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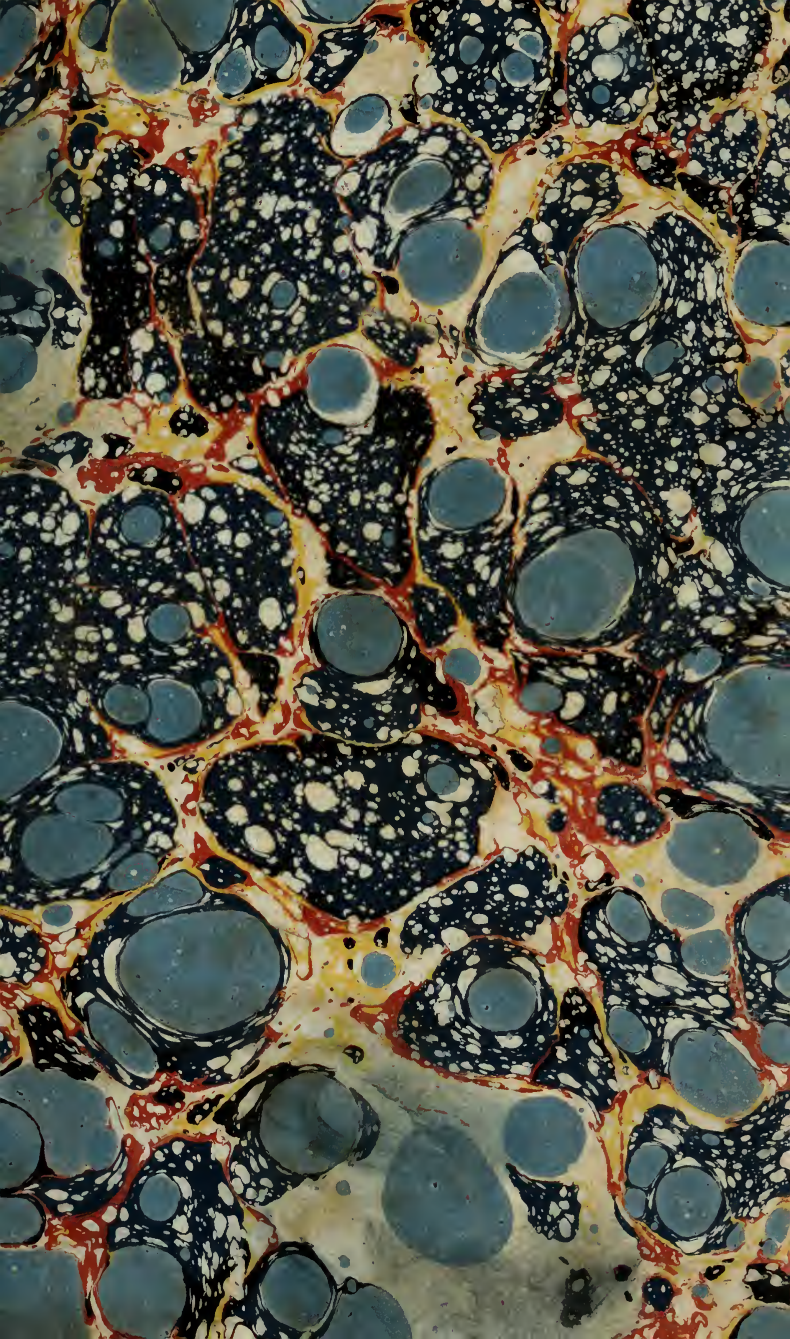

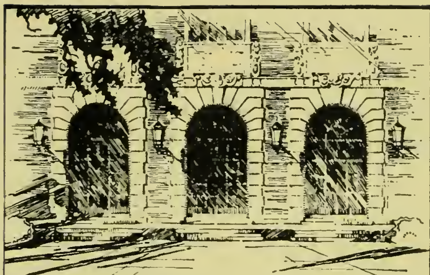

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ANNETTE.

A TALE.

BY

WILLIAM FREDERICK DEACON,

WITH A

MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,

BY

THE HON. SIR T. N. TALFOURD, D.C.L.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
COLBURN AND CO., PUBLISHERS,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1852.

LONDON:
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.

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PREFATORY MEMOIR

OF THE LATE

WILLIAM FREDERICK DEACON.

BY

SIR T. N. TALFOURD, D.C.L.

PREFATORY MEMOIR.

THE Author of the following Romance was my school-fellow at Reading School, and, after the interval of a few years which succeeded our school-days, renewed his acquaintance with me, and allowed me the enjoyment of cordial friendship with him till he died, in 1845. Amidst the labours of periodical literature by which he supported his family, he slowly and carefully composed this work, in the hope of making a considerable addition to the little fund which he struggled to provide for them; and died when it was scarcely completed. Circumstances devoid of general interest have delayed its appearance till now, when an opportunity of

presenting it to the world opens with a prospect of its realizing, in some measure, the hope with which it was written; and I gladly embrace the occasion to pay a late and brief, but faithful, tribute to his memory.

William Frederick Deacon was born on the 26th of July, 1799, in Caroline Place, Mecklenburgh Square, where his father, a highly respectable merchant, then resided; and was the eldest of six children. When about eleven years of age, he was placed at Reading School, then in the height of the prosperity to which it had been raised from a slender foundation, by the excellent scholar who presided over it for more than fifty years. There may have been scholars of more extensive learning than Doctor Valpy; but there has rarely, if ever, lived a better school-master—one who has more eminently possessed the faculty of imparting knowledge and inspiring the love of learning—one who has combined more of that authority which the proud are happy to obey with the power of winning regard; and, therefore, no one whose image has been more reverently cherished by his pupils. His scholastic system was marked

by a peculiarity of his own invention—which it may not be easy to defend as part of the machinery for the acquisition of scholarship, but which produced happy results in the education of the affections.

The performance of certain official duties, the attainment of certain grades of advancement, the success of certain exercises, were rewarded by some "trivial fond records" entered in the Doctor's school-book denominated *Exemptions*—which were contrasted in that book with the sable entry of impositions imposed on one day in the week to be absolutely due on the corresponding day of the next—and which could not only be employed at the will of the fortunate possessor to exempt him from the penalties of any default or misdeed (except a transgression of the bounds of morality or the playground), but which were transferable to his class-fellows or to any boys of a lower class; and if, by virtue of their liberal application, the impositions of one entire day could be expunged, those which became due on the day next after it vanished; so that if the impositions of the three first days of the week could be obliterated, the entire

week's record, how black soever in its three last days, was made blank, and the school started on its course without the shadow of a single fear. This achievement was performed by the elder boys urging and assisting the junior delinquents to pay their imposed dues in advance, and in case of failure, by applying the needful exemption to absolve the small individual and promote the common object of a general amnesty and the holiday which graced it.

This transfer of indulgences, by which a senior boy, rich in the rewards of good works, could save a youngster from punishment, suggested feelings in the junior classes towards the elder very unlike those which have been attributed to the system of fagging (which was wholly disallowed among us), and in the instances of the Reading boys, not only promoted those attachments which class-fellows so often form, but caused feelings of regard to spring up between youths of different ages which are comparatively rare in public schools.

Poor Deacon, who was several years my junior, became first known to me by his need of the "Exemptions" with which my

class was endowed, and by the affecting gratitude—far beyond the occasion—with which he accepted the means of absolution for his defaults. He was a slender boy, tall for his age and naturally graceful, with dark eyes and dirty hands; gay, light-hearted and heedless; quick of apprehension and sensibility; often neglecting his regular lessons to devour works of fiction; indulging thus the most insidious form of idleness, but gifted with remarkable intellectual activity to recover lost time, when the common welfare of the school required the removal of a tissue of impositions from the Doctor's book. I recal him now, through the vista of forty years, on one sad morning, when the school broke up for breakfast, hanging his head over a low worm-eaten desk, after a vain attempt to indite a Latin theme, peremptorily due at the next school-time, and the failure of which would (as available exemptions were exhausted) be certainly followed by that extreme punishment, which having become of rare occurrence was regarded with mysterious terror. An elder boy took pity on his distress, and gave up the half-hour's interval between the school-

time and his breakfast to sit beside him, and help him to a satisfactory completion of his task, which was finished just as the school-bell began to ring for the dreaded hour. The elder lad was surprised to see him wiping large tears from his cheeks with well-inked fingers, and said:

"Why, Deacon, what is the matter with you; the exercise will pass very well?"

"It is not that," blubbered out the junior; "I can't help it, it is because you are too kind to me."

This peculiar touch of the *hysterica passio* was scarcely regarded at the time; but I recal it now as an exception to the rule of school-boy life, which in its exuberance of buoyant spirits and thoughtless gaiety, acquires an insensibility to the gentler impressions; a touch of nature which could scarcely have been found except under such discipline of the affections as precept gave, and example enforced, at Reading.

I left Deacon at school when I quitted it, and did not hear of him afterwards for some years. Soon after I thus lost sight of him, he suffered a great misfortune in the death of his mother,

by whom his susceptible disposition was thoroughly understood, and whose influence was required to temper it with grave thought and earnest purpose. When about sixteen years of age, he was taken from school and entered by his father, who intended him for the Church, at St. Catherine's Hall, Cambridge. There he pursued his studies with desultory ardour—successfully in the acquisition of classical scholarship, for which he had imbibed an earnest love and fine taste under Doctor Valpy's teaching—but not in the direction which led to the honours of Cambridge. The consequence was that, although not stained with gross dissipation, he failed to fulfil the hopes which his father had cherished when he sent him to the University at the sacrifice which is involved in such a course, where a large family is maintained with a moderate income. While his refined taste, and conversational powers endeared him to the junior members of the University, and induced them to regard him as a young man of rare promise, they did not advance his progress in that way which his father desired that he should take; and eventually he quitted

College and the prospect of the sacred profession, and came to London. There my acquaintance with him was renewed; I found him as gay and light-hearted as when I left him at Reading, but endowed with an extensive knowledge of elegant literature, and an accuracy of scholarship far beyond what I had expected from the efforts and the indications of his boyhood.

Mr. Deacon was not in the condition of a youth, starting on a literary career, without any other resources than those of untried ability; for he received an allowance from his grandmother of £100 a-year, which he enjoyed till she died, in 1829. He brought to London a poem composed at Cambridge, entitled, "Hacho, or the Spell of St. Wilten," which, with minor effusions of young enthusiasm, he offered to various eminent publishers in succession, with the customary failure. He found, at last, a very honest and kind publisher in Mr. William Hone, who after having been raised for a time into dangerous celebrity by his forensic contests with Lord Ellenborough, had subsided into his proper character—that of a modest bookworm—and now, established

as a bookseller in a small shop on Ludgate Hill, avoided the political associations which had perilled and advanced him, and dealt chiefly in the old English books which he loved to peruse. Although the parodies, for the publication of which he was exalted into the position of a martyr, were irreverent and offensive, he intended no blasphemy in publishing them; and the boldness of his triumphant defence was not inspired by any natural audacity, but by the desperation to which he was impelled more by the urgent wants of a starving family, than by fear of personal suffering. He afterwards led a laborious and blameless life, producing those pleasant miscellanies to which Charles Lamb contributed, and which Southey honoured with his praise.

From his shop, "Hacho" issued, printed on coarse paper, bound in unsightly boards, and heralded by no friendly criticism; but it succeeded to an extent which would now seem scarcely possible to any poem published without the name of an established author; for it yielded an available surplus. It is an avowed imitation of Sir Walter Scott's romantic poems —a metrical tale, of which the incidents are

thrown far back into the antiquity of Scotland —and in which supernatural agency, appropriate to the era, is gracefully employed. Written in the octosyllabic verse, with intermixtures of lyrical movement, it is without originality of style; but there is a frequent richness in the imagery, and a various harmony in the odes, which indicated promise of rare poetic excellence. But to the development of the vein of poetry which gleamed out in "Hacho," a laborious education of the eye and the mind were requisite; and, at that period of life, Mr. Deacon did not command that power of strenuous labour which is as necessary to the cultivation of the imaginative faculty as to the attainment of excellence in the most abstruse science. The promise, therefore, of this work—remarkable as the production of a youth of nineteen—was not fulfilled by the composition of any other poem of serious interest; but Mr. Deacon was induced, by lighter inspirations, to exercise his talents in that ephemeral line of composition which speedy publication and immediate praise render most fascinating to young authors.

The next literary work which Mr. Deacon attempted was, therefore, one requiring the most constant outlay of talent and promising the quickest returns; for it was nothing less exciting or exhausting than a daily journal, without politics or scandal, entitled: "The Déjeûné, or Companion for the Breakfast Table," issued every morning at eight o'clock, price two-pence. The first number appeared on the 21st of October, 1820; the numbers reached the end of a volume on the 15th of December following, when the honeymoon of periodical lucubration being over, the daily issue dropped to three times a-week, and soon after ceased. The wonder is how the little paper lasted so long, supplied almost entirely by the invention of a youth of twenty-one, who brought no experience of men or manners to aid it, but which, like the sculptures in Christebelle, was "all made out of the carver's brain." Lively talent and quick sensibility gleam through its pages, and would render the long-forgotten volume in which they are collected very agreeable to any traveller who might find it on a rainy day, and would render it suggestive of

grave thought to any one who regards "the first sprightly musings" of youthful talent with anxious anticipation of "the dregs of waning life."

The publishers, who joined Mr. Deacon in this gallant and forlorn adventure, were Messrs. Gold and Northouse, who had just started into the "great trade" in that centre of theatrical interest, Great Russell Street, Covent Garden, and had boldly put forth a "London Magazine" to rival that which, under the same name, had recently been commenced by Mr. Baldwin. Never, perhaps, did any periodical begin with ampler resources than those which Baldwin had secured—including Charles Lamb, producing every month an "Essay of Elia"—Hazlitt communicating his "Table Talk," rich in golden thought, and gaily disporting in dramatic criticism—John Hamilton Reynolds lighting up various aspects of many-coloured life with airy fancy—Barry Cornwall with his earnest sweetness of thought and style—Darley thundering on the modern Drama criticism so bold and vigorous as might almost startle it into new life—and the flaunting vivacity of one

who then, under the signature of "James Weathercock," luxuriated in artistic impertinence, and whose terrible deeds have since invested with frightful interest his true name of Wainwright; all being under the direction of John Scott, a perfect model of an editor. But the prospects of these contributors were speedily saddened by the death of Scott, who fell a victim to the most absurd of guilty fashions applied to the most absurd use—a duellist of a literary quarrel, in which the gentleman by whose hand he fell had no share, and who was connected with the dispute only by the kindest and noblest affections.

This calamity gave to Messrs. Gold and Northouse the semblance of an opening for *their* "London Magazine;" and they proceeded to advertise it with vigour. Mr. Northouse, the junior partner of the firm, a young man of lively parts, and Mr. Deacon, were the chief contributors to the Opposition's Magazine; but it did not long keep up a show of rivalry to that of Paternoster Row; and Great Russell Street has long forgotten it, and its energetic publishers.

Wearied with the excitement of such a life in London as these occupations denote, and perhaps feeling his strength sinking beneath them, Mr. Deacon sought retirement in South Wales. He took a cottage in the beautiful village of Llangadock; fished in the pools, and rambled over the mountains; and read Horace and Sophocles, and wrote when the fancy served. From this retreat, in September, 1821, he addressed Sir Walter Scott, personally a stranger to him, but whose works he had chiefly admired among those of contemporary poets; communicated to him his position; and besought his opinion of sketches and essays which accompanied his letter, his advice for the future, and an introduction to "Blackwood's Magazine." It will be seen from the two following letters, which this communication produced, with what prompt and considerate kindness, the essays and fortunes of a young stranger were regarded by the Mighty Minstrel —not then known as the author of Waverley— but engaged, at that time, in secret composition of the great series of novels by which he has enriched humanity.

MR. SCOTT TO MR. DEACON.

"Sir,

"I received your packet only two days since, and by this may apologize for any delay in reply, as it happened to be addressed to my house in Edinburgh. The favourable idea I am inclined to form of your talents, from the specimen you have sent me, induces me to regret much that I see no chance of my being useful to you in the way you point at. I have no connexion with Mr. Blackwood's Magazine in the way of recommendation or otherwise, nor do I know by whom it is conducted, unless it be by Mr. Blackwood himself. I know him, however, sufficiently to send him your productions, but I dare hardly augur any very favourable result. London, the great mart of literature, as of everything else, is the only place where it is possible for a man to support himself by periodical writings. In our country an editor can get so much gratuitous and voluntary assistance, that he hardly cares to be at the expense of maintaining a regular corps of labourers. I shall be happy if Mr. Blackwood makes a distinction in your favour, were it but to give you some time to look round you, and to choose some more steady mode of life than the chance of this precarious mode of employment, which must necessarily make your comforts, if not your existence, dependent on the caprice of the public and tyranny of booksellers and editors.

"An expression of your letter leads me to think you have in your option some commercial situation, which you reject in consequence of your love for the Muses. If this be so, let me conjure you to pause and to recollect that independence, the only situation in which man's faculties have full scope, and his mind full enjoyment, can only be attained by considerable sacrifices. The commencement of every profession is necessarily dull and disagreeable to youths of lively genius; but every profession has its points of interest when the mind comes to view it divested of its technical details. I was as much disgusted with the introductory studies of the law as you can be with those of commerce, and it cost me many a bitter hour before I could bend my mind to them. But I made a virtue of necessity, and was in due time rewarded by finding that I could very well unite my love of letters with my professional duty, and that, set at ease on the score of providing for my family, I had more respectability in the eyes of the public, more freedom of intellect and sunshine of mind than I could have had with all the uncertainty, dependence and precarious provision which are the lot of men of literature who have neither profession nor private fortune.

"What you mention frankly of your irregularities at College implies, I sincerely hope, the intention of repressing all tendency to such eccentricities in future. Take my advice, and carry your self-control a little further. Reconcile yourself with your father, and subdue your inclinations to his. Your road to literary

distinction will be as easy from the counting-house as from a Welsh valley, for the world does not ask *where* but *what* a man writes. You will acquire a steady income, and in all probability an honourable independence, and when your head is grey, you may lay it on a pillow made soft by your own industry, and by the recollection that you have discharged the duty of a son, by the sacrifice of a predominant taste to the will of your parent. If I thought my own interference could be likely to be of use, I have so much regard for your situation as a young gentleman of talents who seems too much disposed to give way to a generous but irregular love of literature, and so much for that of your father, whose feelings I can judge of by making his case my own, that if you choose to give me a direction and your permission, I would take the liberty to write to your father and try to make up matters betwixt you, an intrusion which my years and situation might perhaps induce him to excuse.

"Perhaps, Sir, I may have exceeded the limits of the sphere to which you meant me to limit my opinion in offering it upon these points; but you must hold the intent, which is most sincerely kind, as an excuse,

"And believe me, Sir,

"Your well-wisher and humble servant,

(Signed) "WALTER SCOTT.

"Abbotsford, near Melburn, N. B.,
"Sept. 1821.

"P.S. Your proposal to go to South America I cannot but consider as a circuitous and protracted mode of suicide, rendered more guilty than the ordinary mode, by the chance of your being engaged in some scenes of violence to others before you become a victim yourself."

MR. SCOTT TO MR. DEACON.

"Sir,

"I am favoured with your letter, and although at all times a slow and unwilling correspondent, I answer it in course that I may entreat you to put the real meaning on my former letter. So far as regards your literary productions, I meant exactly what my words express, and no more: delicacy is an excellent thing, but sincerity from age to youth is much more valuable, and I never allow the former to come in the way of the last. I really think your sketches have indications of very considerable talent; a little immature, perhaps, and formed too much upon the imitation of what has made a just and natural impression on you, but such as, if cultivated with patience and care, may attain to excellence. This is my real opinion, and I am far from desiring you to give up literature. On the contrary, I would advise you strongly to persevere in the cultivation of your mind, for every step in knowledge, properly

considered and well used, is, or should be, a step in happiness. The mind is the garden in the fable, which the old man bequeathed to his sons, intimating that it contained a treasure. They brushed it with care, and found neither gold nor silver, but were amply rewarded by the crop which it produced. What I warned you against was, considering literature as a trade by which you proposed to live, exclusive of other exertions for your support. A more feverish and a more miserable condition than that of writing at the will of a bookseller, frittering away useful talents in the hasty and crude attempts to provide for the passing day, I cannot well conceive. On the other hand, he who limits his expense within such bounds as a professional income, however small, can afford him, is independent both of the bookseller and the public, and may, if he has talents, by writing on what he likes and when he likes, be the conjuror who commands the devil instead of the witch who serves him. I am glad you dispense with my sending your Essays to the Magazine, as I think you may do something better. Your time is now your own, honourably and fairly; so since your father does not insist on your entering the counting-house, employ it to purpose. Avoid dissipation as well of the mind as of the body, and give your time manfully to study; your character will become firmer, and your views of life more sunny.

"It signifies perhaps little what study you choose; that to which your taste most addicts you, or for which your situation affords the greatest facilities, will of

course be most preferable. But do not throw away hope, or discontinue exertion, because you do not at once find yourself in the front rank of literature. Time, labour, and above all attention to character, are all necessary in our hard-working day to acquire any position of celebrity; and after all the public confers it very capriciously. Yet, in my long experience, I have seldom seen a man of real talent drop to leeward, except through his own fault.

"I give you joy, Sir, of being at least partially reconciled to your father; time and your own established character will (if you follow my advice) do the rest, and I think it likely he will find some outlet in life for you, for a father can seldom maintain his resentment long where the cause of displeasure is removed. In one word, Sir, take resolution and take hope to your assistance. Do not think yourself a blockhead, or sit down in inactivity because you have met with a share of that ill-fortune in early youth of which all men have a portion ere life's long day is ended,

"And believe me, Sir,

"Your sincere friend and well-wisher,

(Signed) "WALTER SCOTT.

"Abbotsford,
"Sept. 31, 1821."

"P.S. I should not omit to return you my thanks for having taken in good part what I felt it my duty to say to you. This has not uniformly happened to me in similar circumstances."

Mr. Deacon appreciated the wisdom and the kindness of these letters as they deserved; and always spoke of Sir Walter (whom, I believe, he never saw) with the most ardent gratitude; but he did not adopt the advice thus given, so far as to transfer his attentions from literature to commerce; but the partial estrangement between his father and himself ceased as his reputation as an author advanced, and indicated his moral progress.

In 1822, he published a volume of clever sketches of the manners and scenery of Wales, under the title of "The Innkeeper's Album," with some profit and more applause; and in 1824 produced a little volume entitled "Warreniana," which met with much greater success. It consists of a series of burlesque imitations of the style of the most popular of the living writers, inspired to sing the praises of Warren's Blacking, with a mock debate in the House of Commons on the same brilliant theme. A

few of the poetical imitations may rival some of the "Rejected Addresses," and that of Mr. Canning's most ornate style in the mock debate is very happy; while the imitations of Brougham and some minor patriots have little resemblance to the originals. This small volume, being published by the house of Longman, appeared with advantages which its predecessors wanted; it was favourably noticed by the principal reviews; and obtained a satisfactory sale. It was followed by another collection of Essays and Tales, entitled "November Nights," which also brought some profit and much praise to its author.

On the death of his grandmother in 1829, Mr. Deacon lost the annuity which had till then assisted his literary efforts, and was driven to depend wholly upon them. He had then returned to London; and, being at first without any regular engagement, endured the vicissitudes attendant on such a position, which at last induced him to accept the situation of assistant in a school at Dulwich. How little suited a temperament like his to the duties of such a position were, may be judged

by those who recollect the catechetical interrogatories administered to George Primrose, when he purposed to obtain such an ushership, and who are informed that Mr. Deacon described the reality as corresponding to the picture they suggest; and he soon left it. Fortunately however, he had become a correspondent of the "Sun" newspaper; and, in the midst of his difficulties, formed a connexion with that journal as the contributor of its literary criticism, which continued till his death, and gave him a substantial provision. By the Proprietor of that newspaper, he was always treated with considerate kindness; he appreciated Mr. Deacon's talents, and respected his feelings even when they verged on fastidiousness; and to the constancy of that gentleman's esteem, he principally owed the comfort of his life.

A certainty of employment was rendered more essential to Mr. Deacon by his marriage with a very estimable young lady, and the birth of three children, to whom he was most fondly attached, and the superintendence of whose education was one of his chief pleasures. To improve the income by which they were sup-

ported, and to make some provision for their entrance into life, was his principal anxiety; and this induced him to make efforts sometimes beyond his strength. Besides his regular engagement with the "Sun," he contributed largely to "Blackwood's Magazine," frequently in a series of papers, one of which, "The Picture Gallery," was continued at intervals in 1837, 1838 and 1839, with the approbation of its richly gifted Editor, Professor Wilson. In 1835, he published a humorous tale, in two volumes, under the title of "The Exile of Erin, or the Sorrows of a Bashful Irishman," a pleasant history of an Irish Gil Blas, with some satirical notices of prominent Irish patriots, somewhat extravagant, but wholly untinged by ill-nature. There is a description of an Irish trial, which leads to the transportation of the hero, in which a vivid caricature of O'Connell is given, extremely amusing but extremely unjust; for the great Agitator is represented as taking the occasion of defending the prisoner on a charge of felony, to defy the presiding judge, and to declaim on the wrongs of Ireland, woefully to the prejudice of the

client's chance of acquittal. This was quite a mistake; whatever were the demerits of Mr. O'Connell's agitations, he was always most discreet and faithful as an advocate, bringing all his marvellous power over the sympathies of men to aid his client's cause, but never risking it by an allusion to any topic which would not aid him. This work received great praise from all critical quarters in which it was noticed; sold well; and was republished in America, where it was largely bought, to the fame, but of course not to the profit, of the author.

Although Mr. Deacon's talents, thus devoted solely to literature, were not rewarded by affluence, I do not think his history can be quoted as an example of the justice of those large and general warnings which have often been put forth against its adoption as a means of subsistence. Having regard to his delicate health and excitable temperament, I doubt whether he would have attained greater honour or enjoyed more happiness, or left his family in better fortune, if he had taken any other path of life. Constant confinement to the labours of the desk would have probably led to an earlier development of the seeds of disease; and shut from

the Church by an honest consciousness that he had no mission for Her holy offices, without stamina for the labours of the bar, or nerve for the study and practice of medicine, he could scarcely have obtained so comfortable a livelihood by any other course. He lived for many years in a pleasant cottage in Malvern Terrace, Islington, in the unobtrusive enjoyment of independence produced by honourable labour; and although some three weeks' visit with his wife and children to the sea-side, in the autumn, was the only holiday in which he indulged, he enjoyed it with great relish.

Reviewing his course, I venture to suggest that lamentations over the miseries of a literary life, though often individually true in regard to the persons who make them, and wisely anticipated by Sir Walter Scott in the circumstances submitted to him, are not just in general application. They are often produced by one of two causes: the peculiar temptations which the bright aspects of literature hold out to persons wholly destitute of requisite taste to embrace it, and the selfish improvidence of others, who lay on literature the blame of indiscretion, which would have produced equal calamity in any other depart-

ment of society, without the same means of awakening sympathy.

Every one whose situation has enabled him to judge of the qualifications of the multitude of young men who, believing themselves to be endowed with extraordinary talent, desire the opportunity of emerging from the ranks in life to which Providence has called them, in order that they may 'witch the world with noble authorship, has been surprised to find how rarely any gleam of an original vein is discernible in the carefully copied specimens on which his judgment is prayed, and how often they are destitute even of meaning and grammar. He will find, perhaps, a comedy in five acts, with a prologue and epilogue, ready for representation, and a cast of characters complete for one of the theatres (in which the unhappy reader is surmised to have influence), consisting of ordinary dialogue, without an attempt at wit, and illumined only by puns, "few and far between." Or his advice will be solicited as to the disposal of a tragedy, which the author supposes he has written in blank verse, because he has commenced each line with a

capital letter, but obviously without even knowing the number of syllables which that easiest mode of composition usually requires.

These are extreme, though not very unusual cases; but the instances in which a mere facility of rhyming is mistaken for the poetic faculty abound; and each aspirant is ready, with the slightest encouragement, and sometimes without any, to enter on a literary life. There is, no doubt, a period in youth when the common poetry of our nature is busy within us all, and when it is no ignoble error to mistake the new-born love of excellence for the power of producing it; which may account for the ambition of many aspirants after literary distinction; but still the mistake of many is a perplexing riddle.

Now if these temptations induce persons, wholly unqualified, to rush into print, and the result is neglect and misery, their disasters supply no proof that literature, adopted by persons endowed with reasonable ability, and pursued in the proper line with steadiness, is necessarily a desperate profession. Still less are the misfortunes which improvidence brings on individuals who have succeeded in obtaining

a share of the public favour, proof of the general charge they advance. Their difficulties are not peculiar to the author's calling, and would have awaited them in any other. If a man, in any department of life, spends more than he earns, he must soon be immersed in embarrassment; and if he spends all that he earns, and dies in the prime of life, he must leave his family destitute; these are not the incidents of literature, but belong equally to all who have to carve out their own fortunes. It is a hard thing, even for a prudent man, who marries without fortune, and attains a moderate income by successful industry, to make any provision for his family, unless he is spared to be old; and the children of a literary man, who is stricken in the midst of life, only share a common lot. In one respect, men who, even without the highest genius, pursue the work of literature with industry and honour, have a just advantage over labourers in other professions when misfortune overtakes them, that they have a claim on the society which their works have gladdened or instructed, like that which belongs to personal friendship.

I do not, therefore, think that my lively school-fellow made a bad choice when he devoted himself to the press ; or that his efforts were ill-requited by fortune. If his health had been stronger, I believe he would, even at the age when he died, have acquired a fair provision for his widow and children. What he could do he did—he provided for their comfort while able to work—and conscientiously abstained from touching a little fund which would have contributed to his ease. A legacy of a few hundred pounds in the funds, which fell to Mr. Deacon some years before his death, and which he might have applied in obtaining repose and change of scene, he scrupulously maintained entire ; and very slender as it was as a provision, the sense that he was about to leave it unbroken, with the hope that the work now submitted to the world would increase it, consoled him in his last illness.

The delicacy of Mr. Deacon's health, and the modesty of his nature, induced him generally to abstain from society in his latter years. I was one of the very few old friends whom he visited ; and succeeded, much less rarely than

I wished, in drawing him from his study. When in the society of those to whom he was attached, however, he was as gay and lively as in his first glow of youthful success; and took a deep and unenvying interest in the progress of his early friends. After a rapid decline of six weeks, he died on the 18th of March, 1845, at his house in Malvern Terrace, surrounded by his family, in the forty-sixth year of his age.

The following just tribute to his memory was paid the next day by the "Sun" newspaper, with which he had been so long connected:

"Mr. Deacon's death will be a great loss to the literature of the day. He was a distinguished writer in some of our best periodicals, well known to the first literary characters of the age, and admired as a chaste and elegant scholar; well acquainted with the writings of the ancients, and not surpassed by any in his intimate knowledge of the remarkable works which have issued from the press during the present century. His judgment and taste as a critic were never surpassed; he was just, but rarely severe; he felt the difficulty of writing, made allowance for the faults and

defects of others; was always happy when he could praise, and more distressed perhaps than the author himself whom he was compelled to blame. He was employed for nearly twenty years on the "Sun" newspaper. *We* have, therefore, had reason to know him well; and we willingly pay this tribute to his memory."

The "Morning Chronicle" of the next day, after quoting this paragraph from the "Sun," added:

"Let us add, having known Mr. Deacon intimately, that he was more than a tasteful critic, an accomplished scholar, and an elegant writer—he was all these—but he was also a high-minded gentleman, a kind husband, and an anxious parent."

With the exception of the following work, which was composed at such intervals as urgent duties allowed, Mr. Deacon's writings of late years were chiefly critical. His early tales and sketches have remarkable vivacity; they almost always commence admirably, but are not so often worked out with sustained vigour, and are sometimes hurried towards the close, as if the author were eager "for fresh fields and pastures

new." His criticisms are replete with beauty and truth—written with apparent rapidity and ease, but with unfailing elegance — resembling in variety of illustration and graceful copiousness of language those of the prince of critics, Jeffrey. Scattered through the numbers of a daily journal, and often applied to subjects long forgotten, they have shared the fate, from which such essays, however brilliant, are rarely exempted, and have passed beyond hope of revival. It will be satisfactory to his few surviving friends if this work, constructed on a wider basis, should, by its success, promise a longer duration to his fame than that which it will hold, while they shall remain, among their most affectionate recollections.

T. N. T.

LONDON, 1852.

ANNETTE.

CHAPTER I.

The great French Revolution of 1789 which was hailed with such enthusiasm by the larger portion of the people labouring under the manifold oppressions of the feudal system, caused—at least in its earlier stages—but little excitement in the rude, sequestered district of La Vendée. There, feudalism had never displayed itself in an oppressive form, for the nobles and principal landowners lived among their tenantry and peasantry, like fathers among their children; exhibiting neither pride nor

ostentation, indulging in no other luxury than that of hospitality, and in no other amusement than the chase, to which they were passionately addicted, and in which their dependents were allowed to share equally with themselves.

In the best sense of the term, the feudal lord, or Seigneur, as he was called, was a father and a friend to those over whom he was placed in authority. He held constant and familiar intercourse with them; counselled them in their little domestic matters; acted as their lawyer, and occasionally even as their physician; shared in their agricultural losses as well as their gains; attended at their weddings, where it was his wont to give away the bride; and on Sundays and holidays, and more especially on his hunting expeditions, which, singularly enough, were always announced by the Curé from the pulpit, he assembled as many of his retainers as he could accommodate in his château, where the members of his family mingled with them, dancing with them in the barn or court-yard, according to the season; and the day was wound up by merry, and not seldom boisterous, festivities.

Of the luxurious habits and fashions of the capital, the Seigneur was not unfrequently wholly ignorant. In early youth, perhaps, he might have visited Paris, joined in the courtly society of his peers, and made his bow at Versailles and the Tuileries; but in after life he was as closely wedded to his home as a Highland chieftain of the old school, living in a style of simplicity, and even homeliness, which had long disappeared from every other quarter of the kingdom. His family estate had no ornamented park, trim gardens, or architectural embellishments to boast of; but, generally speaking, was nothing more than a clumsy, old-fashioned château, surrounded with orchards, farm-houses and cottages for the household labourers.

Like the English squire of the days of George III., the Vendean Seigneur was fond of the generous stimulus supplied by the wine-cup; he seldom, however, drank to excess; and though frank and bluff in manner, had none of that revolting coarseness so common among our provincial gentry of the last century. In his notions of loyalty he was as enthusiastic as

he was disinterested. The monarch was, in his eyes, a being holding a place midway between man and the Deity, whose behests, be they what they might, must be obeyed at all hazards; and this sentiment of mingled duty and reverence he diligently impressed on his family and dependents. It was to these Vendean nobles that the unhappy Louis XVI. looked for help, when, after the death of Mirabeau and the emigration of a great portion of the aristocracy, he found himself, like Sampson, " shorn of all his strength."

The peasantry of La Vendée partook of the character of their Seigneurs, with this marked difference however, that they were strangely alive to superstitious influences, and had great faith in miracles. When the effects of the Revolution reached them, and the flames of civil war were lighted up throughout the province, this credulity, aggravated by the cruel sufferings they were constantly compelled to undergo, was carried to a degree bordering on madness.

The chief occupation of this rude and simple people, at the time when our story opens, was agriculture, and their favourite amusement the

wolf, the boar, or the stag-hunt, in which, as has been already observed, they joined on equal terms with their Seigneurs. Sir Walter Scott has observed that there are historical grounds for supposing that the Vendeans are descended from the Huns, Vandals, and Picts, who subdued the western parts of France, adding that "their form and complexion support this opinion, giving strong indications that they are neither of Gallic nor Frank descent." They are indeed—or rather were—particularly distinguished from the rest of their countrymen by their dislike of all innovations, their taciturn habits, and more especially by their love of drinking, which, says a writer who knew them well, "was the sin that most easily beset them." As a body, they were undoubtedly the happiest and most contented of the French peasantry, for there were no odious nor unequal taxes to engender jealousies and heart-burnings among them; and accordingly their nobles had no sooner summoned them to take up arms in defence of the monarchy, after the famous 10th of August, than they obeyed with a readiness and unanimity which showed that they considered the cause their own.

One great reason of the .ignorance and simplicity of these people, was the utter absence of large cities and trading towns in La Vendée. Even the most populous of the latter seldom contained more than two thousand inhabitants; and the villages were little better than a rude cluster of some five or six farm-houses, and about as many cottages, which stood at a considerable distance from each other. Nantes was looked on as the capital of the province; but it was situated on its very edge, and was chiefly resorted to by those who lived in the neighbourhood, and who consequently were a more busy and civilized class than those who dwelt in the interior. Among these last, news circulated but slowly, for rarely did the traveller find his way to their more secluded towns and villages, the facilities of communication being few, only one great road traversing the country—that, namely, from Nantes to Rochelle.

As regards the external appearance of La Vendée, its surface may be said to consist of a series of low hills and narrow winding valleys, watered by innumerable streams. It abounds in woods and thickets—whence it has been called the Bocage—and contains one or two

forests, which afford excellent opportunities for boar-hunting. The ground is mostly in pasturage, being but indifferently adapted to the plough, and it is divided into small enclosures, each of which is surrounded by tall luxuriant hedges. The cross-roads, which are numerous, and in winter serve as channels for torrents, are sadly perplexing to those unacquainted with the country, for they cross each other at the end of almost every field, and wind in so capricious, and labyrinthine a manner, among the hills and through the valleys, that even the natives, says M. de Bournissaux, are apt to miss the track when they venture to any distance from their own dwellings.

Such was La Vendée, which half a century ago was scarcely even known to us by name, and such the character of its Seigneurs and peasantry, at the period to which the present tale refers. Of late years, and more particularly since the restoration of the Bourbons, great changes have taken place, both in the aspect of the country, and the physical and moral condition of its inhabitants. New roads have been made, and canals and bridges formed, for the

purpose of facilitating communication; habits more in unison with those of the rest of France, have been introduced; the religious spirit of the people has lost much of its wild fanatical character; and few could recognise in the lively sagacious Vendean of 1840, the stern grave, undaunted enthusiast of 1793. From the above brief sketch, the reader will be better able to understand what follows.

CHAPTER II.

It was towards the close of a warm day in the May of 1791, that two French horsemen arrived at a small village in the province of La Vendée, and one of them dismounting at the nearest dwelling that presented itself, which was a pretty farm-house, little, if at all, superior to a Welch cottage, with an odd flat tile roof, inquired of a young peasant who chanced to be standing at the door, cleaning his musket, which was the nearest road to the château of the Marquis de Chatillon. The reply was by no means encouraging, for it was to the effect that the château was full four leagues off, and that to travellers unaccustomed to the country the way was very difficult to find.

"Four leagues !" exclaimed the stranger who had put the question, and who, though dressed in the plain attire of a private gentleman, had quite a military air and bearing, "we shall never get there to night with these horses. Harkee, my good fellow," he continued, addressing the peasant, who stood eyeing him with mingled respect and curiosity, "can we be furnished with fresh horses in this out-of-the-way village of yours ?"

"I don't think, Monseigneur," was the answer, "that there are any to be had nearer than the next village, which is a league to the northward, out of your line of road. But if you'll come in, and wait a short time, I'll take the horses round to the shed, and after they've had some food and rest no doubt they'll do the distance."

This proposal was acceded to, and the first spokesman making a sign to his companion to alight and follow him, went into the farm-house, while the peasant led the jaded animals round to a cattle-shed which stood in the rear of the house.

An elderly female who had been standing in

the door-way listening to this conversation, met the travellers on their entrance, and ushered them with simple and ready courtesy into a large kitchen, near the window of which sate a pretty, coquettish looking girl; neatly attired in a white cap edged with black, that set off her face to great advantage, and a brilliant scarlet handkerchief carelessly thrown over her bosom, below which appeared a small jet cross, suspended from a ribbon that encircled her neck. As the strangers came in, she just rose to make them an obeisance, and then quietly resumed her work, which was spinning coarse flax.

When the travellers had seated themselves, the elder of the two females, taking for granted that they stood as much in need of refreshment as their horses, began bustling about with great eagerness; and in a few minutes drew a table towards them, on which she placed some dried fruits, bread, cheese, and a jug of thin sour wine. Their appetites, sharpened by a long ride, were by no means fastidious, and they set to at these homely viands with infinite good will; while, every now and then, the horseman whom I have already noticed

as wearing the aspect of a soldier of rank, kept paying compliments to the rosy little damsel by the window, which caused her to blush and smile in a way that showed she was not altogether displeased.

" Aye, she is a good girl," said the unsophisticated old dame, patting her fondly on the head, " and deserves all the kind words that can be bestowed on her: and she's going to be married next week," a remark which caused the girl to hang her head, and ply her wheel with more activity than ever.

" And the happy bridegroom, I presume, is the young man who has just left us," observed the first speaker.

" Yes, he is Jeannette's cousin : it will be a merry affair, won't it, Jeannette ?"

" No doubt, dame; and you, I'll answer for it, will be among the merriest of the party."

" I hope so, for I've no cause to complain. The Seigneur behaves kindly to us, and our grass lands seldom fail, though this year the drought has somewhat injured them ; but it will be better next year. And so you're going to the château ?"

"You know the Marquis, then?" inquired the traveller.

"Know him!" answered the loquacious old lady, "do I know myself? Do I know little Jeannette here, who has lived with me ever since she was a child? Sure, every one in the Bocage knows the Marquis; and we all love him, too, and would gladly lay down our lives for him, which is but right, seeing that he is our lawful Seigneur."

While this conversation was going forward, an amusing interlude was being played by the other horseman, who had not yet opened his mouth, except to discuss his meal, and the pretty arch peasant-girl. The former made many efforts to catch her eye, by nods, winks, and sundry significant gestures; but his virtuous endeavours were unavailing, for though Jeannette, with the quick tact of womanhood, at once fathomed his meaning, she looked most provokingly unconconscious, so much to his annoyance, that shifting his seat with a glance of huge disdain, he at length fairly turned his back on her, a movement which occasioned her no little secret diversion.

The young farmer here entered the room, with intelligence that the horses had been well looked to, and that now, after an hour's rest, he thought they might venture to continue their journey.

The travellers rose at this intimation, and bidding adieu to Jeannette and their hostess, who declined with an unaffected air, not devoid of dignity, the money which one of them pressed upon her, resumed their route; having received such directions as would enable them to keep in the right track until they reached the next village, where they were told they would be again compelled to halt and make inquiries.

The two strangers whom I have thus abruptly introduced to my readers' notice, were the Count de Sevrac, an officer attached to the body-guard of Louis XVI, and his confidential valet, Jacques — a dapper, lively, talkative, young fellow, as self-conceited as a Parisian domestic is apt to be, and fond of boasting of his influence with the fair sex. But, despite this weakness of character, he had a kindly heart, which, combined with his ready address, and the fact of his having been in the Count's family ever since he

was a boy, made him a favourite with his master, who allowed him greater freedom of speech than he would have done under ordinary circumstances. Two feelings held nearly equal sway over Jacques's mind. One was his attachment to the Count—the other, his sympathy with the revolutionary changes in progress throughout France. And, indeed, the period was one which might well have called forth his most sanguine expectations, for the "fierce democracy" were fully awakened to a consciousness of their growing power, and the aristocracy, alarmed by the popular tokens of dislike to their order, which daily became more unequivocal, had, in a great degree—those at least among them who had not yet emigrated—laid asiae their pompous style of living; and whether stationary in the capital, or journeying in the provinces, had adopted the manners, together with the exterior, of the middle, and sometimes even of the lower classes.

"Well, Jacques," observed the Count, as they pursued their way at a brisk trot through the straggling village, "I think you will now admit that I was right in coming by the dili-

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gence as far as Nantes. Had we taken horse from Paris, as you suggested, or travelled in my own carriage, we should scarcely have gone ten miles in safety. Did you not hear the hoarse rabble-shouts that rose about us at every town we passed through, of *Vivent les Sans-Culottes?* Ah, Jacques, the days are gone by, I fear for ever, when a French nobleman could show himself as such in public. There was but one man, Mirabeau, who could have saved us; and he is dead. But why do I speak of these things to you? you can have no great interest in them."

"Monsieur le Comte is right," replied the valet, with an air of assumed deference, "it is not for one like me to worry my poor brain about public affairs."

"Well said, Jacques," rejoined his master with a smile; "that is the most sensible remark you have made since we left Paris."

Thus encouraged, the valet resumed more familiarly, "Perhaps Monseigneur will allow me to ask him why he has quitted Paris for a barbarous country like this, at a time when his Majesty, as I have heard, has need of all his

friends ?" for Jacques had quitted the bustle and gaiety of the capital with much regret, and was, besides, bursting with curiosity.

"Ask me nothing," replied the Count sternly, "but confine yourself to your own duties; enough that it was my pleasure to quit Paris, and bid you accompany me."

A long silence followed this rebuke, during which the horsemen had pushed through the village and were entering upon a grassy plain of small extent, at the further end of which was a range of low, green hills, one or two of which appeared crowned with the ruins of castles. A narrow strip of road, of the most primitive formation, ran right through the centre of this level space, and in some places where the soil was rather marshy, trunks and branches of trees had been laid across it, and the interstices filled up by stones, clay, and masses of turf, by way of giving it solidity. The travellers followed its course, their horses frequently stumbling as they proceeded, till they reached the base of the high lands, where the road to all appearance terminated, and left them in no little perplexity. As, however, they had been told to keep in as

straight a line as possible, they ascended the hill, which was thickly clothed with short, fresh grasses, and on reaching the summit and looking about them, they discovered another small path, which led them down into the midst of a cluster of fields, each of which was enclosed with hedges. In the distance were seen thick, dark woods, amidst which peeped forth, here and there, the flat tile-roof of a farm-house, a white, naked cliff, or the steeple of some village church gleaming brightly in the evening sun.

"A strange, wild neighbourhood, this," said the Count de Sevrac, "one could scarcely suppose oneself travelling in France."

"True," replied his valet, shrugging his shoulders, and looking unutterable things; "but what could Monseigneur expect from a country where the ladies—as we saw just before we entered the village—ride about in carriages drawn by oxen, and stare at us as if we were wild beasts? They are little better than savages, and I dare say, never so much as heard of Paris! There was that poor, ignorant creature, Jeannette, as they called her at the farm-house, would you believe it, when I civilly wished her

good night, she looked as puzzled as if I were speaking in a foreign language."

This was said in *pique*, for Jacques had not yet forgotten or forgiven the wound inflicted on his vanity by Jeannette's refusal to take the slightest notice of him.

"She is a pretty, modest girl, and I will not have her found fault with. Remember," added the Count gravely, "you are not now in Paris, and must suit your behaviour—especially towards the women—accordingly."

"I will observe what you say," replied the valet, for he was well aware that, although his master in general allowed him great latitude, there were points on which he exacted from him the strictest obedience.

"Yes, Jacques," resumed the Count de Sevrac, "it is my pleasure that you conduct yourself quietly and decorously while you remain with me in La Vendée. In no other part of France have I met with such kindness and courtesy, as I have experienced since we entered the Bocage. Did you mark the difference of manner among the people after we left Nantes this morning? I did, and was agreeably surprised by the change."

"A change, indeed, Monseigneur! They don't talk, or dress, or look, or act like Frenchmen. But it all comes of their living so far from Paris—and to harness oxen to their coaches too! Who would have believed such a thing possible in France?"

"Monstrous!" replied the Count, good-humouredly, "yet there was a day, Jacques, when you first entered into my service, at Rheims, when you knew quite as little about Paris as these poor people."

"Very true," rejoined the valet, pertly, "but for all that, I never thought of making an ox do the duty of a horse, which is going quite against the nature of things. I was not so ignorant as that, I hope."

While they were thus conversing, evening stole on, the bright orange sky of the west had faded to a leaden tint, and the breeze, which had been languid all day, began to freshen, and sweep before it large, watery masses of clouds. Instinctively the travellers quickened their pace, in the hope of reaching some house or village where they might make further enquiries, or be furnished with a guide to the chateau, before darkness should settle down on earth. But no

signs of a habitation appeared; the fields, too, which stretched away far and wide on either side of them, were deserted, the labourers having all concluded their out-of-door work for the day, so that they had no other resource than to persevere in their present course and follow the windings of a rugged cross-road, worn in a soft, clayey soil, between rows of pollards and high hedges which, in places, turned an untrained arch above their heads.

Having toiled a considerable time along this execrable apology for a road, across which lay numerous shallow pools, they came to a spot where it sloped by a gradual descent into a secluded hollow, whence two other roads branched off right and left. Here the Count halted, till his servant, who was some yards in the rear, his horse being encumbered with the weight of a heavy valise which was strapped on behind him to the saddle, should come up; when, after consulting together for a few minutes, they decided on taking the left-hand road, as looking more like a beaten track; but so frequent and puzzling were its sharp, angular turns that, as they jogged along, they more than

once debated the propriety of making their way back to the village.

To add to their embarrassment, twilight fell around them, clothing all things in its dim, grey mantle. Soon afterwards, a few heavy drops began pattering on the leaves and branches on either side of them, and hardly had they got under shelter in a place where the tall spreading trees grew thickest above their heads, when down came the rain, hissing and spluttering so viciously, as threatened to break through their leafy roof and drench them to the skin. Fortunately, in about a quarter of an hour the shower abated as suddenly as it had commenced, and they got ready to move on again, and had advanced about a hundred yards, when, at a fresh bend of the road, they met a man who was journeying on horseback to the village they had so lately quitted.

" Halloo, friend," exclaimed the Count, halting, as did also the person to whom this was addressed, " can you tell me whether I am in the right road to the Chateau de Chatillon ?"

" Yes ; but you are some distance off it yet," replied the countryman.

"Some distance! How far?"

"Between three and four leagues."

"Impossible! We were told nearly the same at the last village, and we have ridden at least two leagues since then."

It is astonishing how one's road makes a point of lengthening, as if from sheer spite, when one is tired, and anxious to come to an end of one's journey. The last individual of whom a belated traveller makes inquiries, invariably gives the same, or nearly the same, answer as to distance, as that given by the preceding one, so that the further we go, the further we still appear to have to go.

"Is there any house or village near us," resumed the Count de Sevrac, "where we can procure the services of a guide?"

"Lavallière is nearly a league further on," was the reply, "and there you will be sure to find some one who will show you the way to the chateau."

"But how to get there, is the question. Are we to follow the windings of this zig-zag bye-path?"

"Yes; until you come to where it branches off in three directions—"

"Three directions—Diable!" muttered Jacques between his teeth.

"You must then take that turn," continued the man, "which inclines most to the left, and which will lead you through the wood to Lavallière. Good night, Messieurs."

"Lead us through the wood!" exclaimed Jacques, pettishly, as the countryman trotted off, "that's easy enough said; but when once we've got into this cursed wood, how are we to get out of it again."

"There may be some difficulty, I grant," observed his master, "but we must do our best; so push forward, Jacques, we have not a moment to lose."

Again they set forward, but only to encounter fresh difficulties, for it was now quite dark, the moon not having yet risen; and their horses kept stumbling incessantly from fatigue as well as from the rugged nature of the road, which was here soft and yielding, and there, as hard as if fashioned out of granite. The Count moved on in silence, every now and then jostling up against some projecting branch of elm or pollard; while his servant, by way of keeping up his spirits, hummed the butt-end of an

opera tune which he had heard in Paris. Suddenly he stopped short in the midst of a scientific quaver, and his master, who was by his side, hearing a crash, accompanied by a fall, as of some heavy substance, called out, "Jacques, is that you?"

A faint, querulous voice replied in the affirmative.

"Where are you?"

"Here, at the bottom of a ditch; a branch of a tree caught me in front, and knocked me off my horse in an instant. *Sacre! diable!*"

"Well, get up—get up," rejoined the Count, who could not refrain from laughing at his valet's ridiculous mishap.

"I wish I could; but I am stuck full-length, and as fast as wax in this slush," and he made one or two desperate efforts to rise, but the soft, rich mud had sucked him in so effectually, that not until his companion had dismounted to his assistance, could he get upon his legs again.

The next step was to find the horse, which was easily done, for the jaded animal was standing quietly by the road-side; and having

got into their saddles again, the Count desired Jacques, who was giving vent to his feelings in a brisk volley of execrations, to keep as close as he could to the left-hand side of the road ; and himself setting the example, they were not long in reaching the turn to which they had been directed, and which at the distance of about a quarter of a league, opened on a small woody tract of land.

No sooner had they entered upon this tract, than they perceived something glimmering among the trees, and riding up in the direction whence t appeared, they found that it proceeded from a lamp, which was darting its rays through a cottage window.

Directing his valet to take charge of the horses, the Count dismounted at the door of this humble tenement, which was in a most ruinous condition, and knocked gently for admittance. As no answer was returned to his summons, he peeped in at the broken casement, and saw a solitary female figure, dressed in the most squalid attire, kneeling before a small crucifix, which was attached to the wall, apparently in an agony of supplication. So absorbed

was she in her devotions, that not until the Count had given three or four brisk taps, first against the door, and secondly, against the casement, did she become aware of his presence, when rising abruptly from her knees, she went to the door, threw it open, and stood with her dark eyes flashing with indignation before De Sevrac.

Her commanding manner, contrasting so strangely with the abject penury that surrounded her, together with the style of her countenance, which though stamped with the impress of grief and sickness, still bore traces of former beauty, took the Count by surprise; and before he could recover from his astonishment, she said:

"Whence this intrusion? What has brought a stranger here at such an hour, to disturb the solitude of a feeble, sorrowing woman?"

"Believe me, I did not mean to intrude," exclaimed the Count, with an air of respect.

"Go, then, and let me no longer be troubled with your presence."

"Yet hear me but for one moment," expostulated the Count, "seeing a light in your

window as I rode past, and being wholly ignorant of my road to the next village, I dismounted to make inquiries."

"They are answered in a word," interrupted the woman impatiently, "your way lies straight on: now leave me, for your manner and your appearance are alike torture to me. Leave me, stranger—I entreat—I command you," and her eye blazed with the fierce light of a maniac's, as she motioned him to the door with an impetuous wave of her arm.

"But one word more—the village—"

"Not a word;" and so saying, she shut the door violently in his face.

"Singular creature this!" muttered De Sevrac to himself, as he hurried forward with Jacques through the wood, "very unlike people in her class of life. And she must have been handsome once; but grief, or ill health, or both perhaps combined, have bowed her form, and wasted her to a mere shadow. She's some wandering devotee, I suppose, whom fanaticism has driven mad; I have heard of such, but never met with one 'till now. Poor thing, it's a thousand pities; I fear she has not long to

live;" and with these words the cool, disciplined man of the world dismissed the subject from his mind.

On gaining the extremity of the wood, which was but of no considerable extent, and thinly stocked with trees, the travellers beheld lights twinkling in the distance, and urging on their horses with whip and spur, they at length arrived at the village of Lavallière, where they procured a lad about twelve years of age for a guide; and the Count de Sevrac mounted him before him on his own horse, as being the least distressed of the two.

Shortly after they lost sight of Lavallière, the road began greatly to improve, leading over high, heathy downs covered with broom and furze, across which the wind blew with most exhilarating freshness. The tall, leafy hedges which had so long shut in their view, had now all disappeared; and the sky having cleared up, they were enabled to catch a glimpse of the surrounding landscape, which touched and softened by the mellowing radiance of a full summer moon, showed to considerable advantage. Before them, and at no great distance,

appeared a small cluster of buildings, above which rose one that looked like the château they were in quest of. On either side, extending to the farthest point of sight, were deep, black woods, in which this quarter of La Vendée abounds; while immediately about them lay shelving pasturage lands, dotted in one place by isolated granite crags, and in another, by small patches of copse-wood. Occasionally the wind brought to their ear the tinkling of many streamlets slipping down the slopes into the low lands, which the travellers had just passed, or the faint, shy note of some bird from the copses near them; but otherwise, all was perfect stillness.

When they had ridden about half a league upon these open downs, the guide, addressing the Count, said, "There's the château!"—a remark which so delighted Jacques, who was one picturesque mass of mud from head to foot, that in the heedless impulse of the moment, he struck up the *Ca ira*, which reaching his master's aristocratic ears, drew down a reproof in such severe terms, that the abashed valet held silence during the remainder of the journey.

A few minutes more brought the party within full view of the château, which was a clumsy, spacious, old-fashioned pile, approached by a broad avenue of trees, at whose extremity was an archway, with the armorial bearings of the Chatillons above it. Through this the travellers passed into the court-yard, and on ringing at the bell, they were saluted by the barking of innumerable dogs, and the clamour of many voices, male as well as female; and presently the door was opened, and two men appeared with lights, one of whom took charge of the horses, while the other, a portly, grave, silver-haired man — no less a personage, in short, than the *maître-d'hôtel*—after waiting respectfully until the Count had communicated his name, went in and informed the Marquis of his arrival.

He returned almost immediately, and directing the mud-bedaubed Jacques and the guide to go round to the rear of the château, which was the part appropriated to the household, preceded the Count along a broad low passage, which opened into a variety of chambers on either side, and was terminated by a door in the

centre of an apartment that ran the entire length of the building. Here De Sevrac was met by his host, who welcomed him cordially to the château, led him to the upper end of the room, and seating him at a table between himself and the Curé, with whom he had just been busy at backgammon, ordered his *maître-d'hôtel* to bring in supper and some wine. While these pleasant orders are in progress, we will take the opportunity of saying a few words about the nobleman who issued them.

CHAPTER III.

THE Marquis de Chatillon, the head of one of the oldest and most influential families in La Vendée, was at this period nearly fifty years of age, though from his hale, hearty look, and athletic frame, he might have passed for ten years younger. His manners were simple, almost homely; his nature frank, hasty, and impetuous; he was convivial in his habits; and like all the Seigneurs of the province, he was enthusiastic in his devotion to the monarch, and the equestrian order to which he belonged.

His parents having died during his infancy, he had been brought up by his grandfather, who had attained high military distinction under Louis XIV., but had subsequently fallen a victim to the intrigues of the War Minister, Louvois,

to whom he had rendered himself obnoxious. In consequence of this, he had quitted the court and the army in disgust, and retired to the comparative solitude of La Vendée, where he devoted the greatest portion of his time to the education of his only grandchild. On the old man's death—for while living, he would have done his best to prevent it—the young Marquis hurried up to Paris, presented himself at Versailles, and mingled much in the gay, dissipated society of the court. It was in these circles that he first met with the Chevalier de Chantereau, a handsome, insinuating adventurer, about his own age, whose polished address made him a general favourite with the privileged classes, notwithstanding his origin, which was equivocal, and his want of fortune, which compelled him to have recourse to the gaming-table. With this accomplished young man, who to his other courtly requisites added that of being an adroit sycophant, the Marquis de Chatillon speedily became intimate; and it was out of this intimacy that the only poignant suffering he had ever known, arose. The circumstance was as follows:

In the family of the Spanish ambassador there was a lovely, high-spirited girl, whom the envoy's wife had brought with her from Madrid, and introduced into the fashionable *salons* of Paris as her friend and *protégée.* As such, Louise de Padilla everywhere experienced the most flattering reception; and the uncommon graces of her person, aided by his knowledge of her influence over the lady of the Spanish minister, made such an impression on the aspiring De Chantereau, that he tasked his utmost powers of pleasing, in the hope of prevailing on her to accept the offer of his hand. Possibly he might have succeeded—for he was one well calculated to ensnare the senses of a giddy Spanish girl of sixteen—but for the Marquis de Chatillon, who no sooner beheld Louise, than he, too, became deeply smitten with her beauty; and being ignorant of his friend's intentions, proposed, and was accepted by the fair foreigner, chiefly at the instigation of the Ambassador's lady, whose pride was gratified by her *protégée's* elevation.

For about two years, during which he never failed to pay a long annual visit to La Vendée, the Marquis lived happily with Louise, who

was some six or seven years his junior, and by whom he had one son. He still kept up his acquaintance with the Chevalier, who, to all appearance, bore his disappointment with equanimity, or at any rate, did not allow it to estrange him from his successful rival.

Towards the close of the third year, however, dissensions began to arise between the married couple. Louise was fond of the society of the French capital, and the homage of the Versailles courtiers; while her husband, more unsophisticated in his tastes, and beginning now to weary of courtly frivolities, sighed for the quiet of La Vendée, and was never so happy as when dwelling among his tenantry, exercising the rites of hospitality, after the social fashion of the province, and indulging in the wild excitement of the chase.

The consequence of such discrepancies of taste between husband and wife may be anticipated. Being both of impassioned natures they knew not how to give way one to the other; Louise insisted on residing altogether at Paris, having a perfect horror of the rustic manners of the Vendean *noblesse* and gentry;

while the Marquis, whose temperament was not without a spice of jealousy, as resolutely insisted on withdrawing her from the flatteries of the most profligate court in Europe. Finding, however, his efforts fruitless, his altercations with his wife daily became more frequent; the artful De Chantereau, who professed to act as the friend of both parties, tending not a little to widen the breach by his insidious bearing towards them.

So matters continued for upwards of four months, when Louise, fancying herself unjustly treated by the Marquis, whom, notwithstanding their disputes, she fondly loved, and being induced by the wily persuasions of her former suitor to believe that De Chatillon no longer entertained the slightest affection for her—Louise, thus deceived, and being prompted by pride and rage, in an evil hour lent a too willing ear to the Chevalier, to whose arms she fled from the shelter of her husband's roof, from which time to the present—a period of nearly twenty years—he had never once seen or heard of her.

The discovery of his wife's flight fell like a

thunder-bolt on the unprepared Marquis. He instantly decided on sending a challenge to the treacherous De Chantereau, with the fixed determination that one only should quit the field alive; but the adventurer had taken the precaution to conceal himself; and the injured husband, justly attributing this to cowardice, took care so effectually to expose him, as that he should never again be able to show his face in the gay and gallant circles of Paris, in whose eyes, to shrink from the personal consequences of a *liaison*, was to commit the most unpardonable of crimes.

Having thus, in part, satisfied his revenge, De Chatillon, disgusted with the world, broke up his Parisian establishment, and returned to the Bocage with his son, who was now approaching his third year. Here, for several weeks he remained in a state of sullen seclusion, haunted by the recollection of his young and beautiful wife; but the healing effects of time gradually made themselves felt; he became more tranquil and resigned, and by way of diverting thought, resorted with greater alacrity than ever to his favourite amusement of the

chase; and passed his evenings in a round of festivity with his neighbours. From this uniform course of life he departed but on one occasion—namely, on the coronation of the present King and Marie Antoinette, the former of whom, when Dauphin, had treated him with much affability; but as soon as etiquette would permit, after the conclusion of the august ceremony, he went back to his château, with the intention of never again quitting it.

Meanwhile, the younger De Chatillon throve apace, and his father's conduct towards him exhibited a singular mixture of fondness and indifference, not unaccountable under the peculiar circumstances of the case; for shortly after Louise's elopement, a rumour had been spread abroad, and had of course reached the Marquis's ears, that Alphonse was not his own son, but the illegitimate offspring of De Chantereau. He did not give absolute credence to this slander, but neither did he wholly disbelieve it; and not being able to make up his mind on the subject, he was too often, in his conduct towards his child, carried away by the impulse, kindly or otherwise, of the moment.

When Alphonse reached a proper age, his father engaged as his tutor a gentleman named Servette, a native of Nantes, who was an able scholar, fond of the study of politics, and an ardent admirer of the principles of the American Revolution, which, under the auspices of Washington, had then recently achieved a glorious triumph. This gentleman did every possible justice to his young pupil, who loved him sincerely, and looked up to him for counsel on all occasions. Under such superintendence, Alphonse became a very passable classical scholar; and by imbuing him with a taste for general reading, and more especially by introducing him to the acquaintance of a wealthy merchant of Nantes — whose family consisted of his wife, who was an Englishwoman, and one daughter—Servette induced his pupil to turn his attention to our difficult language, in which he made such progress, that by the time he reached his seventeenth year, he was enabled, not only to read English, but even to converse in it with accuracy, if not elegance.

Living in a state of almost utter solitude—

for his father seldom interfered with his pursuits—his tutor was Alphonse's chief companion; but on the breaking out of the Revolution, in 1789, that gentleman—delighted, as were all other enlightened Frenchmen with the prospects of regeneration held out to their country—set out to Paris, leaving his pupil to the society of his friends at Nantes, with whom he spent a great portion of his time, and with whom he was now staying on a visit.

Alphonse was now verging upon his twenty-third year. He was a fine, personable young fellow, of a brave and chivalrous character, and possessed of quick sensibilities. His intellect, too, was of an elevated cast, and having few, or none, of those strong aristocratic prejudices, so common among the French *noblesse* of that day, he was prepared to welcome the advent of the Revolution, as holding out a promise of great benefits to France—a sentiment, bye the bye, which he was compelled to keep secret from the Marquis, who would have regarded it as a proof of his son's utter degeneracy; but he was by no means prepared for the popular

excesses that so quickly followed the assembly of the States' General; and as for a Republic, he would have shuddered at the bare idea of such an innovation; for, like all his ancestors, he cherished profound reverence for the monarchical principle. There were several young French noblemen of Alphonse's way of thinking; but the scenes of confusion and bloodshed which took place after the death of Mirabeau, frightened them out of their liberal theories, and forced some to rally round the throne, and others to emigrate to Coblentz.

CHAPTER IV.

The *maître-d'hôtel* made no unnecessary delay in preparing supper; and the Count de Sevrac, notwithstanding that he had taken off the sharp edge of appetite at the farm-house, acquitted himself with very creditable energy; while his host, who had already dispatched his own early meal, looked on with a smile of approval, encouraging him to persevere, in such terms as, "Go on—go on; never heed appearances here; I know well what a traveller's appetite is. Try that Bordeaux, it's far better than your famous Clos Vougeot. Come, I'll set you the example." And the Marquis poured himself out a full glass of the generous wine.

De Sevrac having finished his repast, his

host asked him many questions about his father, with whom he had been acquainted during his first visit to Paris; and receiving for answer that he was dead, expressed his astonishment in a manner that highly amused his guest.

"Dead! Very odd; I'm sure he could not have been ten years my senior, and I have no thoughts of dying yet. He should have come down here, and then he would have been as hearty as I am at this moment, for the Bocage was always favourable to long life. And so your father is dead, you say; well, it can't be helped, we must all go some time or other."

"That's very true," observed the Count, with meritorious gravity.

"You came by way of Nantes, of course," said De Chatillon.

"I did so, and have encountered fatigues and perils enough," remarked the Count archly, "to set me up as an enterprising traveller for life. Such roads as I had to scramble over! labyrinths, rather, twisting and twirling, and leading every way but the right. Then your peasantry! Really, Marquis, there is an origi-

nality in their manners and costume quite enlivening to one accustomed to the monotonous civilization of the rest of France. They eyed us as we passed by, as though we had dropped from the moon. One woman in particular, if woman she be, I shall never forget;" and the speaker went on, in a strain of sprightly raillery, to describe his encounter with the strange female in the cottage by the wood-side.

"I know whom you mean," replied the Marquis, "I have often heard of her; she is a poor, half-witted creature; a gipsy, or something of that sort, who has lived, and I believe from choice, in that solitary hovel where you saw her, for the last twelve months and more. When she first came among us, I had some difficulty in preventing her neighbours from molesting her; for they took it into their wise heads that she was a witch; but they are now used to her reserved ways, and even furnish her, among them, with the means of subsistence. But enough of this—what news do you bring from Paris, Count?"

"Bad as bad can be. The *canaille* are lords of the ascendant, and he has most authority

whose voice is loudest in the clubs. But this can be no news to you."

"Partly so, partly not, but quite bad enough to make an honest Frenchman curse the hour he was born and the country that gave him birth. I had heard of some of the frantic decrees of the Assembly, and the insolence of that rebellious rabble, the National Guard, just as if France needed any other guard than that which her own aristocracy could furnish her with!"

"But remember, Marquis, that best and most legitimate guard has deserted her."

"How so?"

"Is it possible you have not heard of the emigration of our *noblesse*?"

"I am aware that many families of rank have fled the country; but surely the majority remain."

"Not so, it is the majority that have deserted their king; but few now rally round him, and these few are constantly exposed to the pikes and daggers of the *sans-culottes*. I myself have heard hundreds of these ruffians clamouring at the gates of the Tuileries for a Republic."

"A Republic!" exclaimed the horror-stricken

Marquis, turning fiercely round to the attentive Curé, " my God! do you hear that? But were they not instantly cut down? Did not every loyal citizen rise and repel the insult? Oh, for the good old days of the Bastille! France *was* France then."

The Count, whose ideas of loyalty were of a practical and somewhat selfish character, and who at thirty-two years of age—for he was no older—was as consummate a man of the world as though his judgment had been strengthened and disciplined by the experience of twice as many years, could not but smile at his host's ardour, which betrayed such a perfect ignorance of the temper of the times. He took care, however, not to be observed, and merely replied, " loyalty, my friend—such loyalty, at least, as you allude to—is now little better than a name. The prevailing cry of the capital, and of all the cities and towns through which I passed on my way here, is now, " Vive la liberté!" and associated with it, " A bas les aristocrats!"

" Liberty;" rejoined the Marquis scornfully. " Bah! What liberty do we want, but that of maintaining our rights and privileges as nobles?"

"*We!* you seem to forget that *we* are no longer recognized as an independent and influential body in the state. Not only our exclusive privileges, but our very titles and armorial bearings are formally abolished."

"So I've heard—so I've heard," exclaimed the Marquis impatiently, "but no matter, despite this resolution of the Assembly, we are, what we ever were, and ever will be—the right rulers of France. Rely on it, this revolution—as they call it—is a mere revolt, and will be at an end the instant the people return to their senses. I care not what you say to the contrary; it will—it must be so. It is not in reason to suppose that the monarchy of a thousand years, the most powerful and absolute in Europe, should be upset in a few months; and by whom? by a handful of *canaille*, whose tongues have always been sharper than their swords, the curs! A revolution! No, Count, not just yet; the mob may clamour as they please, but the faubourgs of Paris are not France. I feel it by myself; and what I feel, millions of others feel also," and the sanguine loyalist looked with an air of

self-confidence at the Count, as much as to say, "there, answer that, if you can!"

Alas, it was overweening confidence like this, on the part of some of the French noblesse; the affected liberality of others; and the distrust and abject apprehension of a third party, that served more than anything else to precipitate the awful crisis of the revolution. When the higher ranks should have advanced, they stood stock-still; when they should have boldly exhibited themselves in the van of the movement, they either slunk into the rear, or raising the coward's cry of "sauve qui peut!" left their king and country to shift for themselves. True, that with all their exertions, had they even acted together as one man, instinct with one will, they could never have wholly checked the democratic movement; but they might at least, by discreetly succumbing to so much of it as could not, and ought not to have been arrested, have given it a right direction. But they were split into factions, while their enemies—however they may have differed afterwards—were unanimous. Hence the sweeping away, as by a

furious equinoctial tide, of the entire aristocratic body throughout France.

It is not to be supposed that the Marquis felt at heart all the confidence which he so glibly expressed to his guest. In moments of reflection he was not without uneasiness; but the storm was yet at a distance, and he was not the man nicely to calculate its duration and severity, until it absolutely rattled about his ears. Besides, all his recollections were of the days of Louis XV., when, though her political system was rotten to the core, France wore a smiling and even majestic aspect. The conviction therefore with which he usually solaced himself was, that things must soon right themselves; and thus he went on dreaming, and would have gone on dreaming to his dying day, had not events awoke him rudely from his torpor, and summoned him with a voice of thunder into the field of active duty.

"Well, Marquis," resumed the Count, "be this popular uproar, revolution, or be it revolt, one thing is certain, that if not vigorously counteracted, it will ere long pull down the monarchy. And that brings me to the purport of my visit here."

" Why, you came to see an old friend of your father, did you not? or perhaps—as I know you courtiers are not over steady in your adherence to family intimacies—merely to see our mode of living in the Bocage. Bye the bye, we have a boar hunt to-morrow," continued the speaker, dropping into a style of conversation more congenial to him than politics, " and such marksmen as are our peasantry! once put them on their mettle, and they'll give your *sans-culottes* such a taste of their skill, as will soon quiet them. A revolution! Pooh, pooh, Count. What, if our nobles have fled? It is only to return terrible in their wrath as lions. And, then, is not our queen a daughter of Austria? What say you to that, hey?"

The Count made no other reply to this tirade, than by throwing out a hint that he would wish to speak alone with his host; whereupon the Curé, who had taken no part in the conversation, rose and wished the party good night, which he had no sooner done, than De Sevrac also rose from his seat, and after looking along the passage to ascertain that there were no listeners, shut the door, and resumed

his position, his host regarding him the while with looks of the utmost surprise.

"How now, Count?" said he, "wherefore all this caution? We are not used to be so very discreet here, for we say little that we would care for the whole world knowing—but I forgot, you are a courtier and a politician," and the blunt Vendean Seigneur smiled, as if he did not think the better of him for being so.

"I have come here," said De Sevrac, gravely and emphatically, "charged with an express commission from his Majesty."

"From—his—Majesty!" repeated the Marquis slowly, bowing between each word with profound reverence.

"Yes, from his Majesty," rejoined the Count, "who having always ranked you among his best friends, has frequently of late expressed his surprise that you have never once presented yourself at court since the day of his coronation. You see, Marquis, his memory never fails him with those he loves."

Tears stood in the Marquis's eyes, as he replied, "And does his Majesty condescend to remember the rude Vendean noble? Strange! he was little better than a mere boy when I

first had the honour of his notice. And a most promising youth he was too! I recollect as distinctly as if it were but yesterday, when we were all out shooting together at Meudon, that he brought down more birds than any two of the cleverest shots among us. And to think that he should have kept me in mind so long! What a memory—what a kind and gracious master!"

The Count de Sevrac had speculated on this loyal outburst, and immediately returned to the charge. "The King," he said, "well remembers when you were at the Court of Louis XV. about the time of your marriage."

"Enough—enough, Monsieur le Comte," interrupted the Marquis, shuddering, and with darkened brow; "and what is the message with which the King has entrusted you? But first let me show my sense of his Majesty's condescension," and filling his goblet to the brim, and shouting out, "Vive le Roi!" till the old roof rang again, he tossed off the contents at a draught.

It was curious to mark the contrast that the

Count and his host presented at this moment. The former was calm, self-possessed and inaccessible, apparently, to any sort of emotion; the latter was restless and excited, his eye flashing with pride and pleasure, and his lip quivering with an agitation that he could not, and did not attempt to conceal.

Having allowed the Marquis sufficient time to regain his self-control, the Count renewed the conversation as follows:

"In the last audience with which his Majesty was pleased to honour me, and at which the Queen alone was present, he desired me to seek you out in your retirement, and say that, if your son were still living—as he must now be of a fit age to enter upon public life—it was his wish that he should come to Paris, and be presented to him, when he would take an opportunity of giving him an honourable post in his household; 'For,' added he, with a smile, in which the Queen joined, 'the son of so loyal a nobleman as the Marquis de Chatillon, will never be unfaithful to the trust reposed in him.'"

"My son," rejoined the Marquis, "must

always be proud to obey the King's commands; but, to say the truth, I fear that a court life is the one of all others for which he is least qualified. He is quiet and studious in his habits, and like his grandfather and myself, has no relish for the bustle of the capital. He was brought up under a Monsieur Servette, a great scholar—quite a book-worm—who, I'm afraid, has turned his brain. I was wrong to leave them so much together; I should have looked after his education myself."

"You don't mean to say that your son has imbibed any of the vile principles of the day under this tutor!"

"God forbid!" replied the Marquis, warmly. "I would a thousand times rather see him in his coffin, than know that he was tainted with such a cursed plague-spot. But the thing is impossible, for he would not dare to hold any principles but such as I approved. No, I can answer for him as I would for myself."

"I am glad to hear you say so, for then there can be no objection to his returning with me to Paris, and making his appearance at court, which is the surest way to cure him

of those bookish notions that you complain of."

"Justly observed, Count; it is, indeed, high time that Alphonse should mix actively with society, as his ancestors have done before him. How else did I acquire my knowledge of the world?"

This remark elicited an arch smile from De Sevrac, and his host went on to say, "I trust Alphonse may acquit himself with credit in his new career; but, as I observed just now, I have my doubts, for he has very odd ways with him. Would you believe it, I have never yet been able to prevail on him to accompany me either on a stag or a boar-hunt!"

"Shall we see him to-night?"

"No, for he is at present staying at Nantes, with some of his tutor's friends, to whom he seems to have taken a great fancy. I have never seen them myself, but I incline to think well of them, because Alphonse tells me they are thorough Royalists."

"And when will your son return, Marquis?"

" I cannot exactly say; he only left me a few days ago, but if he do not return in a week or so, I will send a courier to summon him home."

" Do so, for I must be in Paris again within a fortnight, or three weeks at furthest. And now, having delivered to you the King's message, I have to add a few words from the Queen, who desired me to assure you of her esteem, and to express her conviction that when circumstances should demand it, and I fear they will soon, you would not fail in your duty to the throne. La Vendée and Bretagne, Marquis, rank high in the estimation of all loyalists, and you are eminent among their gallant Seigneurs."

" Her Majesty," replied the gratified De Chatillon, " has but to command to be obeyed. At the very first intimation of the royal will, my brother chiefs and myself will summon our ten, twenty, aye, thirty thousand men into the field."

" Thanks—thanks, my gallant friend. Her Majesty anticipated your ready acquiescence in her wishes, when she said to me at my audience

of leave, 'Tell the Marquis De Chatillon how delighted the King will be to see him at the Tuileries; but should circumstances prevent him from coming, let him at least be represented by his son.'"

The Marquis paused for an instant, as if undecided what answer to make. "Go!" he exclaimed, "and why not? But no—no, what should I do at court, ignorant as I am of all the changes that have taken place since my time? I should be the butt of the courtiers and the women, weak fools as they are, for my rough habits and love of plain speaking."

"Do not sneer at the women, Marquis," replied De Sevrac, gaily; "remember the Queen is of that despised sex."

"The Queen, Monsieur le Comte, is my Sovereign, and were all the false, fawning sex like her—but no more of this; in a word, I am too old and stubborn to play the courtier, so must depute my son in my stead."

"Be it as you will; but pray be ready to act when the fitting season arrives; and, above all, do not be too hasty, for a premature move-

ment might be attended with the most fatal consequences."

"I understand you," replied De Chatillon; and after some further conversation immaterial to the purposes of our narrative, the friends separated for the night.

CHAPTER V.

The Count de Sevrac, who was a man of active habits, rose at an early hour next morning, and made his way into the room where he had supped the previous night; but finding no one there, he concluded that his host was not yet up, so went out for a stroll into the court-yard of the château till breakfast should be ready. The building was one very unlike those noblemen's houses to which he had been accustomed, and he regarded it with no slight surprise. Its architecture was of a most irregular character, and it had as many points and angles as Don Quixotte's horse, Rosinante. There was neither lawn nor park attached to it; no trim alcoves, terrace-walks, statues, nor fountains; but in the rear was a large garden,

bounded by an orchard, and serving the purposes rather of utility than ornament. Immediately about it were cottages and farm-houses, with rick-yards and ricks close to them, of such an eccentric shape as would have sorely perplexed an English agriculturist. Adjoining these farms were a range of small slips of meadows, on which some cattle were pasturing, but from their lean, poetic appearance, it would seem that the soil from which they derived their subsistence was as unprofitable as that of Parnassus. As the Count stood, marking the difference between this unsightly estate and his own elegant one near Rheims, his valet approached him from the rear of the château.

"You are on the stir betimes this morning, Jacques," observed the Count.

"I was compelled to rise, Monseigneur; for the wind howled so dismally down the chimney, and rattled so against the windows, that I could hardly get an hour's rest, notwithstanding my fatigue."

"And so, now, you've come out to admire the beauties of the château?" rejoined his master.

"That's soon done," said Jacques, flippantly, "singular place, indeed! But everything's singular here!—so unlike *our* château at Rheims! And the Seigneur's household are all so formal, too—though they pass the wine-cup freely enough; I must say that for them."

"Ay, and it was the wine-cup, I suppose, that occasioned that loud laughter which I heard once or twice while I was seated with the Marquis at supper?"

"Oh, that was the girls' doing; they're a thousand times pleasanter than the men, and laughed heartily when I told them some of my Paris adventures. But the women and I always get on very well together. Ah, if these poor things had but the advantage of a Paris education, what might they not be made!—at least, one or two of them, with their pretty eyes and round, rosy faces. But as it is, they are sad ignorant creatures; and that fat, grave, old-fashioned *maître-d'hôtel* is so strict with them, that—"

"So much the better, Jacques; for then you will be compelled to demean yourself with

prudence, and keep in view the warning I gave you yesterday."

The valet looked knowingly after his master, as he turned on his heel, on saying this, and went back into the château; and gently whistling his favourite "*Ca ira!*" so that he should not be overheard, thus gave vent, at intervals, to his meditations: "He's a kind master, the Count, and has far less pride than even this old fool of a *maître-d'hôtel* here, who thought fit to read me a lecture last night, because I praised little Victorine's dark eyes. Yes, and he places confidence in me, and has a high opinion of my shrewdness; and so he may well have, for Jacques Drouet sees further than Monsieur le Comte de Sevrac has any idea of. See further! yes, yes, I warrant I see that things are all being turned topsy-turvy in France, and that the people are about to get all they want. And why not? Why should the aristocrats be allowed to have everything their own way? Down with them, I say!" here he looked cautiously about him, "down with them all, except the Count, and him I'll take under my protection when the

people's day comes. And now I'll go in and say soft things to old Pierre's niece, pretty Mademoiselle Victorine. Ah, Jacques, Jacques! why art thou so irresistible?" and he walked away with that indescribable look and gait so characteristic of a coxcombical French valet.

De Sevrac, meanwhile, had re-entered the breakfast-room, and was amusing himself with looking at the family pictures that lined both sides of the dusky, oak-wainscoted walls, when some one lightly tapped him on the shoulder. He turned, and beheld the Marquis.

"That's a clever painting, Count," said the latter, pointing up to a full-length portrait of a French general, attired in the formal costume of Louis XIV., "it's a likeness of my grandfather, who accompanied the *Grand Monarque* on his Dutch campaign, and would have been created a marshal, only for an unlucky misunderstanding he had with Louvois; so in a fit of disgust he bade adieu to active service, and came down here to spend the remainder of his days in peace and quiet. How well I recollect the old man, with his tall, stately

figure, and his milk-white hairs! He was very kind to me, and often, when he happened to be out of spirits—for he had many sad moments—would place me on his knees, and warn me against the intrigues of courts, and advise me, if I valued peace of mind, to content myself with a country life. Had I but taken warning by him," continued the speaker, with an involuntary sigh, "much suffering had been spared me! But come, Count, breakfast awaits us, and that is better than my egotism;" saying which, he led the way to the head of the room, where, in a recess near a window, a table was spread with a variety of choice edibles.

Shortly after the repast was over, several of the Marquis's tenants, duly announced by old Pierre, the *maître-d'hôtel*, came in, as was their wont, to consult him respecting certain disputes which they had had with their neighbours, for they looked up to him, not only as their Seigneur, but also as their legal adviser, from whose verdict, dispassionate as it generally was, they never dreamed of appealing.

The Count was much entertained by this, to

him, novel scene. The complainants told their story without equivocation or reserve; and the Marquis, after subjecting them to a pretty strict examination, and sometimes summoning witnesses, gave his decisions with an air of grave, judicial authority, and then dismissed the parties.

When they had gone, De Chatillon observing his guest's surprise, said to him, laughingly: "You see, Count, we have quite a fashion of our own in these matters."

"But suppose the parties interested choose to dissent from your verdict; what then?"

"Dissent!" exclaimed the Marquis, "dissent from the just decision of their Seigneur! No, things have not come to that pass yet. We sanction no such doings here, however it may be elsewhere."

"But have you no regular lawyers among you?"

"Not one; such an animal would be as great a phenomenon in the Bocage, as a crocodile or an alligator. But now that I have disposed of these good people's business, what say you to accompanying me to church, and

afterwards to a boar-hunt? We shall have rare sport in the forest."

The Count agreed, and the horses having been got ready, they set out for the church of the district. A portion of the Marquis's household slowly followed on foot, and were joined from time to time by a body of the neighbouring farmers and peasantry, nearly all of whom were armed with fowling-pieces.

The road was, in part, the same as that which the Count had traversed the preceding night, but a short distance from the hut of the gipsy-woman, it branched off in a north-west direction, towards some small farms, among which stood the church; and about a league beyond that, stretched the wide-spreading thicket, where the country assumed a savage, uncultivated aspect, admirably calculated for the sportsman's purposes.

The Marquis and his guest alighted at the church portal, and were followed into the homely pile by several of the former's retainers, while others went off in different directions to the thicket, there to await, each at his allotted post, the arrival of the Seigneur.

As soon as this last, together with De Sevrac, had entered the family seat, which was railed off from all the other seats in the church—an aristocratic distinction already done away with in the other parts of France—the service commenced, and was wound up by a brief exhortation addressed by the Curé to his flock, wherein he impressed on them the duty of implicitly obeying the commands of their lawful Seigneurs. This ended, the worthy man, putting on a more familiar manner, informed his congregation that a boar-hunt was appointed to take place that day; and immediately set an example of locomotion, by hastening out of the church, and seizing hold of the first man's musket that presented itself, while his hearers followed, with ill-suppressed eagerness, at his heels.

The day was a delightful one, warm, but not sultry, for a lively breeze was stirring, and the fleecy clouds that floated high in heaven, just sufficed to temper the fervid rays of the sun, now approaching its meridian. As De Chatillon and his companion rode leisurely along, the former, who was in one of his

happiest moods, had a kind word and a smile to bestow on every one whom he met; and his courtesies were returned with a fearless familiarity that astonished the more exclusive Count.

"You seem surprised at our manners," said the Marquis, in reply to some observation let drop by the other; "but for my part, I would not exchange the pleasure of making these poor simple people happy, for the proudest prospects that the court could hold out to me. There is not a peasant we have passed to-day, who would hesitate to lay down his life in my service, for we are linked together by the strongest of all ties—mutual interest and affection. Far different, and assuredly far less tranquil, was my lot when your father and I first met in the *salons* of the Duc de Choiseul. I dare say you have often heard him talk of those days—"

The Marquis was here interrupted by the approach of a young, sun-burnt farmer, from the neighbouring village of Lavallière, who stopped him with a blunt request that he

would be present at his wedding, which was to take place within a few weeks.

"And so you really are going to get married!" exclaimed his good-humoured Seigneur. "Silly fellow, what could have prompted you to such a rash act?"

"Mademoiselle Mannette," replied the youth gravely, "is a very—"

"Of course, every maid is an angel; it is only when she gets married that she turns out to be the devil. However, young blood will not be advised, so go your ways, Jules, go your ways, and tell Mannette that I will not forget her when the proper time arrives."

The delighted Jules withdrew, and the party rode on at a brisk pace, and quickly reached the thicket, which differed from the small, scanty wood which De Sevrac had passed the day before on his way to the château, inasmuch as it was thickly overgrown with underwood, and full of large, spreading forest-trees, which here formed avenues spreading into beautiful vistas; and there, opened into small, rich, sunny glades, carpeted with the greenest turf. The Seigneur's arrival was the signal for a

body of hunters who were scattered about the outskirts, to dash forward with their dogs into the wood; and he himself and his companion, having been furnished with boar-spears, dismounted from their horses, of which two men took charge, and occupied themselves by keeping a vigilant look-out at the edge of the forest.

While they were thus engaged, the fierce yelping of dogs, the shouts of the hunters, and the discharge of several guns in succession, announced that a boar was roused from his lair, and was beginning to show sport. As the sounds at first came from the heart of the thick wood, it was not yet known in what quarter the brute would make his egress; but soon they drew nearer, and satisfied the Seigneur that he was rushing out in the direction where he and his friend had posted themselves. "Be ready with your spear," he said, addressing De Sevrac, "for I can tell by his roar that he is near at hand."

"Look to yourself, Marquis, look to yourself —quick, here he comes."

The caution was only just in time, for while

the Seigneur was turning round to his companion, who stood about twenty paces off him, to see that he was prepared, the ferocious brute, hotly pursued by men and dogs, came up, his mouth covered with foam, and his red eyes glistening with malignity; and De Chatillon standing right in his path, he made a sudden dash at him—so sudden, indeed, that but for the Count's intervention, who, seeing the imminent peril, had rushed forward and transfixed the boar with his spear, the Marquis would infallibly have been gored, and perhaps have lost his life.

While the animal lay writhing on the ground, grinding his white tusks and uttering a savage growl of defiance, the dogs fastened on him, like so many wolves; but such was his prodigious strength that, wounded and bleeding as he was, and quivering in his last convulsions, he tore open the throat of one, and ripped up the belly of a second, who dropped dead beside him.

The Seigneur continued the sport for some hours longer, during which two more boars were roused, one of which contrived to make

his escape, and the other was not dispatched until three spears had been broken in his body; and then the signal of recal having been given by the Marquis's chief huntsman, and the bodies of the slain animals slung triumphantly on poles which were carried aloft on men's shoulders, the whole party separated, some going off to their respective abodes, and others returning in straggling groups to the château, some on horseback and some on foot, there to end the day in feasting and merry-making.

De Chatillon and the Count were among the last to quit the forest, and were already far advanced on their way home, and within half a mile of the gipsy's cottage, when they saw two men bearing in their arms a female who was to all appearance lifeless, and a third, standing by the roadside holding a couple of horses, from which it was evident the others had just dismounted.

Hastily riding up to him, the Marquis inquired what was the matter, and was answered: "It's the gipsy woman, Seigneur; I was walking along, when I saw her a short way before me, in the middle of the road, stopping as if to

take breath; and presently up came those two horsemen, on their return from the boar-hunt, galloping at such a furious rate that, before she could get clear of them, they knocked her down, and rode over her. I heard them call out, but I suppose she could not hear them, and they could not draw up in time."

"Scandalous negligence!" exclaimed the Marquis. "Is the poor creature much hurt?"

"Yes, Seigneur; she must be bruised all over, for both horses, I think, trampled on her; and when I reached her, I found her quite senseless, with the blood gushing from her mouth. The horsemen, however, did all they could, for they instantly got down, and are now taking her to her cottage."

"And the moment the fellows return," replied De Chatillon, "be sure you tell one or both of them to ride off to Lavallière for medical aid. Tell them to lose not a minute; and say, also, that it is my order that they procure the assistance of some nurse, who may look carefully after the poor woman; I myself will either call or send to-morrow, to ascertain that she has every attention paid her," and with

these words, the Seigneur and the Count rode on.

At the château, meantime, all was laughter and festivity in the barn where the holiday-meeting was held. The portly *maître-d'hôtel* was usually the person selected to preside and maintain order on these occasions, which the Seigneur frequently honoured by his presence; but just now, his whole attention was engrossed by the Count, who was desirous of again talking over the business that had brought them together, and gleaning information from his host, respecting the extent of his available resources, and those of the neighbouring Seigneurs, in the event of a rising in La Vendée.

When the good wine had begun to circulate among the holiday-makers, the "mirth grew fast and furious," and nowhere so much so as in that quarter where our friend Jacques was located, whose extravagant complimentary addresses to the female portion of the company, created a strong sensation among them; while they drew down on him, from time to time, the dignified remonstrances of the *maître-d'hôtel*, Pierre, who, being of Flemish or rather of Dutch

extraction, had very sedate, precise notions of gallantry, and was remarkable for his strict ideas of decorum and subordination.

Such being the case, it may be imagined what was this worthy official's horror and indignation, when the tables having been removed and a space cleared for a dance, the mercurial Jacques, excited by the wine he had been drinking, which rendered him totally forgetful of his master's orders, gathered a knot of young men and girls about him, and began enlightening them on the subject of the mob-risings at Paris, the downfall of the aristocrats and the approaching emancipation of the people. "We shall all have our rights shortly," he said, "and every pretty girl will get a husband, with lots of money to support her."

"Do you mean to say, Monsieur Jacques," replied Pierre's favourite niece, "that we shall all get rich husbands?"

"Yes, my sweet little Victorine, and as many as you choose. The aristocrats have had it all their own way hitherto, and it is our turn now."

"Here's doctrine!" exclaimed the astounded

Pierre, with uplifted hands and eyes. "Forty years and more, man and boy, have I lived in this household, and never yet heard a single syllable about the people and their rights. Hold your tongue, you prating coxcomb," he continued, no longer able to control his passion, when he found that his remonstrances produced no effect on the thoughtless, loquacious valet.

"I scorn to answer you," replied Jacques, sneeringly, "for you're only fit to drive out old women in carriages drawn by oxen."

"*Mon Dieu!* do I hear aright?" exclaimed the *maître-d'hôtel*, looking first at one and then at another of the tittering group.

"Poor gentleman! I pity and forgive you," rejoined the valet, with an inimitable expression of lofty commiseration in his countenance; and then abruptly flying off from politics to gallantry, he took the word of command out of Pierre's mouth, ordered the music to strike up, and seizing on the unreluctant Victorine, he began twirling her round in the dance, and between whiles, imprinting a sonorous salute upon her lips, much to the bewilderment of the more bashful young farmers who stood by, and

who, in the simplicity of their hearts, knew not which most to admire and envy, the elastic spirits, or the immeasurable impudence of the Parisian valet.

All this time, Pierre—who in his own estimation was scarcely inferior to the Marquis—stood perfectly speechless and aghast. His dignity was outraged, his nice sense of decorum was shocked; his niece and heiress had been summarily kissed before his face, and he himself had been treated just as if he were nobody! Never before had such a series of unparalleled affronts been put upon him. And the worst of it was, that all the company had been the eye-witnesses of his humiliation. This was the finishing blow to his self-consequence; and accordingly, before the dancing had become general, the old man, his whole frame trembling with mingled shame and rage, peremptorily broke up the party, despite the clamorous entreaties of Jacques, who grew absolutely furious at the idea of such a violation of the rights of man.

The Marquis and his guest were seated at supper, engaged in earnest conversation, when the *maître-d'hôtel* came in, and advancing

slowly and solemnly towards his master, asked him, in faltering accents, if he might speak a word with him.

"Speak! to be sure. But what's the matter with you, Pierre? You look as grave as if you'd come from a funeral rather than a feast."

"Seigneur," said the old man, in tones fraught with deep dejection, "I have now been upwards of forty years attached to your household. Your honoured father—nay, your grandfather, who brought me with him from Holland shortly after the close of the Dutch campaign—"

"Hey-day, Pierre!" replied the Marquis, "if you're going to begin your story with my grandfather, you won't have finished it to-night."

"I was merely going to observe, Seigneur, that having been so many years in your service, I had hoped to have died in it."

"And what is to prevent it, Pierre?" asked the Marquis, his curiosity roused by this exordium.

"The horrible, the incredible insults that have been put upon me this night," exclaimed

the *maître-d'hôtel*, with increased solemnity of manner. " I have been treated as if I were any common man ; and it has so sunk me in my own esteem, that I feel that I have nothing left but to quit the scene of my disgrace. All the household laugh at me, and I am become an object of pity to the very women. Seigneur, I cannot bear it," and tears sprang to the old man's eyes.

" Be composed, Pierre," replied the Marquis, " and rely on it, whoever has offered you insult, shall be dismissed from my service."

" I have been called, in the hearing of the whole household," continued the *maître-d'hôtel* with an emphasis that he intended to be awful, " ' a bullock-driver! ' Yes, bullock-driver was the word. Victorine heard it, the bailiff heard it, the *maître de cuisine* heard it—we all heard it."

" And who was the offender ?" asked De Chatillon, scarcely able to suppress a smile, notwithstanding his servant's grief.

" Jacques, Monsieur le Comte's valet."

" My valet !" exclaimed De Sevrac. " Then the fellow shall make you, here in my presence, an ample apology."

Greatly reassured by this promise, Pierre went on with his narrative in a calmer manner. "I was subjected to these gross insults," he said, "because I rebuked the young man for his behaviour towards the females, whom he teased and tumbled about in a way shocking to think of. Not only this, Seigneur, but he had the astonishing impudence to make love to them all, one after the other! With my own eyes I witnessed the scandalous transaction; and before I had time to interfere, he had positively kissed not less than three of them, my niece Victorine among the number; and what's most extraordinary is, that the hussies seemed to think all the better of him for it! If I had not seen the thing myself, I would not have believed it possible."

De Sevrac here burst out into a fit of laughter, in which he was followed by his host, who, perceiving the old man's vexation, said, by way of humouring him: "Come, come, don't worry yourself about this matter so, Pierre, for I promise you that Jacques's conduct shall not be repeated. But you should try to make allowances for his folly; remember, we have all been young once."

" And I am certain," archly added the Count, " that the day has been, Pierre—and that not so very long since—when you would have enjoyed a sly romp with the women, quite as well as this scapegrace servant of mine."

" In those days, Monsieur le Comte, which you are pleased to remind me of," exclaimed the *maître-d'hôtel*, with formal gravity, " young men went about these affairs in a far more decorous manner than they do now. If they wanted to go a-wooing, they gave a respectful hint beforehand; but this revolutionary mode of courting, without ' by your leave,' or ' will you permit me ?' or ' shall I have the honour ?' but snatching a kiss, as if one had a right to it !—as if it were one's own property, offends every rule of decency ! The age, Seigneur, is wofully changed from what it was when we were at court, in the days of Louis XV. I recollect—"

" The age is indeed changed, Pierre," observed his master, " nevertheless, we must try and make the best of it ; and I'll take care that Jacques offers you every atonement in his power, for to insult you, is to insult me."

The *maître-d'hôtel* bowed low at this gra-

cious intimation, and added: "But this is not the worst, Seigneur. Not only has Jacques conducted himself towards the women in the way I have mentioned, but he has also been putting strange notions into the men's heads, and talking all sorts of nonsense about the oppressions of the nobles, and the rights of the sovereign people. I assure you, Seigneur, it made my hair stand on end to hear him go on so."

The Marquis's face here blazed like crimson. All his good-humour forsook him in an instant, and striking the table vehemently, he thundered out: "The meddling, mischievous fool! And did he dare to talk in this fashion to my tenantry? People, indeed! What should the people have to do but obey? I'll 'people' him with a vengeance!—call in the fellow!"

"Leave me to deal with him," said the Count; "and I'll answer for it, he will be in no hurry to chatter again on this subject."

The *maître-d'hôtel* quitted the room, and almost immediately reappeared with Jacques, whom he found sitting in the kitchen, sulking over the unceremonious break-up of the party.

On coming into the Count's presence, De Sevrac addressed him in harsher terms than he had ever yet permitted himself to use: "Listen to me, fellow!" he said, "and for the last time. I warned you once before how you demeaned yourself while in this country, and now I find you have paid so little attention to my caution, that you have not only deeply affronted this worthy man," pointing to Pierre, "but, moreover, you have had the audacity to instil into the minds of the Marquis de Chatillon's household and tenantry, the pestilent doctrines you have picked up in Paris. Now, if I did not know that your head were more to blame than your heart in this matter, I would dismiss you without an hour's delay. As it is, I insist on your apologizing to Pierre for your insolence towards him; and bear this in mind, that the very next time I hear so much as a whisper against you, you cease to find a master and a protector in me."

The crest-fallen valet was about to enter into some sort of defence of his behaviour, when the Marquis interrupted him sternly with: "Not a word, fellow—I will not hear a word; do as

your master bids you, or prepare to quit the château this night."

With infinite reluctance Jacques stammered out the required apology, and then took his departure from the room, followed by the *maître-d'hôtel*, who did not attempt to conceal his satisfaction at the turn that the affair had taken.

CHAPTER VI.

The *maître-d'hôtel* and Jacques had hardly left the apartment, when a loud knocking was heard at the door leading into the courtyard, accompanied by a furious ringing of the bell; and on the door being opened, a peasant from Lavallière entered in breathless haste, and insisted on being ushered into the presence of the Marquis, as he had a message of consequence to deliver to him.

"The Seigneur will see no one to-night," replied Pierre, who had halted in the hall, on hearing this request, "for he is busy with the Count de Sevrac, so you must delay your communication until to-morrow."

"I must see him this instant," exclaimed the messenger.

"Impossible," rejoined the pertinacious old man.

"Well, then, since I cannot speak with him, go and show him this ring," and the peasant placed a handsome diamond ring in Pierre's hands.

"Uncommonly beautiful—must have cost a world of money," exclaimed the *maître-d'hôtel*, holding the trinket close up to his eyes. "You say right, my friend, this ring must indeed be shown to the Marquis, for I've no doubt it's one he's lost himself; he was always very careless about these sort of things."

The moment the Seigneur's eyes fell upon the diamond ring, he turned pale, his whole frame quivered, while he exclaimed in tremulous accents: "Who gave you this, Pierre?"

"It was given me by a man who desired me to tell you that he had a communication of importance to make."

Without another word the agitated Marquis hurried out into the hall, and addressing the messenger, said: "How came this ring into your possession?"

"The poor woman who lives in the hut by

the wood-side, gave it me, and charged me to deliver it into your hands, and say that she must see you this night without delay, or it would be too late."

"Go and order the groom to saddle my horse," exclaimed the Marquis, calling aloud to Pierre.

"At this hour, Seigneur!"

"Do as I command you, without a word," replied his master authoritatively.

The *maître-d'hôtel* departed to execute the Seigneur's orders; and the latter, with as much calmness as he could muster, pleaded unexpected business to the Count, as an excuse for leaving him so abruptly; and then hastening back to the hall, at the door of which he found his groom waiting with the horse ready saddled, he mounted, and was off like lightning, much to the astonishment of Pierre, who endeavoured, but in vain, to obtain a solution of the mystery from the messenger.

The night was chill and cloudy, neither moon nor stars were to be seen, and as the Marquis urged his steed forward at a furious pace resembling that of the spectre huntsman, his

thoughts took the gloomy hue of the hour, and many a bitter sigh escaped him, despite his efforts to repress it. That well-remembered ring! With what a world of painful associations was it inextricably linked! Roused by its magic influence, Memory travelled back through a lengthened waste of years, and the rude Vendean chief was once again at the splendid court of Versailles—young, ardent, susceptible, and knowing nought of sorrow but the name. What a change had come over his nature since then! The star of Hope had set, the romance of life had departed, and coarser and more worldly feelings had long since filled up the space they had left vacant in his mind. On—on he flew, as though speed of motion alone had power to keep down the tumult of his soul—on through the village—across the uplands—past the wood—and now, arrived at his journey's end, he fastens his breathless horse by the bridle to the nearest tree, and enters the wretched hovel.

Stretched on an old truckle-bed, the ghastly impress of death stamped on every feature of her face, lay the object of whom De Chatillon was in search. Nothing could be more forlorn

than her condition. The wind blew keenly in through the broken casement and the chinks of the crazy door; the few blankets that covered her were quite threadbare; and the only article of furniture in the hut, with the exception of the bed and a small crucifix hung against the wall, was a ricketty table, whereon stood a small lamp, revealing the forms of two women who sate, one on each side the sufferer, administering from time to time a few drops of a cordial which she was with difficulty prevailed on to swallow.

"Is he come yet?" enquired the wretched creature, her eyes wandering wistfully about the room.

"I am here," said the Marquis, advancing to the foot of the bed.

"Oh, that voice—that voice!" exclaimed the sufferer, clasping her hands together, while a convulsive spasm passed over her face.

"Her mind is wandering, Seigneur," said one of the attendants, in an under-tone. "The Curé, who has just left us, says, that the shock she received to-day is fatal, and that he doubts whether she will survive till morning."

"Leave me alone with the Marquis de Chatillon," exclaimed the stricken woman, "my last words must be breathed into his ear alone."

Her nurses, who were the wives of two of the neighbouring peasants, would fain have demurred to this request, thinking that it proceeded from aberration of mind; but on a signal from the Seigneur, they rose without a word, and quitted the hovel.

When they were gone, the Marquis, seating himself by the bed-side, said, in tones tremulous from suppressed agitation:

"Tell me, woman, I implore you, how you came by that ring. It was my first gift to—"

"Your wife, Louise."

"Ha! How know you that?"

"From her own lips!"

"Curse her—curse her!" interrupted De Chatillon impetuously, for at that moment the sense of his wrongs as a husband revived in his mind with all its former keenness.

"Oh, do not curse her," faltered the sufferer, turning her wan, beseeching eyes on the Marquis. "You do not know what she has

suffered—how deep, how lasting has been her remorse. Wasted by the constant pressure of sickness—steeped in poverty to the very lips—an agonizing sense of what she was, and is, for ever gnawing at her heart—homeless, houseless, without a friend or companion on earth, even her God turning a deaf ear to her supplications—do not, in mercy do not, curse one so wretched, so abandoned of all."

"And where is my—I mean, where is she now?" asked De Chatillon abruptly.

"*Here,* beside you, on her death-bed!" replied Louise, covering her face with her hands, and giving way to such a burst of anguish as seemed to threaten her instant dissolution.

On receiving this unexpected communication, the Marquis started from his seat, and hurriedly paced the room, as though to shake off the bewildering effects produced on his brain by the discovery. It was indeed a bewildering discovery, for none could recognise in the wasted, friendless outcast the once beautiful Louise de Padilla. Alas! there is no mask so effectual as that which grief throws over the countenance.

"You refuse me your forgiveness!" continued the remorse-stricken wife. "Well, I deserve that it should be so, but yet if you did but know what I have gone through, silent and uncomplaining, for years, you would not withhold from me at least your pity. Pray, draw near me, and for once—but once—speak to me—look on me—as you used to do in the days that are past. I ask you not to take me home—home!" she repeated, while the tears flowed down her cheeks, "how strangely that word sounds! Home! What home have I but the grave? Marquis de Chatillon—husband—Alphonse—it is a dying woman that addresses you! In a few hours—and God speed the moment!—this crushed spirit will be at rest; but ere I pass away from your sight, as for years I have from your memory, give me to know, if it be only by a look, that I am forgiven. See, I have no pride now; my very heart grovels in the dust beneath your feet," and she stretched forth her hands towards her husband, who stood leaning with downcast eyes against the wall.

"What, not one word?" resumed the penitent. "Oh, De Chatillon, carry back your recollection to that day when, as we stood together beside the fountain at Versailles, you gave me that ring," pointing to the glittering trinket which, on first hearing his wife's name mentioned, the Marquis had flung indignantly on the table; "I was a young—a happy bride then, and as you placed it on my finger, you said, 'Be this a pledge, Louise, of undying love between us.' You may have forgotten the words, but on my heart they are indelibly engraved."

This allusion roused all the Marquis's fiercest passions.

"Woman!" he exclaimed, grinding his teeth as he spoke, "can you remind me of those words without a burning blush of shame? Who was the first to break the compact? Did I not maintain steadfast and inviolate the faith pledged you, in the face of Heaven, at the altar? Did I not sacrifice my every wish to yours, and suffer you to mould me as you pleased? Even the wildest suggestions of your

woman's vanity—fool that I was to be so blindly trusting!—were laws to me; and how have I been repaid?"

"I cannot speak—let that ring speak for me; it was your own free gift, and is all that is left to remind me that I was once happy and beloved."

"The ring!" interrupted the Marquis, with a laugh of bitter scorn, "look, here is the value I set on the bauble," and snatching it from the table, he dashed it to the ground, and crushed it to atoms beneath his tread.

The humble, abased creature breathed a sigh so deep as she beheld this act, that life seemed issuing with it; but recovering herself by a strong effort, she murmured in a tone of voice whose very calmness spoke of settled despair:

"It is as I feared—all is over—there is no longer a hope."

"None," replied the Marquis sullenly.

"Go, then, Alphonse—go, I would not have you see me die; but when the last struggle is ended, and she who has wronged you can wrong you no more, come back, and casting one brief glance on her inanimate form, ask

yourself this question: 'Should I not have shown more mercy?' Go, for there is a sure monitor within that warns me my hour draws nigh."

But De Chatillon stirred not; his feet seemed rooted to the spot.

Snatching eagerly at this faint hope of relenting, Louise continued:

"Though I have deeply injured you, yet I am not quite so guilty as you imagine; we have both been grossly deceived."

"Deceived! How? Speak!"

"It is a revolting story," said the penitent, with a shudder, raising herself with difficulty on her straw pillow, "but it must be told," and with an endeavour at composure which caused her much suffering, she commenced as follows: "You remember the Chevalier de Chantereau, whom you once thought your friend. He it was who, from mixed motives of hate and jealousy, first engendered discord between us. He bribed my confidential maid to drop into my too credulous ear that you had ceased to love me, and that the sole cause of your often-expressed wish to quit Paris and return to La

Vendée was, that you had formed an attachment there to the daughter of one of your tenants; and he himself took care to give effect to the calumny by assuming an air of profound pity and respect whenever accident or design brought him into my presence. Think what I must have suffered when day after day this story was repeated in my hearing! For a long time—judging of your feelings by my own—I treated it with disdain; but when a forged letter was purposely thrown in my way, wherein, writing to the Duc de Choiseul, you were made to boast of your new *liaison*, I could withhold my belief no longer; and maddened by your altered manner, and too proud, alas! to seek an explanation, in a moment of rage and despair, I was prevailed on to—but too well you know the sequel."

"The traitor—the lying, heartless traitor!" exclaimed De Chatillon, his eyes blazing with fury, "he, too, led me to believe that my confidence in you was wholly misplaced—but go on, go on."

"We quitted Paris for an obscure retreat on the Spanish frontier, for the Chevalier, as

cowardly as he was treacherous, dreaded the effects of your vengeance. O God! the remorse—the agony—the humiliation of that moment when I was fatally and for ever undeceived as to the nature of the wretch's feelings towards me! Impatient of his seclusion from the gay world, he soon began to make me the victim of his spleen; nay, he cursed me for the very love which he said had lured him to his ruin; till one day, roused to fierce hatred by his taunts, I snatched up his sword, which lay on a chair near him, and he fell, weltering in his blood, at my feet."

As Louise thus spoke, a gleam of that proud, impetuous spirit which had formerly so distinguished her, flashed across her countenance, but quickly subsided again into the expression of deep, subdued melancholy which her features had worn for so many years.

"The instant the blow was struck," resumed the sufferer, "I rushed from the spot, and in a state bordering on phrenzy, made my way across the frontier, and thence to Madrid, where my rigid and haughty relatives, who had heard my story, indignant at the disgrace I had brought

on them, and anxious as much as possible to conceal it from the world, gave out that I was mad, and caused me to be imprisoned as such at Valladolid, whence, after a dreary confinement of years, I managed to effect my escape; and from that time to the present, by way of doing penance for my crimes, I have wandered a hopeless, half-crazed outcast over France, subsisting, like a mendicant, on charity, and so utterly broken in spirit as to be thankful for the alms tossed to me by those whom I would once scarcely have deigned to acknowledge as my fellow-creatures. Thus seven weary years rolled away, and still found me a restless wanderer, but as sickness fell on me, and grief anticipating the work of age made me old and helpless before my time, I became conscious that my career was drawing to a close, and resolved to wear away the wretched remnant of my life here in this once-despised neighbourhood; and—as the chief part of my self-inflicted penance—never to reveal myself, never to supplicate your forgiveness, or seek to bestow a mother's embrace on my boy, till my last hour should arrive. Alphonse, that welcome hour is come; and now nought remains, but that once more I sue to

you for pardon. Oh, let me not plead in vain, but think of our child, and for his dear sake, forgive his erring mother!" and exhausted with the exertions she had made to maintain composure, and struggle against the agitation that shook her fearfully at some portions of her confession, the penitent's eyes closed, and she lay motionless on the bed, as though life had quitted its frail tenement.

In this state she remained for nearly an hour, when by means of some drops of a cordial which her attendants had left on the table, and which the Marquis now forced down her throat, she began to revive a little, and smiled faintly when she saw how he was employed.

Seizing the opportunity of his wife's restoration to consciousness, De Chatillon bending over her, exclaimed in agitated accents:

"I almost dread to ask—report said that Alphonse—but I did not believe it, though the horrid thought would at times cross my mind—speak, I conjure you, you know what I would ask."

"Marquis de Chatillon," replied Louise, crossing her hands on her bosom, and uplifting her eyes to heaven, "as there is a God above

us, in whose awful presence I shall soon appear, that child is your own. I never wronged you, even in thought, till the day when I was led to believe that your affections were wholly estranged from me."

"Blessings on you for those words," exclaimed De Chatillon fervently, "for they have removed a mountain from my heart, Louise," and taking his wife's offered hand, he pressed it warmly between his own.

"Again—call me Louise again—your Louise. Your voice was changed of late, but now once more I recognise its tones. Speak to me, Alphonse—husband!"

"Louise," rejoined the Marquis, "from my soul I forgive you; if you have erred, I too have not been blameless; come, then, poor penitent, and lay your head upon my breast; it is long since you have had such a pillow."

"My strength fails," said the dying woman, her voice sinking to a whisper, "but—but I die happy since my last moments are cheered by your forgiveness."

"Die!" exclaimed her astonished husband, as if now, for the first time, awakened to a

sense of his wife's danger. "Good God, what have I been thinking of all this while! Let me fly for aid to Lavallière—my horse is close at hand, and I will be back—"

"Too late—too late—no human means can avail me now," replied Louise, retaining him by the hand with as strong a grasp as her weakness would allow.

"Not so, while there is life, there is hope," and the Marquis again strove to extricate himself from her grasp, but when he saw the agony that the idea of his leaving the hut occasioned her, he was constrained to stay.

"My child—my dear Alphonse," muttered Louise, looking beseechingly into her husband's face, "would that I could see him—I would not reveal myself—no, he should know in me but the nurse of his childhood—but it cannot be—I feel that it cannot be," she kept repeating in tones broken by sobbing.

"He will return home in a few days, perhaps to-morrow, Louise, and then you shall see him."

"To-morrow! there is no morrow for me; yet I could have wished—but since it cannot be, tell my child, not the history of his mother's

shame, no, I could not endure that he should hear *that*, but how fervent, how lasting, was my affection for him. Tell him to think of me with fondness; and when he passes the spot where I am buried, to halt, and offer up a prayer for the repose of my soul. Do not quit me, love, 'till all is over," and feebly pressing her husband's hand against her heart, Louise closed her eyes, and seemed, by the slight movement of her lips, as though she were engaged in earnest supplication to Heaven.

After a lapse of a few minutes, she again addressed the Marquis:

"I have but one more request to make," she said, scarcely able to find utterance: "let me not be buried in the vault of the De Chatillons, but in the churchyard of Lavallière, without parade of any kind; and, above all, let there be no show of mourning at the château, so that the relationship between us may still remain a secret, and my son not be compelled to blush for his parent."

The Marquis made no reply to this entreaty; his strong sense of family pride would have induced him at once to accede to it; but justice

and humanity said: No, you have forgiven your wife; be generous then, brave the strictures of the world, acknowledge her at least in death, and pay the fitting respect to her ashes.

Louise, rightly interpreting the motives of her husband's silence, again besought him to accede to her request: "'Tis the last I shall ever make," she observed, "and must not be refused. A prayer read above my grave, a handful of dust strewed upon my coffin, are all I now ask. The very idea of pompous funeral rites for such as I, is horrible."

"Be it as you will, Louise," rejoined the Marquis, strongly affected by his wife's disinterested generosity, "yet I could have wished it had been otherwise."

"And to this you solemnly pledge yourself?"

The Marquis bowed his head in assent, but it was evident, from his embarrassed manner, that he did not yield without a sore struggle against the promptings of his heart.

A wan smile that flitted over his wife's countenance, attested the satisfaction she derived from this promise. But this was almost the

last symptom of consciousness she evinced. Her physical powers, completely worn out by the severe trial to which she had subjected them during this painful interview, refused to rally again; she drew her breath with more and more difficulty; a dull film came over her eyes; her brain began to wander, and she imagined herself standing beside the fountain at Versailles, gazing delighted on the ring which her husband was placing on her finger.

So she continued for hours, while De Chatillon kept anxious vigil by her side, momentarily expecting the return of her attendants, whom he would himself have gone out to seek, had he not been fearful she might have discovered his absence. From time to time, as he cast his eyes, now upon his unconscious wife, and now upon the comfortless dwelling wherein she lay, an acute feeling of regret, and even of remorse, escaped him, that he had not done more to alleviate her lot, even when he only knew her as a forlorn stranger. How too, was it that he had not, on his first entrance into the hut, discovered her dying state, and done his best to soothe her, instead of heaping on her un-

availing reproaches? Alas! he was so full of his own passionate thoughts and disquietudes that he had no leisure to think of, or feel for, another!

He was roused from these gloomy reflections by his wife's convulsive efforts to raise herself, so as to recline her head upon his breast. It was the last struggle of expiring nature.

"Alphonse," she murmured, but in so low a tone that he was compelled to stoop close down to hear, "where are you? I see you not—it is cold, very cold—dearest Alphonse, it is Louise who speaks—do not forget your—" and with these words, her spirit passed away from earth.

The deep, solemn hush about him, broken only by the rustling of the wind among the trees, first impressed the Marquis with the conviction that the wife so long lost, so late found, was again and for ever torn from him. Oh, what would he not have given to have been able to recal her to consciousness but for one brief hour, while he expressed his contrition for the reproaches that had so wrung her heart! But she was gone. Yes, the dim lamp which he

held close to her pale, thin face, warned him she would wake no more. And this was the end of one who in youth had been the pride of a court—the idol of friends—lovely, innocent, and happy! Night with her sable train of shadows passed off, and the young day springing from the east, came smiling in at the casement, and still the widower sate, half-stupified, beside the body. Feelings to which he had been for years a stranger pressed with crushing weight upon his heart; and the rough, jovial Vendean Seigneur, who but the day before would have scorned the idea of such sensibility, now softened to more than woman's weakness, sobbed convulsively like a child. Long and earnestly he perused the features of his unawakening wife; they were changed more from grief than age; and as he called to mind all she had gone through since they last parted —her strange, forlorn mode of life, and the intense agony and abasement of spirit that had suggested her cruel, self-inflicted penance, he felt that he—the too-late relenting husband—had most need of forgiveness. Thus he sate, a subdued, stricken man, till recalled to a sense

of his situation by the return of the nurses, he started up, and covering his face with his hands, rushed from the hut.

Within a week from the period of her decease, Louise was consigned to her last resting-place. The funeral, as she had desired, was strictly private, and the Marquis, who attended as chief mourner, rose wonderfully in the estimation of all who knew—or fancied they knew—the circumstances of the case, for his humane attentions to the poor gipsy woman. Oh, with what altered feelings would he have looked down upon her humble grave, could he but have foreseen the stern tragedy that was soon to be enacted there!

CHAPTER VII.

It is a fertile subject for reflection, to consider the wonderful variety of events that are everywhere taking place at one and the same period of time. At the very hour when one man is mourning the wreck of all his hopes, another is rejoicing in their fulfilment. While one unit is blotted out from humanity, another is added to its sum total. Here, the bell tolls for a funeral, there, it rings merrily out for a bridal. Not an hour passes over our heads, but is fraught with weal or woe—is cursed or blessed by hundreds, millions of our fellow-creatures. There is no pause, no halting, in the great action of existence. Grief and joy, health and sickness, life and death, are for ever simultaneously at

work. Historians expatiate on the startling vicissitudes of years and centuries; what volumes might not be written on the strange contrasts and changes presented by one single hour!

At the very same hour when the grave closed over the remains of the ill-starred Louise de Chatillon, her only son, Alphonse, was strolling with a young female companion along one of those pleasant walks by the banks of the Loire, which abound in the environs of the flourishing and picturesque city of Nantes. The girl was exquisitely beautiful, of a graceful and slender figure, with an oval form of countenance, lit up by such large, soft black eyes, as might have become an houri. Her luxuriant tresses were of the same raven hue, and wantoned in profusion about a neck white as Parian marble; and she moved by her companion's side with the elastic step of one of the Dryads of Grecian fable, pausing every now and then, as if to direct his attention to the cheerful scenery about them: the broad, clear stream, dotted with islets whereon stood the villas and pleasure-gardens of the wealthier citizens, and the green meadows, sloping hills, and majestic ruins of the feudal

castle of the old Dukes of Bretagne—all of which objects, though seen and admired, perhaps, a hundred times before, were now invested with peculiar softness and beauty by the mellow radiance flung over them by the evening sun.

Annette Delille was the daughter of a wealthy merchant of Nantes, who, in the course of one of his frequent trips to England—for previously to the Revolution, Nantes carried on nearly as thriving a commercial intercourse with this country as Bordeaux now does—had married the orphan niece of a London citizen, a man of considerable opulence, but of rough manners and uncultivated mind. The match was a clandestine one, for Mr. Danton, the young lady's uncle, professed—in the true spirit of a John Bull of the old school—to hold all Frenchmen in contempt. In process of time, however, his prejudices against Delille, if not wholly removed, were at least much softened, the more so when he heard that the latter made an affectionate husband, and, to quote his own favourite expression, was "well to do in the world;" and at last he became so far reconciled to him, as to offer him the accommodation of his house when-

ever business summoned him from Nantes to London.

Of this offer Delille gladly availed himself, and not unfrequently his wife, accompanied by Annette, who was much liked by her great-uncle, would take up their residence with him for weeks and weeks together. Since the death of Mrs. Delille, however, which occurred when her daughter was in her twelfth year, her husband had never once quitted Nantes, but had withdrawn altogether from commerce, and now lived the quiet life of a country gentleman; respected by all his fellow-citizens, and devoting himself to the education of Annette, who had just completed her eighteenth year, and at a period when education was by no means general among French ladies of the middle class, was remarkable for the variety of her accomplishments. She had been long acquainted with Alphonse, who had been first brought to her father's house by his tutor, Servette, an old friend of the family; and the young people—then mere boy and girl—had early imbibed an affection for each other, which gathered strength with each successive visit Alphonse paid to

Nantes. Of late years, and more particularly since his tutor's departure for Paris, the youth had been a constant guest of the Delilles, and was uniformly treated by the elder one with a kindness, that helped to make him amends for the indifference so often testified towards him by his own father.

"Annette," said Alphonse, as they slowly pursued their way along the banks of the Loire, "this hasty summons from the Marquis bodes, I fear, no good. It cannot be that he is unwell, or the courier would have said so; but when I catechized him, not an hour since, on the subject, he merely replied that the Count de Sevrac had arrived about a week or ten days ago at the château, and that I must return thither without delay. Your father thinks that I shall be sent off to Paris, with a view, perhaps, to my entering the army; and gladly would I go, were it not that I leave you behind. What if I refuse? The Marquis has seldom deigned to consult my wishes on any occasion. Speak, Annette, and tell me how I shall act?"

"Obey the Marquis, Alphonse, without considering any one else. If it be his wish that

you should set out for Paris, go without a murmur; you will have many opportunities of revisiting the château, and then you can again ride over here, and be my father's guest. He will always be delighted to see you, for you know he looks upon you almost in the light of a son."

"Return! Ah! Annette, you know not how long it may be before I come back to the Bocage. Paris, they say, is just now in a volcanic state, and who can tell what part I may be called upon to play? My father, an enthusiastic royalist of the old *régime*, may possibly have found means to procure me some situation about the person of the King, such as many of my ancestors have held; and if so, Heaven knows when we shall meet again!"

"It cannot be helped, Alphonse; you must go whither your duty calls you."

"How easily do you say this, Annette! I could not speak so coolly were it you who were about to quit Nantes."

"If I speak with calmness, it is for your good. I should take shame on myself were I, on an important occasion like the present, to

consult only my own inclinations. Besides, I do not think it at all likely that your absence will be prolonged beyond a few months. When Paris is tranquil again, and the country settled down—"

"Foolish girl! you speak now as I have sometimes heard the Marquis speak, when talking to the Curé about the present state of things in the capital. Because the occasional clamour of the mob here at Nantes, within the last year or so, has as yet led to no serious results, he thinks that the ferment in Paris is equally superficial in its character. But your father regards matters differently. He knows well that the storm has long been brewing, and is justly apprehensive of the consequences. My tutor, too, foresaw it, for he told me so himself, in the very last conversation I had with him."

"I am not able to discuss the question, Alphonse, and can only repeat that I feel assured we shall shortly meet again."

"And should it really be so," rejoined her companion, gathering confidence from her words, "will you then, dearest girl, suffer me to call you mine. Your father would surely not

object; for, as you told me but a few minutes ago, he already looks on me as his son."

"Alphonse," replied the blushing girl, "though I grieve to cause you pain, yet I will not buoy you up with false hopes. My father, it is true, entertains a sincere regard for you; there is another, too," and she looked fondly in his face, "who is certainly not indifferent to your happiness; but ere we can be more to each other than we now are, the Marquis's consent must be gained."

"Unkind Annette; you know my father's prejudices on the score of family."

"I do, and though of course I cannot share them, yet I feel that, as far as you and I are concerned, they must be submitted to. Would you have me, the daughter of a French gentleman, proud, and deservedly so, of the unsullied integrity of his life, intrude myself into a family that would scorn me? Never! There is humiliation in the very idea."

"And is this the love, Annette, which you have so often confessed for me? I thought you had more regard for my happiness."

"And it is because I feel deeply interested in

your welfare, that I will not be tempted to take a step which might be your ruin. Never will I be the cause of sowing dissension between father and son."

The calm but decided manner in which this was said, convinced Alphonse that further entreaty would be useless; accordingly, he made no reply, but walked on for some time in moody silence; whereupon his companion, gently pressing his arm, exclaimed in a soft, beseeching tone of voice, that made instant way to his heart:

"Do not be angry with me; I am sure I have given you no cause, as you yourself will acknowledge when you come seriously to reflect on what I have said."

"I am not angry, but—"

"Why do you hesitate to speak your thoughts? But I can guess what is passing in your mind. Come, now, be frank, Alphonse, and say at once that I am a mere creature of caprice, who will cease to care for you the instant you have quitted my sight."

"Oh, Annette, how could you suppose for a moment that such a thought crossed my mind?

I was only going to observe that it was sorrow, not anger, I felt at your decision. But though you refuse to accede to my wishes, at least you will promise that when I am gone you will bear me constantly in remembrance, as I shall you. Never, for one instant, amid the stir and bustle of Paris—should such be my destination—will your dear image cease to present itself to my mind. Annette, we have now known each other many years; as boy and girl we have played and studied together; my tutor was our common friend; your father is our common parent; I conjure you, then, as you cherish these recollections, to keep me ever uppermost in your thoughts. They say that women are capricious, and their hearts prone to change; but you will not, love, will you?"

Affected by her lover's fervour, the disinterested, warm-hearted girl turned on him a glance so full of tenderness, that he was at once reassured. Nevertheless, he could not help recurring to the old theme.

"Annette," he said, "if you would but abandon your resolution, and consent to be mine—"

"Say no more, I beseech you, on this sub-

ject," replied Annette, "you have already had my answer, and for your sake it is that I will not retract my decision."

"Where shall I be this time next week?" resumed Alphonse, "far away from La Vendée, perhaps never to come back."

"Do not say *never*, Alphonse; the word *never* sounds so mournfully in my ear," and unconsciously her small white hand was pressed closer on his arm, as though, despite the acknowledged necessity of separation, she would still retain him by her side.

By this time they had re-entered the city, and on passing by the cathedral, saw a large crowd, consisting chiefly of the lower orders, listening eagerly to the latest news from the capital, which a young man in the garb of a mechanic was reading aloud to them from a Parisian journal. The mob seemed much excited, and their shouts and threatening gestures so alarmed Annette, that she hurried her companion past them, nor once slackened her pace until she reached home.

It being Alphonse's last night, the party did not separate till late, and until he had extorted

a promise from Delille, a mild, quiet old gentleman, that he would communicate with him by letter, and that Annette should occasionally contribute a postscript. When he rose at an early hour next morning, he found her alone, waiting his presence in the breakfast-room ; her spirits were greatly depressed, but her lover's soothing attentions restored her to something like composure; again and again he assured her of his unalterable affection, and was proceeding to enforce his assurances by that most pleasant process of ratiocination—a kiss, when Delille's entrance cut him short in the flower of his logic.

Immediately the repast was over, Alphonse bade adieu to his friends, mounted his horse, and, accompanied by the messenger who had brought the summons for his recall, set forward on his return to the château.

CHAPTER VIII.

A WEEK had now elapsed since De Sevrac's arrival at the château, during which period he had, with the activity peculiar to his character, visited many of the most influential Vendean Seigneurs, and even crossed the Loire into Brittany, for the purpose of ascertaining the state of public opinion in that province. He found the majority of its leading men strongly disposed towards the monarchy, and filled with distrust of the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly; but it was not without considerable difficulty that he prevailed on them to rise in arms on the first summons they should receive from the court; for the Breton and Vendean *noblesse* were, generally speaking, a pacific class

of men, who were not to be effectually roused till the dangers, of which they had heard so much, approached their own neighbourhood.

It was fortunate for the Marquis that his guest was thus busily engaged, for the unexpected discovery and death of his wife had given him so severe a shock, that he would have been wholly unable to discharge the rites of hospitality. Indeed, until the day of the funeral, he rigidly confined himself to his own chamber, notwithstanding the entreaties of old Pierre, who, finding meal after meal that he brought up sent away scarcely touched, made sure that his master was in a bad way, and implored him to take active out-door exercise, as the only means of re-establishing his health. What confirmed the *maître-d'hôtel* in his belief, was the unusual circumstance of the Seigneur's dispatching a messenger to order his son home, which he did on the morning of his wife's interment; and thus persuaded of his master's ill health—for he never dreamed of his relationship to Louise, but attributed his attendance as chief mourner entirely to the natural kindliness of his heart—Pierre walked about the house with an

air of such sad solemnity as highly diverted Jacques, who, whenever the old man's back was turned, made a point of ridiculing him before Victorine and the other females of the establishment.

Late at night, when De Chatillon having paid the last tribute of respect to his wife's memory, had retired to his bed-chamber, oppressed with mournful recollections, the Count returned from his flying trip into the adjacent province of Britanny. When he met his host the following morning, he could perceive—notwithstanding the latter's endeavours to assume a cheerful aspect—that something had occurred to disquiet him during his brief absence, for he had quitted the château about an hour before the Marquis had returned from his ~~last~~ interview with Louise; but with the tact of the man of the world he affected not to perceive any alteration in his manner, and began talking of the promises of support he had received from all the Seigneurs whom he had visited, in so lively and sanguine a strain as tended greatly to revive De Chatillon's drooping spirits, by diverting the channel of his thoughts.

At night-fall Alphonse arrived, after a brisk day's ride from Nantes, and was cordially greeted by the Count, and received by his father, not as of old, with careless indifference, scarcely a question asked as to where he had been, or who were his companions, but with the most marked kindness. Delighted with such an unwonted reception, the tears sprang to the young man's eyes, and for the first time for many a long year, he felt that he had indeed a parent.

" Welcome, my boy," exclaimed the Marquis, endeavouring to hide his feelings beneath a show of eagerness and curiosity, " it is little more than a week since you left the château, yet already it seems an age. And so you have been staying at Nantes with the Delilles! There must be some great attraction there to take you so often from home. Delille, I think I've heard you say, is one of the most respectable persons in that city—"

" He is so, and he is also a generous, friendly, enlightened—"

" No doubt—no doubt," interrupted the Marquis, " but, Alphonse, I have now other companions for you. My friend here, the Count de

Sevrac, with whose father I was well acquainted many years ago, returns to Paris to-morrow, after a short visit to the Bocage, whither he came on an important state affair,"—this was said with an air of dignified emphasis—" and it is my wish that you accompany him back to the capital, which will give you an opportunity of seeing the world, and forming connexions more suited to your rank than Delille, though his uniform kindness to you deserves and obtains my regard."

"I am surprised at what you say, father," replied Alphonse, "for I have often heard you express your dislike of Parisian society, and tell me that I lost nothing by not being familiar with it."

"True, my boy," exclaimed the Seigneur, with a sigh, "I have said so more than once, and perhaps I had some cause—however, let that pass; enough now to state that it is necessary you set out with the Count to-morrow for Paris."

"Where it is not impossible," observed De Sevrac, "that you may be speedily summoned to a post of high honour, perhaps of danger."

"And, provided it be one of honour," rejoined Alphonse with animation, "I care not for the danger, but will grapple with it face to face, as becomes the race from which I spring."

"My noble boy!" exclaimed the delighted Marquis, "there spoke a true De Chatillon. How like you are to your grandfather! I wonder I never discovered the resemblance before."

"I can say nothing about that," observed the Count; "but he is the exact image of yourself. I was struck with the likeness the minute he entered the room."

"So he is—so he is," replied his father, chuckling at the idea of his son's resemblance to himself; "people have told me so a hundred times, but I never paid much attention to what they said; but now I am convinced of it. Ah, Alphonse, my child! I fear I have much indifference, not to say unkindness, to atone for."

The Count de Sevrac, ignorant of what had taken place during his absence from the château, regarded this ebullition merely as a proof of the Marquis's satisfaction that Alphonse had so readily agreed to his wishes; and as he marked

the young man's handsome and intelligent countenance, he did not feel at all surprised at his father's manifest pride in him.

Alphonse's preparations for the journey were soon completed, and the Marquis furnished him with an order on his Paris banker for whatever sums might be needful during his stay there; and on the following day the party, to the huge delight of Jacques, who was heartily tired of La Vendée, took their departure from the château.

"Farewell," said the Count, embracing his host; "I assure you, since I have been here, I have learned quite to envy you, for you live surrounded by those you love, and who love you; while I go to scenes of tumult and anarchy, where friend scarce trusts friend, and factious hate embitters all one's best feelings. Farewell, Marquis, it may be for ever; but whether we meet again or not, remember your promise! I need not be told how great your influence is throughout the district, and I feel that, at the fitting juncture, you will so exert that influence, as to entitle yourself to their Majesties' lasting gratitude."

"I will," replied the Seigneur; "the King

has only to issue his commands to that effect, and I and mine will rush to arms, as my grandfather did in the glorious days of—"

"Thanks, my friend, a thousand thanks," exclaimed the Count, hastily vaulting into his saddle, by way of cutting short his host's story, which he had good reason to fear would be a long one.

The Marquis then turned to his son.

"Adieu, my boy," said he, fondly pressing him to his breast, "be true to whatever trust may be reposed in you, and, above all, never forget that you are a De Chatillon. We shall write often to each other—adieu," and so saying, the Seigneur, not daring to trust himself with further speech, turned back into the château, and the travellers rode off.

CHAPTER IX.

When they reached Nantes, the travellers resigned their horses to the custody of one of the Marquis's servants, who had accompanied them with Alphonse's valise, and stepping into the *diligence*, which was just about starting for Paris, were whirled away to the capital, where they arrived after a tedious journey, unmarked by any incident of moment, and repaired to the Count's lodging; for, like most of the resident aristocrats, De Sevrac had disposed of his magnificent hotel, dismissed the major part of his household, and adopted such a style of living as might least expose him to the jealous scrutiny of the *sans-culottes.*

The first thing Alphonse did, was to procure

apartments as near as possible to his friend; and having succeeded in his task, he next directed his steps to his father's banker, Monsieur Delaborde, a homely, unpretending man of business, somewhat advanced in years, who furnished him with funds sufficient for his current expenses; asked him many questions about the Marquis, whom he observed he had not seen since the day of the present King's coronation, and gave him much well-meant advice touching the course of conduct he should pursue while residing in the capital.

"I trust, my young friend, if so you will permit me to call you," he said, "I trust you have not come here with the view of taking a decided part in any of the political squabbles of the day. These are not times for such an experiment, which would most probably have no other result than your own ruin. Look on, if you please, as an unconcerned spectator, but beware of meddling as a partisan. The Marquis, I doubt not, as a man of good common sense, has already advised you to the same effect."

"On the contrary," replied Alphonse, smiling at Delaborde's notion of his father's character,

"as an enthusiastic royalist, he has insisted on my attaching myself to the court."

"A very rash speculation," said the banker, gravely shaking his head.

"Why so?"

"Because nothing is to be gained by it, the court having no longer any suitable pensions or appointments to bestow on its adherents."

"But I want neither place nor pension," interrupted Alphonse.

"Indeed!" replied Delaborde, who was a mere man of the counting-house, and had no notion of disinterested loyalty, "well, that is very creditable to your patriotism, but it is not the true principle of business."

"Perhaps not; but the laws of honour, not the principles of business, will regulate my conduct," rejoined Alphonse with some warmth.

"Mere moonshine—the romance of youth," said the banker drily; "where is the honour, to say nothing of the prudence, of your attaching yourself to a cause by which you can gain little or nothing, and may possibly lose all. When you have reached my years, my young friend, you will think very differently on these matters."

"I presume, Monsieur Delaborde, you are of opinion that the people are the winning party."

"Why, judging from present indications, I should be inclined to say they are; but there's no knowing," added the discreet man of business, "and therefore I should be sorry to commit myself by any premature expression of opinion."

"None can wish more fervently than I do," said Alphonse, "that the people should win all that they have a right to win; but if they have their privileges, so also has the court; and thus thinking, it is my intention—should the opportunity be afforded me—to tender my services to his Majesty; for, from what I have heard and read lately, I am satisfied that the democrats have already more power than they know how to use. But do not misunderstand me. Though I am a stanch Royalist, yet I am no bigot, and hate despotism quite as cordially as even Lafayette can do," with which words, Alphonse took leave of Delaborde, and after calling at the Count's lodgings, who was absent on duty at the Tuileries, he went home, and occupied himself in writing letters to his father and the Delilles.

It was not till the fourth day after his arrival in Paris, that Alphonse was able to see his friend De Sevrac. But he had not been unoccupied in the interim. He was never weary of wandering about the city, the splendour and variety of whose public buildings struck him with astonishment; and not less was he surprised at the absence of all showy equipages, and gaily-dressed people in the streets, so different from what he had been prepared to expect, and which originated, partly in the fears of the aristocracy, and partly in that affectation of republican simplicity, which was already beginning to develop itself among the mass of the populace. But what most astonished the young man, was the quiet and even forlorn aspect that the Tuileries presented. The days of its court magnificence was gone, and nothing indicated that it was the abode of royalty, but a stately Garde du Corps, who was sullenly pacing to and fro in front of the grand entrance. Alphonse was so struck with the air of gloom and solitude that hung over this celebrated palace, that he could not help dwelling on the subject to the Count, when, pursuant to a message delivered to him by

Jacques, he made his appearance at that nobleman's residence.

"You may well be surprised," replied De Sevrac, coolly, "but this is among the least of the changes that have taken place within the last three years."

"But does not the King still continue to hold his court at the Tuileries?" inquired the young man.

"Court!" exclaimed the Count, "there is nothing worthy of the name now. His Majesty lives in retirement, giving audience to none but his ministers, and the few nobles who still remain by his side, and who come and go as quietly as possible, without the slightest show of parade or ceremony. But tell me, how have you been disposing of your time lately? I suppose you thought I had forgotten you; but the truth is, I have been in such close attendance at the Tuileries, every day since my return, that I have not had an hour to spare. His Majesty's indisposition, too, which confines him to his private apartments—"

"What, is the King ill? I trust there is no cause for apprehension."

"No, it is merely a general physical languor, induced by anxiety of mind. Had it not been for this, he would have commanded your attendance at the palace before now, for he is aware that you are in Paris, and made many inquiries after you and your father. And this brings me to the subject of the household appointment that we spoke of. At present, the thing cannot be managed, for the Assembly have just passed a resolution, which puts it out of the King's power to make a suitable provision for you. We cannot even attach you to his body-guard, for its numbers are abridged, and I fear will shortly be replaced by the National Guard."

"Since this is the case, then, and I am no longer likely to be of use in Paris, I may as well return to the Bocage," replied Alphonse, his disappointment softened by the idea of shortly again seeing Annette.

"Return!" exclaimed De Sevrac, with an air of grave surprise, "return! And to what? To a life of inglorious ease and obscurity, at the very moment when every man, who has a spark of honour or courage in his nature, feels it his most sacred duty to rally round the throne, and

either triumph with it, or perish with it. Can you possibly dream of returning at such a crisis; and all because you happen to have met with a trifling disappointment? For shame!—for shame; I did not think you required to be bribed to do your duty!"

"Count de Sevrac, you mistake me," replied Alphonse, with animation, "upon my soul you do. I care nothing for the loss of the household appointment. It was not that which brought me to Paris. No, I am here because my father so willed it; and if by continuing here I can be of the slightest use to his Majesty, I care not how lengthened is my stay."

"Well said, my young friend, I was certain I misunderstood you. But to the point. You can be of service—of great service—to your King, and it was to tell you this, and also to point out to you the means of rendering him assistance, that I sent for you here to-day. You are aware, perhaps, of the system of espionage kept up by the Assembly over his Majesty—"

"How then can one so utterly without influence as I am be of use to him?" inquired Alphonse, interrupting his friend's observations.

"I will tell you. There are certain distinguished members of the household now in their turn of attendance at the Tuileries, who are anxious, without loss of time, to quit Paris, and join the emigrants on the frontier. The King is equally desirous that they should set out, purposing through them to communicate with the Princes at Coblentz; but as their persons are well known, and they are supposed to exercise undue influence over the royal mind, he is apprehensive that their sudden departure from the palace, if not contrived with the utmost skill and secresy, will—in the present feverish state of men's minds—give rise to suspicions that some new court intrigue is on foot. Now what is required of you is this—to keep a careful watch in that quarter of the Tuileries whence the party I allude to intend making their escape, so that none may be cognisant of their flight but those who, like ourselves, are concerned in it. How say you? Are you willing to assist in furthering this scheme?"

"Most gladly will I do so," replied Alphonse; "but how comes it that I am selected for this task? Why is not the watch con-

fided to you, who are so much better acquainted with the ways of the court?"

"Because I am too well known to all the retainers at the Palace, as the King's friend and adviser. Were I, therefore, to appear in the matter, or be seen stealing out with a disguised party by a back-door at night, suspicion would instantly be awakened. With you it is different; you are a stranger—a mere private individual, who, if surprised on your watch, which is not likely, may turn aside distrust far more readily than I could."

"And when is this scheme to be carried into execution?"

"This very night."

"And may I inquire the names of the parties?"

"Oh, certainly: they are the Duc de Beauvilliers, the Duchess, her sister, and two children. At present, I have neither time nor authority to make any further communication," and as he said this, the Count bade adieu to his young friend, observing that he was going to the palace to concert the final arrangements for the party's departure, and

should be back in the afternoon, till when he requested Alphonse not to quit the apartment.

When he was gone, De Chatillon amused himself with a volume of Voltaire's tales, which he took down from the shelf of a small bookcase, and had just finished the perusal of "L'Ingénu," when the Count returned. He was in high spirits, and instantly ordered an early dinner, by way, as it would seem, of helping to pass away the time, for he ate little or nothing himself, and Alphonse, whose mind was much excited by the task he had so unexpectedly been called upon to perform, was almost as abstemious.

When the attendant had left the room, De Sevrac informed his companion that every arrangement had been made to ensure the safe departure of the Duke and his party, and then gliding from the subject, he began discoursing on indifferent matters, with an air of *nonchalance*, which a more experienced observer than De Chatillon would have seen was but put on, to conceal the workings of an anxious spirit.

Thus they sate, chatting on every subject but that which engrossed their thoughts, until the deepening gloom of the apartment warned them that the day was gone. The Count's restlessness, notwithstanding the pains he took to conceal it, now began visibly to increase, and walking to the window, he said: "Fortune favours us, for the sky is overcast, and neither moon nor stars are to be seen—another hour, and then let Lafayette and his rebel colleagues look to themselves!"

The anxiously expected hour at length arrived; and then De Sevrac, referring to his watch, rang the bell for his valet.

"Where is Jacques?" he asked of a servant who answered the summons.

"I know not, Monseigneur; he went out early in the afternoon, and has not yet returned."

"The incorrigible rascal! I must get rid of him; for his head seems completely turned, and neither advice nor remonstrance make the slightest impression on him; but no matter, go and get me a *fiacre*."

Within a brief space the servant returned,

with intelligence that the *fiacre* was at the door; and the Count and Alphonse entered it, the former ordering the driver to halt at a certain spot which he mentioned in the immediate vicinity of the Tuileries.

As they went along, De Sevrac explained to his companion the specific duty required of him.

"You will station yourself," said he, "at the end of a passage leading to the apartments of the King's domestics, whither I shall conduct you. At the opposite extremity of this passage, which opens directly into the street, you will perceive a small private door on the left-hand side; and you are to keep your attention fixed on it, till you see the Duke, his sister, and his children come out, when you will advance towards them—first ascertaining that no other person is nigh—and ask them for the pass-word. They will reply "De Chatillon," which will satisfy you that they are the right party; and you will then, with as little delay and noise as possible, see them safely out of the palace, and close the door gently behind them. Soon afterwards, the Duchess will come out alone; you

will put to her the same question that you put to the others, and she will make you the same answer, whereupon you will give her your arm, and hurry her off as quickly as you can to the Petit Carousel. Here you will find the rest of the party, together with a coachman, awaiting your arrival; and to the latter you are to resign the custody of the lady, whom he will immediately convey to a carriage hard by; you must, however, take care not to quit the spot until the whole party have driven off, when you will make the best of your way to my lodgings, where you will find me eagerly expecting your return. You understand me, Alphonse?"

"Perfectly."

"Then pray have all your wits about you, for you know not how much depends on the issue of this night's work. But whatever you do, be careful of the Duchess. Repress any disposition she may show to converse; and, above all, avoid crowds, for her Grace's person is well known, and were her disguise once to be detected, the Royal Family would lose the only remaining chance they have of communicating with their allies beyond the frontier. But see,

the *fiacre* has stopped; so let us get out, for we are near the palace."

Having quitted the vehicle, the two friends proceeded towards the Tuileries, the Count leading the way and purposely selecting the most retired streets. On arriving at the gates of the palace, he addressed a few words to the sentinel on duty, and was forthwith admitted into the court-yard. Alphonse, by his directions, followed close to his heels, and they ascended the grand staircase, on the top of which, and lounging against a magnificent balustrade, stood a young officer of the body-guard, who seemed to be acquainted with De Sevrac, and offered no interruption to his progress; though he assured him that if he wished to see the King he would be disappointed, for his Majesty was indisposed, and had retired to the Queen's private apartments for the night.

Following his guide in silence, Alphonse, after traversing a spacious suite of rooms, descended another and inferior staircase, situated apparently at one of the extremities of the palace, in the humblest and most retired quarter, which terminated in a long, narrow passage, lit

by a solitary and not very brilliant lamp. Here De Sevrac came to a halt, and turning cautiously round to ascertain that no one was within sight or hearing, said in a low tone of voice: "This is the passage I spoke to you of, and yonder is the door at which the party will come out. You cannot possibly mistake it, for it is the last one on the left-hand side, within a yard or two of the street-door fronting us." They were standing at the foot of the staircase, just at the commencement of the long, straight passage. "Now keep a strict watch; turn back any intruder that may attempt to pass you, for which I give you the authority of the Comptroller of the Household; and be sure you lose not a moment, and exercise your utmost caution in escorting the Duchess to the Carousel. Adieu, I dare stay no longer, for this is no place for one like me to be seen in," and with quick and noiseless steps, the Count re-ascended the staircase, and was quickly lost to sight.

He had no sooner disappeared than Alphonse commenced his watch, standing with folded arms against the wall, between the passage and the staircase, so that he could command an un-

interrupted view of both to their full extent, and listening attentively so as to catch even the slightest sound. He heard nothing, however, but now and then the distant clapping of a door, or the confused hum of voices, and rattling of coaches in the street.

After remaining motionless at his post for nearly half an hour, his quick ear caught the sound of footsteps, and presently he saw a gentleman dressed in black slowly descending the staircase towards him. As he drew near, he cast a hasty, suspicious glance about him, and on gaining the spot where the young sentinel stood, he looked him steadily in the face, and without saying a word, passed him, and continued his way along the passage. De Chatillon immediately hastened after him, whereupon the intruder stopped, and exclaimed with an air of authority, "How is this, young man? Do you know who I am?"

"No," replied Alphonse; "but be you who you may, you must not pass this way."

"But I must pass. I belong to his Majesty's household, and if you attempt to stop me, you do so at your peril."

"I cannot help it; I must obey my orders."

"And pray who gave you those orders?" inquired the gentleman authoritatively, "tell me at once, or I will summon the guard."

Apprehensive from the individual's manner, who, he felt persuaded was a person of distinction about the court, that he would put his threat into execution, and by so doing, mar the scheme which the Count had so much at heart, Alphonse replied, though not without visible embarrassment: "My orders were given me by—but before I say more, I must know whom I am addressing."

"You are a discreet youth," said the gentleman with an encouraging smile; "but you need not fear telling me your authority; look, here is the King's own signet-ring, which will satisfy you that you are speaking to a friend of his Majesty."

Alphonse glanced at the glittering trinket, which was held up close to him, and replied: "As you tell me this is the King's signet-ring, I presume that it is so, and therefore I have no hesitation in saying that I

received my orders from the Count de Sevrac."

"Humph, I guessed as much. Well, young man, now that you are satisfied I am no mere officious intruder, I suppose I may pass on to yonder door."

"I dare not even now say yes; I fear I have said too much—" Before he could complete the sentence, a noise was heard as of some one treading hastily along a distant gallery, on which the gentleman whispered: "Don't be alarmed, young Sir, you shall not incur danger on my account, for I see that you are faithful to the trust that the Count has reposed in you—would that others were like you!" He then, without making any further attempt to pass on to the door, returned with cautious steps the same way he came.

On his departure, Alphonse returned to his post, where he kept guard for a considerable time longer, musing now on his last interview with Annette Delille, and now on the strange fate that had so suddenly transferred him from the sylvan retirement of La Vendée to the

heart of a crowded and tumultuous capital. While he thus stood, absorbed in reverie, he heard a clock strike in a remote quarter of the palace, and ere the sound had died away, the chandelier that lit that portion of the gallery which opened on the staircase disappeared, as though it were drawn up through the roof; and now, nothing but a dim light in the centre of the passage remained between him and utter darkness. Presently he fancied he heard the unclosing of a door, and immediately moved towards the one on which he had been told to keep a wary eye. He was not mistaken; the door was gradually and cautiously opened, and a man's head thrust through the aperture. The stranger looked vigilantly in the direction of the staircase, and seeing Alphonse, came out into the passage accompanied by a lady and two children; he was dressed like one of the King's valets, but notwithstanding his evident disguise, De Chatillon had no difficulty in recognizing the individual who had accosted him about an hour before.

"We are alone, I think," observed the Duke, addressing Alphonse.

"Not a soul has passed since you left me. But," added the young man, seeing the party make a move towards the street-door, "have you no pass-word to give? I dare not let you depart without."

"De Chatillon," replied the other with a courteous smile; on hearing which, Alphonse accompanied the Duke to the door, which he quickly proceeded to unlock, and gently pushing the lady and the children before him into the street, said, as he himself followed: "Young man, there is yet another, who demands your care. Be vigilant, therefore, and prompt in your movements; and remember, we shall soon meet again, when you will find that I know how to be grateful."

De Chatillon carefully closed the door after the Duke and resumed his original position; but he had not been in it above ten minutes, when the side-door was again opened, and a lady, of a tall and majestic figure made her appearance, clad in a neat but homely attire. Persuaded that she was the Duchess de Beauvilliers, the young man put to her the same question that he had previously put to the

Duke, and receiving the same answer, respectfully offered her his arm, which she accepted without hesitation, and they passed out into the street, without a word being spoken on either side.

The street into which the passage opened was narrow and dark, and to Alphonse's great relief, almost deserted; but as he turned out of it into a broader and better lighted one, the scene became more busy, and crowds, chiefly of the lower classes, passed him, wearing the *bonnet rouge*, and chanting patriotic songs with a fierce energy of manner, that caused his companion to grasp his arm convulsively, as though she apprehended her life was in danger. They were pursuing their course with unrelaxing speed, when a neighbouring church clock chimed the first quarter after ten. The lady started at the sound, and whispering her fears that they would be too late, hurried Alphonse down a long, winding lane, which seemed emptied of all its inhabitants. Imagining from her alert and unhesitating manner that she was perfectly familiar with the road, the young man offered no opposition to her guidance; but he was soon

compelled to interfere, and hint his belief that they had lost their way.

"Ha! indeed," exclaimed the Duchess, impetuously; "have you misled me, then, in order to betray me?"

"Lady," rejoined Alphonse, gravely, "I am incapable of such baseness. The fault, allow me to say so, is your own. I was fearful we were going wrong, but you appeared to be so confident of your road, that I took for granted you were acquainted with it."

"You are right, young man; I am to blame, not you; but I was desirous to avoid those horrid crowds."

As De Chatillon made no answer, the Duchess, concluding that she had deeply wounded his sense of honour, added in her most winning manner: "Forgive my hasty speech; I meant not to affront you, for I feel persuaded that it is not from such as you that I need dread treachery; but how very vexatious! What is to be done now?"

"If time will admit of our going back," said Alphonse, "I can easily get again into the right track, for I know the Carousel, but

we seem involved here in a perfect labyrinth of streets."

"No, no, we have not a minute to spare," replied the Duchess.

"In that case, then, you had better walk slowly on, while I go and make inquiry at that shop over the way."

"Do so, but pray, pray be quick, for everything depends on dispatch."

Quick as lightning Alphonse darted across the street, and having ascertained the right direction, returned to his companion's side, whom he urged forward at a pace resembling rather a run than a walk. As they drew near the Louvre, they saw a carriage slowly coming towards them, with attendants walking beside it with torches which threw a broad red glare across the road.

"It is Lafayette!" exclaimed the Duchess in a deeply agitated tone; "if he sees us we are lost."

"This way, lady, this way," said De Chatillon eagerly; "let us conceal ourselves here," and he lead her to the wickets of the Louvre, beneath which he placed her, and took his station by her side.

When the carriage had passed on, they emerged from their hiding place, and quickly reached the Petit Carousel. A young man, dressed like a coachman, and who appeared to have been long on the look-out, no sooner beheld the Duchess, than he rushed up to her, and exclaiming in an under-tone: "Thank God you are come at last, Madame; you know not what uneasiness you have occasioned us all!" led the way to a coach which was in waiting hard by, and in which the rest of the party were already seated.

When the Duchess had taken her place in the carriage, she said, turning to Alphonse, who stood close by the open window: "Farewell, young man; you have this night done such good service as none here will ever forget; farewell, and when you next see the Count, tell him he shall hear from us at the very earliest opportunity." As she spoke these words, she courteously waved her hand to him, and the next instant the coach drove off. Alphonse watched it until it had disappeared, and then went back to De Sevrac's lodgings.

"Almost eleven o'clock," said the Count,

referring to a watch in his hand; "I began to fear that our scheme had miscarried, but I can read in your eye that we have succeeded."

"We have so, but not without difficulty."

"And you saw the party all safely seated in the carriage?"

"Yes."

"And waited at the Carousel till it drove off."

"Yes."

"Very good; now look at me. Do I betray any symptom of exultation at the tidings you have brought? Is my cheek flushed, my eye brighter, or my voice more excited in consequence?"

"I see no change from your usual manner," replied Alphonse, surprised at these abrupt questions.

"Yet at this very moment, when I appear to you so calm and even indifferent," said De Sevrac, "my heart is literally bounding with joy; but experience in the world's ways has taught me the necessity of practising self-command, which you also must study to acquire, if you would hope to turn to account the glorious

chances of preferment which the events of to-night have thrown in your way."

"I don't understand you, Count; what possible influence can the Duke's flight from France have on my fortunes?"

"Duke!" exclaimed De Sevrac, with energy, "there was no Duke in the case, or Duchess either."

"Who then were the party?"

"Cannot you guess?"

"My God!" said Alphonse, after a moment's reflection, "can it be possible that I have been aiding in the escape of—"

"The Royal Family of France!" rejoined the Count, "'tis even so. The lady whom you escorted to the Carousel was indeed no other than the Queen herself, the illustrious Marie Antoinette! I would have told you this before, but I feared that the intelligence might create a flutter and agitation of spirits, fatal to that cool self-possession so essential to the success of our scheme. Hence the feigned names of the Duke and Duchess de Beauvilliers. But let me hear your account of matters?"

"I have little to say, in addition to what you

already know," observed De Chatillon, when he had recovered from the astonishment which his friend's communication had caused him. He then spoke of the wearisome and protracted watch he had kept, which was interrupted only by the King's sudden appearance in the passage, and was proceeding to inquire the reason of such strange conduct on the part of his Majesty, when the Count stopped him with: "'Tis just like Louis; I could have sworn he would have acted so. Oh, when will he learn to discriminate between friends and foes! You ask me why he sought an interview with you. Because, not satisfied with my representations, he was determined to judge for himself of your trustworthiness. But the Queen—she showed none of this petty feeling of distrust? She relied implicitly on you, did she not?"

"Without the slightest hesitation," replied Alphonse.

"I knew she would, for her's is a truly heroic spirit. Would that Louis possessed half her loftiness of character and energy of purpose!"

When, in continuation, De Chatillon stated how they had lost their way, and what alarm

the Queen felt, lest she should have been discovered by some of the followers of Lafayette, the Count exclaimed with a shudder: "'Twas indeed a hazardous moment, but, thank God, all has turned out well. Now let the anarchists tremble!" he added fiercely, shaking his clenched hand above his head. "Take heed, Lafayette! Girondists, Jacobins, beware; your heads sit but loosely on your shoulders. Yes, the factions shall be crushed to atoms, for the King is no longer a slave, but free to act as becomes a French monarch. With the Emperor's forty thousand men in Flanders and Alsace, with the Swiss marching on Lyons, the Piedmontese threatening Dauphiné, Prussia and Spain cooperating with us, England neutral, the Count d'Artois at Coblentz, and the gallant Bouillé with his camp at Montmedy—with brave allies like these, what may we not hope for? And La Vendée, boy! We will but wait till the King has crossed the frontier, and then, while I set out for Coblentz, you shall rejoin your father, and summon the whole province to arms. My life on it, we shall conquer, and ours shall be no bloodless——"

The Count's sanguine day-dreams were suddenly dispelled by an uproar, as of people quarrelling in the hall, and before he had time to ascertain the cause of such a disturbance, the door was thrown violently open, and in strutted his scapegrace valet, Jacques, as full of drink and democracy as a Parisian patriot could reasonably desire to be.

"So you've been at your old tricks again," said De Sevrac, sternly addressing the intruder. "How dare you venture into my presence in such a condition?"

"Monsieur le Comte," hiccupped Jacques, assuming an air of tipsy bravado, "you once gave me a warning, and now I am come to give you one."

The Count stared, but did not condescend to make any answer, and the valet mistaking the cause of his silence, exclaimed: "You're a ruined man, Monsieur le Comte, a ruined man," he repeated, with grotesque emphasis. "You may stare, but it's true for all that. We've borne with the aristocrats long enough; and our club says, and the great Marat says, and we all say, that it's now the people's turn. And

so it is; and we're going to do away with all laws and taxes, and have our own way in everything. And if you'll join us, and help us to put down our oppressors, you shan't want my good word with—"

"A truce with this frantic nonsense, fool!" said the Count, half inclined to laugh, notwithstanding his indignation at the fellow's audacity.

"Frantic nonsense!" rejoined Jacques, with quite a theatrical start; "and fool, too! meaning me, of course. Well, we'll hear what they say at the club, when I tell them that one of their chief speakers—"

"Turn this drunken fool out of the house, and take care that he never enters it again," said De Sevrac, beckoning to another of his servants who had been lingering at the door during the discussion.

On hearing this order, Jacques burst out into a vehement tirade against all aristocrats; but ere he could finish it to his satisfaction, he found himself standing alone in the street, half strangled, and with his coat hanging in tatters upon his back.

The foregoing scene caused De Chatillon

much diversion, and he laughed heartily at the desperate but fruitless efforts which Jacques made to free himself from the tenacious grasp of the servant. When they were again left to themselves, the Count, observing his mirth, said: "In that drunken, turbulent fellow, exquisitely ridiculous as is his conduct, you have a very fair specimen of the popular demagogues of the day, with this difference, that he is more fool than knave, more to be pitied and laughed at than hated or feared. God help me, what must be the cause when such are the advocates!"

CHAPTER X.

WITHIN ten hours from the period of the King's flight, the news became generally known throughout Paris, and produced an electric sensation among all classes. Frequent mobs of imperfectly breeched patriots thronged the Palais Royal, and the various approaches to the Tuileries; the *cafés* and *restaurants* were crowded to suffocation with open-mouthed gossips hungering and thirsting for the daily journals; and the Royalists were seen congratulating each other in every quarter of the Faubourg St. Germain.

But of all parties, the Girondists,* who con-

* A powerful political party in the Legislature; so called, because the majority of them were deputies from the department of the Gironde.

stituted a large portion of the Legislative Assembly, and had strong hopes of forcing their way into the ministry, were the most interested; and while the conscientious but feeble Lafayette contented himself with dispatching emissaries in pursuit of the royal fugitives, the deputies of the Gironde instructed their agents in the different clubs and journals to hint at the question of the King's deposition, while their more vigorous rivals, the Jacobins, openly proclaimed the necessity of such a measure.

Alphonse's old tutor, Servette, was a forcible and eloquent writer in the service of the Girondist party, whose leaders held him in high esteem, especially Roland and his celebrated wife. As the young man was acquainted with his place of abode, for he had received frequent letters from him since his departure from the château, he took the opportunity of renewing his intercourse with him; and on the day after the King's flight, he went to the Rue St. Jacques, the street where his tutor resided.

He found Servette seated in his library, and busily engaged in writing at a table covered

with journals, pamphlets, and manuscripts. He was a mild, thoughtful man, pale and thin, with a slight stoop in his shoulders, and flowing, milk-white hair, which, while it added to the interest of his appearance, made him look ten years older than he really was. Like Bailly, whom he resembled in kindliness and simplicity of nature, he was an enthusiastic advocate for the revolution, but being better versed in books than men, was ill-qualified, except as a writer, to take an active part in that great popular movement. And so was it with the rest of the Girondist party. With the single exception of the worldly, matter-of-fact Roland, they were mere visionaries—perfectibility men, of lettered minds indeed, and exemplary habits—but nothing more. Alas, how much mischief has been done with the best intentions to society by politicians and philosophers of this stamp!

Servette welcomed his pupil with the greatest cordiality; inquired how he had left their mutual friends, the Delilles—not forgetting a sly allusion to the pretty Annette; how long he had been in Paris; and what had brought him to that hot-bed of bustle and tumult.

"The Delilles were all well when I left them," replied Alphonse; "and as for me, I came here in the hope of obtaining a situation in the royal household, through the influence of the Count de Sevrac. My father was particularly desirous that I should gain the appointment, but I have been disappointed."

"I am glad of it," said Servette, "for the King's service is one from which little honour is to be derived. You have heard of course of his Majesty's flight?"

"Oh, yes; as I came along, the people were talking of nothing else."

"They say that it had been long premeditated, and that the Queen—but what ails you? You appear agitated," and the speaker looked kindly at his young friend, whose embarrassment was visible in his countenance.

"I am quite well," replied Alphonse, fearful of betraying his secret, "but—but I could not hear the Queen's name mentioned without emotion, so generous, so high-minded, as even her enemies allow her to be."

"She is certainly not devoid of good qualities," observed Servette, "but she is rash and

headstrong; and if it be really true that it is at her instigation the King has taken this disastrous step, she has done more injury to royalty than she will ever be able to repair. For my own part, I hope that Louis may succeed in crossing the frontier, for it will save him much suffering, and the Legislature much embarrassment; but should he be intercepted in his flight, and compelled to return to Paris, there will be but one chance left him of retrieving his position. Let him throw himself boldly and unreservedly into the arms of the popular party, the Girondists, for instance—"

"The Girondists!" exclaimed De Chatillon: "to resign the government into their hands, would be to pull down and reconstruct the whole fabric of monarchy."

"And wherefore not? The old *régime* is worn out."

"And henceforth, I presume, the Girondists are to be lords of the ascendant!"

"Not so; the great national party to which it is my pride to belong, demand no undue ascendancy for themselves, but merely fair play for all classes. And mark my words—they

will obtain that just demand as sure as night follows day. You may smile, but events will prove that I am no false prophet. The spirit of an enlightened freedom is abroad; men now know the rights which formerly they but guessed at; and should those rights be much longer withheld, the monarchy, already verging on its decline, will sink to rise no more. God grant that it may not set in blood!"

"Rights!" replied Alphonse, "I know of no rights that the Crown withholds from the people. On the contrary, so far as I can understand, it has made concession after concession, till it has hardly anything left to concede. In short, at this present moment, the governing power is the mob; and is it fit that they should be our rulers?"

"Not our rulers, for that would be substituting one tyranny for another—King Stork for King Log, as Æsop says in one of his happiest apologues. Bye the bye, do you remember how often I warned you, when we used to exult together in the triumphs of Washington, that the example set by America would be infectious? You see I was right in

my prediction. Believe me, my dear Alphonse," continued Servette with impressive energy, "this outbreak, as the court party still persist in calling it, is no partial or evanescent explosion; it is a mighty, national impulse—the manifestation of a sublime purpose, the effects of which will not be confined to France, but will be felt throughout Europe, thrilling to its heart's core."

"When you talk of a national impulse," rejoined De Chatillon indignantly, "I think of the treacherous murder of Delauney; of the mob-cry against the priests and nobles, '*à la lanterne;*' of the bleeding heads stuck on pikes, and carried before the royal carriage during the night journey from Versailles; and am filled with wonder—to say the least—at your adoption of such a phrase."

"Ah, Alphonse," replied Servette, mildly rebuking him, "your sympathies, I see, are exclusively with the privileged classes; you have no tear to bestow on the vast body of the people, whose existence has for centuries been a blank, or worse than a blank—one long, hopeless scene of suffering. Now is

this generous, think you? Is it in accordance with the dictates of an enlarged humanity?"

"Surely, Monsieur Servette, you will not attempt to justify such atrocities as I have alluded to!"

"Heaven forbid! But, remember, the people took no part in them; they were the acts of a ruffian mob—the very dregs of the capital. But granting, for argument's sake, that it were otherwise, before you utterly condemn such deeds, think of the long series of maddening provocations that gave rise to them. Think of the exactions of the feudal system, of the tyrannical *lettres de cachet*, of the demoralizing orgies of the Parc aux Cerfs, of the reckless extravagance and methodical profligacy of the court, with their necessary consequences, a bankrupt exchequer, and a denationalized aristocracy;—think, I say, of these things, and if you cannot justify, at least cease to wonder at the bloody retribution to which they have led."

"I trust the time will never come," said De Chatillon, "when I shall cease to deplore and

wonder at the anarchy and licentiousness now raging in this capital."

"I can enter into your feelings, Alphonse, for I too once had my doubts and fears of the great political problem now in the course of solution; but subsequent reflection, aided by experience, has convinced me of the absolute necessity of the experiment. But a truce to such matters for the present. You say you entertain a dislike to the Girondists."

"Only as statesmen, for it would be impossible to dislike or despise men of such private worth and splendid ability as Roland, Vergniaud and Brissot, whose speeches I am in the daily habit of reading, and never without wonder at the talent they exhibit. Men like them—however erroneous may be their theories of government—can yet have nothing in common with Danton, Marat, and the rest of the rabble leaders."

"Since such are your feelings, then," observed Servette, "you can have no objection to accompany me to Roland's to-morrow night. He lives just over the way, and you will have an opportunity of seeing his highly-gifted wife,

and many of the ablest men in Paris. You need not be alarmed for your political opinions," added the speaker good-humouredly, "we shall make no attempt to shake your faith; though you may take this as a truth, that the Girondists, dangerous as you imagine their views to be, are far better friends to the King than the selfish aristocrats who have hitherto influenced his actions."

Curious to see some of the celebrated men whose names were then in every one's mouth, yet resolved not to mingle with any of their party projects, Alphonse accepted Servette's invitation; and at the appointed hour went with him to Roland's house.

CHAPTER XI.

Nothing could be more unassuming than the interior of Roland's house; the rooms, in particular, wherein he received his guests, were furnished in the plainest, and even homeliest fashion; and the dress and manner of the host were equally unostentatious, for he was a man who—in imitation of Franklin, as was supposed—affected a more than republican simplicity. His air was grave and somewhat austere, and he spoke in a curt, sententious manner, without the slightest parade of eloquence. Far different was his celebrated wife. She was of a lively, ardent nature; was learned without being arro-

gant or pedantic; and was in the habit of seasoning her conversation with apt touches of sarcasm, which she threw out without effort and without malice. Her manners were frank and conciliatory; and she was regarded as a sort of oracle by the powerful party to which she belonged, and which indeed was chiefly kept together by her consummate address.

As Alphonse and his friend entered the *salon*, this illustrious lady—whose name will be long held in respectful remembrance, if only for the serene courage and dignity that marked her conduct on the scaffold—was engaged in conversation with a remarkably handsome young man who stood next her; and by the flashing of her full dark eye, and the smile that played round her mouth, it was clear that his remarks deeply interested her.

"Who is that lady?" inquired De Chatillon in a whisper of his companion.

"Madame Roland," replied Servette; "and the gentleman beside her is Barbaroux, a fiery young Marsellois, who is a constant attendant at her *soirées*. Let us join them."

With this he led Alphonse up to Madame

Roland, and introduced him to her as an old friend and pupil of his own, which procured him a gracious reception from the lady.

Barbaroux had been speculating on the probability of the King's capture, and hoping that it might not take place, as it would put the Assembly in a very embarrassing position, when Madame Roland observed:

"Yet should Louis succeed in making his escape, the reforms so auspiciously commenced must of necessity be interrupted, if not wholly stopped, for he will be sure to throw himself into the arms of Austria, and assisted by the Prussians and the emigrants, will return at the head of an overwhelming force, and restore matters to the state in which they were previous to the assembly of the States-General."

"He may strive to do so," exclaimed Servette, "but the endeavour will be a hopeless one."

"Hopeless indeed!" said Barbaroux with animation, "for absolutism in France is dead without a chance of resurrection. As for Prussian or Austrian interference, let us but be true

to ourselves, and not all Europe in arms shall prevail against us."

Madame Roland smiled at Barbaroux's fervour, and asked Alphonse if he entertained the same conviction.

"Most certainly I do," was the rejoinder. "I should be but an unworthy Frenchman were I not confident of my country's success in a good cause; but I will not answer for her triumph in a bad one."

"My young friend here," interposed Servette, "who is but lately arrived from La Vendée, has not yet been able to divest himself of certain opinions which, conscientious as they are, cannot be maintained by argument, wherefore," he added with an arch look, "he is somewhat shy of discussing them. Is it not so?"

Alphonse rejoined modestly:

"I cannot undertake to cope with you in reasoning, Monsieur Servette"—for he entertained great respect for his old master's intellect—"but I must say I do not share in the popular distrust of the King. What his Majesty ought in justice to do, that, I doubt not, he is prepared to do."

"Never!" exclaimed Barbaroux scornfully, "there is neither honour nor justice to be found in—"

"Hush—hush," interrupted Madame Roland, in her most conciliatory manner, "we must have no political quarrels here." She then turned the conversation on a recent pamphlet by Camille Desmoulins, observing: "It is full of point and antithesis, and for a certain free and easy play of wit, is almost worthy of Voltaire. But I cannot approve the sentiments, for they are those of an anarchist, not a rational lover of liberty."

"He is but a lad yet," remarked the kindly and tolerant Servette, "and is scarcely aware of the tendency of his own writings."

"So his pamphlet assures me," replied the lady, "for presumption and inexperience are stamped on every page."

"He will learn discretion as he grows older," observed Servette.

"True," said Madame Roland, "but the mischief will be done before he reaches the age of discretion, which, judging by this, his last and worst production, seems, like the horizon, to fly before him as he advances."

" Whom are you speaking of?" inquired Roland, who at that moment joined the circle.

" Camille Desmoulins," said Barbaroux.

" Ay, I have heard of the vain, headstrong stripling; he styles himself attorney-general to the lamp-post, I think."

" I grant you he is rash and self-conceited," remarked Barbaroux " yet you must acknowledge, Roland, that he possesses considerable wit and eloquence."

" Nonsense, nonsense," replied Roland, " Camille wants the staple of all eloquence—common sense. Instead of dealing with facts and practical matters, he goes voyaging through the airy, barren realms of fancy. He is lively, it is true, and at times brilliant; but remember the old adage—all is not gold that glitters."

Barbaroux was about making a reply to these disparaging remarks on Camille Desmoulins, when a gentleman entered the *salon*, and walking straight up to Roland, addressed him in such a deferential and obsequious manner as induced Alphonse to regard him with more than ordinary attention. He was rather short of stature, of a slender make, and a livid and

bilious complexion; his eyes, which at times wore a singular expression of distrust and fear, were dull and sunk in their sockets, and there was a constant blinking of the lids, arising apparently from some nervous affection. His dress was smart and even foppish. He wore a large frill, plaited with extreme neatness, a light-blue, embroidered waistcoat, and a shewy, well-fitting coat, in which not a wrinkle was to be seen. His hair was dressed in the most careful style, and he had several costly rings on his fingers, which he took care to exhibit while tapping a massive gold snuff-box, which was seldom out of his hands. In his address he was stiff and embarrassed, reserved of speech, and when speaking to Roland, studiously avoided looking him in the face.

Struck with the stranger's manner, and not less so by his dress, which was wholly at variance with the taste of the day, De Chatillon inquired of Servette who he was, and was answered: "His name is Robespierre, and he is just now patronized by our host, who, though he thinks him much too violent in his opinions,

has a great notion of his integrity. He was first brought under Roland's notice by a clever juvenile essay, which he wrote in 1785, against the Punishment of Death, and which gained the prize awarded by the Royal Society of Metz. At present, he is one of the principal orators at the Jacobin Club, but his position is a precarious one, however flattering to his vanity; and hence, while avowing himself a zealous democrat, he takes care to conciliate Roland, and through him the Girondists; so that, in case of need, he may have useful friends at his elbow. I cannot bring myself to like him, for I suspect that he is playing a deeper game than people are aware of. Mark him now, while talking to Madame. See how he casts his eyes on the ground whenever she looks steadily at him."

"We have been speaking of Camille's last pamphlet," said Madame Roland, addressing Robespierre, "have you read it?"

"In part I have," replied Robespierre in a harsh, croaking voice, "but I do not like the flippant manner in which he discusses grave

subjects. A nation's wrongs are not fit themes for merriment, though the heartless Voltaire thought otherwise."

"Heartless Voltaire!" exclaimed Madame Roland.

"I mean, as compared with his rival Rousseau," observed Robespierre.

"I presume, then," rejoined the lady, "you are a disciple of the recluse philosopher of Ermenonville."

Robespierre replied in the affirmative, whereupon Madame Roland said: "I cannot applaud your discrimination in selecting such a wayward visionary for your model. His philosophy, I admit, is specious enough; but when you come to analyze it, you find that it is a mere compound of selfishness and egotism. Rousseau's nature was essentially deficient in elevation and purity of sentiment. He was the slave of maudlin vanity, which he mistook for real feelings; and imagined himself a philosopher, when he was nothing more than a weaver of paradox and sophistry. His works advocate, not liberty but licence, and lay the axe to the root of all

that is most august and estimable in the social system."

"It is with pain I differ from you," replied Robespierre obsequiously; "but I conceive Rousseau to be the greatest man that modern times have produced; and were it ever to be my proud lot to exercise an influence over the destinies of France, I should certainly take his 'Contrat Social' as my text-book."

"A happy idea!" said Madame Roland ironically, "with one only drawback, that it has not so much as a glimmering of reason to recommend it; but this, perhaps, constitutes its chief excellence in your eyes," a remark which stung Robespierre to the quick, for he was a man of inordinate vanity, and had a special dread of ridicule. He was careful, however, to conceal his feelings, and made no other answer than by a wordy, common-place panegyric on the spirit of philanthropy that pervaded Rousseau's works.

"Our friend Roland, I fear, thinks Robespierre the ardent philanthropist he would wish to appear," whispered Servette to Alphonse;

"but trust me, the time is not far distant when that man will fling back the cause of liberty full half a century. But I will have my eye on him."

Apparently, Robespierre was aware that he was the subject of remark; for although he could not overhear what was said, inasmuch as Servette and Alphonse were at the moment standing a few feet apart from Roland, yet he threw on the former a glance that seemed to say: "I understand you, and the day is coming when you shall find that I do."

A brisk, intelligent-looking individual here entered the room, and De Chatillon observed him attentively, when he learned that he was Brissot, one of the most active leaders of the Girondist party, and as favourite a speaker in the Assembly as the more noisy and energetic Danton was in the club of the Cordeliers.

"Have you heard the news?" he exclaimed, addressing the company generally.

"News! What news?" inquired Barbaroux and several others, gathering round him.

"The arrest of the Royal Family! There is

a rumour abroad to that effect, but I cannot undertake to say whether it be true or false."

These tidings caused considerable excitement; but there was one man who, to all appearance, heard them unmoved—and that one was Robespierre; he asked no questions, but stood apart from the animated group of which Brissot formed the centre, with his eyes fixed on the ground, as though he were engrossed with far other considerations; but Servette, who watched him narrowly, could perceive by the changing colour of his cheek, and the slight, unconscious quivering of his lips, that he took the deepest personal interest in the news, notwithstanding his evident desire to assume an aspect of indifference.

"Who told you that the King was arrested?" asked Roland of Brissot.

"I heard it from one of Lafayette's staff."

"It cannot be true," observed Roland, after a pause.

"Why not?" said Barbaroux.

"Because it is too soon yet to have any positive intelligence."

"So I think," remarked Madame Roland. "What say you, Monsieur Robespierre?"

"I can only say," replied Robespierre, awakened from his reverie by this sudden appeal to him, "that I hope the report may be true, for though personally I can have no interest in the matter, yet as far as the cause of freedom is concerned, I am persuaded that the tyrant's capture will be of infinite benefit to that glorious cause," and he flourished emphatically on the word "glorious," just as a well-trained singer shakes on some particular syllable at the close of a ballad.

Madame Roland smiled at this patriotic clap-trap; but her husband, who had a distaste for fine speeches, heard it with manifest impatience, observing: "Oh, ay! the cause is glorious enough; but its greatest recommendation with me is its common-sense."

"You had Franklin in your thoughts when you said that," remarked Brissot.

"I was not aware of it," rejoined Roland; "but it is not unlikely, for he and I think alike on many points. He had a great respect for

common-sense, and so have I. He considered it rather a scarce commodity among legislators, and so do I."

"But I was not alluding to any general coincidence of opinion between you and him," said Brissot, "but to a particular anecdote which was told me by one of his friends, and of which your answer to Robespierre reminded me."

"Pray let me hear it," exclaimed Madame Roland, "for I am interested in everything that regards Dr. Franklin."

"He was talking one day," continued Brissot, "with several members of Congress on the subject of the American Revolution, when observing that each vied with the other in the warmth of his eulogiums on its glorious character, he suddenly checked their ardour by saying: 'Pooh, pooh! what had our struggle to do with glory? Common-sense was its guiding principle. If we must take praise to ourselves, let it be for having fought, like rational folks, for the substance of enlightened legislation, not, like fools, for such a mere shadow as glory.'"

"There is a world of sound practical wisdom in that retort of Franklin," observed Roland.

"More wisdom than sentiment," rejoined Brissot; "but such was the character of the great American statesman's intellect. He had no sympathy with, no conception of, any nobler principle of action than common-sense. To the quickening impulses of ambition, whether literary or political, he was a total stranger, and he would have derided as puerile vanity that passionate desire to be honourably remembered in after-ages, which is the parent of all that is really great in our nature. Franklin's worldly sagacity was, I grant you, remarkable, so also were his philosophic and scientific attainments; but he had not a spark of that imagination which quickens into life the cold abstractions of the understanding; or of that loftiness of thought which appears to be then only in its element, when it has gained the height at which ordinary intellects grow dizzy. I remember him telling me, when I last saw him in Philadelphia, the particulars of the experiment which he made at midnight, on a solitary

moor, and in the midst of a thunder-storm, to attract and conduct the lightning from the clouds which were crashing above his head. The experiment was in every respect a memorable one, involving the boldest philosophic discovery of the age, and peculiarly calculated to kindle the imagination, and suggest a train of the sublimest reflections; yet Franklin told the anecdote as coldly, as drily, and as methodically, as if it were the veriest commonplace—as if, indeed, he had been speaking of his toilet or his dinner."

"He was telling you a fact," said Roland, "and you would not have had him tell it you as a fiction."

"Assuredly not," rejoined Brissot; "but I would have had his feelings and his fancy take an equal share with his understanding in the narrative. In a word, I would have had him clothe his Truth—and such a Truth, too!—in garments worthy of its majesty—in the imperial purple of the imagination; and not place it before me like some trite, familiar fact, without even a fig-leaf to cover its nakedness.

A philosopher's mind should not be always dwelling on the literal and the practical; it should have wings to fly with—"

"Say, rather, it should have legs to stand upon," retorted Roland, and, weary of a discussion wholly foreign to his tastes, he drew Brissot aside, and commenced a conversation with him on the subject of Lafayette's last address to the National Guard of Paris.

Chagrined and annoyed at the report of the King's capture, De Chatillon now prepared to quit the *soirée*, when, on casting his eyes towards the door, he became aware that a person whom Robespierre had joined but a few minutes before, was fixing on him (Alphonse) a stern gaze of scrutiny.

There was so much ill-will expressed in the stranger's countenance, that the young man could not refrain from questioning Servette respecting him; but the only answer he got was: "I know not his name, but I suppose from his acquaintance with Robespierre, that he is some stormy orator at the Jacobins or Cordeliers."

"How then came he here? I understood

from you that Roland's party discountenanced the violence of these men."

"So we do; but, situated as we now are, we cannot afford to separate wholly from them. We must temporize and conciliate."

"And can you reconcile such conduct to a strict sense of duty?"

"Unquestionably; for, intemperate as they are, we have, nevertheless, more points in common with these men than we have with the court party."

The stranger whose presence at the *soirée* had led to these remarks, withdrew his glance when he found that it had been noticed, which gave Alphonse a better opportunity of observing him. He was, apparently, about fifty years of age, and the style of his features showed that in youth he must have been handsome; but his inflamed eyes, and white, bloated face now wore quite a revolting expression—the result of long habits of gross debauchery. As he passed by Alphonse, in order to pay his respects to Madame Roland, who had joined Brissot and her husband, he chanced to hear Servette pronounce the word "De Chatillon,"

when he started as if an adder had stung him, but instantly recovered himself, and moved on to the lady's side.

"That man," said Servette, struck with the malignant expression of his countenance, "must owe you a deep grudge. Did you observe how he started when I happened to address you as De Chatillon? I suppose he is one of those infuriate demagogues who cannot hear an aristocratic name pronounced without flying into a passion."

"He must be a desperate demagogue, indeed, if he hate me, without knowing me, merely because I prefix 'De' to my name;" and without deigning to take any further notice of the incident, Alphonse quitted the party, leaving his friend Servette behind him.

As he passed the Palais Royal, which, as usual, was thronged with people, he saw one of those itinerant declaimers, who were to be met with in every quarter of Paris, mounted on a low stool, and haranguing the mob, in very indifferent grammar, on their rights, privileges and dignity. Thinking that the

man's voice was familiar to him, Alphonse drew as close to him as the crowd would permit, when he found, to his great surprise, that the orator was no less distinguished a personage than the Count de Sevrac's valet, Jacques, who, on being dismissed from his master's service, had turned patriot, and was by no means without a chance of eminence in that line, if one might judge by the favour with which his clap-traps were received by his auditors!

And this, thought De Chatillon, as he slowly resumed his route, this is patriotism—or at least is so considered by nine-tenths of the population of this mighty capital! Ah, Servette, my kind old friend and preceptor, whom as a man I revere, but whom as a politician I deplore, I much fear that your apprehensions will be realized, and that this monarchy of a thousand years will ere long set in blood!

CHAPTER XII.

When the news of the King's capture became confirmed, a delirium of joy took possession of all the most ardent spirits in Paris. Danton at the Cordeliers boldly insisted on his imprisonment, and the proclamation of a Republic; and the cautious Robespierre spoke to the same effect at the Jacobins, though in more guarded and mystical language, and always by way of hypothesis, for he felt that the Girondists were yet too strong for him, and this party were unwilling to resort to extremities, so long as a chance remained of their being able to prevail on Louis to adopt their views of a Constitutional Government. At the theatres, every sentiment of the slightest republican tendency was vociferously

applauded; and busts, crowned with laurel, of Phocion, Brutus, and other Greek and Roman statesmen, were paraded about the principal streets.

On the morning of the day on which the royal family were expected to arrive in Paris, the populace were astir from day-break. Every window in the direction which it was supposed the cavalcade would take had its occupant, and even the roofs of the houses were crowded. As the day advanced, couriers were seen hurrying to and from Lafayette's head-quarters, whence messengers were dispatched every half-hour to the Assembly with accounts of the reception which the royal party were experiencing on their approach to the capital.

De Chatillon, sharing in the general fever, joined the immense crowd that thronged the grand entrance to the Tuileries, and was listening with mingled scorn and indignation to the coarse abuse lavished on the Queen by two working-men near him, when a squadron of the National Guard came riding along with intelligence that the King had reached the Champs Elysées, and might be momentarily expected.

Forthwith, a deep, stern, ominous silence prevailed among the mighty multitude, affecting Alphonse with far deeper sadness than the wildest uproar would have caused. While he stood musing on this marked indication of a settled purpose in men's minds, another troop of the guard approached, and presently Lafayette, followed by his staff, drew up in front of the palace. Scarcely had he done so, when the cavalcade came in sight, advancing at a walking pace, and was received by the populace with their hats on, and with a gloomy silence as of the grave.

With considerable difficulty Alphonse contrived to elbow his way through the dense crowd, close to the gates of the Tuileries, so that when the royal carriage stopped, he was able to obtain a clear view—the windows being down in consequence of the excessive heat—of the illustrious party. The King maintained his usual dull look of apathy; but there was an expression of anguish, and even despair, in the countenance of the Queen, that went to the young man's heart. As she hurriedly descended the steps of the coach, her eye caught his, and

recognizing in him the assistant in her escape from the Tuileries, she testified her sense of his presence by a courteous inclination of the head, which he returned with a bow of the profoundest reverence.

Some fiery *sans-culottes*, who had observed this action, and who seemed impatient of the long restraint which, in compliance with Lafayette's orders, they had put upon their feelings, seized this opportunity of giving vent to their patriotic wrath.

"Down with the aristocrat!" cried a ruffian, who stood behind Alphonse.

"He is a spy of the Austrian Committee!" exclaimed another. "I saw him make a sign to the Queen. Down with him!" and he grasped De Chatillon by the collar.

"Yes," replied the high-spirited young Royalist, "you did see me make a sign to her Majesty; but it was merely in token of my respect and sympathy for her misfortunes: and where is the true Frenchman who would not have done the same? Hands off, fellow!" and he raised his arm to strike his aggressor to the earth.

"Down with him!—the spy—the aristocrat!" cried a hundred hoarse voices, and, at the words, such a rush was made at Alphonse, that, excited as the mob were about him, and communicating the infection of their example to those at a more remote distance, he would infallibly have been torn limb from limb, had not the guards who were posted at the palace gates interfered to restore order.

By their aid, De Chatillon was at length rescued from his perilous position, and a space being cleared for him, he lost no time in making his escape; and had got as far as the Carousel, when he overtook Servette, who, like himself, had mingled among the crowd, and was now on his return to the Rue St. Jacques.

As the two friends walked on together, Alphonse mentioned to his companion the brutal treatment he had experienced from the *canaille*, adding, with warmth: "And these are the people whom you and your party represent as being fit to receive liberty in its purest form! I really am astonished, Monsieur Servette, how, with those refined notions

of justice and freedom which you have so often endeavoured to instil into my mind, you can dream of espousing the cause of such a herd of immitigable ruffians!"

"Alphonse," replied Servette, "I do not espouse the cause of ruffians; but I can make allowances for excited passions, especially when they are played on by designing demagogues for their own selfish purposes. You should not blame, but pity these poor, thoughtless wretches; for, believe me, they are mere tools. In you, and such as you, they have been artfully taught to recognize an incarnation of despotism; hence, in attacking you, they imagine that they are attacking an evil principle. It is from sheer ignorance that they offend, not from any inherent brutality."

"And is their ignorance, then, to be held as justifying their brutality?"

"I am far from saying that popular excesses are to be justified; but I do again repeat that, in this instance, they admit of palliation. If the mob now exhibit the ferocity of half-emancipated serfs, such ruthless conduct is the inevitable result of the tyranny that has en-

slaved them for ages. Blame then the court and its confederate aristocracy, not the miserable victims of their oppression. Why are the lower classes so happy and contented in La Vendée? Because they live—and have lived for years—under the sway of beneficent Seigneurs. Do you suppose human nature is different there from what it is in other parts of France? No; like causes produce like effects all the world over."

Thus conversing, they continued to walk on till they came to the site of the Bastille, now indicated by a large open square, in one corner of which there still lay a few detached fragments of the walls of that gloomy fortress. De Chatillon gazed for some minutes in silence on these scanty vestiges of one of Absolutism's strongholds, whereupon his companion observed: "You may well be thoughtful, Alphonse, for a sight like this is calculated to awaken many grave reflections. What a terrible spectacle of feudal tyranny has been here exhibited for centuries! How many a poor wretch has here sighed away years in hopeless captivity, cut off from friends, kin-

dred, home, and all that gives life its value, merely to gratify the vindictive passions of irresponsible authority! Oh, could those ruins but be informed with speech, what mournful tales could they not relate of blighted hopes and broken hearts! Wit, beauty, genius, high-souled youth and philosophic age, have here alike been immured as in a sepulchre; for Tyranny, when once its fears or its jealousies have been provoked, never forgets or forgives. Alphonse," continued the speaker, in agitated tones, "you wonder—I know you do—how one so studious, so peaceable, and so far advanced on his road to the grave as I am, can advocate with such ardour the cause, of what you deem, Licentiousness. Listen. Many years ago, I had a friend, brave, generous, enlightened, like yourself; of rare promise, of aspiring character; but indiscreet, alas! from the mere excess of his animal spirits. All who knew him, loved and admired him; but none more than I. One day an arch, sportive sally against Madame du Barri, which had gone the round of the Parisian *salons,* was traced to my friend. Instantly a *lettre de cachet* was procured

against him, and he was torn, at midnight, from the arms of his young wife. Inquiry after inquiry was instituted, but none ever knew what became of him. Twenty years elapsed; the struggle between Might and Right had commenced; and then the mystery of his disappearance was unravelled. On the capture of the Bastille, I penetrated with the crowd into its cells, and in one of the gloomiest of these, what think you I beheld?"

"I can guess," replied Alphonse, "and feel quite as indignant as yourself at such a monstrous stretch of authority."

"I beheld," resumed Servette with increased emotion, "a grey-headed old man seated in a wooden chair, his head reclining on a table whereon stood the day's untasted meal. As I approached, he looked up, and then in this feeble, prematurely aged wretch, I recognized my once light-hearted friend! But he knew me not; his fine intellect was eclipsed for ever; and though I bore him to my own house, tended him with the utmost care, and tried every means I could think of to bring back some fragment, however imperfect, of recol-

lection, my efforts were vain, for he survived his liberation but one short month, and never knew to whom he was indebted for it. Poor Victoire! How intense must have been the agony of spirit that could have overthrown so vigorous a mind! I can imagine him seated in his lonely cell, watching day by day the varying shadows of the sun, which rose and set in vain for him; listening to the busy hum of life without, that fell like the sea's distant murmur on his ear; weeping bitterly in the dreary watches of the night, at the thought of that young and loving wife whom he was never more to see; or wandering in dreams over the hills of his native Languedoc, to be roused, perhaps, by the striking of the prison clock—his only comforter, for it warned him he was an hour nearer to his grave!"

Overpowered by the recollection of his friend, Servette here made a pause, and averted his head to wipe away the tears that were starting to his eyes. He soon, however, recovered his self-possession, and continued: "Forgive an old man's weakness, but whenever I call to mind my friend, as I first knew him, and as

I last saw him, my heart swells almost to bursting. But—thanks to a beneficent Providence!—such atrocities can never again be perpetrated with impunity in France. The long reign of Despotism draws to a close. From the very spot where we now stand, a warning spirit has gone forth against it—the voice of outraged humanity has pronounced its doom. Yes," added the speaker, in a strain of solemn enthusiasm, "the dawn of a better day is breaking in the east, and the future stands revealed to my imagination, star-crowned, and radiant with glory, when man, for so many ages the oppressor, shall become the benefactor of his fellow-man; do reverence at the shrine of peace which is happiness, and of truth which is religion; keep firm to the dictates of his enlarged understanding, as the planets keep their courses; recognize and enforce no absolute authority save that of justice and reason; and bow the knee only to Omnipotence."

"You are an optimist, I perceive," observed De Chatillon, affected more than he was willing

to avow, by the impassioned fervour with which Servette expressed himself.

"I have always had faith in human nature," replied the sanguine and lofty-minded old man, "and despite the sneers of the sceptics of Voltaire's school, am firmly of opinion that its tendency is to good, instead of evil. But I do not wish to weary you with a long homily," he added, dropping into his usual familiar manner, "so let us return, for I am to meet Brissot this afternoon on matters of consequence."

The friends parted at the door of Servette's house, when Alphonse, not having seen De Sevrac for some days, walked on to his lodgings, musing by the way on the sentiments which he had just heard—sentiments which he could not but admire, for he recognized in them much that was just and noble, however difficult it might be to act upon them, in the present circumstances of France, or indeed under any circumstances.

The young man found the Count reclining on a sofa, with his hand pressed against his

forehead, as though he were engrossed with the consideration of some theme of moment. Though little more than a week had elapsed since De Chatillon had seen him, yet a striking change had taken place in his appearance. His cheeks were pale and haggard, the fire of his eye was dim, and his whole demeanour was that of a man worn down by mental disquietude.

He started up on seeing his visitor, and exclaimed in accents of mingled grief and bitterness: "So, all our fine schemes have come to nothing—the King is here, and the *canaille* triumph! Who could have anticipated such a result, so well arranged as were our plans? But I can guess who made them miscarry—it was the King, whose conscience, perhaps, smote him for leaving such affectionate and dutiful subjects!" and the Count laughed loud in scorn. "Alphonse," he continued, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder, "take this warning from a ruined man, never have any political transactions with a fool, even though that fool be—I cannot help it, it must out—your own sovereign!"

"But you cannot yet be sure that it was the King who caused the scheme to miscarry."

"I am as sure of it as I am of my own existence. Have I not had experience of his vacillation; and have not all made the same complaint of him, who have ever been admitted to his secret councils? Not a popular movement has taken place for the last two years, that has not been precipitated by his folly. You know, I suppose, that the Assembly have decided on keeping him a close prisoner in his palace—a preliminary step, of course, to his dethronement."

"Yes, I read the debate on the question, in one of the daily papers."

"And such being the fact, all my hopes are blasted. Had Louis escaped, and re-entered France at the head of the allies, the Marshal's bâton had been mine; or if not that, a high—perhaps the highest—post in the new ministry. And now, here I am, associated with a cause from which I can never hope to derive the slightest advantage. 'Tis enough to drive one mad to think of it."

De Chatillon always knew that the Count was a man of the world, but he at least gave him credit for being disinterested in his loyalty; but now he discovered that he was acted on by selfish considerations; and could not help contrasting his feelings with those of the lofty-natured Servette. Judging from his silence, that he shared in his vexation, De Sevrac went on to say: "You may well feel for me, my friend, for my disappointment is yours; what might you not have been, had we succeeded!"

"I was not thinking of my own prospects," answered Alphonse.

The Count stared, but made no reply; some new project seemed suddenly to have crossed his brain, and after a pause, during which he appeared buried in deep thought, and as if unconscious of his visitor's presence, he muttered in low but audible tones: "Hah, a good thought! Why not make cause with the Girondists? They will soon be the ruling party, and something perhaps might be done with them—but no, there is but faint hope in that quarter. Well, say Orleans. Impossible; he has identified himself too closely with the

Jacobins; and they and I can never act in concert. There is nothing then to be done but to remain quiet, and trust to the chapter of accidents. 'Twould be imprudent to break with the court party, for though at present luck is against them, yet the game is not wholly—Hah, Alphonse! you there? I thought you were gone," and the Count turned with ill-concealed displeasure to De Chatillon, whose eyes had been fixed on him during his soliloquy with an expression of grave surprize.

Mastering his vexation, however, by a strong effort, and putting on as unembarrassed a manner as his ruffled temper would allow, the Count observed: "You must not think that I have altogether lost my senses, Alphonse—as I perceive by your countenance you seem half-inclined to do—because I happen to have been talking nonsense just now; it was a mere whim of the moment—nothing more;" and having succeeded, as he conceived, by this clumsy artifice in lulling his friend's distrust, he added, "the truth is, my mind is somewhat unhinged by this sad affair of the King's capture; but a few days' quiet will bring me round, and then we will again set our wits to work, and see

what can be done to promote that glorious cause which we have both so much at heart," and so saying, he threw himself listlessly on the sofa, and pleaded a violent head-ache. Alphonse took the hint, and left the room, his regard for the Count not a little disturbed by this unexpected development of character.

CHAPTER XIII.

De Chatillon, had now been almost a year in Paris, and since his interview with the Count, which is described in the foregoing chapter, had seen nothing of him, for he had quitted the capital in disgust, and retired to his country seat near Rheims. Meantime, though he had but a faint hope of being able to distinguish himself in the King's service, or even of being admitted to his presence, Alphonse bore his disappointment with equanimity, enjoying Servette's society, and frequently accompanying him to Roland's, whose sagacious wife was fully capable of appreciating his good qualities of head and heart; she respected, even while she regretted, his chivalrous devotion to royalty,

which she could see, was the result of circumstances, rather than of an enlightened conviction. She held many good-humoured arguments with him on this subject, and might perhaps have succeeded in converting him, at least partially, to her own views of government, had not the brutal conduct of the rabble towards the King on their first memorable assault on the Tuileries, which took place about this time, confirmed all his wavering predilections in favour of the monarchy.

Being well supplied with funds by his banker, Delaborde, Alphonse was enabled to enter into all the various amusements which a crowded and luxurious capital offers--and never was Paris, though distracted with factions, fuller and gayer than now—but he had no relish for general dissipation, confining himself to the society of the select few, and dedicating his solitary hours to his father and the Delilles, with both of whom he kept up an active correspondence.

For the last four or five months, however, he had received no replies to his frequent letters, either from the Marquis or Monsieur Delille; and this protracted silence, coupled with rumours

of disturbances that had recently taken place at Nantes, occasioned him such uneasiness, that, despite his father's wish that he should remain where he was, as long as there existed the slightest chance of his being of use to his Sovereign, he was meditating a departure from Paris, when an unexpected event occurred, which compelled him to abandon his design, and remain for some time longer in that city.

He was seated one night at the Opera listening to Beaumarchais' delightful "Figaro," when he thought he perceived in a front box on the opposite side of the theatre, the stranger whom he had seen on his first visit to Roland's house. Alphonse could hardly be mistaken in the man's identity, for he had encountered him once or twice since in the streets, on which occasions he appeared as though he would gladly have fastened a quarrel on him, could he have found a suitable pretext; and now to confirm his conjecture, he saw that the recognition was mutual, and that the stranger's glance was fixed on him with the same malignant expression that had once before attracted Servette's notice. Eager to know who the individual was, and the cause of his

manifest hatred towards him, De Chatillon decided on going round to his box, and boldly demanding an explanation of his extraordinary conduct; but as he was in the act of rising from his seat, the unknown, conjecturing—as his manner indicated—the young man's purpose, abruptly quitted the theatre.

Thus disappointed, Alphonse quietly re-seated himself, and remained till the close of the night's performances, when he slowly bent his steps homewards. At about two hundred yards' distance from the theatre, two men muffled up in dark cloaks, and one of whom resembled the unknown — so at least De Chatillon imagined, from a moment's glimpse of his countenance—hurried past him, and then turning round, followed cautiously at his heels. Assassination being by no means unfrequent at this distracted period in Paris, the young man's suspicions were instantly awakened, and he halted at the end of the street, as if considering which was his right direction, but in reality to allow the strangers to overtake and get before him, which they did, and disappeared beneath a neighbouring arch-way.

Upon this Alphonse moved on again, taking,

however, a circuitous by-road to his lodgings, so as to mislead the strangers, in case they should still be on the look-out. For some time he saw no more of them, and concluded, therefore, that his impression as to their intentions was an erroneous one; but as he was passing along a dark street—or rather a straggling cluster of houses, in one of the less frequented parts of the city, he heard the sound of half-suppressed voices not far off him. One side of the street was composed of mean, irregular buildings, some of which were roofless, and the majority in a sad, ruinous condition; and the other was formed by a low wall which bounded an open space, perhaps a field or a garden. It was from behind this wall that the whisperings came, whence the young man concluded that two, or possibly more, men were concealed there.

His first idea was to retrace his steps, for the spot was dark and lonely, and the houses uninhabited, as he guessed from the absence of even a glimmering of light in them; but when he began to reflect on his position, he recollected that it was quite as hazardous to go back as to go forward, for he was now half-way down the

street; he thought it best, therefore, to continue his course, keeping his hand on his sword, in order to be prepared for any assault that might be made on him. When he reached the narrowest part of the street, he distinctly heard the words: "Now—now—we have him now—do not hesitate to take his life, for he is a Knight of the Dagger*—a bigoted aristocrat, and the worst enemy of the people;" and immediately afterwards two men, one of whom was his unknown foe, leaped at a bound over the wall, and rushed upon him.

The first who came up with him, made a vigorous pass at him with his sword, but Alphonse, being on his guard, and possessing much skill with his weapon, parried the thrust, and in so doing, knocked the assailant's sword out of his hand, who, with the cowardly instinct of an assassin, did not attempt to regain possession of it, and renew the conflict, but took directly to his heels.

The second man, who had till now stood aloof, as if he felt that his assistance was

* A popular term of reproach applied to the King's friends—more especially to those who held household appointments at the Tuileries.

unnecessary, astonished and enraged at his companion's sudden flight, attacked De Chatillon with all the fury that the most envenomed hatred could inspire, and for some time the conflict continued doubtful; but at length, in making a rush at his antagonist, the young man received a thrust in the fleshy part of his sword-arm, and he would probably have been soon disabled, and in consequence have lost his life, but that the sound of approaching footsteps alarmed the stranger, who retreated in the utmost haste, muttering, as he retired, between his clenched teeth: "You have escaped me this once; but, mark me, I will not lose sight of my revenge!"

De Chatillon waited only to bind his handkerchief round his arm, to stop the effusion of blood, and then, under an impression that his opponent had retreated into one of the ruined houses nearest him, and being bent on bringing him to a strict account, even at the hazard of his own life, he darted into the first door which he found open, and which led into a sort of hall, the wooden floor of which was broken in several places, and creaked and bent at every step he took. Arrived at the end of this

passage, which was so narrow that, by stretching out both arms, he could touch the walls on either side, he became satisfied that no one was concealed there, so groped his way on to a small back court-yard, at the extremity of which were two or three loose stone-steps. Here his further progress was checked by an oaken door, that had once been of prodigious strength, but was now partially rotten from age, pierced by many holes, and with a large crevice directly above the lock.

Alphonse was about to attempt forcing open this door, but the sound of many voices from within induced him to desist from his intention; and applying his eye closely to the crevice, he took a survey of the scene before him. A formidable spectacle met his gaze! The door opened into a low, spacious, comfortless apartment, that looked as though it had been originally intended for a cellar; and was lighted by a solitary lamp which hung from the cracked and mildewed ceiling. In the centre of the room stood a large oblong table, whereon were several wine-jugs, horn-cups, glasses, &c.; in fact, all the appearances of men drinking. Ranged round the table, were naked wooden benches, and on these sat some fifteen or twenty of the most

squalid and ferocious wretches Alphonse had ever seen. There were no symptoms of jovial festivity among them; their countenances wore an expression stern and inexorable; and a savage scowl lowered on each brow, as though they were discussing some act of atrocity already perpetrated, or about to be perpetrated. All were armed, some with pikes, and others with swords, daggers, and pistols; and all wore the *bonnet rouge.* At the upper end of the table, facing the door, sate a tall, athletic young man, whose dress and bearing denoted that he was of superior station to the rest of the party, and who appeared to officiate as President; and behind him, was a narrow recess or niche in the wall, before which hung a plain black cloth reaching from the ceiling to the floor.

As well as his position would allow, Alphonse examined attentively the countenances of this band of desperadoes, in the expectation of discovering the stranger among them; but he was not there, though at the further end of the table De Chatillon observed a face that was well-known to him. While he was endeavouring to recollect who this individual was, and when, and under what circumstances he had met him, the

President abruptly started up from an oaken chair in which he was seated, and commanding silence in an imperious tone, commenced an energetic harangue, not deficient in a certain terse, rude eloquence common enough among the rabble orators of that day, and full of such patriotic clap-traps as were best calculated to ensure the sympathies, and inflame the passions of his audience. "Citizens," he exclaimed, "since we last met, the grand confederation of which we form a branch, has increased tenfold in this capital. The faubourg St. Antoine alone can now number not less than a dozen secret societies, who have all taken the same oath as ourselves, and are all inspired by the same godlike love of liberty. The great Danton, too, is with us; and Marat—the glorious Marat!—whose warning voice is daily lifted up in our behalf, conjuring us to be united as one man, for in union alone is strength. What, shall our oppressors combine for evil, and we not combine for good? Shall Tyranny have her myriad defenders, and Freedom be without a friend? Never! We are sworn to do her bidding—we are leagued to do it—and we will not desist till it be done. Citizens, the proud

day of victory is at hand! See, then, that ye be not found wanting; but strike and spare not, for Liberty must be baptized in blood. Yes, our tyrants must be exterminated root and branch. We must show ourselves terrible in our wrath, and march to the sanctuary of Freedom over thousands of mangled bodies. 'Tis not our own injuries only that we are called on to revenge, but those of France, our common mother. She it is who now cries to us for redress, and perish every thought but that of exacting a bloody retribution from her enemies!

"Tremble, tyrants, tremble! The voice of a confederated people has willed your doom, and what they will, who shall dare gainsay? For centuries have your hateful chains been wound round our limbs, clanking sweet music in your ears. When we sued to you for pity, you spurned us as the vile worm beneath your feet. When we insisted on our rights, your reply was, the rack, the dungeon, and the scaffold. But we are your slaves no longer! We stand, erect in the strength and dignity of emancipated manhood, prepared to a man to perish, but never—never again to submit our necks to your yoke.

"Yet a few days, citizens, and we march to

our crowning victory! Be ready, then, to strike the decisive blow; and remember, when the tricolor floats above the Tuileries, and tyranny lies vanquished at our feet, that he who spares an aristocrat, is a traitor to our cause, and shall die the death of one. No mercy to the wretches—show no mercy to them, I say, for in the day of their power they showed us none. I have done. Vive la Liberté! A bas les aristocrats!"

When the President had concluded his phillipic, which was received throughout with a tempest of acclamation, he filled a large horn-cup to the brim with wine, and calling on all his associates to do the same, an order which they obeyed with alacrity, he drank: "Health to our new confederate, and may he soon have his wish, destruction to all tyrants!"

Another shout of applause followed this toast; and when the party had drained their glasses, and the din of voices had subsided, the President turning towards an individual at his elbow—in whom Alphonse had by this time recognized our old acquaintance, Jacques—addressed him briefly to the effect, that he should be faithful, at all risks, to the oath he had taken

to maintain the interests of the secret society of which he was now become a member; and then quitting his chair, and stationing himself in front of the covered recess, the speaker ordered Jacques to come and take his stand beside him, and placing a dagger in his hand, exclaimed: "The rules of our society ordain, that all new members should give a practical proof of their devotion to the people's cause, so that we may know how far they are to be relied on; say, is it not so, friends?"

"Yes," was the reply of one and all of the party.

"Behold, then," resumed the President, addressing Jacques, "here stands one of those tyrants whom you have sworn to pursue to the death! Strike, and strike boldly to the heart!" and as he said this, he drew aside the curtain, and displayed a figure dressed like an aristocrat, with his arms pinioned to his side, standing erect in the recess.

Notwithstanding that death confronted him in its most appalling form, the helpless victim uttered no supplications for mercy, but silent and motionless awaited the stroke that was to dismiss him from the world. Not thus tranquil

was his intended murderer, who twice raised the instrument of death, and twice let it drop, unable to perpetrate the atrocious act. At last, rendered desperate by the fierce clamour of his impatient colleagues, and the still more significant menaces of the President, he uplifted his arm for the third time to strike, when Alphonse unable longer to preserve his self-control, exclaimed: "Hold, wretch!" and made a strenuous effort to wrench open the door, which, however, was barred and bolted on the inside.

"Who spoke?" inquired the President, raising his voice to its loudest pitch, so as to be heard by all the clamorous assembly.

"I heard nothing," replied several ruffians at once "but the shaking and clattering of that crazy old door in the wind."

"I'll swear I heard some one cry out 'hold!'" rejoined the President; "who was it?"

"'Twas mere fancy—nothing more," observed a brawny, beetle-browed fellow who stood near him. "But you're always so full of your fancies, Jagault."

"Well, I suppose I was mistaken," replied the President; and again addressing Jacques, who still held the dagger in his uplifted hand,

and whose ashen countenance and trembling limbs showed that he too had heard the warning voice, he said: "What do you stand there for, staring as if you were looking on a ghost? Strike, I say!"

No longer daring to refuse obedience, and summoning up what little energy remained to him, the agitated Jacques buried his weapon in the breast of his victim; the curtain was then immediately drawn over the recess, and the unwilling murderer staggered back into his seat, amid loud bursts of laughter from his ruffian associates.

"Monsters!" shouted Alphonse, wholly forgetting in the distraction of his feelings the imminent danger to which he was exposing himself; "you shall answer with your lives for this atrocity," and he applied his utmost force to the door, which, though it shook and rattled vehemently, still resisted all his furious endeavours to force it off the hinges.

His words, uttered in the loudest tones of rage and horror, and more especially the noise he made in his attempts to force an entrance into the room, produced an electrical effect on the conspirators. They turned on each other

glances of wonder not unmingled with fear, and each man instinctively laid his hand on the weapon he bore; but for a minute or so none stirred nor spoke.

The President's voice was the first to break the silence. "We are betrayed!" he exclaimed. "The police are on us. To your arms, citizens: let us sell our lives dearly!"

As he spoke, a general rush was made to the door; and to add to the confusion, the rusty chain by which the lamp was suspended from the ceiling, suddenly broke from the hook to which it was attached. Down came both chain and lamp with a heavy clatter upon the table, crushing to atoms several of the wine-jugs, cups, and glasses; and immediately all was profound darkness.

Alphonse, meantime, whom the rush of the armed party to the door had awakened to a sense of the extreme peril of his situation, seized the opportunity of effecting his escape, while the foremost ruffians were withdrawing the bolts and bars; and favoured by the obscurity of the night, he succeeded in making his way out of the house unperceived; and darting over the wall on the opposite side of the street,

concealed himself behind it, till the alarmed conspirators had all hurriedly dispersed in various directions, when he ventured forth from his hiding-place, and getting again into the right track, called a *fiacre*, which quickly conveyed him to his own lodgings.

No sooner had he set foot in his apartment, than the pain arising from his wound, combined with the recollection of the horrid act he had witnessed, produced such an effect on his system that he fell fainting on the floor, in which state he was found by his servant, who lost not a moment in procuring the services of a surgeon, by whose prompt exertions Alphonse was restored to animation; and his wound having been dressed, he went to bed, but not to sleep, for his brain seemed on fire, and his thoughts were constantly dwelling on the events of the last two hours.

Towards morning, however, in consequence of the narcotic he had been prevailed on to swallow, he fell into a heavy slumber, not refreshing, but disturbed by confused and ghastly visions. The image of the man he had seen murdered, stood by his bedside. His eye was fixed on him with a hard, stony stare;

his limbs were fast stiffening in death; and the assassin's dagger still stuck in his cloven heart. Suddenly his lineaments altered to those of the inscrutable stranger; life began to stir within him; and with a laugh of fiendish joy, he bent over the unarmed sleeper, clutched him by the throat, and buried his sword in his breast. Again the vision changed, and Alphonse was floating—smothering in a sea of blood. The clouds above him wore the same crimson hue, and strange phantom shapes robed in winding-sheets, seemed to look down from them, and mock his terrors, as after being dashed from rock to rock, he was slowly swallowed up by the waters!

It was late in the morning before Alphonse awoke from these horrid visions, and sitting up in bed, he endeavoured to clear his brain of the crowd of terrible images that beset it. "They were but dreams!" he exclaimed, laughing at himself for his fears, as he wiped the cold, clammy perspiration from his brow; nevertheless, mere dreams as they were, they still retained such a hold on his mind, that for hours afterwards he was unable to shake off their benumbing influence.

CHAPTER XIV.

De Chatillon's first care, on recovering from the effects of his wound, was to go and acquaint Servette with the particulars of the murder, of which he had been the eye-witness, in order that they might concert some scheme for bringing the guilty parties to justice; and also to consult with him respecting the stranger, whose deadly enmity towards him, he was more than ever at a loss to account for.

As usual, he surprized the old man in his study, where he was seated with a pair of dusty horn spectacles on his nose, poring over some hints for a new constitution, which had been drawn up by Condorcet, and were then being handed about in manuscripts among the Girondists. So intent was he on his occupation, that

he did not at first notice his visitor; and even when he became aware of his presence, fixed on him a glance of the most *naïve* bewilderment; for at the moment, he had actually forgotten his name, and would probably have forgotten his own also, had the question been suddenly put to him!

"You don't remember me, I see!" replied the young man, smiling at the good old optimist's absence of mind; "my name is De Chatillon, but I am usually called Alphonse by my friends."

"True—true; and to think that I shouldn't have recollected you! Bless me, how odd! But where are my spectacles? No wonder I didn't recognize your features;" and Servette began fumbling about in his pockets, and among the heap of papers that lay strewed on the table before him.

"Your spectacles are where they should be—on your nose!"

"Dear me! so they are; well, who'd have thought it? But, come, sit down—sit down. A noble project of government this of Condorcet's—what expanded and philosophic views! Well may Brissot and Roland—"

"Never mind Brissot and Roland now, my friend," said Alphonse; "but just oblige me with a short and attentive hearing;" and without further preamble, he detailed all the circumstances of the murder which he had seen perpetrated by Jacques, at the instigation of his fellow-conspirators; and of the attack that had been made on his own life by the stranger.

Servette was greatly shocked at the intelligence. "Monstrous—monstrous!" he exclaimed. "Deeds like these are enough to disgust one with the very name of Frenchman. It is clear, from their own account, that the wretches form one of those secret societies which now swarm in Paris. But who could have thought it possible that they would have murdered an unarmed man in cold blood? As for the stranger's assault on you—"

"Assault! It was a cowardly, premeditated attempt at assassination, which failed only by chance. Who can the villain be? And what cause of enmity can I have given him?"

"I cannot answer your question further than by saying that you are an aristocrat, and therefore an object of hatred to every lawless ruffian in the capital. I will take care, however, that

the whole case shall be represented in the proper quarter, though, from the time that has elapsed since its occurrence, and the inefficiency of the constituted authorities, I fear that interference will be useless."

"But if the stranger cannot be discovered, the murderer, at least, can be arrested and punished. I know his name; and can swear to his person."

Servette shook his head. "If he be a member of one of the secret societies, there will be great difficulty in finding out his abode; still greater in bringing him to justice. You know not the power of these reckless demagogues, who have their spies in all quarters."

"And what arms these ruffians with such power, but the language held in the Assembly and the journals by those who miscall themselves patriots? Your Girondists, Monsieur Servette, though I may respect them as private individuals, have, as a public party, much to answer for. Who is it that is continually trying to widen the breach between the people and the monarchy? Who, but your vaunted leader, Brissot, the rashest and most intemperate—"

"Softly, softly," replied Servette, laying his hand kindly on De Chatillon's arm. "Brissot, like the rest of us, is but the tool of circumstances, and those circumstances have been solely created by the court. Do you suppose his republican theories would have the slightest effect on the people, if it were not for their distrust of Louis and his advisers? Believe me, Alphonse, Brissot is only powerful because the King is insincere."

"Insincere he is not; vacillating he may be —and I fear is, too much so for his honour and safety—but be he what he may, I will not fall away from his side, or be found among his detractors at this, his season of extremity."

"It is indeed a season of extremity, not only for Louis, but for all who take part with him. Even now, while I speak, thousands and tens of thousands of Frenchmen are meditating the expediency of dethroning a monarch who cannot go back, and who will not go forward; who does just enough to whet expectation, but not enough to satisfy it. Heaven help the country! I fear it has a terrible ordeal to pass through, before it settles down into tranquillity.

Hark! what sound is that?" and they both rushed to the window.

The street below them, as far as the sight could extend, was thronged with an excited multitude of all classes, and in the middle of the road marched a body of five hundred men, attired in a strange costume, and chanting in deep, sonorous tones, the famous Marseillaise Hymn, the chorus of which, "Aux armes, citoyens!" was caught up by the people with an enthusiasm approaching to phrenzy.

Servette's eyes kindled, as he beheld this animated spectacle. "Mark them," he said, as they passed underneath the window, with the slow and measured tread of trained soldiers, "how manly is their bearing! How determined the expression of their keen, flashing eyes! With what energy they chant that noble hymn, which might almost rouse the dead to action!"

"Who are they?" inquired Alphonse, unable to take his eyes off the strangers, whose proud carriage, stern looks, and picturesque costume, acted on his imagination like a spell, "who are they?" he repeated. "Never yet have I seen a body of men whose appearance gave me such a

vivid conception of those fiery spirits whom Rienzi summoned to arms against the nobles of Rome! They look more like Italians than Frenchmen."

"They are a band of patriots from Marseilles," replied Servette, "and have come up to Paris to tender their assistance to the people. They have been long expected, and now that they have arrived, events will stride on at a giant's pace. See, their fellow-citizen, young Barbaroux, is marching at their head!"

De Chatillon's heart sunk within him at this reply; he turned thoughtfully away from the window, and when the mighty mass had passed by, on their way to the seat of legislature, he took a cold leave of Servette, and repaired to the lodgings of the Count de Sevrac, who he learned had returned the day before from his protracted stay in the country, intending, through him, to renew his offer of services to the King.

Within a few paces of his own door he encountered Jacques, who was no longer the dapper, self-conceited coxcomb; but slovenly in his dress, pale and care-worn, with a nervous tremour in his limbs, that indicated extreme agitation of mind.

"Wretch!" exclaimed Alphonse, confronting him with looks of fury, "what brings you here? Is it to perpetrate another murder? But you shall not escape this time," and seizing hold of him by the collar, he began dragging him towards his own lodgings, with the view of keeping him a close prisoner there, until he could consign him to the custody of the proper authorities.

"Murderer!" rejoined the astonished Jacques, "it is to prevent murder that I have sought you out to-day; so loosen your hold on me, and I will willingly accompany you home, for," looking timidly round him, "I dare not be seen talking to one of your appearance in the street. Oh, Monsieur de Chatillon, I have much of moment to say to you."

The earnestness of his manner impressed Alphonse with a conviction of Jacques's sincerity, and accordingly he made no further effort to detain him, but bidding him precede him into the house, he followed, keeping a watchful eye on his movements; and when they had entered his sitting-room, he addressed the trembling ex-valet in these terms: "You tell me you are no murderer; I would fain believe

you, for though I know you to be fickle, and ungrateful, I never imagined you could be guilty of taking the life of a helpless fellow-creature. But mark me, fellow, I myself saw you, not ten nights ago, strike a dagger into the heart of one who, I am certain, could never have injured you. You start, as if the charge were false; but I could not have been mistaken in your person, for I was standing concealed at the cellar-door at the very moment when the blow was struck."

"Can it be possible?" exclaimed Jacques; "yours, then, was the warning voice that bade me stay my arm?"

"It was, and you confess your crime, wretch!"

"Never—never! I am no murderer—I never was—I never will be one. The figure you beheld was no living being, but an emblem of aristocratic tyranny, so contrived as to represent life. The idea was suggested by Marat, and has been adopted by all the secret societies of the faubourg St. Antoine, as a means of familiarizing their more scrupulous members with the work of blood."

"Were you aware of this at the time?"

"I was."

"What, then, occasioned the excessive agitation I witnessed in you?"

"I was horror-struck, because at the moment the dagger was placed in my hand, I remembered that I had taken an oath to act towards all aristocrats who should oppose the people's will, as I acted towards that effigy."

"And you intend to keep that oath?"

"I will not," replied Jacques, with unwonted energy of manner; "for it was wrung from me before I was aware of its import, and when I had been so plied with drink as to have lost all self-control. An oath taken under such circumstances I will not consider as binding on my conscience."

"Your conscience!" said Alphonse, with a sneering laugh.

"Yet, if I disobey," resumed the unhappy man, relapsing into his former terrors, "my life will pay the forfeit. Why—oh, why did I ever leave my kind, my generous master?"

"'Tis too late to ask yourself that question now," replied De Chatillon, pitying even while he despised this miserable victim of self-conceit.

"I was led astray," continued Jacques, "by

the fine talk I heard everywhere about men being all equals; but since I have leagued myself with the Maratists—as most of the secret societies call themselves—I am become such a slave, that I dare not even call my thoughts my own. And 'tis these societies, Monsieur de Chatillon, that I wish to speak to you about. The other evening the one to which I belong held a final meeting, at which it was agreed that they should join their confederates in the different faubourgs, and march on the Tuileries to-morrow night, the 10th of August. I said nothing at the time, but instantly made up my mind that I would seek an interview with you, in the hope that you might be able to give the Count timely warning, and to save his life, for in case of resistance, it is intended to massacre every soul in the palace "

"Dreadful!" exclaimed Alphonse, half-stupified by this communication. "And pray, fellow, do you mean to take part in this infernal project?"

"No; I shall be at the Bicêtre, where I am now going to take up my residence; for I've been appointed under-jailor of the prison, through the agency of a member of our society,

who recommended me to Pétion. They tell me," added Jacques, in a low tone of voice, as if he feared to speak out his convictions, "they tell me I shall soon have enough to do there; and I believe them, men of blood as they are. Oh, what would I not give that I had never left the Count de Sevrac's service! Farewell, Monseigneur. I have come at the hazard of my life to say thus much, and now I must be gone; so farewell. Do not think harshly of me, but believe that I have erred more from thoughtlessness than design."

"To-morrow night!" muttered De Chatillon, when Jacques had left him to himself; "assault the palace to-morrow night! Be it so; but forewarned is forearmed, and the ruffianly *canaille* shall be made to see—aye and feel too—that Louis is aware of their designs, and prepared to give them a far different reception to that which they experienced last June. But what if this fellow's communication should be false? Traitor, as he is, to all parties, his statement is not much to be depended on. Yet he must be right, for he can have no motive in deceiving me; besides, the arrival of the Marseillois, coupled with

that vile demagogue's speech, which I overheard the other night, are vouchers for the truth of his statement. So, now to seek out the Count, who, from all that I can learn, is the only one of the King's advisers qualified to—Ah, De Sevrac!" continued the young man, as the door of his apartment opened, and the very individual of whom he was going in quest, entered, "welcome, a thousand welcomes! This visit is as opportune as it is unexpected. You have been so long absent from Paris, that I began to think you had emigrated, and despaired of ever seeing you again."

"Nor would you have seen me again, at least not here," replied the Count, warmly returning his friend's embrace, "had not circumstances forced me back upon this hot-bed of faction. Towards the close of last year, wearied of the secluded and inactive life I led at my château, I had an idea of joining the Princes at Coblentz, and next I thought of acting as a volunteer in the Prussian army, in either of which cases we should probably never again have met; but what I heard soon afterwards of the distracted councils of the emigrants,

and of the headstrong conduct of the Duke of Brunswick, convinced me that I did well to abandon both schemes, and continue quiet at home, till the approach of better times should enable me to resume active life with credit to myself and advantage to the poor King. But, alas! my friend," pursued the Count, in desponding tones, "I have learned too late that those times will never arrive; and I now acknowledge the justice of Brissot's remark, that there is no longer a chance for monarchy in France. It is not Paris alone that is mad for change, the whole country has caught the infection—"

"You do not mean to include Rheims and its neighbourhood in this sweeping charge; I have always been given to understand that the people there were remarkable for their loyalty."

"Yes," rejoined De Sevrac, "even at Rheims, the inhabitants—I speak of the better classes, as well as the mere rabble—think, talk, dream of nothing but the sovereignty of the people. For some time, however, they graciously permitted me, though an aristocrat and a royalist, to remain unmolested at my château, seeing that

my habits were retired and inoffensive; but about the middle of last month, some agents of the Jacobin Club found their way to Rheims, and the consequence of their incendiary addresses was, that the peasants of the district—even those on my own estate, to whom I have ever been a considerate landlord—rose in a body, and burned my château, and would have burned me too, had I not given them the slip, and fled in disguise from the home that had sheltered my family for two hundred years. So now here I am in Paris, a ruined man, with nothing that I can call my own, but a small sum at our friend Delaborde's, and my family jewels, which I saved at the risk of my life from the conflagration! Well, the King himself is not much more happily situated, as he assured me this morning, when I went to pay my respects at the palace; but that is cold comfort—"

"The King's life is not worth four-and-twenty hours' purchase," exclaimed Alphonse, hastily interrupting the Count.

"Not quite so bad as that," replied De Sevrac, smiling at his companion's sudden energy, "though indeed there is a rumour

abroad that the mob intend to assault the Tuileries again in a few days."

"To-morrow night — perhaps this very night!"

"Humph; do you know this on good authority, or do you merely go by report?"

"On the best authority, and the wretches who are to attack the palace, intend, in case of resistance, to massacre all the inmates — not excepting even the royal family."

"Indeed!" replied the Count, with earnestness: "this must be inquired into. But who was your informant, for you do not, I think, move in circles where you are likely to get sure information?"

"Jacques was my informant."

"What, my old scapegrace valet, Jacques? But how came he to communicate with you, of all others, on the subject?"

In reply, Alphonse mentioned the discovery he had accidentally made of the nocturnal proceedings of the secret society, and the subsequent communication of the remorse-stricken Jacques; whereupon the Count, whose spirits seemed to rise at the prospect of danger, exclaimed: "I must go without a moment's loss of time, and

report this matter to the King, so that he may not, as on the former occasion, be taken unawares. The ministers sit daily in council at the Tuileries; and who knows, if they can but be prevailed upon to urge Louis to a decisive course of action, but that events will take a turn in our favour! Doubtless, the people will swarm by thousands at the palace gates; but the Swiss Guard are true; and there is more real courage in one of those trained soldiers, than in a hundred of the greasy mob. Let us take heart, then, my friend, for while there is life, there is hope; and should we succeed in beating back the besiegers, the King will be placed in a firmer position than he has occupied since the death of Mirabeau. I must leave you now, but pray do not stir out, till you see or hear from me, which will be to-night or to-morrow morning at furthest," and without waiting for an answer, De Sevrac turned on his heel, and hurried from the house.

CHAPTER XV.

The state of Paris was at this period more critical, and the prospects of the court party more deplorable, than they had been since the assembling of the States-General in 1789. An insurrectional committee was formed in the very heart of the capital, holding daily communication with the agents of Danton, who was now become the most formidable demagogue in France; and this committee had its secret partizans in every faubourg, by whose means a band of desperadoes were gathered together, ready, at the first hint from head-quarters, to perpetrate any enormity. While the leaders of the insurrection were discussing the best means of proceeding, the premature publication of a

most insolent and menacing manifesto put forth by the Duke of Brunswick, and dated from the obnoxious neighbourhood of Coblentz, brought matters to an immediate crisis; and the committee, exasperated to the highest degree, decided that a general rising of the populace should take place on the 10th of August.

On the afternoon of that eventful day, Alphonse was seated alone in his room, having been all the morning in momentary expectation of a message or a visit from De Sevrac. But hours rolled on, and still he came not; and the young man was beginning to think that he had forgotten him, when a hasty step was heard on the staircase, and presently the Count entered.

"You are very late!" exclaimed Alphonse. "I have been expecting you for hours; and indeed had almost given you up."

"I could not help it," replied De Sevrac. "I have only just left the Tuileries, whither the King commands your attendance."

"Of course you acquainted his Majesty with the intelligence I communicated to you."

"I did so; but he had had some previous intimation of the fact, and has in consequence gathered round him the few whom he thinks

he may rely on. No doubt, as you have once before served him with prudence and fidelity, and he has a high idea of Vendean loyalty, he will station you near his person. But, come; it is time for us to be on the move."

"But—but—" said the young man, hesitating.

"But what?" interrupted the Count, impatiently.

"I have no court dress ready; and I have heard say, that it is contrary to etiquette for any one to be publicly presented, for the first time, except in—"

"Court dress!" exclaimed De Sevrac, with a sneering laugh, "who thinks of such etiquette now? Look at me; you see I have purposely selected for the day's wear my plainest attire; and so must you, for now that you have drawn my attention to the matter, I perceive that your equipment is much too—I will not say aristocratic, but what is equally offensive to the multitude—much too trim for the occasion. My good friend, that fine plaited frill and that glossy blue coat will never do. Before we have gone a dozen yards, we shall have a rascally mob after us, thirsting for our patrician blood."

"I have worn them hitherto without molestation," said Alphonse.

"That may be; but to-day is not like any other day. You must positively try to look a little more like a *sans-culotte;* for the cry against the aristocrats is fiercer now than ever it was. Here, take this—this will do famously," and snatching up an old travelling cloak that lay on a chair, and which Alphonse had brought with him from La Vendée, he flung it round the young man, and led the way down into the street.

They walked on at a rapid pace, and De Sevrac bade his companion observe the savage, inexorable demeanour of the crowds who thronged the great thoroughfares. All betokened an immediate crisis. In one place there was a vast mob of women and lads, whom a tall, swarthy virago—the notorious Theroigne de Merincourt—dressed in a man's hat and coat, was haranguing, with a pistol in each hand; in another, stood a sullen group of red-capped porters and mechanics, variously armed with rusty firelocks, swords, and bludgeons with sharp pieces of iron fastened on to the end of them, commenting on the last number of Marat's journal; and in a third

place, the two royalists met, and had some trouble in extricating themselves from a noisy detachment of desperadoes, who were marching along with banners, whereon were inscribed: "The Constitution or Death!"—"Down with the Austrian Committee!" and other popular demands of the hour. Some of these vagabonds held up ragged breeches, by way of flags; and their leader bore aloft a calf's heart on the point of a pike, which he assured the by-standers was the veritable heart of an aristocrat—a refined piece of drollery that occasioned huge delight. 'Twas a terrible—an awful spectacle which the streets of Paris presented on this memorable day. The shops were shut; business of all sort was suspended; and the few respectable individuals who dared to come abroad, were marked as aristocrats, and subjected to gross insult.

When the Count and his friend reached the Place du Carousel, which, instead of the immense court now extending from the body of the palace to the gate and from one wing to another, then contained numerous small courts separated by walls and houses, with ancient wickets opening from each of them into

the Carousel—when the two royalists reached this place, they found all the avenues swarming with *sans-culottes*, who were still more tumultuous than any they had yet met, and were only prevented from breaking out into bloody excesses by the presence of some well-known municipal officers in whom, as friends of Pétion, they placed implicit confidence. At the entrance of the Tuileries, a small detachment of the National Guard was drawn up, looking exceedingly sulky and embarrassed, as if undetermined what course of conduct to pursue in the crisis which they saw was close at hand. The great gates were closed; but the Count, on making himself known to the sentinel on duty—a veteran soldier who had served under Bouillé—was readily admitted, and, followed by Alphonse, made his way direct to the royal apartments.

At the door of the presence chamber stood the usher-in-waiting, a formal, elder beau of the times of Louis XV., dressed according to the exactest court etiquette, who no sooner caught sight of De Sevrac and Alphonse, than he said, glancing uneasily at their homely attire: "I dare not venture to exclude you from the

presence, Monsieur le Comte; but your friend," he added, shrugging his shoulders, "cannot enter in that disrespectful costume."

"But he must enter," replied De Sevrac; "for his Majesty himself has expressly commanded his attendance."

The courtly master of the ceremonies bowed low at this intimation, and offered no further opposition; but as they passed on, he could not refrain from muttering, in the spirit of one who has sustained a severe shock: "No point-ruffles—not even a buckle in their shoes! Good God! what will this wretched country come to!"

In the presence chamber two or three of the ministers were in attendance, together with several members of the household, and officers of the National and Swiss Guards. The former were seated at a table covered with letters and official documents, which they were perusing with visible uneasiness; and of the rest, some were lounging up and down the apartment, and others were standing in groups near the window, conversing together in whispers. Almost immediately after De Sevrac and his companion entered, a bustle was heard without; the mi-

nisters rose from their seats; the rest of the company ceased talking; and presently a powdered and periwigged usher—one of the few relics of pageantry that Louis had yet left—threw open the folding-doors of an inner apartment, exclaiming: "The King—the King!"

The eyes of Alphonse were directed with eager interest to the august personage who now slowly and thoughtfully entered the room. He was of middle height, inclining to corpulence, and easy, but far from dignified in his movements; the natural expression of his full, fleshy countenance was a sort of insipid good-humour—some would have said, sheer mental imbecility; but at present, it wore a look of peevishness and irresolution, which, considering the circumstances of his case, it was painful to contemplate. His hair was carefully dressed; a single star was on his breast; and his clothes were embroidered in the ancient court fashion. As he advanced into the chamber, his eyes wandered listlessly over the circle, but suddenly encountering De Chatillon, he stopped, and signed to him and the Count to approach.

"This, Sire," said De Sevrac, "is the young Alphonse de Chatillon, whom I have so often

mentioned to your Majesty. He has long been waiting an opportunity to express to you in person his sentiments of loyalty."

"We are already much indebted to him," replied the King, holding forth his hand, which Alphonse knelt and kissed with a respect to which the humbled monarch had long been a stranger, "and have now again to thank him for the communication which he caused yesterday to be conveyed to us through you, De Sevrac. We knew your father, young man, in other and happier days; and should it ever be in our power to requite his and your attachment to our person, you may rely on our sense of gratitude. For the present, we retain you near us, for our situation is such as to require the assistance of all our friends; and we hope shortly to be able to enrol you in our household. Where is Mandat?" continued the King raising his voice, and looking anxiously round the room.

"Here, Sire," said the Commandant of the National Guard, stepping forth from the group who were standing near the window.

"I presume, Monsieur Mandat," observed the King, "that you have made every prepara-

tion for the defence of the palace that time and circumstances admit of."

"I have so, please your Majesty," replied Mandat, bowing.

"And what is the extent of our available means?" pursued Louis.

"I grieve to say, Sire, that we can muster at the utmost but nine hundred of the Swiss Guard, and rather more than one battalion of the National Guard, whom I have posted, some in the courts, and others in the garden. I have issued orders also that one piece of cannon be planted in the court of the Swiss, and three in the central court; and I have stationed some advanced posts of *gensd'armes* at the colonade of the Louvre, and the Hôtel de Ville; but I fear," he added, with a sigh, "that they cannot be depended on."

"Not depended on!" exclaimed the King, with a burst of petulance that he could not restrain; "and are you to be depended on?"

"My duty to your Majesty I know, and shall discharge, being persuaded that it will not be such as shall infringe the constitution," rejoined Mandat, respectfully but firmly, for he was a determined constitutionalist.

"Do but your duty, and we shall be satisfied," replied Louis, and seating himself at the head of the table, he conversed for a brief space with his ministers, whom he ordered to resume their places; read over a few documents which they presented for his signature; and then yawning, as if already wearied with the fatigue and drudgery of business, he rose, and retired to the Queen's apartments.

The King had hardly withdrawn, when a mob of noisy, reckless courtiers, attended by several of Louis's most attached servants, entered, armed grotesquely with the first weapons they could lay hands on. Some carried daggers; others, pistols fastened to their waist by pocket-handkerchiefs; and Monsieur de Souplet, one of the royal equerries, and a page of the household, instead of muskets, carried on their shoulders the tongs belonging to the King's ante-chamber, which—obsreves Madame Campan in her Memoirs—"they had broken, and divided between them."

Imminent as was the danger, a laugh burst from the spectators at this ludicrous exhibition.

"We are now sure of victory," said one

courtier to another, "for those tongs are irresistible. Oh, that Danton's nose were between them!"

A variety of similar irrelevant flippancies were bandied about, especially among the younger courtiers, who unable to comprehend the full hazard of their situation, amused themselves by telling scandalous court anecdotes, and mimicking the manners of some of the more popular speakers in the Assembly, greatly to the annoyance of the more rational portion of the company, who in vain implored them to quit the room, or at any rate to deport themselves with decency.

"There is nothing to be done with fools like these," whispered the Count to Alphonse.

"I fear not indeed."

"And yet the King is much influenced by them, because they fall in with all his caprices, and encourage the Queen's known detestation of the leaders of the movement party. When such are the cherished advisers of royalty, who can be surprized that the palace is one scene of discord, confusion, and bewilderment?"

A messenger here came from Louis to summon the ministers to the Queen's private apart-

ments, whither they immediately repaired; while De Sevrac and Alphonse accompanied Mandat on his tour of inspection through the Tuileries, the remainder of the company strolling at large about the palace, for all conventional etiquette was banished, and all distinctions of place and rank lost sight of in the general excitement of the hour.

Thus were the several parties occupied, till nearly midnight, when as Mandat and his two associates were re-entering the presence-chamber after completing their tour of inspection, they heard the loud clang of the tocsin, and the drum beating to arms in all quarters.

"It is the knell of the monarchy," said the Commandant, gravely.

"Yet we will not perish without a struggle," impetuously exclaimed Alphonse.

"Right; we will struggle," said the Count; "but I fear for the result with forces such as ours."

"The Swiss Guard at any rate are faithful," observed Mandat.

"But there is no confidence to be placed in the National Guard; we have enemies among them, even in the palace."

While De Sevrac was speaking, the King, with the members of the council in his train, again came into the chamber, having just finished the last meal he was destined to take in the home of his ancestors. Addressing the Commandant, he said: "We have not yet decided, Monsieur Mandat, respecting the best course to pursue in this exigency. Some of our ministers are of opinion that we should not wait till we are besieged, but at once sally forth on the insurgents. What are your impressions?"

"Will your Majesty," interposed Alphonse, laying his hand on his sword, "permit me to go out with the attacking party?"

"Silence, young man," said the King, but not unkindly, "older heads than yours must decide this matter."

"My opinion is, "observed Mandat, "that the instant the faubourgs are in motion, and one party marches by the Pont Neuf along the quay of the Tuileries, we unhesitatingly attack them. Trusting that my views would meet with your Majesty's concurrence, I have already given directions to that effect."

"You have!" exclaimed the King, looking sternly and distrustfully at the Commandant.

"and who told you to do so? Am I no longer Sovereign, or are you in chief authority here? Beware, Mandat; we know that, as a constitutionalist, you bear no great love to the throne."

The Count here interposed by saying: "Monsieur Mandat, Sire, is right."

"We will think of your scheme then; perhaps we were too hasty just now."

"Think, Sire!" pursued the Commandant, it is too late for thought. Listen! cannot your Majesty hear the distant thunder of the cannon that warns us the insurgents are mustering their powers? Oh, Sire, let me conjure you, as you value your own safety and that of your august family, to take the advice of one who has no interest in deceiving you, and is ready to perish in your service! Decision alone can save us now. Two hours hence, and it may be too late!"

As he ceased speaking, a deafening shout was heard of, "To arms—to arms!"

The King started at the sound. "Well, Mandat," he said, in tones husky from agitation, "be it as you would have it."

The Commandant, followed, as before, by

De Sevrac and Alphonse, withdrew from the royal presence, but the door had not closed on them, when the feeble, irresolute monarch called them back. "Stay, my friends, stay," he said, imploringly, "this is a hazardous scheme, and may involve the ruin of all dear to me. Yet why should we not attempt it? Yes, we will, but no—no; there are thousands to our hundreds—perhaps conciliation and a show of forbearance may soften these angry spirits;" and thus muttering, the King threw himself into a chair, making no other reply to the urgent entreaties of his ministers who, with the Count, besought him to take the advice of Mandat, than by continually repeating: "It is never too late to prevent bloodshed."

While the doomed monarch thus sate, with his face buried in his hands, the picture of hopeless imbecility, a message came from the new municipality which had just been formed at the Hôtel de Ville, summoning Mandat, as Commandant of the National Guard, before them, in consequence of a report that he had ordered the royal troops to fire on the people. As this order was couched in peremptory terms, and to have disobeyed it would have been to

infringe one of the laws of the constitution, Mandat had no alternative but to comply. " Farewell, Sire," he said, kneeling at the King's feet, overcome by a sad presentiment of his impending fate, " farewell, I go to death, but my greatest grief is, that your Majesty has not seen fit to adopt the only course that can save the monarchy. Farewell, Count; farewell, young De Chatillon; gentlemen all, farewell; my fall precedes yours but a few hours!"

" Is he gone?" exclaimed the King, rising abruptly from his seat, as Mandat withdrew from the chamber.

" He is," replied De Sevrac with mournful earnestness, " never to return."

" You are wrong, Monsieur le Comte," rejoined the King angrily, " quite wrong. The forbearance of the troops here, under his command, will convince the municipality, that Mandat bears no hostility to the people; and he will be back within the hour. Harm him! They dare not do it. Yet why do I say so, with the recollection of poor Delaunay on my mind?" and dropping again into his chair, the weak-minded monarch abandoned himself to his former dejection.

It was now verging towards morning, and confusion still reigned throughout the Tuileries. All talked of the necessity of action, yet none knew how to act, with the exception of De Sevrac, whose proposal to put himself at the head of the Swiss Guard, sally forth on the advancing besiegers, and risk all on one desperate charge, met with no more favourable reception than Mandat's project. The King, indeed, seemed well-nigh past the power of coming to any decision whatever; and kept restlessly wandering about the palace, now going to the Queen's apartments under the pretext of allaying her apprehensions; and now returning into the presence-chamber, which the members of the council regarded as their head-quarters for the night. As to the younger courtiers who had been so speech-valiant a short while before, their energies were now quite exhausted, and they either threw themselves along chairs and sofas, where they fell fast asleep, or waited in sullen apathy the catastrophe to whose horrors they appeared at last to be fully awakened. How different the scene which the Tuileries now presented, to that which it was wont to exhibit but four years since! Then,

its lofty halls and state rooms, illumined by magnificent lustres, and lined with officers in the gorgeous uniforms of the Gardes du Corps, were nightly crowded with courtiers, all smiles and sunshine, and with lovely women blazing with jewels, here listening to strains of voluptuous music, and there, moving in the mazy windings of the dance, or lending an eager ear to the flatteries of young and gallant nobles. Now, all this was at an end ; and none traversed the gloomy and deserted halls, where rank, and wealth, and beauty had so often bowed, willing slaves, before the shrine of power, but a few terror-stricken individuals who flitted to and fro like spectres, startled even by the echo of their own footsteps, and listening to each successive discharge of cannon that pealed from the floating battery on the Seine, as the convict listens to the bell that tolls the hour of his execution.

Another hour passed away, and now the King was about to be roused from his state of lethargic bewilderment by one of the cruelest shocks he had yet sustained ; for a messenger of the court rushed in breathless haste into the presence-chamber, crying out at the top of his voice : "The King—where is the King ?"

"What are your tidings?" inquired the agitated monarch, looking up from his seat at the head of the council board.

"Oh, Sire, Mandat is murdered, and they are bearing his bleeding head to the palace?"

"Murdered, say you?" exclaimed Louis, aghast with horror, "oh, my poor Mandat, what a price have you paid for your fidelity!"

"Revenge—revenge, Sire, this most atrocious deed," said Alphonse, his face crimson with rage.

Before Louis could reply to this impassioned appeal, a second messenger arrived with news that the insurgents headed by the Marseillois and Breton federalists were on full march for the palace, and that some pieces of artillery were already pointed against it.

"Now, Sir," exclaimed De Sevrac, "now or never is the time to act."

"I fear indeed that blood must now be shed, but perhaps if I show myself on the balcony, and reason with these misguided men, I may effect some good."

The ministers to whom these words were addressed, made no answer; for the brutal murder of Mandat seemed to have deprived

them, for the time, of all power of utterance. But not thus quiescent was the Count de Sevrac, who exclaimed, "Reason with assassins, Sire! Reason with the ocean in a storm—with the famished tiger who is crouching for his spring—with the madman who holds his dagger to your breast—you may as well hope to reason with one or all of these, as with wretches who are thirsting for your blood, and attribute your forbearance to nothing but excess of weakness."

"You are bold, Monsieur le Comte," replied Louis, haughtily, "this is not fit language to hold in my presence."

"It is the language of truth, Sire, however unsuited to—"

The Count's further speech was put an end to by the entrance of the Queen and her young family, who had been endeavouring to snatch a few hours' slumber, but had been roused up by the loud shouts of the populace outside the palace gates.

The descriptions of historians and contemporary memoir-writers have made the world acquainted with the person and manners of this illustrious Princess. Peltier and Madame

Campan—the latter of whom knew her well—speak with unwonted animation of her majestic air, her finely-chiselled bust, and the ever-varying expression of her countenance; and Burke, who had seen her when Dauphiness at Versailles, has recorded the impression her singular beauty made on him, in the most eloquent passage of his "Reflections." Sorrow had now dimmed the lustre of her cheek, tinged her luxuriant tresses with grey, and bowed her stately figure; but enough still remained of grace and loveliness to rivet the admiring gaze of all who beheld her.

As with the serene dignity of a Juno she advanced into the presence-chamber, the first person whom she noticed was Alphonse, and despite the perils of her position, her true woman's nature experienced a momentary thrill of gratified pride, when she observed the deep respect and admiration with which he knelt before her.

Having addressed to him a few gracious words, not one of which but made a profound impression on the young man's mind, she turned to the King, and said, "Will not your Majesty go down and review the troops in the

court? I am told that they have been some hours anxiously awaiting your presence."

"Be it so," replied Louis, to whom his wife's slightest wish was as a law; and motioning to the Count, Alphonse, and some others of his adherents to accompany him, he descended the staircase, preceded by the Queen and her children.

At the sight of the monarch, loud cries of "Vive le Roi!" burst from the assembled veterans, who were standing ready in their ranks, waiting but the royal command to act on the offensive.

Once more De Sevrac urged him to give the order. "If your Majesty," said he, "will but summon up the energy of your ancestors; mount your horse, and charge at the head of the troops, I will answer for a victory. Not a soldier here but will shed the last drop of his blood in your cause."

The Queen added her entreaties to those of the Count, and for a moment he seemed willing to comply. His cheek flushed, his eye sparkled, and his hand unconsciously sought his sword; and this being observed by the soldiers on duty, so animated them that they renewed their cries

of "Vive le Roi!" the ardent Alphonse making himself heard above them all. But, alas! the King's energy was but a transient flash, for just when the Queen and those who stood round him, thought he was going to act, the terrific shouts of "En avant!" from the insurgents, who announced that the hour of assault had arrived, brought back all his former alarm and indecision.

"I will go," said the excited monarch—for it was energy of character rather than physical courage he wanted—"I will go and show myself at the window to these rebellious men; and if they have one spark of justice or feeling left, they may be induced to respect their Sovereign's last appeal."

"All is lost!" observed the Queen, in an undertone to De Sevrac.

"You are right, Madam," replied the Count, with a sigh.

"Monsieur le Comte," rejoined the Queen, "and you, too, De Chatillon, go with the King, and remain by his side; for me, I have no longer a hope but to perish in the bosom of my children;" and the high-minded woman, whose heart swelled with ill-disguised indignation at

the vacillating conduct of her husband, withdrew again, with the young Dauphin and his sister, to her private apartments, while the troops remained below in the court-yard, sullen, disheartened, and ignorant how to act.

Louis, in the interim, made his way back to the interior of the palace, and lost not a moment in exhibiting himself at one of the front windows, where he beheld a spectacle calculated to extinguish whatever hopes he might have entertained from adopting a conciliatory course of conduct. All the main approaches to the Tuileries were choked up with people, above whose heads rose a forest of pikes, spears, and banners, while the torches which many of them held up, and which contrasted strangely with the cold, grey, unsettled light of the morning, threw a ghastly glare on the faces of the ferocious rabble, that gave them the aspect of demons. In front of the palace gates were drawn up several pieces of artillery, with gunners standing near them; and directly behind them was a closely-wedged group of *sans-culottes*, conspicuous by their naked, bloody arms, and still more, by their deafening yells and frantic gestures. One of these

wretches bore aloft on a pike the head of Mandat still dripping with blood; and every time he waved it to and fro, a roar came up from those about him, like that of the ocean in a storm, which, blended with the ringing of the church bells—the thunder of the alarm-guns—the roll of the drums—the inspiring chorus of the Marseillaise Hymn—the clash of steel—the clatter of the artillery-waggons—and the incessant cry of "To arms!" from the thousands upon thousands who kept pouring in one rapid continuous tide down the narrow streets and courts of the Carousel—produced an effect on the imagination of Alphonse which haunted him for years.

As soon as this mighty multitude got sight of the King, they were hushed to stillness, as if they expected he would address them, and were desirous to know the purport of his speech; a few faint cries of "Vive le Roi!" however, which proceeded from some old grenadiers of the guard who had got mixed up among the crowd, had the effect of provoking a reaction; first, a few menacing cries were heard of "Down with Monsieur Veto!" and then at a given signal from a hideous, half-naked ruffian

with a huge hatchet in his hand, who was mounted on the shoulders of his neighbours, and seemed to act as one of the mob-leaders, the whole living mass broke out into such terrific yells of execration, that they rang through every quarter of the palace, and brought the Queen in alarm to the balcony, which she induced her husband to quit.

The next instant the ministers who had remained behind in the council-chamber, and whose repeated consultations during the night had produced no result, owing to the King's infirmity of purpose, now came to him in a body, and announced the decision at which they had finally arrived—namely, that as the palace was untenable against the assailants, since the chance of success offered by Mandat's scheme was abandoned, the royal family should retire for protection into the Constituent Assembly, for their lives would be in the greatest peril, should the Tuileries be taken by storm.

When the Queen was made acquainted with this decision, her lip curled with scorn, and drawing herself up to her full height, she exclaimed in tones of bitter contempt: "Shame on the ministers who can dare make such a

proposal, and shame on those who can agree to it! Sire, we will not so humiliate ourselves. As for me, rather than crouch a suppliant to a set of men who have ever treated me with insult, I will be nailed to the walls of the palace! Gentlemen, you are answered."

"Gracious Madam," said the Count, stepping forward, and addressing the high-minded Princess with marked respect and sympathy, "let me implore you to adopt the course recommended by his Majesty's ministers; 'tis painful, I admit, but it is the only alternative that inexorable circumstances have left you. For your children's sake be advised."

A brisk discharge of cannon, and the crash of innumerable hatchets, were here heard at the outer gates of the palace.

"Quick, Sire, decide—oh God, they come!" exclaimed several of the ministers, crowding about the royal family.

"Save yourself, Sire," said an officer of the household, bursting into the chamber; "a detachment of the National Guard have just deserted their ranks, and gone over to the enemy!"

This last stunning blow completely bereft the King of what little self-possession he had

to lose. His cheeks whitened, his arms dropped heavily by his side, and there was an expression in his large, dull eye, as he turned with a vacant stare from one to another of those about him, that gave the idea of a feeble mind tasked beyond its capacity, and shocked into sudden idiotcy. Far otherwise was it with the Queen. Calmly, and with unblenched countenance, she heard the fatal tidings; but hers was not the calmness of an obtuse, lethargic nature, but of high moral courage, wound up to the extreme point of tension. Aware of the whole extent of her danger, she yet exhibited no further sense of apprehension, than by pressing her children closer to her side—an act of which she was at the time unconscious, but of which the Count, who alone observed it, hastened to take advantage, by again entreating her to quit the palace, if she would save the lives of those most dear to her.

"Urge me no further," replied the Queen, impatiently, "I cannot—will not consent to become an object of pity and contempt to base and ungenerous enemies. I have lived in honour, and in honour I will die."

"And your children, Madam!" persisted

De Sevrac, "can you endure to see these helpless and innocent creatures butchered in your very presence—to see their last dying glance fixed reproachfully on the parent who could, but would not, save them? Oh, think again, ere it be too late!"

This forcible and direct appeal made instant way to the royal mother's heart. Tears sprang to her eyes, as she looked down upon the trembling Dauphin and his sister; and after a brief but violent struggle between her strong sense of pride as a Queen, and her tenderer feelings as a parent, she said, in a voice which excess of emotion rendered almost inaudible: "Let us depart, Sire, since it must be so." Leading the way, she slowly descended the stairs, but when she reached the court, turned to cast one sad, parting look at the splendid pile where her happiest and proudest days had been spent, but which she was never again to enter; while the rest of the circle, aware that if they accompanied the King to the Assembly, they would irritate it still further against him, remained behind in the presence-chamber, with no other expectation than that the fate of Mandat would, within an hour, be theirs.

"There he goes!" whispered De Sevrac to his young friend, pointing contemptuously to the retreating figure of Louis; "there he goes, without a thought or a care for those he leaves behind him, though it is his imbecility that has sealed their doom! Well, gentlemen, what are we to do now? To repel the assault is impossible; to defend ourselves successfully for any length of time, equally so."

While the royalist party were discussing this vital question, and the Count, who had fully made up his mind that the destruction of all was inevitable, was listening with an air of gloomy composure to their suggestions, the rabble forced the palace gates, and burst into the court where the Swiss Guard were drawn up, with the exception of the few who were escorting the royal fugitives to the place where the Constituent Assembly held its sittings. The sight of these veterans, whose aspect denoted stern and indomitable resolution, for a brief while kept the van of the insurgents in check; but the rear quickly forced them forward, and a musket fired by one of the mob, which shot a Swiss stone-dead, so exasperated his comrades, that disregarding the orders which

the King had given them on crossing the court, they poured in a close, destructive volley, that scattered the *canaille* in all directions. Ashamed, however, of having been repulsed by a mere handful of men, the latter rallied in an instant; and such was the fury of the assault, that they bore down all before them, and the majority of the Swiss were massacred, amid the shouts of the rabble, who pressed forward with renewed energy into the interior of the palace.

When the sounds of this murderous conflict —which, owing to the overwhelming force of the mob, was decided in a few minutes—reached the ears of the ministers, they put a summary stop to their discussion, and flew to that more retired quarter of the palace usually appropriated to the King's servants; but De Sevrac and Alphonse, less overcome by their fears, determined on forcing their way down into the court, and boldly confronting their destiny in the ranks of the brave Swiss. Before, however, they could put their scheme into execution, they were met at the door by several of this devoted band, who had escaped from the scene of slaughter, and who acquainted them with the fate of their comrades.

"Do you really mean to say that they are massacred?" inquired the astonished Count. "Impossible! 'Tis scarcely a quarter of an hour since the King left the palace; and then the mob had not even forced the gates!"

"The royal family," replied a Swiss officer, "had only just quitted the court, when the insurgents broke in. The conflict, murderous as it was, lasted but a few minutes, for we were too weak—far too weak," he repeated, with emotion, "to offer a lengthened resistance; and now the victorious populace have spread themselves throughout the Tuileries, and will be here immediately."

"Then let us remain where we are," said De Sevrac; "and if we can but hold out a short time, orders may come from the Assembly to put a stop to this wholesale carnage," with which words, assisted by Alphonse and the Swiss, he began barricading the closed door with chairs, tables, and every massive article of furniture he could lay hands on.

Thus busily were the party employed, when a stunning uproar was heard without; and a female voice exclaimed, in piercing accents: "Help—help! They are murdering me!"

Quick as thought Alphonse flew to the door, and drawing away a table which the moment before he had placed against it, he gave admittance to the wretched suppliant, who was one of the Queen's maids of honour; but it was too late, for as the door opened, she fell covered with blood at the entrance, while a horde of infuriate ruffians rushed over her inanimate body, and poured like a torrent into the apartment.

The first who entered dropped, pierced through the heart by the ready sword of De Chatillon, whose companions followed up the attack with such spirit, that the insurgents, unprepared for resistance, thinking that it must have ceased with the destruction of the Swiss Guard, gave way; and before they could rally, the whole gallant party had cut their way out into the passage.

At the foot of the grand staircase they encountered a group of those courtiers who had been so valiant a few hours before, but were now wringing their hands, and exhibiting every token of abject despair. "Oh, Monsieur le Comte!" exclaimed one of these imbecile braggarts; "for mercy's sake help us to escape

from this slaughter-house. We will abide implicitly by your directions."

"Take your own course, gentlemen, and fight your own battles," replied De Sevrac, sternly. "I have no sword for such as you; for it is your rash councils that have precipitated this catastrophe."

"But we know not how to act; nor whither to betake ourselves," said another of the petitioners. "We dare not venture into the court; for some of the assassins are still there, stripping and mangling the murdered Swiss."

These words operated like electricity on the few survivors of that gallant band, who recovered from their first alarm, and perhaps somewhat ashamed of their flight, now darted forward into the court, resolved to rescue the bodies of their comrades from the gross indignities of the *canaille;* and the terror-smitten courtiers, unaware of the cause of this sudden excitement on the part of the Swiss, and taking for granted that they were retreating to some known place of safety, followed them as mechanically as a flock of sheep follow the movements of their leader.

De Sevrac and his friend were now left to

themselves; and the former, whose self-possession had not once deserted him during this appalling crisis, said: "You remember, Alphonse, the private passage where you kept watch on the night of the King's escape? If we can but reach that, I think we may manage to make good our retreat from the Tuileries. How say you? Shall we try? Trust me, it is our only chance."

"Certainly," replied De Chatillon; and without another word, the two royalists remounted the grand staircase, whence they proceeded by a private way well known to the Count, but which had as yet escaped the notice of the insurgents, towards the passage in question, their feelings kept painfully on the stretch, by the screams and groans of the wounded, and the loud crashing of doors, as room after room was forced open and ransacked by the mob, who, having murdered all whom they could lay hands on in the royal family's apartments, and shattered all the gorgeous furniture to atoms, were now pursuing the work of death and destruction in another quarter of the palace.

On coming to the head of a long, narrow

gallery, at the further end of which was the staircase that led down to the private passage, Alphonse, who was in advance, nearly stumbled over some three or four dead bodies of the insurgents, who, it was evident, had perished in a desperate conflict with the household, this being the quarter assigned to the head cooks, and valets, and pages of the back-stairs.

Halting beside the corpses: "De Sevrac," exclaimed the young man, eagerly, "a good idea strikes me; let us put on the red caps and flannel-jackets of these lifeless wretches; none will know us in such a disguise, and when we reach the passage door, should there happen to be—which is most likely—a crowd outside, they will mistake us for *sans-culottes*, and give us free egress."

The Count readily caught at the idea, and having disguised themselves, and taken the additional precaution to substitute the pikes of the slain ruffians for their own swords, the friends moved on towards the door, which, however, was locked and bolted; and without was a vociferous multitude striving hard to force an entrance.

"Brave citizens!" exclaimed De Sevrac,

raising his voice so as to be heard by the besiegers, and appealing to them in their own favourite style, "help! break open the door; the tyrants' myrmidons are behind us; and if you do not assist us, we shall be slaughtered."

Deceived by these words into a belief that it was some of their own fraternity who required their aid, the mob plied their pikes, hatchets, and bludgeons with redoubled zeal; and the iron fastenings of the door yielding gradually to their tremendous assaults, the disguised royalists forced themselves through the aperture, and were welcomed with acclamations by their supposed coadjutors, from whose greasy embraces they had no little trouble in extricating themselves.

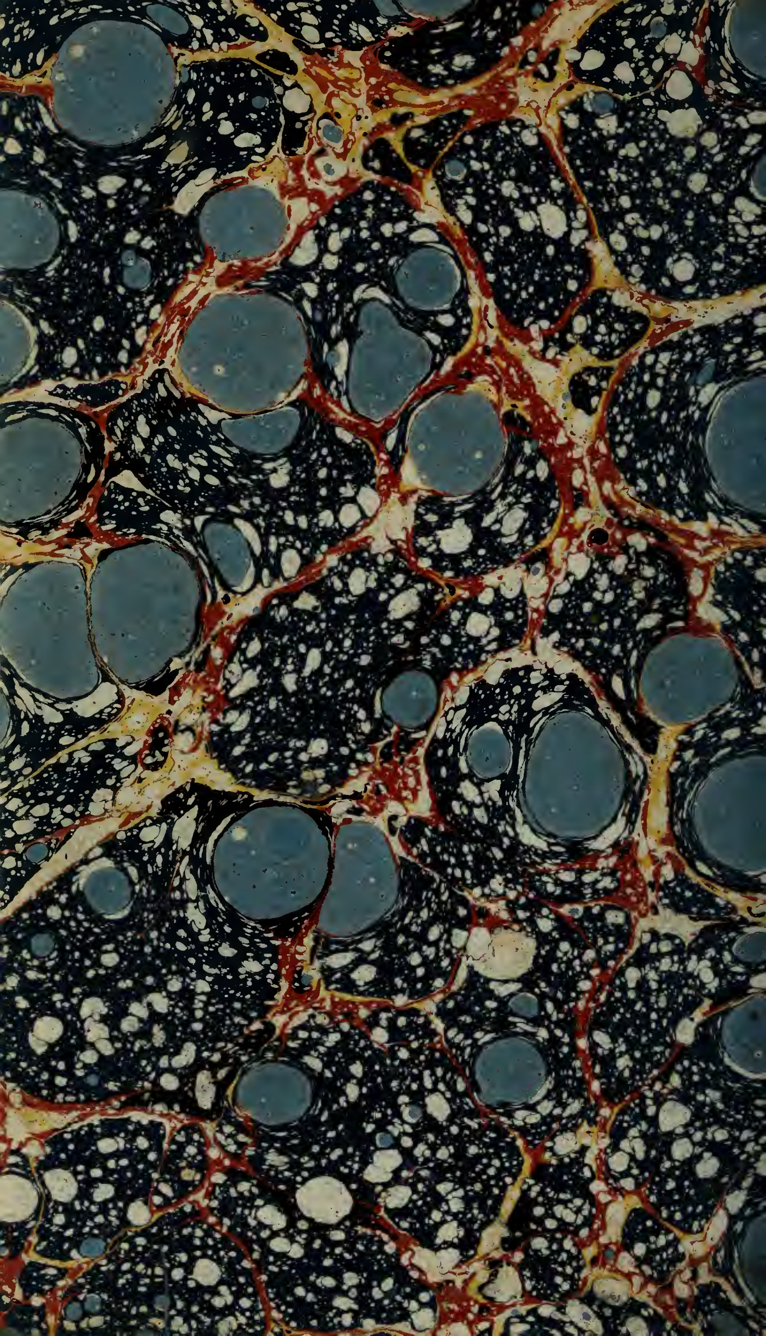
The fury of the assault was now greatly moderated, for the populace were in full possession of the palace, and there were few victims left on whom they could wreak their vengeance. The work of pillage and destruction, however, still continued; but not content with this, a set of drunken miscreants resolved to fire the Tuileries, and to efface every vestige of the superb edifice. Already the sheds contiguous to the outer courts were in a blaze, and the

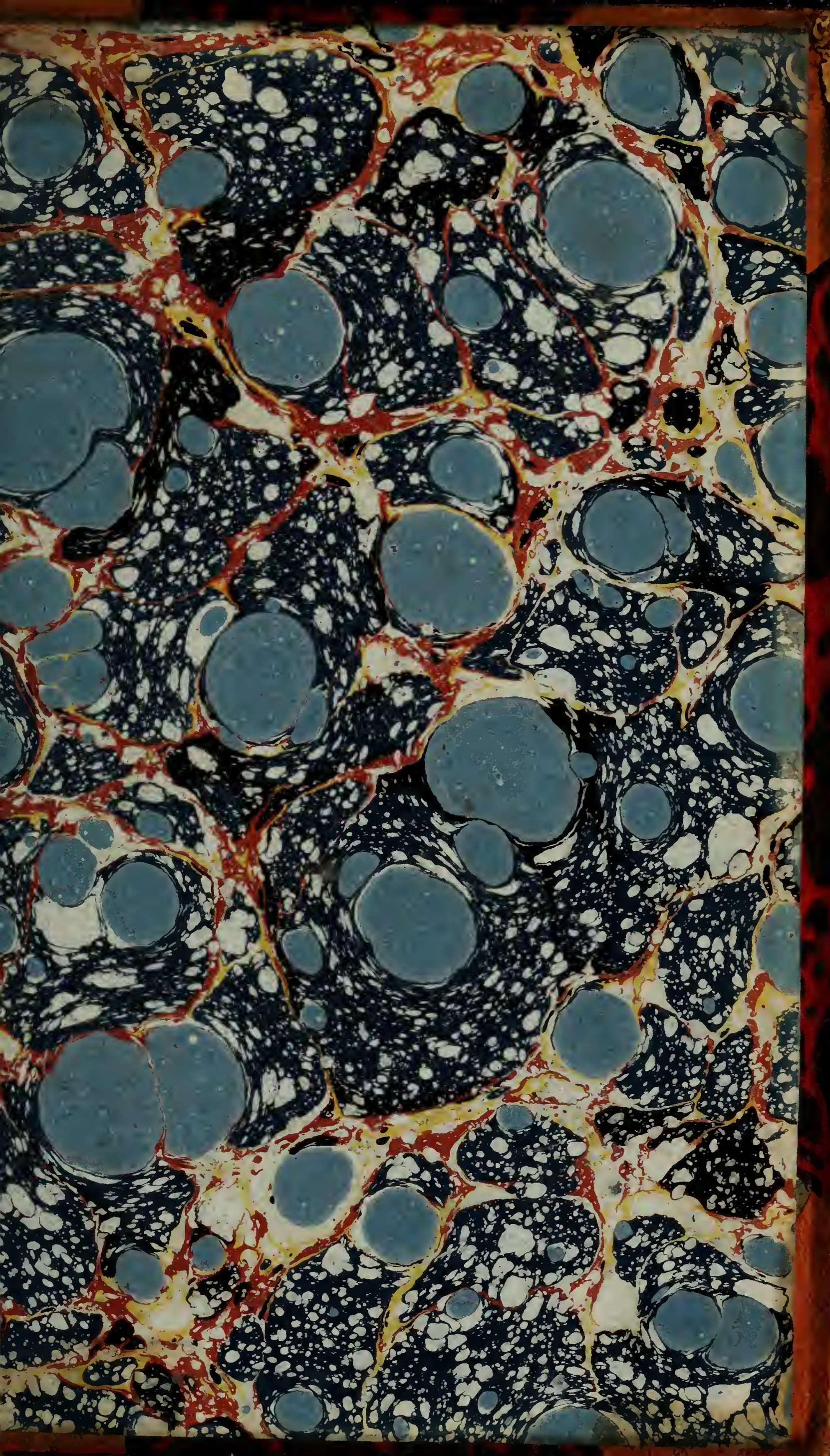
flames were beginning to spread to the palace, which they threatened to wrap in one wide, general conflagration. At this moment a gigantic figure waving a tricolor in his right hand, appeared at the balcony where King Louis had so lately stood. It was the terrible demagogue, Danton, who, with Santerre, Westermann, and other rabble leaders, had been actively interfering to put a stop to the pillage and massacre. "Citizens!" he exclaimed—and his stentorian voice awed to stillness the immense multitude who heard him—"brave citizens, rejoice, for tyranny is overthrown, and freedom triumphs! The tricolor, our national flag, the emblem of hope and liberty—the unconquered tricolor will in a few minutes wave over the home of the detested Bourbons; and at the signal, couriers will start off to carry the glorious tidings of our victory to every quarter of emancipated France. Shout, then, citizens, shout, and give free vent to your joy, for as you sowed the seeds, so you shall reap the harvest of this triumph!" A deafening shout here burst forth from thousands and tens of thousands of hoarse *sans-culottes*, for as Danton

ceased speaking, the tricolor was hoisted on the summit of the Tuileries—and thus, amid the renewed discharge of cannon, the fall of blazing roofs, the groans of the dying, and the frantic yells of the conquerors, went down the absolute monarchy of a thousand years, like some proud ship of war in the midst of storm and tempest, never more to rear its head in France!

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.





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