's name had been on everybody's lips: but even as they glanced at one another they rose.

Bailly cast an inquiring look around him; and, as the silent answer he read in his colleagues' eyes seemed unanimous, he answered, —

“Go and inform Monsieur that we are ready to receive him, though we are greatly surprised at the honour he does us.”

A few seconds afterwards Monsieur entered the room.

He was unattended; his face was pale, and his gait, which was always rather unsteady, was even more vacillating than usual that evening.

He cast a furtive glance around the large assemblage, then spoke in a trembling voice, which grew stronger, however, as he proceeded.

“Gentlemen,” he began, “the desire to refute a base calumny has brought me here. Monsieur de Favras was arrested the night before last by order of your investigating committee, and to-day it is rumoured that I was associated with him.”

Smiles flitted over the faces of his auditors, and an occasional chuckle was heard.

“As a citizen of Paris,” continued Monsieur, “I feel it my duty to inform you of the only relations I have ever sustained towards Monsieur de Favras. In 1772 Monsieur de Favras enlisted in my Swiss Guards. He left the Guards in 1775, and since that time I have not exchanged a word with him.”

An incredulous murmur arose from his auditors, but it was promptly checked by a look from Bailly; and Monsieur consequently remained in doubt as to whether it was a token of approval or disapproval.

“Deprived of my income for several months,” he continued, “and anxious in regard to some heavy payments I had to make in January, I wished to prepare to meet these obligations without making any demands upon the public treasury, and therefore resolved to negotiate a loan for that purpose. Favras was mentioned to me by Monsieur de la

Châtre as a person who might be able to secure this loan for me from a Genoese banker. Consequently, I gave my note for two million francs, the amount required for meeting my obligations at the beginning of the year, and for the support of my regular establishment. It was purely a business transaction, and my steward attended to it for me. I have not seen Favras, nor have I written to him, or held any communication with him. In fact, I have no knowledge whatever of anything he may have done in connection with other matters."

A sneering laugh proved that every one was not inclined to believe this assertion on the prince's part, — that he had intrusted the negotiation of a loan of two million francs to any person without seeing him personally, especially when this agent was an old acquaintance.

Monsieur blushed; and anxious, doubtless, to escape from the false position in which he had placed himself, he continued hurriedly, —

"To my great surprise, I learned yesterday that documents of this description were being sown broadcast through the city."

Here he produced and proceeded to read the circular just now cited, — an entirely unnecessary proceeding on his part, as everybody either had it in his hand, or deeply engraved upon his memory.

When he came to the words, "Monsieur, the king's brother, was at the head of the conspiracy," all his auditors bowed. Did they mean by this that they were of the same opinion as the circular, or did they simply mean that they were perfectly well aware of the accusation?

"You can hardly expect, I am sure," continued Monsieur, "that I should stoop to clear myself of such an accusation; but at a time when the most absurd slander may easily lead you to mistake the most patriotic citizen for an enemy of the Revolution, I have concluded, gentlemen, that it is only just to the king, to you, and to myself to enter into

these details, in order that the public mind may not be left in doubt. Ever since the day when, in the second assemblage of the leading men of the kingdom, I stated my opinion concerning the fundamental question which is still breeding dissensions in our midst, I have not ceased to feel that the time has come for a great revolution, in which the king, by reason of his laudable intentions, virtues, and exalted rank, should act the part of leader, inasmuch as what is of advantage to a nation is of equal advantage to its sovereign; for royal authority should be the safeguard of national liberty, as national liberty should be the basis of royal authority."

Though the meaning of this last phrase was not very clear, the habit of applauding certain combinations of words led some of his auditors to applaud this.

Somewhat encouraged, Monsieur raised his voice a little, and added, with rather more assurance: "Who can mention one word or act of mine which contradicts any of the sentiments I have just uttered? and who can show that I have ever, under any circumstances, ceased to regard the welfare of the king and of the people as the chief object of my thoughts and endeavours? Until then, I have a right to be believed. I have never changed my opinions and principles, and I never shall."

Bailly said, in reply, —

"Monsieur, it is a great satisfaction to the members of the municipal government to see in their midst the brother of a beloved king, — a king who is the restorer of French liberty. August brothers, you are united by the same sentiments. Monsieur has proved himself the truest of patriots by voting, in the Second Assembly of notables, for the admission of the third estate to equal legislative rights. Monsieur was then almost alone in this opinion; or, at least, he was supported by only a very limited number of friends of the people: so he may justly be considered the chief author of the doctrine of civil equality. He gives a fresh proof of it by coming among the representatives of the

people to-day, claiming only that consideration to which he is justly entitled, by the patriotic sentiments of which the explanation he has so kindly given us is only additional proof. As a citizen, he values the good opinion of his fellow citizens; and I offer Monsieur, in behalf of this assembly, the tribute of respect and gratitude which is justly due to such laudable sentiments, to the honour of his presence, and, above all, to the value he attaches to the esteem of free men."

Though Monsieur understood perfectly well, in spite of Bailly's eulogy, that many of his audience were probably of a very different opinion, he responded, with that paternal air he knew so well how to assume when occasion required, —

"The duty I have just fulfilled was one most painful to a virtuous heart; but I am more than repaid by the kindly feeling that this assembly has manifested towards me, and I need say no more, except to implore forgiveness for those who have so wronged me."

It must be evident to the reader that Monsieur pledged himself to nothing, nor did he ask anything definite of the assemblage. For whom did he implore forgiveness? Certainly not for Favras, because no one knew that Favras was really guilty. Besides, Favras had not accused Monsieur.

No, Monsieur only asked mercy for the anonymous author of the circular accusing him.

Monsieur had himself put in practice at least a part of the advice he had given his brother.

He had denied all connection with Monsieur de Favras; and, from the eulogiums heaped upon him by Bailly, the step seemed to have proved a great success.

It was probably due to this fact that Louis XVI. also decided to swear allegiance to the constitution.

One fine morning an usher announced to the president of the Assembly that the king, attended by one or two of his cabinet ministers and three or four prominent officials,

was rapping at the door of the National Assembly, as Monsieur had recently rapped at the door of the Hôtel de Ville.

The representatives of the people looked up in amazement. What could the king, who had held aloof so pertinaciously, have to say to them?

Louis XVI. was invited to enter, and the president yielded the chair to him.

The hall resounded with enthusiastic acclamations. Aside from Pétion, Camille Desmoulins, and Marat, all France was still, or still believed itself to be, devoted to the monarchy.

The king had felt that he must come and congratulate the Assembly on its work: he could not but admire the admirable division of the kingdom into geographical departments; but the feeling which he could no longer repress, the feeling with which his heart was filled to overflowing, was his ardent love for the constitution.

The beginning of his speech — for be it understood that no one, white or black, aristocrat or plebeian, royalist or constitutionalist, had any idea what the king was driving at — occasioned considerable uneasiness; the middle of it aroused the gratitude of his hearers; the conclusion excited their wildest enthusiasm.

If the king could not repress his longing to declare his love for the infant constitution of 1791, which was still unborn, what would his feelings be when it saw the light of day?

The king's passion for it then would no longer be love, but positive fanaticism.

We will not give the king's speech, — there are six pages of it. It is quite enough to have been obliged to wade through Monsieur's discourse, which seemed frightfully tedious, though only one page long.

The king's discourse seemed none too long, however, to the Assembly, which wept tears of joy as it listened,

When we say *wept*, it is no mere figure of speech.

Barnave wept, Lameth wept, Dupont wept, Mirabeau wept, Barrère wept; it was a positive deluge.

The Assembly lost its head completely. The members rose in a body; the spectators rose. Each man lifted up his hand and swore fidelity to a constitution that was not yet framed.

The king started to go, but the king and the Assembly could not be parted thus; so the members followed him out, and gathered around him, forming his escort to the Tuileries, where the queen received them.

The queen — she was no enthusiast, this haughty daughter of Maria Theresa; she did not weep, this dignified sister of Leopold; she presented merely her son to the deputies of the nation.

“I share the king’s feelings, gentlemen,” she said; “I cordially approve of the step which his love for his people has impelled him to take. Here is my son; I shall omit nothing that will teach him to early imitate the virtues of the best of fathers, to respect public liberty, and to uphold the laws, of which I trust he will be the chief support.”

The enthusiasm must indeed have been genuine, not to have been chilled by this discourse. That of the Assembly was at a white heat. It was suggested that every one should take the oath of constitutional allegiance, then and there, and it was formulated on the spot. The king was the first to repeat the words, —

“I swear to be faithful to the nation, to the laws, and to the king, and to unreservedly maintain, with all my powers, the constitution framed by the National Assembly and approved by the king.”

All the members of the Assembly, save one, raised their hands, each in turn, and repeated, “I swear.”

The ten days immediately following this auspicious event, which had brought joy to the hearts of the deputies, tranquillity to Paris, and peace to France, were devoted to *fêtes*, banquets, balls, and illuminations. Nothing but the oath of allegiance to the constitution was talked of. People

were taking oaths everywhere, — on the Place de Grève, at the Hôtel de Ville, in the churches, in the streets, in the public squares. Altars to the country were erected everywhere; school children were conducted to them, and took the oath as if they were grown men and understood the obligation and full import of it.

The deputies ordered a *Te Deum* to be sung, and attended the ceremony in a body. There at the altar, in the presence of God, the oath was to be taken again.

But the king did not go to Notre Dame, and consequently did not take this solemn oath.

His absence was noticed; but everybody was so happy, and hopeful, and confident, that everybody was content with the first excuse offered for his absence.

“Why did you not attend the *Te Deum*? Why did you not swear before the altar like the others?” asked the queen.

“Because I am willing to lie, but not to perjure myself, madame.”

The queen breathed more freely. Until then, she, like every one else, had believed in the king’s sincerity of purpose.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A GENTLEMAN OF FRANCE.

THE king's visit to the Assembly occurred on the 4th of February, 1790.

Twelve days afterwards, on the night of the seventeenth of the same month, in the absence of the governor of the Châtelet, who had asked and obtained permission to go to Soissons to be with his dying mother, a man presented himself at the door of the prison, armed with an order signed by the chief of police, — an order which permitted the visitor the privilege of a private interview with Monsieur de Favras.

Whether this order was genuine, or only a counterfeit, we do not presume to say; but the assistant superintendent, who was aroused from sleep to examine it, pronounced it valid; and though it was now late in the night, he gave directions for the bearer of the order to be conducted to the prisoner's cell.

The turnkey to whom this duty was intrusted opened a door, allowed the visitor to pass through, closed and locked the door behind him, then looked at the stranger inquiringly, as if expecting he had some important communication to make to him.

Next they descended a dozen or more steps and entered an underground passage-way, where another door presented itself, which the gaoler opened and closed like the first.

They now found themselves on a sort of landing, with another flight of stairs leading downward in front of them.

Here the visitor paused and gazed searchingly around him. When he had satisfied himself that the place was as deserted as it was dark and gloomy, he asked, —

“Is your name Louis?”

“Yes.”

“Are you a brother from the American Lodge?”

“Yes.”

“You were placed here a week ago to accomplish an important work, were you not?”

“Yes.”

“Are you ready to perform it?”

“I am.”

“You are to receive orders from a certain man — ?”

“Yes; from the anointed one.”

“How are you to recognise him?”

“By three letters embroidered on his breast.”

“I am that man, and here are the three letters;” and as he spoke, the visitor pushed aside his lace frill and displayed the letters L.P.D. embroidered upon his breast, — those mystic letters to whose marvellous power we have had occasion to refer more than once in the course of these narratives.

“Master, I am at your service,” said the gaoler, humbly.

“Very well; open the prisoner’s cell, and hold yourself in readiness to obey orders.”

The gaoler bowed, without replying, and walked on ahead to light the way; but soon pausing at a low door, he whispered, “Here it is.”

The stranger made a motion with his head; the key grated in the lock, and the door opened.

Although they had taken the greatest possible precautions to insure the prisoner’s safety, even consigning him to a cell twenty feet under ground, the authorities had not forgotten the consideration due a person of his rank. He had a comfortable bed with white curtains, and near it stood a table covered with books and writing materials, intended, doubtless, to be used in the preparation of his defence. Among them towered an extinguished lamp. In a corner, on another table, glittered several toilet articles, taken from a handsome dressing-case bearing the owner’s coat of arms.

The prisoner was sleeping soundly. Though the visitor approached the bedside, and though the gaoler placed his lamp on the table near the other, and then left the room at a signal from the visitor, neither the noise nor the movements disturbed the prisoner's slumbers.

The stranger gazed at the sleeper sadly for a moment; then, as if recollecting that time was precious, however much he might deplore the necessity of disturbing such tranquil repose, he laid his hand on the sleeper's shoulder.

The prisoner started violently, then turned quickly, with eyes wide open, as persons do who fall asleep in the expectation of being aroused by some painful news.

"Do not be alarmed, monsieur," said the stranger; "it is a friend."

Favras gazed at his nocturnal visitor for an instant with mingled suspicion and astonishment; then, suddenly recovering himself, exclaimed, "Ah, Baron Zannone!"

"The same, my dear marquis."

Favras glanced around the room, then smilingly pointed his visitor to the one stool unencumbered by books and clothing. "Have the goodness to sit down," he said courteously.

"The business that brought me here does not admit of any prolonged discussion, my dear marquis," the visitor replied. "Besides, we have no time to lose."

"I hope it is n't another loan, baron, for I fear I could n't furnish very good security."

"That would not matter to me, marquis. I am ready to offer you a million; but it must be under certain conditions. You are aware that your trial is to come off to-morrow, I suppose?"

"Yes, I have heard something of the kind."

"And you know that the judges before whom you are to appear are the same who acquitted Augeard and Besenval?"

"Yes."

"You know, too, that neither of those men would have been acquitted but for the intervention of the Crown?"

“Yes,” answered Favras, for the third time, without the slightest change in his voice.

“You hope, doubtless, that the Crown will do for you what it did for your predecessors.”

“Those with whom I had the honour to be associated in this affair know what should be done in regard to me, monsieur, and whatever they do will be well done.”

“They have already taken their stand in regard to you, marquis. I will tell you exactly what they have done, if you like.”

The marquis did not evince the slightest curiosity, however.

Nevertheless, the visitor continued,—

“Monsieur went to the Hôtel de Ville, and declared that he had scarcely any acquaintance with you; that you enlisted in his Swiss Guards in 1772; that in 1775 you left the regiment, and that he had not seen you since.”

The marquis bowed his acquiescence.

“As regards the king, he not only says that the idea of flight never entered his mind, but, what is more, on the fourth day of this month he went, of his own accord, to the National Assembly, and took the oath of allegiance to the constitution.”

A smile flitted over the lips of the marquis.

“Do you doubt my word?” asked the baron.

“I did not say so.”

“You see, then that you can place no dependence upon either Monsieur or the king.”

“What of that, baron?”

“You will appear before your judges and be condemned—”

“That is quite probable.”

“Condemned to death.”

“That, too, is very probable,” and Favras bowed his head like a man ready for his fate, whatever that fate might be.

“But do you know to what death you will be condemned, my dear marquis?”

“Are there *two* deaths, my dear baron?”

“There are six: by impalement, quartering, the wheel, the maiden, the gallows, and decapitation; or, rather, there were all these methods a week ago. Now, as you say, there is but one, — the scaffold.”

“The scaffold?”

“Yes; the National Assembly, having declared all men equal before the law, has now instituted equality in death as well. Nobles and plebeians are to leave the world by the same door; that is, they will all be hanged.”

“Ah — ah!” said Favras.

“If you are condemned to death, you will be hanged, — a sorry end, even for one who, I know well, does not fear death, though he shrinks from the gallows.”

“Did you come here solely to impart this cheering intelligence, monsieur; or have you still better news in store for me?”

“I came to tell you that all the necessary preparations for your escape have been made, and that in ten minutes you can be out of this prison, and in twenty-four hours out of France.”

Favras reflected a moment; then he asked, —

“Does this offer come from the king, or from his Royal Highness?”

“No, it comes from me.”

“From you? And why from you?” Favras asked, looking searchingly at the baron.

“Because of my interest in you, marquis.”

“But what possible interest can you take in me? You have met me but twice.”

“One does not need to see a man twice to know him, my dear marquis; and gentlemen are so rare nowadays, I should like to preserve one, — I will not say for the sake of France, but of humanity.”

“And you are actuated by no other reason?”

“This, too, monsieur, that, having negotiated a loan of two millions with you, and having given you the money, I really furnished you with the means of carrying on your

recently discovered plot, and have consequently contributed indirectly to your ruin."

Favras smiled.

"If that is your only crime, rest in peace, for I absolve you," he said cheerfully.

"What! you refuse to flee?"

Favras held out his hand. "I thank you from the bottom of my heart; I thank you in the name of my wife and children; but I decline your offer."

"Perhaps you think my plans poorly made, marquis, and fear that an attempt to escape will prove a failure, and so only aggravate your situation."

"I think, monsieur, that you are an exceedingly shrewd, and I may also say venturesome, man, as you came to propose this escape in person; but I repeat that I shall not flee."

"Possibly you fear that, being compelled to leave France yourself, your wife and children will be reduced to want. I have provided for this contingency, monsieur, and can offer you this wallet, containing one hundred thousand francs in bank-notes."

Favras looked at the baron with something like admiration in his gaze; then, shaking his head, he said, —

"That is not the reason, monsieur. I should not need this inducement to make me accept your offer, if I had any desire to escape; but my mind is made up, — I shall not flee."

The baron looked at the speaker as if he thought him bereft of reason.

"This determination on my part evidently astonishes you, baron," Favras continued, with marvellous serenity; "and you are wondering, without daring to ask me, what is the cause of this strange resolve to persist unto the end, and suffer death, if need be, however ignominious that death may be. Am I not right?"

"I admit it."

"Well, I will tell you. I am a royalist, but not one of

the kind who emigrate to foreign lands, or play the hypocrite in Paris. My political creed is not based upon calculation or self-interest; it is a religion with me. I regard kings as I do an archbishop or a pope, — as the visible representative of the religion I have spoken of. If I should consent to flee, it might be surmised that the king or Monsieur made me do so, and that they were consequently my accomplices. It is needless to say, in the present state of public opinion, how fatal such a suspicion would be to Monsieur, who has denied me, and to the king, who pretends not to have had any knowledge of my scheme. Religions fall into decay, baron, when there are no more martyrs. Well I will revive mine by dying for it. My death will be a reproach to the past, and an encouragement to those who come after me.”

“But think of the mode of death that awaits you, marquis.”

“The more ignominious the death, the more meritorious the sacrifice will be. Christ died upon the cross between two thieves.”

“I could understand you, monsieur, if your death would accomplish for royalty what Christ’s death accomplished for the world. But the sins of kings are so great, marquis, that I am very much afraid that not only the blood of a nobleman, but that of a monarch as well, will be required to wash them away.”

“That is for God to decide. baron; but in these days of doubt and vacillation — days in which so many persons fail in their duty, — I shall die with the consoling thought that I have done mine.”

“Oh, no, monsieur,” responded the baron, impatiently; “you will simply die with the harrowing thought that the sacrifice of your life has been utterly in vain.”

“When the disarmed soldier refuses to flee, and calmly awaits the approach of the enemy, when he braves death and meets it, he, too, knows perfectly well that his death is useless; but he says to himself that flight would be disgraceful, and he would rather die.”

"I will not acknowledge myself defeated in my plans, marquis," said Cagliostro, glancing at his watch. "It is three o'clock; we have another hour yet," he continued. "I am going to seat myself at this table and read awhile; in the mean time, reflect. In half an hour you can give me your final answer."

And, taking a chair, he seated himself with his back to the prisoner, and picked up a book.

"Good-night, baron," said Favras, turning his face to the wall, perhaps in order to be able to think undisturbed.

Far more impatient and restless than the prisoner, the visitor drew his watch from his pocket and glanced at it two or three times. When the half-hour had elapsed, he arose and approached the bed but he waited in vain, — Favras did not turn or speak. Bending over him, the baron perceived by the prisoner's regular breathing that he was sound asleep.

"I must acknowledge myself beaten," Cagliostro said to himself; "but judgment has not yet been pronounced upon him, — perhaps he still doubts that he has been so basely deserted."

Not wishing to awaken the unfortunate man, over whom the shadow of death was already brooding, the baron picked up a pen and wrote on a sheet of blank paper the following lines:—

"When the sentence of death is pronounced, and the Marquis de Favras has no longer anything to hope for from his judges, from Monsieur, or from the king, he has only to call the turnkey, Louis, and say, 'I have determined to flee,' and means will be taken to insure his escape.

"Even when the marquis is in the death-cart; when he makes his confession in public in front of Notre Dame; when he traverses with bare feet and bound hands the little piece of ground in front of the Hôtel de Ville, where he will make his last will and testament, — even from the gallows on the Place de Grève, he has only to say, in a loud voice, 'I wish to be saved!' and he will be saved.

"CAGLIOSTRO."

Then the visitor took the lamp and again approached the bed, to see if the prisoner might not have waked in the mean time; but finding him still asleep, he walked—though not without turning and looking back several times—to the door of the cell, on the other side of which the turnkey, Louis, was standing, with the placid resignation of one who is capable of, and ready for, any sacrifice to secure the accomplishment of a difficult task.

“Well, master, what am I to do?” he asked.

“Remain in the prison, and obey the commands of the Marquis de Favras in all things.”

The turnkey bowed low, and, taking the lamp from Cagliostro’s hand, walked respectfully before him, like a lackey lighting his master’s way.

Handwritten scribbles

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