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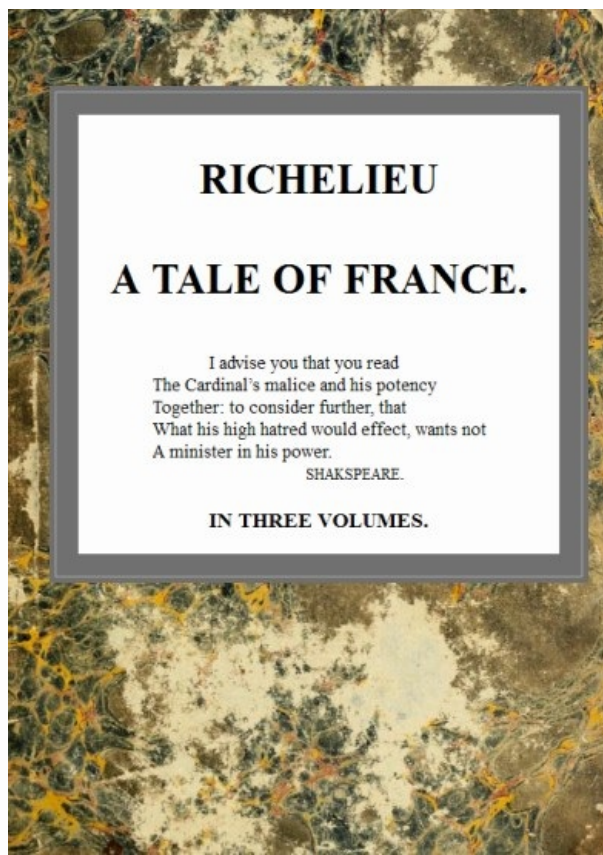
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK RICHELIEU: A TALE OF FRANCE, V. 2/3 ***



RICHELIEU,
A TALE OF FRANCE.

I advise you that you read
The Cardinal's malice and his potency
Together: to consider further, that
What his high hatred would effect, wants not
A minister in his power.
SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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RICHELIEU.

CHAPTER I.

The motto of which should be "Out of the frying-pan into the fire."

THE jingle of Claude de Blenau's spurs, as he descended with a quick step the staircase of the Palais Cardinal, told as plainly as a pair of French spurs could tell, that his heart was lightened of a heavy load since he had last tried their ascent; and the spring of his foot, as he leaped upon his horse, spoke much of renewed hope, and banished apprehension.

But the Devil of it is—for I must use that homely but happy expression—the Devil of it is, that the rebound of hope raises us as much above the level of truth, as the depression of fear sinks us below it: and De Blenau, striking his spurs into the sides of his horse, cantered off towards St. Germain as gaily as if all doubt and danger were over, and began to look upon bastilles, tortures, and racks, with all the other et-cetera of Richelieu's government, as little better than chimeras of the imagination, with which he had nothing farther to do.

Hope sets off at a hand gallop, Consideration soon contents herself with a more moderate pace, and Doubt is reduced, at best, to a slow trot. Thus, as De Blenau began to reflect, he unconsciously drew in the bridle of his horse; and before he had proceeded one league on the way to St. Germain's, the marks of deep thought were evident both in the pace of the courser and the countenance of the rider; De Blenau knitting his brow and biting his lip, as the various dangers that surrounded him crossed his mind; and the gentle barb, seemingly animated by the same spirit as his master, bending his arched neck and throwing out his feet with as much consideration as if the firm *Chemin de St. Germain* had been no better than a quagmire.

De Blenau well knew that even in France a man might smile, and smile, and be a villain; and that the fair words of Richelieu too often preceded his most remorseless actions. He remembered also the warning of Mademoiselle de Bourbon, and felt too strongly how insecure a warranty was conscious innocence for his safety; but still he possessed that sort of chivalrous pride which made him look upon flight as degrading under any circumstances, and more especially so when the danger was most apparent. Like the lion, he might have slowly avoided the hunters while unattacked; but once pressed by the chase, he turned to resist or to suffer. Such was the quality of his mind; and in the present instance he resolved to await his fate with firmness, whatsoever that fate might be.

I know not whether an author, like an Old Bailey witness, be, by the laws in that case made and provided, obliged to tell, on every occasion, not only the truth, but the whole truth: however, lest I should offend against any known or unknown statute, be it remarked, that the whole credit due to the determination of De Blenau is not to be attributed to that great and magnanimous quality, called by some persons *undaunted resolution*, and by others *fool-hardiness*; for in this as in almost every other proceeding of the human heart, there were two or three little personal motives which mingled with all his ideas, and, without his knowing any thing about it, brought his reasoning to the conclusion aforesaid.

Of these little motives I shall only pick out one as a specimen; but this one in the breast of a young man of five and twenty, living in a romantic age, and blest with a romantic disposition, may be considered all sufficient. Now if it should be love!—As I write this volume entirely for ladies, we are all agreed.—Love it was! and who is there that will presume to say, Claude de Blenau was not completely justified in resolving to hazard all, rather than part with Pauline de Beaumont?

As long as any hesitation had remained in the mind of De Blenau, he had proceeded, as we have seen, with a slow unequal pace; but the moment his determination was fixed, his thoughts turned towards St. Germain's, and all his ideas concentrating into one of those daydreams, that every young heart is fond to indulge, he spurred on his horse, eager to realize some, at least, of the bright promises which hope so liberally held forth. It was late, however, before he arrived at the end of his journey, and internally cursing the etiquette which required him to change his dress before he could present himself at the Palace, he sent forward his Page to announce his return, and beg an audience of the Queen.

His toilet was not long, and without waiting for the boy's return, he set out on foot, hoping to join the Queen's circle before it separated for the evening. In this he was disappointed. Anne of Austria was alone; and though her eyes sparkled with gladness for his unexpected return, and her reception was as kind as his good services required, De Blenau would have been better pleased to have been welcomed by other lips.

"I could scarce credit the news till I saw you, *mon Chambellan*," said the Queen, extending her hand for him to kiss; "nor can I truly believe it is you that I behold even now. How have you escaped from that dreadful man?"

"I will tell your Majesty all that has happened," replied the Count; "and as I have a boon to ask, I think I must represent my sufferings in your Majesty's cause in the most tremendous colours. But without a jest, I have had little to undergo beyond a forced attendance at the Cardinal's fête, where the only hard word I received was from L'Angeli, the Duke of Enghien's fool, who, seeing my riding-dress, asked if I were Puss in Boots." De Blenau then shortly related all that had occurred during his stay in Paris. "And thus, Madam," he added, "you see that Chavigni has kept his word; for had it not been for that promise, I doubt not I should have been even now comfortably lodged in the Bastille, with a table at his Majesty's expense."

The Queen mused for a moment without making any reply; but from her countenance it seemed that she was not a little troubled by what she had heard.

"De Blenau," said she at length, in a calm but melancholy voice, "there is something concealed here. The Cardinal has deeper plans in view. As Marie de Bourbon told you, they are plotting my ruin. When first I entered France, that man of blood and treachery resolved to make me his slave. He flattered my tastes, he prevented my wishes, like an insidious serpent he wound himself into my confidence; and I was weak enough to dream that my husband's minister was my best friend. With as much vanity as insolence, he mistook condescension for love. He sought his opportunity, and dared to insult my ears with his wishes. I need not tell you, De Blenau, what was my reply; but it was such as stung him to the soul. He rose from where he had been kneeling at my feet, and threatened such vengeance, that, as he said, my whole life should be one long succession of miseries. Too truly has he kept his word."—The Queen paused, and as was often her custom when any circumstance called her memory back to the bitter events of her past life, fell into a deep reverie, from which it was not easy to rouse her.

"Too much of this," said she at length; "we must look to the present, De Blenau. As the mother of two princes,

Richelieu both hates and fears me; and I see that they are plotting my ruin. But yours shall not be involved therein.— De Blenau, you must fly till this storm has passed by.”

“Pardon me, madam,” replied the Count, “but in this I cannot yield your Majesty that obedience I would willingly show under any other circumstances. I cannot, I must not fly. My own honour, madam, requires that I should stay; for if flight be not construed into an evidence of guilt, it may at least be supposed a sign of cowardice.”

“Indeed, indeed! De Blenau,” said the Queen, earnestly, “you must do as I require; nay,” she added, with a mixture of sweetness and dignity, “as I command. If they can prove against you that you have forwarded letters from me to my brother the King of Spain, they will bring you to the block, and will most likely ruin me.”

“I trust to the promise your Majesty gave me when first I undertook to have those letters conveyed to your royal brother King Philip,” answered De Blenau: “you then pledged to me your word that they were alone of a domestic nature, and that they should always continue so, without ever touching upon one subject of external or internal policy, so that my allegiance to my king, and my duty to my country, should alike remain pure and inviolate. I doubt not that your Majesty has pointedly kept this promise; and De Blenau will never fly, while he can lay his hand upon his heart and feel himself innocent.”

“Yes, but remember, my good youth,” replied the Queen, “that this Cardinal,—my husband’s tyrant rather than his subject,—has commanded me, his Queen, to forbear all correspondence with my brother, and has narrowly watched me to prevent that very communication between Philip and myself, which your kindness has found means to procure. Remember too his remorseless nature; and then judge whether he will spare the man who has rendered his precautions vain.”

“Madam,” replied De Blenau, “I do not fear; nothing shall make me fly. Though there be no bounds to what the Cardinal dare attempt, yet his power does not extend to make me a coward!”

“But for my sake,” still persevered Anne of Austria, labouring to persuade him to a measure on which she too well knew his safety depended. “Remember, that if there be proved against me even so small a crime as having sent those letters, my ruin is inevitable, and there are modes of torture which will wrench a secret from the most determined constancy.”

“I fear me,” replied De Blenau, “that some act of mine must have much degraded me in your Majesty’s opinion.”

“No, no, my friend!” said the Queen; “not so indeed,—I do not doubt you in the least: but I would fain persuade you, De Blenau, to that which I know is best and safest.”

“Your Majesty has now given me the strongest reasons for my stay,” replied De Blenau, with a smile; “I have now the means of proving my fidelity to you, and nothing shall tempt me to leave you at this moment. But in the mean time there is one favour I have to request.”

“Name it,” replied, the Queen: “indeed, De Blenau, you might command it.”

“Your Majesty is too good,” said the Count. “I will make my story as brief as possible, but I must explain to you, that Mademoiselle de Beaumont and myself were plighted to each other when very young.”

“I know it, I know it all,” interrupted the Queen, “and that you love each other still; and believe me, my dear De Blenau, neither time nor disappointment has so frozen my heart that I cannot enter warmly into all you feel. Perhaps you never discovered that Anne of Austria was an enthusiast.—But tell me, what difficulty has occurred between you?”

“Why, in truth, Madam,” answered De Blenau, “the difficulty arises with your Majesty.”

“With me!” cried the Queen. “With me, De Blenau! impossible! Nothing could give me more pleasure than to see your union. This Pauline of yours is one of the sweetest girls that ever I beheld; and with all her native un-bought graces, she looks amongst the rest of the court like a wild rose in a flower-garden,—not so cultivated, in truth, but more simply elegant, and sweeter than them all.”

Those who say that all is selfishness, let them tell me how it is that one simple word in praise of those we love, will give a thousand times more pleasure than the warmest commendation of ourselves.

De Blenau’s heart beat, and his eye sparkled, and he paused a moment ere he could reply; nor indeed were his first sentences very distinct. He said a great deal about her Majesty’s goodness,—and his own happiness,—and Pauline’s excellence; all in that sort of confused way, which would make it appear simple nonsense were it written down; but which very clearly conveyed to the Queen how much he loved Pauline, and how much obliged he was to her Majesty for praising her.

After this, he entered rather more regularly into a detail of those circumstances which had induced Mademoiselle de Beaumont to suspect him. “The point which seems to affect her most,” continued De Blenau, “is the visit with which Mademoiselle de Hauteford honoured me by your Majesty’s command, in order to receive from me the last letter from your Majesty to the King of Spain, which I was unhappily prevented from forwarding by my late wounds. Now this, as affecting the character of the Lady your Majesty employed in the business, does certainly require some explanation. In regard to every thing else, Pauline will, I feel sure, consider my word sufficient.”

“Oh, leave it all to me, leave it all to me!” exclaimed the Queen, laughing. “What! jealous already is she, fair maid? But fear not, De Blenau. Did she know you as well as I do, she would doubt herself sooner than De Blenau. However, I undertake to rob the rose of its thorn for you, and leave love without jealousy. A woman is very easily convinced where she loves, and it will be hard if I cannot show her that she has been in the wrong. But take no unworthy advantage of it, De Blenau,” she continued; “for a woman’s heart will not hesitate at trifles, when she wishes to make reparation to a man she loves.”

“All the advantage I could ever wish to take,” replied the Count, “would be, to claim her hand without delay.”

“Nay, nay—that is but a fair advantage,” said the Queen. “Yet,” continued she, after a moment’s pause, “it were not wise to draw the eyes of suspicion upon us at this moment. But there are such things as private marriages, De Blenau.”—

There was no small spice of romance in the character of Anne of Austria; and this, on more than one occasion, led her into various circumstances of danger, affecting both herself and the state. Of an easy and generous spirit, she always became the partisan of the oppressed, and any thing that interested or excited her feelings, was certain to meet encouragement and support, however chimerical or hazardous; while plans of more judgment and propriety were either totally discountenanced, or improperly pursued. This appeared through her whole life, but more

especially at an after period, when the Government fell into her own hands, and when, like a child with some fine and complicated machine, she played with the engine of the state, till she deranged all its functions.

It was, perhaps, this spirit of romance, more than any political consideration, which, in the present instance, made her suggest to the Count de Blenau the idea of a private marriage with Pauline de Beaumont; and he, as ardent as herself, and probably as romantic, caught eagerly at a proposal which seemed to promise a more speedy union with the object of his love, than was compatible with all the tedious ceremonies and wearisome etiquette attendant upon a court-marriage of that day.

"I shall not see your Pauline to-night," said the Queen, continuing the conversation which this proposal had induced. "She excused herself attending my evening circle, on account of a slight indisposition; but to-morrow I will explain every thing on your part, and propose to her myself what we have agreed upon."

"She is not ill, I trust?" said De Blenau.

"Oh no!" replied the Queen, smiling at the anxiety of his look, "not enough even to alarm a lover, I believe."

This answer, however, was not sufficient for De Blenau, and taking leave of the Queen, he sent for one of Madame de Beaumont's servants, through whose intervention he contrived to obtain an audience of no less a person than Louise, Pauline's *suivante*. Now Louise was really a pretty woman, and doubtless her face might have claimed remembrance from many a man who had nothing else to think of. De Blenau remembered it too, but without any reference to its beauty, which, indeed, he had never stayed to inquire into.

It must be remembered, that the morning previous to his journey to Paris, the moment before he was joined by Chavigni, his eye had been attracted by that nobleman, engaged in earnest conversation with a girl, habited in the dress of dear Languedoc; and he now found in the *soubrette* of Mademoiselle de Beaumont, the very individual he had seen in such circumstances. All this did not very much enhance the regard of De Blenau towards Louise; and he satisfied himself with a simple inquiry concerning her mistress's health, adding a slight recommendation to herself, to take care whom she gossiped with while she remained at St. Germain, conveyed in that stately manner, which made Louise resolve to hate him most cordially for the rest of her life, and declare that he was not half so nice a gentleman as Monsieur de Chavigni, who was a counsellor into the bargain.

After a variety of confused dreams, concerning queens and cardinals, bastilles and private marriages, De Blenau woke to enjoy one of those bright mornings which often shine out in the first of autumn,—memorials of summer, when summer itself is gone. It was too early to present himself at the Palace; but he had now a theme on which his thoughts were not unwilling to dwell, and therefore as soon as he was dressed, he sauntered out, most lover-like, into the Park, occupied with the hope of future happiness, and scarcely sensible of any external thing, save the soothing influence of the morning air, and the cheerful hum of awakening nature.

As time wore on, however,—and, probably, it did so faster than he fancied,—his attention was called towards the Palace by an unusual degree of bustle and activity amongst the attendants, who were now seen passing to and fro along the terrace, with all the busy haste of a nest of emmets disturbed in their unceasing industry.

His curiosity being excited, he quitted the principal alley in which he had been walking, and ascending the flight of steps leading to the terrace, entered the Palace by the small door of the left wing. As none of the servants immediately presented themselves, he proceeded by one of the side staircases to the principal saloon, where he expected to meet some of the *valets de chambre*, who generally at that hour awaited the rising of the Queen.

On opening the door, however, he was surprised to find Anne of Austria, already risen, together with the Dauphin and the young Duke of Anjou, the principal ladies of the court, and several menial attendants, all habited in travelling costume; while various trunk-mails, saddle-bags, portmanteaus, &c. lay about the room; some already stuffed to the gorge with their appropriate contents, and others opening their wide jaws to receive whatever their owners chose to cram them withal.

As soon as De Blenau entered this scene of unprincely confusion, the quick eyes of Anne of Austria lighted upon him, and, advancing from the group of ladies to whom she had been speaking, she seemed surprised to see him in the simple morning costume of the court.

"Why, De Blenau!" exclaimed she, "we wait for you, and you have neither boots nor cloak. Have you not seen the Page I sent to you?"

"No, indeed, Madam," replied De Blenau; "but having loitered in the Park some time, I have probably thus missed receiving your commands."

"Then you have not heard," said the Queen, "we have been honoured this morning by a summons to join the King at Chantilly."

"Indeed!" rejoined De Blenau thoughtfully, "What should this mean, I wonder? It is strange! Richelieu was to be there last night: so I heard it rumoured yesterday in Paris."

"I fear me," answered the Queen, in a low tone, "that the storm is about to burst upon our head. A servant informs me, that riding this morning, shortly after sunrise, near that small open space which separates this, the forest of Laye, from the great wood of Mantes, he saw a large party of the Cardinal's guard winding along towards the wooden bridge, at which we usually cross the river."

"Oh I think nothing of that," replied the Count. "Your Majesty must remember, that this Cardinal has his men scattered all over the country:—but, at all events, we can take the stone bridge farther down. At what time does your Majesty depart? I will but pay my compliments to these ladies, and then go to command the attendance of my train, which will at all events afford some sort of escort."

During this dialogue, the Queen had looked from time to time towards the group of ladies who remained in conversation at the other end of the apartment; and with that unsteadiness of thought peculiar to her character, she soon forgot all her fears and anxieties, as she saw the dark eye of Pauline de Beaumont wander every now and then with a furtive glance towards De Blenau, and then suddenly fall to the ground, or fix upon vacancy, as if afraid of being caught in such employment.

Easily reading every line expressive of a passion to which she had once been so susceptible, the Queen turned with a playful smile to De Blenau. "Come," said she, "I will save you the trouble of paying your compliments to more than one of those ladies, and she shall stand your proxy to all the rest. Pauline—Mademoiselle de Beaumont," she continued, raising her voice, "come hither, Flower! I would speak a word with you."

Pauline came forward—not unhappy in truth, but with the blood rushing up into her cheeks and forehead, till timidity became actual pain, while the clear cold blue eye of Mademoiselle de Hauteford followed her across the room, as if she wondered at feelings she herself had apparently never experienced.

De Blenau advanced and held out his hand. Pauline instantly placed hers in it, and in the confusion of the moment laid the other upon it also.

“Well,” said the Queen with a smile, “De Blenau, you must be satisfied now. Nay, be not ashamed, Pauline; it is all right, and pure, and natural.”

“I am not ashamed, Madam,” replied Pauline, seeming to gain courage from the touch of her lover; “I have done De Blenau wrong in ever doubting one so good and so noble as he is: but he will forgive me now, I know, and I will never do him wrong again.”

I need not proceed farther with all this. De Blenau and Pauline enjoyed one or two moments of unmingled happiness, and then the Queen reminded them that he had yet to dress for his journey, and to prepare his servants to accompany the carriages. This, however, was soon done, and in less than half an hour De Blenau rejoined the party in the saloon of the Palace.

“Now, De Blenau,” said the Queen, as soon as she saw him, “you are prepared for travelling at all points. For once be ruled, and instead of accompanying me to Chantilly, make the best of your way to Franche Comté, or to Flanders, for I much fear that the Cardinal has not yet done with you. I will take care of your interests while you are gone, even better than I would my own; and I promise you that as soon as you are in safety, Madame De Beaumont and Pauline shall follow you, and you may be happy surely, though abroad, for a few short years, till Richelieu’s power or his life be passed away.”

De Blenau smiled. “Nay, nay,” replied he, “that would not be like a gallant Knight and true, either to desert my Queen or my Lady Love. Besides, I am inclined to believe that this journey to Chantilly bodes us good rather than harm. For near three months past, the King has been there almost alone with Cinq Mars, who is as noble a heart as e’er the world produced, and is well affected towards your Majesty.—So I am looking forward to brighter days.”

“Well, we shall see,” said the Queen, with a doubtful shake of the head. “You are young, De Blenau, and full of hopes—all *that* has passed away with me.—Now let us go. I have ordered the carriages to wait at the end of the terrace, and we will walk thither:—perhaps it may be the last time I shall ever see my favourite walk; for who knows if any of us will ever return?”

With these melancholy anticipations, the Queen took the arm of Madame de Beaumont, and, followed by the rest, led the way to the terrace, from which was to be seen the vast and beautiful view extending from St. Germain’s over Paris to the country beyond, taking in all the windings of the river Seine, with the rich woods through which it flowed.

The light mists of an autumnal morning still hung about the various dells and slopes, softening, but not obscuring the landscape; and every now and then the sunbeams would catch upon a tower or a spire in the distant landscape, and create a glittering spot amidst the dark brown woods round about.

It is ever a bright scene, that view from St. Germain, and many have been the royal and the fair, and the noble, whose feet have trod the terrace of Henry the Fourth; but seldom, full seldom, has there been there, a group of greater loveliness or honour than that which then followed Anne of Austria from the Palace. The melancholy which hung over the whole party took from them any wish for farther conversation, than a casual comment upon the beauties of the view; and thus they walked on nearly in silence, till they had approached within a few hundred yards of the extremity, where they were awaited by the carriages prepared for the Queen and her ladies, together with the attendants of De Blenau.

At that moment the quick clanging step of armed men was heard following, and all with one impulse turned to see who it was that thus seemed to pursue them.

The party which had excited their attention, consisted of a soldier-like old man, who seemed to have ridden hard, and half-a-dozen chasseurs of the guard, who followed him at about ten or twelve paces distance.

“It is the Count de Thiery,” said De Blenau; “I know him well: as good an old soldier as ever lived.”

Notwithstanding De Blenau’s commendation, Anne of Austria appeared little satisfied with the Count’s approach, and continued walking on towards the carriages with a degree of anxiety in her eye, which speedily communicated feelings of the same kind to her attendants. Pauline, unacquainted with the intrigues and anxieties of the court, saw from the countenances of all around that something was to be apprehended; and magnifying the danger from uncertainty in regard to its nature, she instinctively crept close to De Blenau, as certain of finding protection there.

Judging at once the cause of De Thiery’s coming, De Blenau drew the arm of Pauline through his, and lingered a step behind, while the rest of the party proceeded.

“Dear Pauline!” said he, in a low but firm tone of voice, “my own Pauline! prepare yourself for what is coming! I think you will find that this concerns me. If so, farewell! and remember, whatever be my fate, that De Blenau has loved you ever faithfully, and will love you till his last hour—Beyond that—God only knows! but if ever human affection passed beyond the tomb, my love for you will endure in another state.”

By this time they had reached the steps, at the bottom of which the carriages were in waiting, and at the same moment the long strides of the Count de Thiery had brought him to the same spot.

“Well, Monsieur de Thiery!” said Anne of Austria, turning sharp round, and speaking in that shrill tone which her voice assumed whenever she was agitated either by fear or anger; “your haste implies bad news. Does your business lie with me?”

“No, so please your Majesty,” replied the old soldier; “no farther than to wish you a fair journey to Chantilly, and to have the pleasure of seeing your Majesty to your carriage.”

The Queen paused, and regarded the old man for a moment with a steady eye, while he looked down upon the ground and played with the point of his grey beard, in no very graceful embarrassment.

“Very well!” replied she at length; “you, Monsieur de Thiery, shall hand me to my carriage. So, De Blenau, I shall not need your attendance. Mount your horse and ride on.”

“Pardon me, your Majesty,” said De Thiery, stepping forward with an air of melancholy gravity, but from which

all embarrassment was now banished. "Monsieur de Blenau," he continued, "I have a most unpleasant task to accomplish: I am sorry to say you must give me up your sword; but be assured that you render it to a man of honour, who will keep it as a precious and invaluable charge, till he can give it back to that hand, which he is convinced will always use it nobly."

"I foresaw it plainly!" cried the Queen, and turned away her head. Pauline clasped her hands and burst into tears: but amongst the attendants of De Blenau, who during this conversation had one by one mounted the steps of the terrace, there was first a whisper, then a loud murmur, then a shout of indignation, and in a moment a dozen swords were gleaming in the sunshine.

Old De Thiery laid his hand upon his weapon, but De Blenau stopped him in his purpose.

"Silence!" cried he in a voice of thunder; "Traitors, put up your swords!—My good friends," added he, in a gentler tone, as he saw himself obeyed, "those swords, which have before so well defended their master, must never be drawn in a cause that De Blenau could blush to own. Monsieur le Comte de Thiery," he continued, unbuckling his weapon, "I thank you for the handsome manner in which you have performed a disagreeable duty. I do not ask to see the *lettre de cachet*, which, of course, you bear; for in giving you the sword of an honourable man, I know I could not place it in better hands; and now, having done so, allow me to lead her Majesty to her carriage, and I will then follow you whithersoever you may have commands to bear me."

"Most certainly," replied De Thiery, receiving his sword; "I wait your own time, and will remain here till you are at leisure."

De Blenau led the Queen to the carriage in silence, and having handed her in, he kissed the hand she extended to him, begging her to rely upon his honour and firmness. He next gave his hand to Pauline de Beaumont, down whose cheeks the tears were streaming unrestrained. "Farewell, dear Pauline! farewell!" he said. Her sobs prevented her answer, but her hand clasped upon his with a fond and lingering pressure, which spoke more to his heart than the most eloquent adieu.

Madame de Beaumont came next, and embraced him warmly. "God protect you, my son!" said she, "for your heart is a noble one."

Mademoiselle de Hauteford followed, greeting De Blenau with a calm cold smile and a graceful bow; and the rest of the royal suite having placed themselves in other carriages, the cavalcade moved on. De Blenau stood till they were gone. Raising his hat, he bowed with an air of unshaken dignity as the Queen passed, and then turning to the terrace, he took the arm of the Count de Thiery, and returned a prisoner to the Palace.

CHAPTER II.

Which gives an example of "The way to keep him."

"WELL, Sir," said De Blenau, smiling with feelings mingled of melancholy resignation to his fate and proud disdain for his enemies, "imprisonment is too common a lot, now-a-days, to be matter of surprise, even where it falls on the most innocent. Our poor country, France, seems to have become one great labyrinth, with the Bastille in the centre, and all the roads terminating there. I suppose that such is my destination."

"I am sorry to say it is," replied his companion. "My orders are to carry you thither direct; but I hope that your sojourn will not be long within its walls. Without doubt, you will soon be able to clear yourself."

"I must first know of what I am accused," replied the Count. "If they cry in my case, as in that of poor Clement Marot, *Prenez le, il a mangé le lard*, I shall certainly plead guilty; but I know of no state crime which I have committed, except eating meat on a Friday.—It is as well, perhaps, Monsieur de Thiery," continued he, falling into a graver tone, "to take these things lightly. I cannot imagine that the Cardinal means me harm; for he must well know that I have done nothing to deserve ill, either from my King or my country. Pray God his Eminence's breast be as clear as mine!"

"Umph!" cried the old soldier, with a meaning shake of the head, "I should doubt that, De Blenau. You have neither had time nor occasion to get it so choked up as doubtless his must be.—But these are bad subjects to talk upon: though I swear to Heaven, Sir Count, that when I was sent upon this errand, I would have given a thousand livres to have found that you had been wise enough to set out last night for some other place."

"Innocence makes one incautious," replied De Blenau; "but I will own, I was surprised to find that the business had been put upon you."

"So was I," rejoined the other. "I was astonished, indeed, when I received the *lettre de cachet*. But a soldier has nothing to do but to obey, Monsieur de Blenau. It is true, I one time thought to make an excuse; but, on reflection, I found that it would do you no good, and that some one might be sent to whom you would less willingly give your sword than to old De Thiery. But here we are at the Palace, Sir. There is a carriage in waiting; will you take any refreshment before you go?"

The prospect of imprisonment for an uncertain period, together with a few little evils, such as torture, and death, in the perspective, had not greatly increased De Blenau's appetite, and he declined accepting the Count de Thiery's offer, but requested that his Page might be allowed to accompany him to Paris. The orders of Richelieu, however, were strict in this respect, and De Thiery was obliged to refuse. "But," added he, "if the boy has wit, he may smuggle himself into the Bastille afterwards. Let him wait for a day or two, and then crave of the gaoler to see you. The prison is not kept so close as those on the outside of it imagine. I have been in more than once myself to see friends who have been confined there. There was poor La Forte, who was afterwards beheaded, and the Chevalier de Caply, who is in there still. I have seen them both in the Bastille."

"You will never see the Chevalier de Caply again," replied De Blenau, shuddering at the remembrance of his fate. "He died yesterday morning under the torture."

"*Grand Dieu!*" exclaimed De Thiery; "this Cardinal Prime Minister stands on no ceremonies. Here are five of my friends he has made away with in six months. There was La Forte, whom I mentioned just now, and Boissy, and De Reineville, and St. Cheron; and now, you tell me, Caply too; and if you should chance to be beheaded, or die under the torture, you will be the sixth."

"You are kind in your anticipations, Sir," replied De Blenau, smiling at the old man's bluntness, yet not particularly enjoying the topic. "But having done nothing to merit such treatment, I hope I shall not be added to your list."

"I hope not, I hope not!" exclaimed De Thiery, "God forbid! I think, in all probability, you will escape with five or six weeks imprisonment: and what is that?"

"Why, no great matter, if considered philosophically," answered De Blenau, thoughtfully. "And yet, Monsieur de Thiery, liberty is a great thing. The very freedom of walking amidst all the beauties of the vast creation, of wandering at our will from one perfection to another, is not to be lost without a sigh. But it is not that alone—the sense, the feeling of liberty, is too innately dear to the soul of man to be parted with as a toy."

While De Blenau thus spoke, half reasoning with himself, half addressing his conversation to the old soldier by his side, who, by long service, had been nearly drilled into a machine, and could not, consequently, enter fully into the feelings of his more youthful companion, the carriage which was to convey them to Paris was brought round to the gate of the Palace at which they stood. Figure to yourself, my dearly beloved reader, a vehicle in which our good friend, the Giant Magog, of Guildhall, could have stood upright; its long sides bending inwards with a graceful sweep, like the waist of Sir Charles Grandison in his best and stiffest coat; and then conceive all this mounted upon an interminable perch, connecting the heavy pairs of wheels, which, straggling and far apart, looked like two unfortunate hounds coupled together against their will, and eternally struggling to get away from each other. Such was the *chaise roulante* which stood at the gate of the Palace, ready to convey the prisoner to Paris.

The preparations that had been made for De Blenau's journey to Chantilly, now served for this less agreeable expedition; and the various articles which he conceived would be necessary to his comfort, were accordingly disposed about the vehicle, whose roomy interior was not likely to suffer from repletion.

It is sad to say farewell to any thing, and more especially where uncertainty is mingled with the adieu. Had it been possible, De Blenau would fain have quitted St. Germain's without encountering the fresh pain of taking leave of his attendants; but those who had seen his arrest, had by this time communicated the news to those who had remained in the town, and they now all pressed round to kiss his hand, and take a last look of their kind-hearted Lord, before he was lost to them, as they feared, for ever. There was something affecting in the scene, and a glistening moisture rose even in the eye of the old Count de Thiery, while De Blenau, with a kind word to say to each, bade them farewell, one after another, and then sprang into the carriage that was to convey him to a prison.

The vehicle rolled on for some way in silence, but at length De Blenau said, "Monsieur de Thiery, you must excuse me if I am somewhat grave. Even conscious rectitude cannot make such a journey as this very palatable. And besides," he added, "I have to-day parted with some that are very dear to me."

"I saw that, I saw that," answered the old soldier. "It was bad enough parting with so many kind hearts as stood round you just now, but that was a worse farewell at the end of the terrace.—Now out upon the policy that can make such bright eyes shed such bitter tears. I can hardly get those eyes out of my head, old as it is.—Oh, if I were but forty years younger!"

"What then?" demanded De Blenau, with a smile.

"Why, perhaps I might have ten times more pleasure in lodging you safe in the Bastille than I have now," answered De Thiery. "Oh, Monsieur de Blenau, take my word for it, age is the most terrible misfortune that can happen to any man; other evils will mend, but this is every day getting worse."

The conversation between De Blenau and his companion soon dropped, as all conversation must do, unless it be forced, where there exists a great dissimilarity of ideas and circumstances. It is true, from time to time, Monsieur de Thiery uttered an observation which called for a reply from De Blenau; but the thoughts which crowded upon the young Count were too many, and too overpowering in their nature, to find relief in utterance. The full dangers of his situation, and all the vague and horrible probabilities which the future offered, presented themselves more forcibly to his mind, now that he had leisure to dwell upon them, than they had done at first, when all his energies had been called into action; and when, in order to conceal their effect from others, he had been obliged to fly from their consideration himself.

A thousand little accessory circumstances also kept continually renewing the recollection of his painful situation. When he dropped his hand, as was his custom, to rest it upon the hilt of his sword, his weapon was gone, and he had to remember that he had been disarmed; and if by chance he cast his eyes from the window of the carriage, the passing and repassing of the guards continually reminded him that he was a prisoner. De Blenau was new to misfortune, and consequently the more sensible to its acuteness. Nor did he possess that buoyant spirit with which some men are happily gifted by nature—that sort of carelessness which acts better than philosophy, raising us above the sorrows and un comforts of existence, and teaching us to *bear* our misfortunes by *forgetting* them as soon as possible. He had too much courage, it is true, to resign himself to grief for what he could not avoid.—He was prepared to encounter the worst that fate could bring; but at the same time he could not turn his thoughts from the contemplation of the future, though it offered nothing but dark indistinct shapes; and out of these his imagination formed many horrible images, which derived a greater appearance of reality from the known cruelty of Richelieu, in whose power he was, and the many dreadful deeds perpetrated in the place to which he was going.

Thus passed the hours away as the carriage rolled on towards Paris. It may be well supposed that such a vehicle as I have described did not move with any great celerity; and I much doubt whether the act-of-parliament pace which hackney-coaches are obliged to adhere to, would not have jolted the unhappy *chaise roulante* limb from limb, if it had been rigorously enforced. But it so happened that the machine itself was the personal property of Monsieur de Thiery, who always styled it *une belle voiture*; and looking upon it as the most perfect specimen of the coach-building art, he was mighty cautious concerning its progression. This the postilion was well aware of, and therefore never ventured upon a greater degree of speed than might carry them over the space of two miles in the course of an hour; but notwithstanding such prudent moderation, the head of Monsieur de Thiery would often be protruded from the window, whenever an unfriendly rut gave the vehicle a jolt, exclaiming loudly, "*Holla! Postillon! gardez vous de casser ma belle voiture*;" and sundry other adjurations, which did not serve to increase the rapidity of their progress.

Such tedious waste of time, together with the curious gazing of the multitude at the State-prisoner, and uncertain calculations as to the future, created for De Blenau a state of torment to which the Bastille at once would have been relief; so that he soon began most devoutly to wish his companion and the carriage and the postilion all at the Devil together for going so slowly. But, however tardily Time's wings seem to move, they bear him away from us notwithstanding.—Night overtook the travellers when they were about a league from Paris, and the heaviest day De Blenau had ever yet known found its end at last.

Avoiding the city as much as possible, the carriage passed round and entered by the Porte St. Antoine; and the first objects which presented themselves to the eyes of De Blenau, after passing the gates, were the large gloomy towers of the Bastille, standing lone and naked in the moonlight, which showed nothing but their dark and irregular forms, strongly contrasted with the light and rippling water that flowed like melted silver in the fosse below.

One of the guards had ridden on, before they entered the city, to announce their approach; and as soon as the carriage came up, the outer drawbridge fell with a heavy clang, and the gates of the court opening, admitted them through the dark gloomy porch into that famous prison, so often the scene of horror and of crime. At the same time, two men advancing to the door, held each a lighted torch to the window of the carriage, which, flashing with a red gleam upon the rough stone walls, and gloomy archways on either side, showed plainly to De Blenau all the frowning features of the place, rendered doubly horrible by the knowledge of its purpose.

A moment afterwards, a fair, soft-looking man, dressed in a black velvet pourpoint, (whom De Blenau discovered to be the Governor,) approached the carriage with an official paper in his hand, and lighted by one of the attendant's torches, read as follows, with that sort of hurried drawl which showed it to be a matter of form:—

"Monsieur le Comte de Thiery," said he, "you are commanded by the King to deliver into my hands the body of Claude Count de Blenau, to hold and keep in strict imprisonment, until such time as his Majesty's will be known in his regard, or till he be acquitted of the crimes with which he is charged, by a competent tribunal; and I now require you to do the same."

This being gone through, De Thiery descended from the carriage, followed by the Count de Blenau, whom the Governor instantly addressed with a profound bow and servile smile.

"Monsieur de Blenau," said he, "you are welcome to the Bastille; and any thing I can do for your accommodation, consistent with my duty, you shall command."

"I hope you will let it be so, Sir Governor," said old De Thiery; "for Monsieur de Blenau is my particular friend, and without doubt he will be liberated in a few days. Now, Monsieur de Blenau," continued he, "I must leave you for the present, but hope soon to see you in another place. You will, no doubt, find several of your friends here; for we all take it in turn: and indeed, now-a-days, it would be almost accounted a piece of ignorance not to have been in the Bastille once in one's life. So, farewell!" And he embraced him warmly, whispering as he did so, "Make a friend of the Governor—gold will do it!"

De Blenau looked after the good old soldier with feelings of regret, as he got into his *belle voiture* and drove

through the archway. Immediately after, the drawbridge rose, and the gates closed with a clang, sounding on De Blenau's ears as if they shut out from him all that was friendly in the world; and overpowered by a feeling of melancholy desolation, he remained with his eyes fixed in the direction De Thiery had taken, till he was roused by the Governor laying his hand upon his arm. "Monsieur de Blenau," said he, "will you do me the favour of following me, and I will have the honour of showing you your apartment."

De Blenau obeyed in silence, and the Governor led the way into the inner court, and thence up the chief staircase to the second story, where he stopped at a heavy door plated with iron, and sunk deep in the stone wall, from the appearance of which De Blenau did not argue very favourably of the chambers within. His anticipations, however, were agreeably disappointed, when one of the attendants, who lighted them, pulled aside the bolts, and throwing open the door, exposed to his view a large neat room, fitted up with every attention to comfort, and even some attempt at elegance. This, the Governor informed him, was destined for his use while he did the Bastille the honour of making it his abode; and he then went on in the same polite strain to apologize for the furniture being in some disorder, as the servants had been very busy at the chateau, and had not had time to arrange it since its last occupant had left them, which was only the morning before. So far De Blenau might have imagined himself in the house of a polite friend, had not the bolts and bars obtruded themselves on his view wherever he turned, speaking strongly of a prison.

The end of the Governor's speech also was more in accordance with his office: "My orders, Monsieur de Blenau," said he in continuation, "are, to pay every attention to your comfort and convenience, but at the same time to have the strictest guard over you. I am therefore obliged to deny you the liberty of the court, which some of the prisoners enjoy, and I must also place a sentinel at your door. I will now go and give orders for the packages which were in the carriage to be brought up here, and will then return immediately to advise with you on what can be done to make your time pass more pleasantly."

Thus saying, he quitted the apartment, and De Blenau heard the heavy bolts of the door grate into their sockets with a strange feeling of reluctance; for though he felt too surely that liberty was gone, yet he would fain have shrunk from those outward marks of captivity which continually forced the recollection of it upon his mind. The polite attentions of the Governor, however, had not escaped his notice, and his thoughts soon returned to that officer's conduct.

"Can this man," thought he, "continually accustomed to scenes of blood and horror, be really gentle in his nature, as he seems to show himself? or can it be that he has especial orders to treat me with kindness? Yet here I am a prisoner,—and for what purpose, unless they intend to employ the most fearful means to draw from me those secrets which they have failed in obtaining otherwise?"

Such was the nature of his first thoughts for a moment or two after the Governor had left him; but rousing himself, after a little, from reveries which threw no light upon his situation, he began to examine more closely the apartment which bade fair to be his dwelling for some time to come.

It was evidently one of the best in the prison, consisting of two spacious chambers, which occupied the whole breadth of the square tower in the centre of the Bastille. The first, which opened from the staircase and communicated with the second by means of a small door, was conveniently furnished in its way, containing, besides a very fair complement of chairs and tables of the most solid manufacture, that happy invention of our ancestors, a corner cupboard, garnished with various articles of plate and porcelain, and a shelf of books, which last De Blenau had no small pleasure in perceiving.

On one of the tables were various implements for writing, and on another the attendant who had lighted them thither had placed two silver lamps, which, though of an antique fashion, served very well to light the whole extent of the room. Raising one of these, De Blenau proceeded to the inner chamber, which was fitted up as a bed-room, and contained various articles of furniture in a more modern taste than that which decorated the other. But the attention of the prisoner was particularly attracted by a heavy iron door near the head of the bed, which, however, as he gladly perceived, possessed bolts on the inside, so as to prevent the approach of any one from without during the night.

So much of our happiness is dependent on the trifles of personal comfort, that De Blenau, though little caring in general for very delicate entertainment, nevertheless felt himself more at ease when, on looking round his apartment, he found that at all events it was no dungeon to which he had been consigned: and from this he drew a favourable augury, flattering himself that no very severe measures would ultimately be pursued towards him, when such care was taken of his temporary accommodation.

De Blenau had just time to complete the perambulation of his new abode, when the Governor returned, followed by two of the subordinate ministers of the prison, carrying the various articles with which Henry de La Mothe had loaded the *belle voiture* of Monsieur de Thiery: and as the faithful Page had taken care to provide fully for his master's comfort, the number of packages was not small.

As soon as these were properly disposed about the apartment, the Governor commanded his satellites to withdraw, and remained alone with his prisoner, who, remembering the last words of the old Count de Thiery, resolved, as far as possible, to gain the good will of one who had it in his power not only to soften or to aggravate the pains of his captivity, but even perhaps to serve him more essentially. De Thiery had recommended gold, all-powerful gold, as the means to be employed; but at first De Blenau felt some hesitation as to the propriety of offering sordid coin to a man holding so responsible a situation, and no small embarrassment as to the manner. These feelings kept him silent for a moment, during which time the Governor remained silent also, regarding his prisoner with a polite and affable smile, as if he expected him to begin the conversation.

"I will try the experiment at all events," thought De Blenau. "I could almost persuade myself that the man expects it."

Luckily it so happened, that amongst the baggage which had been prepared for Chantilly, was comprised a considerable sum of money, besides that which he carried about him: and now drawing forth his purse, the contents of which might amount to about a thousand livres, he placed it in the hands of the Governor.

"Let me beg you to accept of this, Monsieur le Gouverneur," said he, "not as any inducement to serve me contrary to your duty, but as a slight remuneration for the trouble which my being here must occasion."

The smooth-spoken Governor neither testified any surprise at this proceeding, nor any sort of reluctance to accept what De Blenau proffered. The purse dropped unrejected into his open palm, and it was very evident that his

future conduct would greatly depend upon the amount of its contents, according as it was above or below his expectation.

"Monseigneur," replied he, "you are very good, and seem to understand the trouble which prisoners sometimes give, as well as if you had lived in the Bastille all your life; and you may depend upon it, as I said before, that every thing shall be done for your accommodation—always supposing it within my duty."

"I doubt you not, Sir," answered De Blenau, who from the moment the Governor's fingers had closed upon the purse, could hardly help regarding him as a menial who had taken his wages: "I doubt you not; and at the present moment I should be glad of supper, if such a thing can be procured within your walls."

"Most assuredly it can be procured *to-night*, Sir," replied the Governor; "but I am sorry to say, that we have two meager days in the week, at which times neither meat nor wine is allowed by Government, even for my own table: which is a very great and serious grievance, considering the arduous duties I am often called upon to perform."

"But of course such things can be procured from without," said De Blenau, "and on the days you have mentioned. I beg that you would not allow my table to bear witness of any such regulations; and farther, as I suppose that *you*, Sir, have the command of all this, I will thank you to order your purveyor to supply all that is usual for a man of my quality and fortune, for which he shall have immediate payment through your hands."

The tone in which De Blenau spoke was certainly somewhat authoritative for a prisoner; and feeling, as he proceeded, that he might give offence where it was his best interest to conciliate regard, he added, though not without pain,—

"When you will do me the honour to partake my fare, I shall stand indebted for your society. Shall I say to-morrow at dinner, that I shall have the pleasure of your company?"

The Governor readily accepted the invitation, more especially as the ensuing day chanced to be one of those meager days, which he held in most particular abhorrence. And now, having made some farther arrangements with De Blenau, he left him, promising to send the meal which he had demanded.

There is sometimes an art in allowing one's self to be cheated, and De Blenau had at once perceived that the best way to bind the Governor to his interest, was, not only to suffer patiently, but even to promote every thing which could gratify the cupidity of his gaoler or his underlings; and thus he had laid much stress upon the provision of his table, about which he was really indifferent.

Well contented with the liberality of his new prisoner, and praying God most devoutly that the Cardinal would spare his life to grace the annals of the Bastille for many years, the Governor took care to send De Blenau immediately the supper which had been prepared for himself: an act of generosity, of which few gaolers, high or low, would have been guilty.

It matters little how De Blenau relished his meal; suffice it, that the civility and attention he experienced, greatly removed his apprehensions for the future, and made him imagine that no serious proceedings were intended against him. In this frame of mind, as soon as the Governor's servants had taken away the remains of his supper, and the bolts were drawn upon him for the night, he took a book from the shelf, thinking that his mind was sufficiently composed to permit of his thus occupying it with some more pleasing employment than the useless contemplation of his own fate. But he was mistaken. He had scarcely read a sentence, before his thoughts, flying from the lettered page before his eyes, had again sought out all the strange uncertain points of his situation, and regarding them under every light, strove to draw from the present some presage for the future. Thus finding the attempt in vain, he threw the book hastily from him, in order to give himself calmly up to the impulse he could not resist. But as the volume fell from his hand upon the table, a small piece of written paper flew out from between the leaves, and after having made a circle or two in the air, fell lightly to the ground.

De Blenau carelessly took it up, supposing it some casual annotation; but the first few words that caught his eye riveted his attention. It began.

"To the next wretched tenant of these apartments I bequeath a secret, which, though useless to me, may be of service to him. To-day I am condemned, and to-morrow I shall be led to the torture or to death. I am innocent; but knowing that innocence is not safety, I have endeavoured to make my escape, and have by long labour filed through the lock of the iron door near the bed, which was the sole fastening by which it was secured from without. Unfortunately, this door only leads to a small turret staircase communicating with the inner court; but should my successor in this abode of misery be, like me, debarred from exercise, and also from all converse with his fellow prisoners, this information may be useful to him. The file with which I accomplished my endeavour is behind the shelf which contains these books. Adieu, whoever thou art! Pray for the soul of the unhappy Caply!"

As he read, the hopes which De Blenau had conceived from the comforts that were allowed him fled in air. There also, in the same apartment, and doubtless attended with the same care, had the wretched Caply lingered away the last hours of an existence about to be terminated by a dreadful and agonizing death. "And such may be my fate," thought De Blenau with an involuntary shudder, springing from that antipathy which all things living bear to death. But the moment after, the blood rushed to his cheek, reproaching him for yielding to such a feeling though no one was present to witness its effects. "What!" thought he, "I who have confronted death a thousand times, to tremble at it now! However, let me see the truth of what this paper tells;" and entering the bed-room, he approached the iron door, of which he easily drew back the bolts, Caply having taken care to grease them with oil from the lamp, so that they moved without creating the smallest noise.

The moment that these were drawn, the slightest push opened the door, and De Blenau beheld before him a little winding stone staircase, filling the whole of one of the small towers; which containing no chambers and only serving as a back access to the apartments in the square tower, had been suffered in some degree to go to decay. The walls were pierced with loopholes, which being enlarged by some of the stones having fallen away, afforded sufficient aperture for the moonlight to visit the interior with quite enough power to permit of De Blenau's descending without other light. Leaving the lamp, therefore, in the bed-room, he proceeded down the steps till they at once opened from the turret into the inner court, where all was moonlight and silence, it being judged unnecessary, after the prisoners were locked in for the night, to station even a single sentry in a place which was otherwise so well secured.

Without venturing out of the shadow of the tower, De Blenau returned to his apartment, feeling a degree of satisfaction in the idea that he should not now be cut off from all communication with those below in case he should

desire it. He no longer felt so absolutely lonely as before, when his situation had appeared almost as much insulated as many of those that the lower dungeons of that very building contained, who were condemned to drag out the rest of their years in nearly unbroken solitude.

Having replaced the paper in the book, for the benefit of any one who might be confined there in future, De Blenau fastened the iron door on the inside, and addressing his prayers to Heaven, he laid himself down to rest. For some time his thoughts resumed their former train, and continued to wander over his situation and its probable termination, but at length his ideas became confused, memory and perception gradually lost their activity, while fatigue and the remaining weakness from his late wounds overcame him, and he slept.

CHAPTER III.

Which shows a new use for an old Castle; and gives a good receipt for leading a man by the nose.

Now if the reader imagined that I wrote the whole of the twelfth chapter of the last volume for the sole purpose of telling a cock and a bull story about a country innkeeper and conjuror's first cousin, he was very much mistaken. Let him immediately transport himself back to the little village of Mesnil St. Loup, and let him remember the church, and the old trees, and the ruined castle beyond, with all the circumstances thereunto appertaining; and if any thing that has since passed has put the particulars out of his mind, let him return to the aforesaid twelfth chapter, and learn it by heart, as a penance for having forgotten it. But if, on the contrary, he remembers it fully—I will go on with my story.

It was in the old Chateau of St. Loup, near the village of Mesnil, on a sultry evening about the end of September, that a party was assembled, who, in point of rank and greatness of design, had seldom been equalled within those walls, even when they were the habitation of the great and beautiful of other days. But years and centuries had passed since they had been so tenanted. The court-yard was full of weeds, and grass, and tangled shrubs: the ivy creeping over the ruined walls obtruded its long branches through the unglazed windows, and the breaches which the siege of time had effected in the solid masonry, gave entrance to the wind of night and the wintry tempest.

The chamber that had been chosen for a place of meeting on the present occasion was one which, more than any other, had escaped the hand of desolation. The casements, it is true, had long ceased to boast of glass, and part of the wall itself had given way, encumbering with its broken fragments the farther end of the great saloon, as it had once been called. The rest, however, of the chamber was in very tolerable repair, and contained also several pieces of furniture, consisting of more than one rude seat, and a large uncouth table, which evidently had never belonged to the castle in its days of splendour.

At the head of this table sat Gaston Duke of Orleans, the younger brother of the King, leaning his head upon his hand in an attitude of listless indifference, and amusing himself by brushing the dust which had gathered on the board before him, into a thousand fanciful shapes with the feather of a pen—now forming fortifications with lines and parallels, and half moons and curtains—and then sweeping them all heedlessly away—offering no bad image of the many vast and intricate plans he had engaged in, all of which he had overthrown alike by his caprice and indecision.

Near him sat his two great favourites and advisers, Montessor and St. Ibal: the first of whom was really the inconsiderate fool he seemed; the second, though not without his share of folly, concealed deeper plans under his assumed carelessness. These two men, whose pride was in daring every thing, affected to consider nothing in the world worth trouble or attention, professing at the same time perfect indifference to danger and uncomfot, and contending that vice and virtue were merely names, which signified any thing, according to their application. Such was the creed of their would-be philosophy; and Montessor lost no opportunity of evincing that heedlessness of every thing serious which formed the principal point of his doctrine. In the present instance he had produced a couple of dice from his pocket, and was busily engaged in throwing with St. Ibal for some pieces of gold which lay between them.

Two more completed the party assembled in the old Chateau of St. Loup. The first of these was Cinq Mars: his quick and ardent spirit did not suffer him to join in the frivolous pastimes of the others, but on the contrary, he kept walking up and down the apartment, as if impatient for the arrival of some one expected by all; and every now and then, as he turned at the extremity of the chamber, he cast a glance upon the weak Duke and his vicious companions, almost amounting to scorn.

Beside the Master of the Horse, and keeping an equal pace, was the celebrated President De Thou, famed for unswerving integrity and the mild dignity of virtuous courage. His personal appearance, however, corresponded ill with the excellence of his mind; and his plain features, ill-formed figure, and inelegant movements, contrasted strongly with the handsome countenance and princely gait of Cinq Mars, as well as the calm pensive expression of his downcast eye, with the wild and rapid glance of his companion's.

As the time wore away, the impatience of Cinq Mars visibly increased; and every two or three minutes he would stop, and look out from one of the open casements, and then approaching the table would take one of the torches, of which there were several lighted in the room, and strike it against the wall to increase the flame. "It is very extraordinary," cried he at length, "that Fontrailles has not yet arrived."

"Oh! no, Cinq Mars," replied De Thou, "we are a full hour before the time. You were so impatient, my good friend, that you made us all set off long before it was necessary."

"Why, it is quite dark," said the Master of the Horse, "and Fontrailles promised to be here at nine.—It is surely nine, is it not, Montessor?"

"Size ace," said the Gambler, "*quatre à quatre*, St. Ibal. I shall win yet!"

"Pshaw!" cried Cinq Mars—"who will tell me the time? I wish we could have clocks made small enough to put in our pockets."

"I will show you what will tell us the hour as well as if we had," answered De Thou. "Look out there in the west! Do you see what a red light the sun still casts upon those heavy masses of cloud that are coming up? Now the sun goes down at seven; so you may judge it can scarce be eight yet."

"*Cinq quatre!*" cried Montessor, throwing. "I have lost, after all—Monsieur De Thou, will you bet me a thousand crowns that it is not past eight by the village clock of Mesnil St. Loup?"

"No, indeed!" replied the President; "I neither wish to win your money, Monsieur Montessor, nor to lose my own. Nor do I see how such a bet could be determined."

"Oh! if you do not take the bet, there is no use of inquiring how it might be determined," rejoined Montessor. "Monseigneur," he continued, turning to the Duke of Orleans, who had just swept away his last fortification, and was laying out a flower-garden in its place; "can you tell how in the name of fortune these chairs and this table came here, when all the rest of the place is as empty as your Highness's purse?"

"Or as your head, Montessor," answered the Duke. "But the truth is, they were the property of poor old Père Le Rouge, who lived for many years in these ruins,—half-knave, half-madman,—till they tried and burnt him for a sorcerer down in the wood there at the foot of the hill. Since then it has been called the Sorcerer's Grove, and the

country people are not fond of passing through it, which has doubtless saved the old Conjuror's furniture from being burnt for firewood; for none of the old women in the neighbourhood dare come to fetch it, or infallibly it would undergo the same fate as its master."

"So, that wood is called the Sorcerer's Grove," said St. Ibal, laughing: "that is the reason your Highness brought us round the other way, is it not?"

Gaston of Orleans coloured a good deal at a jest which touched too near one of his prevailing weaknesses; for no one was more tainted with the superstition of the day than himself, yet no one was more ashamed of such credulity. "No, no!" answered he; "I put no faith in Père Le Rouge and his prophecies. He made too great a mistake in my own case to show himself to me since his predictions have proved false, I will answer for him."

"Why, what did he predict about you, Monseigneur?" asked De Thou, who knew the faith which the Duke still placed in astrology.

"A great deal of nonsense," answered the Duke, affecting a tone very foreign to his real feelings. "He predicted that I should marry the Queen, after the death of Louis. Now, you see, I have married some one else, and therefore his prophecy was false. But however, as I said, these chairs belonged to him: where he got them I know not—perhaps from the Devil; but at all events, I wish he were here to fill one now; he would be a good companion in our adventures." As he spoke, a bright flash of lightning blazed through the apartment, followed by a loud and rolling peal of thunder, which made the Duke start, exclaiming, "Jesu! what a flash!"

"Your Highness thought it was Père Le Rouge," said St. Ibal; "but he would most likely come in at the door, if he did come; not through the window."

Gaston of Orleans heard the jests of his two companions without anger; and a moment or two after, Cinq Mars, who stood near one of the dilapidated casements, turned round, exclaiming, "Hark! I hear the sound of a horse's feet: it is Fontrailles at last. Give me a torch; I will show him where we are."

"If it should be the Devil now——" said Montessor, as Cinq Mars left the room.

"Or Père Le Rouge," added St. Ibal.

"Or both," said the Duke of Orleans.

"Why for cunning and mischief they would scarcely supply the place of one Fontrailles," rejoined St. Ibal. "But here comes one or the other,—I suppose it is the same to your Royal Highness which."

"Oh, yes!" answered the Duke, "they shall all be welcome. Nothing like keeping good company, St. Ibal."

As he spoke, Cinq Mars returned, accompanied by Fontrailles, both laughing with no small glee. "What makes ye so merry, my Lords?" exclaimed Montessor; "a laugh too good a thing to be lost. Has Monsieur de Fontrailles encountered his old friend Sathanus by the road-side, or what?"

"Not so," answered Cinq Mars, "he has only bamboozled an innkeeper. But come, Fontrailles, let us not lose time: will you read over the articles of alliance to which we are to put our names; and let us determine upon them to-night, for, if we meet frequently in this way, we shall become suspected ere our design be ripe."

"Willingly for my part," replied Fontrailles, approaching the table, and speaking with some degree of emphasis, but without immediately deviating into declamation. "There certainly never was a case when speedy decision was more requisite than the present. Every man in this kingdom, from the King to the peasant, has felt, and does now feel, the evils which we are met to remedy. It is no longer zeal, but necessity, which urges us to oppose the tyranny of this daring Minister. It is no longer patriotism, but self-defence. In such a case, all means are justifiable; for when a man (as Richelieu has done) breaks through every law, human and divine, to serve the ungenerous purpose of his own aggrandizement; when he sports with the lives of his fellow-creatures with less charity than a wild beast; are we not bound to consider him as such, and to hunt him to the death for the general safety?"

De Thou shook his head, as if there was something in the proposition to which he could not subscribe; but Cinq Mars at once gave his unqualified assent, and all being seated round the table, Fontrailles drew forth some papers, and proceeded.

"This, then, is our first grand object," said he: "to deprive this tyrant, whose abuse of power not only extends to oppress the subject, but who even dares, with most monstrous presumption, to curb and overrule the Royal authority, making the Monarch a mere slave to his will, and the Monarch's name but a shield behind which to shelter his own crimes and iniquities—I say, to deprive this usurping favourite of the means of draining the treasures, sacrificing the honour, and spilling the blood of France; thereby to free our King from bondage, to restore peace and tranquillity to our country, and to bring back to our homes long banished confidence, security, and ease—To this you all agree?"

A general assent followed, and Fontrailles went on.

"Safely to effect our purpose, it is not only necessary to use every energy of our minds, but to exert all the local power we possess. Every member, therefore, of our association will use all his influence with those who are attached to him by favour or connexion, and prepare all his vassals, troops, and retainers, to act in whatsoever manner shall hereafter be determined, and will also amass whatever sums he can procure for the general object. It will also be necessary to concentrate certain bodies of men on particular points, for the purpose of seizing on some strong fortified places. And farther, it will be advisable narrowly to watch the movements of the Cardinal, in order to make ourselves masters of his person."

"But whose authority shall we have for this?" demanded De Thou; "for while he continues Prime Minister by the King's consent, we are committing high treason to restrain his person."

"We must not be so scrupulous, De Thou," rejoined Cinq Mars; "we must free his Majesty from those magic chains in which Richelieu has so long held his mind, before we can expect him to do any thing openly: but I will take it upon me to procure his private assent. I have sounded his inclinations already, and am sure of my ground. But proceed, Fontrailles: let us hear what arrangements you have made respecting troops, for we must have some power to back us, or we shall fail."

"Well, then," said Fontrailles, "I bring with me the most generous offers from the noble Duke of Bouillon. They are addressed to you, Cinq Mars, but were sent open to me. I may as well, therefore, give their contents at once, and you can afterwards peruse them at your leisure. The Duke here offers to place his town and principality of Sedan in our hands, as a depôt for arms and munition, and also as a place of retreat and safety, and a rendezvous for the

assembling of forces. He farther promises, on the very first call, to march his victorious troops from Italy, when, as he says, every soldier will exult in the effort to liberate his country."

"Generously promised of the Duke," exclaimed Montessor, slapping the table with mock enthusiasm. "My head to a bunch of Macon grapes, he expects to be prime minister in Richelieu's place."

"The Duke of Bouillon, Monsieur de Montessor," replied Cinq Mars somewhat warmly, "has the good of his country at heart; and is too much a man of honour to harbour the ungenerous thought you would attribute to him."

"My dear Cinq Mars, do not be angry," said Montessor. "Don't you see how much the odds were in my favour? Why, I betted my head to a bunch of grapes, and who do you think would be fool enough to hazard a full bunch of grapes against an empty head? But go on, Fontrailles; where are the next troops to come from?"

"From Spain!" answered Fontrailles calmly; while at the name of that country, at open war with France, and for years considered as its most dangerous enemy, each countenance round the table assumed a look of astonishment and disapprobation, which would probably have daunted any other than the bold conspirator who named it.

"No, no!" exclaimed Gaston of Orleans, as soon as he had recovered breath. "None of the Spanish Catholicon for me;" alluding to the name which had been used to stigmatize the assistance that the League had received from Spain during the civil wars occasioned by the accession of Henry IV. to the throne. "No, no! Monsieur de Fontrailles, this is high treason at once."

St. Ibal was generally supposed, and with much appearance of truth, to have some secret connexion with the Spanish court; and having now recovered from the first surprise into which he had been thrown by the bold mention of an alliance with that obnoxious country, he jested at the fears of the timid and unsteady Duke, well knowing that by such means he was easily governed. "Death to my soul!" exclaimed he. "Your Highness calls out against high treason, when it is what you have lived upon all your life! Why, it is meat, drink, and clothing to you. A little treason is as necessary to your comfort as a dice-box is to Montessor, a Barbary horse to Cinq Mars, or a bird-net and hawking-glove to the King. But to speak seriously, Monseigneur," he continued, "is it not necessary that we should have some farther support than that which Monsieur de Bouillon promises? His enthusiasm may have deceived him;—his troops may not be half so well inclined to our cause as he is himself;—he might be taken ill;—he might either be arrested by the gout, to which he is subject; or by the Cardinal, to whom we all wish he was not subject. A thousand causes might prevent his giving us the assistance he intends, and then what an useful auxiliary would Spain prove. Besides, we do not call in Spain, to fight against France, but for France. Spain is not an enemy of the country, but only of the Cardinal; and the moment *that* man is removed, who for his sole interest and to render himself necessary has carried on a war which has nearly depopulated the kingdom, a lasting and glorious peace will be established between the two countries; and thus we shall confer another great benefit on the nation."

"Why, in that point of view, I have no objection," replied the Duke of Orleans. "But do you not think that Louis will disapprove of it?"

"We must not let him know it," said Montessor, "till Richelieu is removed, and then he will be as glad of it as any one."

"But still," rejoined the Duke with more pertinacity than he generally displayed, "I am not fond of bringing Spanish troops into France. Who can vouch that we shall ever get rid of them?"

"That will I," answered St. Ibal. "Has your Highness forgot what good faith and courtesy the Spanish government has shown you in your exile; as also the assistance it yielded to your late Royal Mother? Besides, we need not call in a large body of troops. What number do you propose, Fontrailles?"

"The offer of Spain is five thousand," replied Fontrailles; "with the promise of ten thousand more, should we require it. Nothing can be more open and noble than the whole proceeding of King Philip. He leaves it entirely to ourselves what guarantee we will place in his hands for the safety of his troops."

"Well, well," said the Duke of Orleans, getting tired of the subject, "I have no doubt of their good faith. I am satisfied, St. Ibal; and whatever you think right, I will agree to. I leave it all to you and Montessor."

"Well then," said Fontrailles hastily, "that being settled, we will proceed—"

"Your pardon, gentlemen," interposed De Thou, "I must be heard now—Your schemes extend much farther than I had any idea of—Cinq Mars, I was not informed of all this—had I been so, I would never have come here. To serve my country, to rid her of a Minister who, as I conceive, has nearly destroyed her, who has trampled France under his feet, and enthralled her in a blood-stained chain, I would to-morrow lay my head upon the block—Frown not, Monsieur de Fontrailles—Cinq Mars, my noble friend, do not look offended—but I cannot, I will not be a party to the crime into which mistaken zeal is hurrying you. Are we not subjects of France? and is not France at war with Spain? and though we may all wish and pray God that this war may cease, yet to treat or conspire with that hostile kingdom is an act which makes us traitors to our country and rebels to our King. Old De Thou has but two things to lose—his life and his honour. His life is valueless. He would sacrifice it at once for the least benefit to his country. He would sacrifice it, Cinq Mars, for his friendship for you. But his honour must not be sullied: and as through life he has kept it unstained, so shall it go with him unstained to his last hour. Were it merely personal danger you called upon me to undergo, I would not bestow a thought upon the risk: but my fame, my allegiance, my very salvation are concerned, and I will never give my sanction to a plan which begins by the treasonable proposal of bringing foreign enemies into the heart of the land."

"As to your salvation, Monsieur le President," said Montessor, "I'll undertake to buy that for you for a hundred crowns. You shall have an indulgence to commit sins *ad libitum*, in which high treason shall be specified by name. Now, though these red-hot heretics of Germany, who seem inclined to bring that fiery place upon earth, which his Holiness threatens them with in another world, and who are assisted by our Catholic Cardinal with money, troops, ammunition, and all the hell-invented implements of war,—though these Protestants, I say, put no trust in the indulgences which their apostacy has rendered cheap in the market, yet I am sure you are by far too staunch a stickler for all antique abuses to doubt their efficacy. I suppose, therefore, when salvation can be had for a hundred crowns, good Monsieur de Thou, you can have no scruple on that score—unless indeed you are as stingy as the dog in the fable."

"Jests are no arguments, Monsieur de Montessor," replied De Thou, with stern gravity; "you have a bad habit, young Sir, of scoffing at what wiser men revere. Had you any religion yourself of any kind, or any reason for having none, we might pardon your error, because it was founded on principle. As for myself, Sir, what I believe, I believe

from conviction, and what I do, I do with the firm persuasion that it is right; without endeavouring to cloak a bad cause with a show of spirit, or to hide my incapacity to defend it with stale jokes and profane raillery. Gentlemen, you act as you please; for my part I enter into no plan by which Spain is to be employed or treated with."

"I think it dangerous too," said the unsteady Duke of Orleans.

"Ten times more dangerous to attempt any thing without it," exclaimed Fontrailles.—"Should we not be fools to engage in such an enterprise without some foreign power to support us? We might as well go to the Palais Cardinal, and offer our throats to Richelieu at once."

Montessor and St. Ibal both applied themselves to quiet the fears of the Duke, and soon succeeded in removing from his mind any apprehensions on the score of Spain: but he continued from time to time to look suspiciously at De Thou, who had risen from the table, and was again walking up and down the apartment. At length Gaston beckoned to Cinq Mars, and whispered something in his ear.

"You do him wrong, my Lord," exclaimed Cinq Mars indignantly, "I will answer for his faith. De Thou," he continued, "the Duke asks your promise not to reveal what you have heard this night; and though I think my friend ought not to be suspected, I will be obliged by your giving it."

"Most assuredly," replied De Thou; "his Highness need be under no alarm. On my honour, in life or in death, I will never betray what I have heard here. But that I may hear as little as possible, I will take one of these torches, and wait for you in the lower apartments."

"Take care that you do not meet with Père Le Rouge, Monsieur de Thou," exclaimed St. Ibal as De Thou left them.

"Cease your jesting, gentlemen," said Cinq Mars; "we have had too much of it already. A man with the good conscience of my friend De Thou, need not mind whom he meets. For my own part, I am resolved to go on with the business I have undertaken; I believe I am in the right; and if not, God forgive me, for my intentions are good."

The rest of the plan was soon settled after the President had left the room; and the treaty which it was proposed to enter into with Spain was read through and approved. The last question which occurred, was the means of conveying a copy of this treaty to the Court of King Philip without taking the circuitous route by the Low Countries. Numerous difficulties presented themselves to every plan that was suggested, till Fontrailles, with an affectation of great modesty, proposed to be the bearer himself, if, as he said, they considered his abilities equal to the task.

The offer was of course gladly accepted, as he well knew it would be: and now being to the extent of his wish furnished with unlimited powers, and possessed of a document which put the lives of all his associates in his power, Fontrailles brought the conference to an end: it being agreed that the parties should not meet again till after his return from Spain.

A few minutes more were spent in seeking cloaks and hats, and extinguishing the torches; and then descending to the court-yard, they mounted their horses, which had found shelter in the ruined stable of the old castle, and set out on their various roads. By this time the storm had cleared away, leaving the air but the purer and the more serene; and the bright moon shining near her meridian, served to light Cinq Mars and De Thou on the way towards Paris, while the Duke of Orleans and his party bent their steps towards Bourbon, and Fontrailles set off for Troyes to prepare for his journey to Spain.

CHAPTER IV.

Intended to prove that keen-sighted politicians are but buzzards after all, and to show how Philip the woodman took a ride earlier than usual.

I WISH to Heaven it were possible, in a true story, to follow the old Greek's rule, and preserve at least unity of place throughout. It would save a great deal of trouble, both to writer and reader, if we could make all our characters come into one hall, say their say, and have done with it. But there is only one place where they could be supposed to meet—heroes and heroines, statesmen and conspirators, servant and master, proud and humble—the true Procrustes' bed which is made to fit every one. However, as before I could get them there, the story would be done, and the generation passed away, I must even violate all the unities together, and gallop after my characters all over the country, as I have often seen a shepherd in the Landes of France, striding here and there upon his long stilts after his wilful and straggling sheep, and endeavouring in vain to keep them all together. I must ask the reader, therefore, to get into the chaise with me, and set off for Chantilly; and as we go, I will tell him a few anecdotes, just to pass the time.

It was a common custom with Louis the Thirteenth to spend a part of the morning in that large circular piece of ground at Chantilly, called then, as now, the Manège; while his various hunters, in which he took great delight, were exercised before him. Here, while the few gentlemen that generally accompanied him, stood a step behind, he would lean against one of the pillars that surrounded the place, and remark, with the most minute exactitude, every horse as it passed him, expressing his approbation to the grooms when any thing gave him satisfaction. But on the same morning which had witnessed at St. Germain the arrest of De Blenau, something had gone wrong with the King at Chantilly. He was impatient, cross, and implacable: and Lord Montague, an English nobleman, who was at that time much about him, remarked in a low voice to one of the gentlemen in waiting, "His Majesty is as peevish as a crossed child, when Cinq Mars is absent."

The name of his Grand Ecuyer, though spoken very low, caught the King's ear.

"Do any of you know when Cinq Mars returns?" demanded he. "We never proceed well when he is not here.—Look at that man now, how he rides," continued Louis, pointing to one of the grooms; "would not any one take him for a monkey on horseback? Do you know where Cinq Mars is gone, *Mi Lor?*"

"I hear, Sire," replied Lord Montague, "that he is gone with Monsieur de Thou to Troyes, where he has an estate, about which there is some dispute, which Monsieur de Thou, who is learned in such matters, is to determine."

"To Troyes!" exclaimed the King, "that is a journey of three days—Did not some of you tell me, that Chavigni arrived last night, while I was hunting?"

"I did so, please your Majesty," replied one of the gentlemen; "and I hear, moreover, that the Cardinal himself slept at Luzarches last night, with the purpose of being here early this morning."

"The Cardinal at Luzarches!" said the King, a cloud coming over his brow. "It is strange I had not notice—We shall scarce have room for them all—I expect the Queen to-night—and the Cardinal and her Majesty are as fond of each other as a hawk and a heron poulet."

Louis was evidently puzzled. Now the best way to cut the Gordian knot of an *embarras*, is to run away from it, and let it settle itself. It is sure to get unravelled somehow; and by the time you come back, a thousand to one the fracas is over. Louis the Thirteenth, who of all men on earth hated what is called in the vulgar tongue a *piece of work*, except when he made it himself, was very much in the habit of adopting the expedient above mentioned, and, indeed, had been somewhat a loser by the experiment. However, it was a habit now, confirmed by age, and therefore more powerful than Nature. Accordingly, after thinking for a moment about the Queen and the Cardinal, and their mutual hatred, and their being pent up together in the small space of Chantilly, like two game cocks in a cock-pit; and seeing no end to it whatever, he suddenly burst forth—

"Come, Messieurs, I'll go hunt. Quick! saddle the horses!" and casting kingly care from his mind, he began humming the old air *Que ne suis je un Berger!* while he walked across the manège towards the stables. But just at that moment, Chavigni presented himself, doffing his hat with all respect to the King, who could not avoid seeing him.

Louis was brought to bay, but still he stood his ground. "Ah! good day, Monsieur de Chavigni," exclaimed he, moving on towards the stables. "Come in good time to hunt with us. We know you are free of the forest."

"I humbly thank your Majesty," replied the Statesman; "but I am attending the Cardinal."

"And why not attend the King, Sir? Ha!" exclaimed Louis, his brow gathering into a heavy frown. "It is our will that you attend us, Sir."

Chavigni did not often commit such blunders, but it was not very easy to remember at all times to pay those external marks of respect which generally attend real power, to a person who had weakly resigned his authority into the hands of another: and as the Cardinal not only possessed kingly sway, but maintained kingly state, it sometimes happened that the King himself was treated with scanty ceremony. This, however, always irritated Louis not a little. He cared not for the splendour of a throne, he cared not even for the luxuries of royalty; but of the personal reverence due to his station, he would not bate an iota, and clung to the shadow when he had let the substance pass away. The Statesman now hastened to repair his error, and bowing profoundly, he replied, "Had I not thought that in serving the Cardinal I best served your Majesty, I should not have ventured on so bold an answer; but as your Majesty is good enough to consider my pleasure in the chase, and the still greater pleasure of accompanying you, your invitation will be more than an excuse for breaking my appointment with the Cardinal."

To bear the burthen of forcing one of the Council to break his engagement with the prime Minister, and all for so trifling a cause as an accidental hunting-party, was not in the least what the King wished or intended, and he would now very willingly have excused Chavigni's attendance; but Chavigni would not be excused.

The wily Statesman well knew, that Richelieu had that day a point to carry with the King of the deepest importance as to the stability of his power. The Queen, whom the Cardinal had long kept in complete depression, being now the mother of two princes, her influence was increasing in the country to a degree that alarmed the Minister for his own sway. It was a principle with Richelieu always to meet an evil in its birth; and seeing plainly that as the King's health declined—and it was then failing fast—the party of Anne of Austria would increase, if he did not

take strong measures to annihilate it—he resolved at once to ruin her with her husband, to deprive her of her children, and, if possible, even to send her back to Spain. “And then,” thought he, “after the King’s death I shall be Regent.—Regent? King! ay, and one more despotic than ever sat upon the throne of France. For twenty years this young Dauphin must be under my guidance; and it will be strange indeed if I cannot keep him there till my sand be run.” And the proud man, who reasoned thus, knew not that even then he trembled on the verge of the grave.

“Ainsi, dissipateurs peu sages
Des rapides bienfaits du temps,
Nos désirs embrassent des âges,
Et nous n’avons que des instans.”

However, the object of his present visit to Chantilly was to complete the ruin of the Queen; and Chavigni, who suffered his eyes to be blinded to simple right and wrong by the maxims of State policy, lent himself entirely to the Cardinal’s measures, little imagining that personal hatred had any share in the motives of the great Minister whose steps he followed.

A moment’s reflection convinced Chavigni that he might greatly promote the object in view by accompanying the King in the present instance. He knew that in difficult enterprises the most trifling circumstances may be turned to advantage; and he considered it a great thing gained at that moment, to lay Louis under the necessity of offering some amends, even for the apparent trifle of making him break his appointment with Richelieu. In riding with the King, he would have an opportunity of noting the Monarch’s state of mind, which he perceived was unusually irritated, and also of preparing the way for those impressions which Richelieu intended to give: and accordingly he avoided with consummate art any subject which might open the way for Louis to withdraw his previous order to accompany him.

Having already followed one royal hunt somewhat too minutely, we will not attempt to trace the present; only observing that during the course of the day, Chavigni had many opportunities of conversing with the King, and took care to inform him that the campaign in the Netherlands was showing itself much against the arms of France; that no plan was formed by the Government, which did not by some means reach the ears of the Spanish generals, and consequently that all the manœuvres of the French troops were unavailing; and from this, as a natural deduction, he inferred, that some one at the court of France must convey information to the enemy; mingling these pleasant matters of discourse, with sundry sage observations respecting the iniquity and baseness of thus betraying France to her enemies.

Louis was exactly in the humour that the Statesman could have wished. Peevish from the absence of Cinq Mars, and annoyed by the unexpected coming of Richelieu, he listened with indignation to all that Chavigni told him, of any one in France conveying intelligence to a country which he hated with the blindest antipathy.

The predominant passion in the King’s mind had long been his dislike to Spain, but more especially to Philip, whom he regarded as a personal enemy: and Chavigni easily discerned, by the way in which the news he conveyed was received, that if they could cast any probable suspicion on the Queen, (and Chavigni really believed her guilty,) Louis would set no bounds to his anger. But just at the moment he was congratulating himself upon the probable success of their schemes, a part of the storm he had been so busily raising fell unexpectedly upon himself.

“Well, Monsieur de Chavigni,” said the King, after the chase was over, and the Royal party were riding slowly back towards Chantilly, “this hunting is a right noble sport: think you not so, Sir?”

“In truth I do, Sire,” replied Chavigni; “and even your Majesty can scarce love it better than myself.”

“I am glad to hear it, Sir,” rejoined the King, knitting his brows; “’tis a good sign. But one thing I must tell you, which is, that I do not choose my Royal forests to be made the haunt of worse beasts than stags and boars.—No wolves and tigers.—Do you take me, Sir?”

“No, indeed, Sire,” replied Chavigni, who really did not comprehend the King’s meaning, and was almost tempted to believe that he had suddenly gone mad. “Allow me to remind your Majesty that wolves are almost extinct in this part of France, and that tigers are altogether beasts of another country.”

“There are beasts of prey in every part of the world,” answered the King. “What I mean, Sir, is, that robbers and assassins are beginning to frequent our woods; especially, Sir, the wood of Mantes. Was it that, or was it the forest of Laye, in which the young Count de Blenau was attacked the other day?”

It was not easy on ordinary occasions to take Chavigni by surprise, and he was always prepared to repel open attack, or to parry indirect questions, with that unhesitating boldness, or skilful evasion, the proper application of which is but one of the lesser arts of diplomacy; but on the present occasion, the King’s question was not only so unexpected as nearly to overcome his habitual command of countenance, but was also uttered in such a tone as to leave him in doubt whether Louis’s suspicions were directed personally towards himself. He replied, however, without hesitation: “I believe it was the wood of Mantes, Sire; but I am not perfectly sure.”

“You, of all men, ought to be well informed on that point, Monsieur de Chavigni,” rejoined the King, “since you took care to send a servant to see it rightly done.”

The matter was now beyond a doubt, and Chavigni replied boldly: “Your Majesty is pleased to speak in riddles, which I am really at a loss to comprehend.”

“Well, well, Sir,” said Louis hastily, “it shall be inquired into, and made plain both to you and me. Any thing that is done legally must not be too strictly noticed; but I will not see the laws broken, and murder attempted, even to serve State purposes.”

Thus speaking, the King put his horse into a quicker pace, and Chavigni followed with his mind not a little discomposed, though his countenance offered not the slightest trace of embarrassment. How he was to act, now became the question; and running over in his own mind all the circumstances connected with the attack upon the Count de Blenau, he could see no other means by which Louis could have become acquainted with his participation therein, than by the loquacity of Philip, the woodman of Mantes: and as he came to this conclusion, Chavigni internally cursed that confident security which had made him reject the advice of Lafemas, when the sharp-witted Judge had counselled him to arrest Philip on first discovering that he had remarked the livery of Isabel and silver amongst the robbers.

In the present instance the irritable and unusually decided humour of the King, made him fear that inquiries

might be instituted immediately, which would not only be dangerous to himself personally, but might probably overthrow all those plans which he had been labouring, in conjunction with the Cardinal, to bring to perfection. Calculating rapidly, therefore, all the consequences which might ensue, Chavigni resolved at once to have the Woodman placed in such a situation as to prevent him from giving any farther evidence of what he had seen. But far from showing any untimely haste, though he was the first to dismount in the court-yard in order to offer the King his aid in alighting, yet that ceremony performed, he loitered, patting his horse's neck, and giving trifling directions to his groom, till such time as Louis had entered the Palace, and his figure had been seen passing the window at the top of the grand staircase. That moment, however, Chavigni darted into the Chateau, and seeking his own apartments, he wrote an order for the arrest of Philip the woodman, which with the same despatch he placed in the hands of two of his most devoted creatures, adding a billet to the Governor of the Bastille, in which he begged him to treat the prisoner with all kindness, and allow him all sort of liberty within the prison, but on no account to let him escape till he received notice from him.

We have already had occasion to see that Chavigni was a man who considered State-policy paramount to every other principle; and naturally not of an ungentle disposition or ignoble spirit, he had unfortunately been educated in a belief that nothing which was expedient for the statesman could be discreditable to the man. However, the original bent of his mind generally showed itself in some degree, even in his most unjustifiable actions, as the ground-work of a picture will still shine through, and give a colour to whatever is painted above it. In the present instance, as his only object was to keep the Woodman out of the way till such time as the King's unwonted mood had passed by, he gave the strictest commands to those who bore the order for Philip's arrest, to use him with all possible gentleness, and to assure his wife and family that no harm was intended to him. He also sent him a purse, to provide for his comfort in the prison, which he well knew could not be procured without the potent aid of gold.

The two attendants, accustomed to execute commands which required despatch, set out instantly on their journey, proceeding with all speed to Beaumont, and thence to Pontoise, where crossing the river Oise they soon after arrived at Meulan: and here a dispute arose concerning the necessity of calling upon two Exempts of that city to aid in arresting Philip the woodman, the one servant arguing that they had no such orders from their Lord, and the other replying that the said Philip might have twenty companions for aught they knew, who might resist their authority, they not being legally entitled to arrest his Majesty's lieges. This argument was too conclusive to be refuted; and they therefore waited at Meulan till the two Exempts were ready to accompany them. It being night when they arrived at Meulan, and the two Exempts being engaged in "potations deep and strong," drinking long life to the Cardinal de Richelieu, and success to the royal prisons of France, some time was of course spent before the party could proceed. However, after the lapse of about an hour, discussed no matter how, they all contrived to get into their saddles, and passing the bridge over the Seine, soon reached the first little village, whose white houses, conspicuous in the moon-light, seemed, on the dark back-ground of the forest, as if they had crept for protection into the very bosom of the wood; while it, sweeping round them on every side, appeared in its turn to afford them the friendly shelter that they sought.

All was silence as they passed through the village, announcing plainly that its sober inhabitants were comfortably dozing away the darkness. This precluded them from asking their way to Philip's dwelling; but Chavigni had been so precise in his direction, that notwithstanding the wine-pots of Meulan, the two servants, in about half an hour after having entered the wood, recognized the *abreuvoir* and cottage, with the long-felled oak and piece of broken ground, and all the other *et-cetera*, which entered into the description they had received.

There is nothing half so amusing as the bustle with which little people carry on the trifles that are intrusted to them. They are so important, and so active, one would think that the world's turning round upon its axis depended upon them; while all the mighty business of the universe slips by as quietly as if the wheels were oiled; and the government of a nation is often decided over a cup of coffee, or the fate of empires changed by an extra bottle of Johannisberg.

But to return. Chavigni's two servants, with the two Exempts of Meulan, were as important and as busy as emmets when their hill is disturbed—or a *sous-secrétaire* when he opens his first despatch, and receives information of a revolution in the Isle of Man—or the fleas in an Italian bed, when you suddenly light your candle to see what the Devil is biting you so infernally—or the Devil himself in a gale of wind—or any other little person in a great flurry about nothing. So having discovered the cottage, they held a profound council before the door, disputing vehemently as to the mode of proceeding. One of the Exempts proposed to knock at the door, and then suddenly to seize their prisoner as he came to open it; but Chavigni's servants, though somewhat dipped in the Lethean flood, in which the Exempts of Meulan had seduced them to bathe, remembered the strict orders of their master, to treat Philip with all possible gentleness, and judging that the mode proposed might startle him, and affect his nerves, they decided against the motion.

A variety of other propositions were submitted, and rejected by the majority, each one liking nobody's suggestion but his own; till one of the Exempts, not bearing clearly in mind the subject of discussion, knocked violently at the door, declaring it was tiresome to stand disputing on their feet, and that they could settle how they should gain admission after they had got in and sat down.

This seemed a very good motion, and settled the matter at once; and Philip, who was in that sound and fearless sleep which innocence, content, and labour can alone bestow, not exactly answering at first, they all repeated the noise, not a little enraged at his want of attention to personages of such high merit as themselves.

The moment after, the Woodman appeared at the window, and seeing some travellers, as he imagined, he bade them wait till he had lighted a lamp, and he would come to them. Accordingly, in a moment or two Philip opened the door, purposing either to give them shelter, or to direct them on their way, as they might require; but when the light gleamed upon the black dresses of the Exempts, and then upon the well-known colours of Isabel and silver, the Woodman's heart sank, and his cheek turned pale, and he had scarcely power to demand their errand.

"I will tell you all that presently," replied the principal servant of the two, who, like many another small man in many another place, thought to become great by much speaking. "First let us come in and rest ourselves; for as you may judge by our dusty doublets, we have ridden far and hard: and after that I will expound to you, good friend, the cause of our coming, with sundry other curious particulars, which may both entertain and affect you."

Philip suffered them to enter the house, one after another, and setting down the lamp, he gazed upon them in silence, his horror at gentlemen in black coats and long straight swords, as well as those dressed in Isabel and silver,

being quite unspeakable.

"Well, Monsieur Philip le Bucheron," said the spokesman, throwing himself into the oaken settle with that sort of percussion of breath denoting fatigue: "you seem frightened, Monsieur Philip; but, good Monsieur Philip, you have no cause for fear. We are all your friends, Monsieur Philip."

"I am glad to hear it, Sir," replied the Woodcutter; "but may I know what you want with me?"

"Why, this is the truth, Monsieur Philip," replied the servant, "it seems that his Majesty the King, whom we have just left at Chantilly, is very angry about something,—Lord knows what! and our noble employer, not to say master, the Count de Chavigni, having once upon a time received some courtesy at your hands, is concerned for your safety, and has therefore deemed it necessary that you should be kept out of the way for a time."

"Oh, if that be the case," cried Philip, rubbing his hands with gladness, "though I know not why the King's anger should fall on me, I will take myself out of the way directly."

"No, no, Monsieur Philip, that won't do exactly," answered the servant. "You do not know how fond my master is of you; and so concerned is he for your safety, that he must be always sure of it, and therefore has given us command to let you stay in the Bastille for a few days."

At that one word *Bastille*, Philip's imagination set to work, and instantly conjured up the image of a huge tower of red copper, somewhat mouldy, standing on the top of a high mountain, and guarded by seven huge giants with but one eye apiece, and the like number of fiery dragons with more teeth and claws than would have served a dozen. If it was not exactly this, it was something very like it; for Philip, whose travels had never extended a league beyond the wood of Mantes, knew as much about the Bastille as Saint Augustin did of Heaven,—so both drew from their own fancy for want of better materials.

However, the purse which Chavigni's attendants gave him in behalf of their master, for they dared not withhold his bounty, however much they might be inclined, greatly allayed the fears of the Woodman.

There is something wonderfully consolatory in the chink of gold at all times; but in the present instance, Philip drew from it the comfortable conclusion, that they could not mean him any great harm when they sent him money. "I know not what to think," cried he.

"Why, think it is exactly as I tell you," replied the servant, "and that the Count means you well. But after you have thought as much as you like, get ready to come with us, for we have no time to spare."

This was the worst part of the whole business. Philip had now to take leave of his good dame Joan, which, like a well-arranged sermon, consisted of three distinct parts; he had first to wake her, then to make her comprehend, and then to endure her lamentation.

The first two were tasks of some difficulty, for Joan slept tolerably well—that is to say, you might have fired a cannon at her ear without making her hear—and when she was awake, her understanding did not become particularly pellucid for at least an hour after. This on ordinary occasions—but on the present Philip laboured hard to make her mind take in that he was arrested and going to the Bastille. But finding that her senses were still somewhat obdurate, and that she did nothing but rub her eyes, and stretch and yawn in his face, he had recourse to the same means morally, which he would have used physically to cleave an oak; namely, he kept shouting to her, "Bastille! Bastille! Bastille!" reiterating the word upon her ear, just in the same manner that he would have plied the timber with his axe.

At length she comprehended it all. Her eye glanced from the inner room upon the unwonted guests who occupied the other chamber, and then to the dismayed countenance of her husband; and divining it suddenly, she threw her arms round the athletic form of the Woodman, bursting into a passion of tears, and declaring that he should not leave her.

Of course, on all such occasions there must follow a very tender scene between husband and wife, and such there was in the present instance: only Joan, availing herself of one especial privilege of the fair sex, did not fail, between her bursts of tears and sobs, to rail loudly at the Cardinal, the King, and all belonging to them, talking more high treason in five minutes, than would have cost any *man* an hour to compose; nor did she spare even the Exempts, or the two gentlemen in Isabel and silver, but poured forth her indignation upon all alike.

However, as all things must come to an end, so did this; and Philip was carried away amidst the vain entreaties his wife at length condescended to use.

The only difficulty which remained was, how to mount their prisoner, having all forgot to bring a horse from Meulan for that purpose; and Philip not choosing to facilitate his own removal by telling them that he had a mule in the stable.

However it was at length agreed, that one of the Exempts should walk to the next town, and that Philip should mount his horse till another could be obtained. As the party turned away from the hut, the chief servant, somewhat moved by the unceasing tears of Joan, took upon him to say that he was sure that Charles the Woodman's son, who stood with his mother at the door, would be permitted to see his father in the Bastille, if they would all agree to say, that they did not know what was become of him, in case of any impertinent person inquiring for him during his absence.

This they all consented to, their grief being somewhat moderated by the prospect of communicating with each other, although separated; and Philip once more having bid his wife and children adieu, was carried on to a little village, where a horse being procured for him, the whole party took the road to Marly, and thence proceeded to Paris with all possible diligence.

Day had long dawned before they reached the Bastille, and Philip, who was now excessively tired, never having ridden half the way in his life, was actually glad to arrive at the prison, which he had previously contemplated with so much horror.

Here he was delivered, with the *lettre de cachet*, and Chavigni's note, to the Governor; and the servant again, in his own hearing, recommended that he should be treated with all imaginable kindness, and allowed every liberty consistent with his safe custody.

All this convinced the Woodcutter, as well as the conversation he had heard on the road, that Chavigni really meant well by him; and without any of those more refined feelings, which, however they may sometimes open the gates of the heart to the purest joys, but too often betray the fortress of the breast to the direst pains, he now felt

comparatively secure, and gazed up at the massy walls and towers of the Bastille with awe indeed, but awe not unmingled with admiration.

CHAPTER V.

Which shows that diadems are not without their thorns.

THIS shall be a short Chapter, I am determined; because it is one of the most important in the whole book.

During the absence of the King and Chavigni in the chase, two arrivals had taken place at Chantilly very nearly at the same moment. Luckily, however, the Queen had just time to alight from her carriage, and seek her apartments, before the Cardinal de Richelieu entered the court-yard, thus avoiding an interview with her deadly enemy on the very threshold,—an interview, from which she might well have drawn an inauspicious augury, without even the charge of superstition.

As soon as Chavigni had (as far as possible) provided for his own safety by despatching the order for Philip's arrest, he proceeded to the apartments of Richelieu, and there he gave that Minister an exact account of all he had heard, observed, and done; commenting particularly upon the violent and irascible mood of the King, and the advantages which might be thence derived, if they could turn his anger in the direction that they wished.

In the mean while Louis proceeded to the apartments of the Queen, not indeed hurried on by any great affection for his wife, but desirous of seeing his children, whom he sincerely loved, notwithstanding the unaccountable manner in which he so frequently absented himself from them.

Never very attentive to dress, Louis the Thirteenth, when any thing disturbed or irritated him, neglected entirely the ordinary care of his person. In the present instance he made no change in his apparel, although the sports in which he had been engaged had not left it in a very fit state to grace a drawing-room. Thus, in a pair of immense jack-boots, his hat pressed down upon his brows, and his whole dress soiled, deranged, and covered with dust, he presented himself in the saloon where Anne of Austria sat surrounded by the young Princes and the ladies who had accompanied her to Chantilly.

The Queen immediately rose to receive her husband, and advanced towards him with an air of gentle kindness, mixed however with some degree of apprehension; for to her eyes, long accustomed to remark the various changes of his temper, the disarray of his apparel plainly indicated the irritation of his mind.

Louis saluted her but coldly, and without taking off his hat. "I am glad to see you well, Madam," said he, and passed on to the nurse who held in her arms the young Dauphin.

The child had not seen its father for some weeks, and now perceiving a rude-looking ill-dressed man, approaching hastily towards it, became frightened, hid its face on the nurse's shoulder, and burst into tears.

The rage of the King now broke the bounds of common decency.

"Ha!" exclaimed he, stamping on the ground with his heavy boot, till the whole apartment rang: "is it so, Madam? Do you teach my children, also, to dislike their father?"

"No, my Lord, no, indeed!" replied Anne of Austria, in a tone of deep distress, seeing this unfortunate *contretems* so strangely misconstrued to her disadvantage. "I neither teach the child to dislike you, nor *does* he dislike you; but you approached Louis hastily, and with your hat flapped over your eyes, so that he does not know you. Come hither, Louis," she continued, taking the Dauphin out of the nurse's arms. "It is your father; do not you know him? Have I not always told you to love him?"

The Dauphin looked at his mother, and then at the King, and perfectly old enough to comprehend what she said, he began to recognize his father, and held out his little arms towards him. But Louis turned angrily away.

"A fine lesson of dissimulation!" he exclaimed; and advanced towards his second son, who then bore the title of Duke of Anjou. "Ah, my little Philip," he continued, as the infant received him with a placid smile,—“you are not old enough to have learned any of these arts. You can love your father without being told to show it, like an ape at a puppet-show.”

At this new attack, the Queen burst into tears.

"Indeed, indeed, my Lord," she said, "you wrong me. Oh, Louis! how you might have made me love you once!" and her tears redoubled at the thought of the past. "But I am a weak fool," she continued, wiping the drops from her eyes, "to feel so sensibly what I do not deserve—At present your Majesty does me deep injustice.—I have always taught both my children to love and respect their father. That name is the first word that they learn to pronounce; and from me they learn to pronounce it with affection. But oh, my Liege! what will these dear children think in after years, when they see their father behave to their mother, as your Majesty does towards me?"

"Pshaw!" exclaimed the King, "let us have no more of all this. I hate these scenes of altercation. Fear not, Madam; the time will come, when these children will learn to appreciate us both thoroughly."

"I hope not, my Lord"—replied the Queen fervently—"I hope not. From me, at least, they shall never learn all I have to complain of in their father."

Had Anne of Austria reflected, she would have been silent; but it is sometimes difficult to refrain when urged by taunts and unmerited reproach. That excellent vial of water, which the Fairy bestowed upon the unhappy wife, is not always at hand to impede the utterance of rejoinders, which, like rejoinders in the Court of Chancery, only serve to urge on the strife a degree farther, whether they be right or wrong. In the present case the King's pale countenance flushed with anger. "Beware, Madam, beware!" exclaimed he. "You have already been treated with too much lenity—Remember the affair of Chalais!"

"Well, Sir!" replied the Queen, raising her head with an air of dignity: "Your Majesty knows, and feels, and has said, that I am perfectly guiltless of that miserable plot. My Lord, my Lord! if *you* can lay your head upon your pillow conscious of innocence like mine, you will sleep well; *my* bosom at least is clear."

"See that it be, Madam," replied Louis, darting upon her one of those fiery and terrible glances in which the whole vindictive soul of his Italian mother blazed forth in his eyes with the glare of a basilisk. "See that it be, Madam; for there may come worse charges than that against you.—I have learned from a sure source that a Spaniard is seeking my overthrow, and a woman is plotting my ruin," he continued, repeating the words of the Astrologer; "that a Prince is scheming my destruction, and a Queen is betraying my trust—so, see that your bosom *be* clear, Madam." And passing quickly by her, he left the apartment, exclaiming loud enough for all within it to hear, "Where is his Eminence of Richelieu? Some one, give him notice that the King desires his presence when he has

leisure.”

Anne of Austria clasped her hands in silence, and looking up to Heaven seemed for a moment to petition for support under the new afflictions she saw ready to fall upon her; and then without a comment on the painful scene that had just passed, returned to her ordinary employments.

CHAPTER VI.

Containing a great many things not more curious and interesting than true.

IN the old Chateau of Chantilly was a long gallery, which went by the name of the *Cours aux cerfs*, from the number of stags' heads which appeared curiously sculptured upon the frieze, with their long branching horns projecting from the wall, and so far extended on both sides as to cross each other and form an extraordinary sort of trellis-work architrave, before they reached the ceiling.

The windows of this gallery were far apart, and narrow, admitting but little light into the interior, which, being of a dingy stone colour, could hardly have been rendered cheerful even by the brightest sunshine; but which, both from the smallness of the windows and the projection of a high tower on the other side of the court, was kept in continual shadow, except when in the longest days of summer the sun just passed the angle of the opposite building and threw a parting gleam through the last window, withdrawn as quickly as bestowed.

But at the time I speak of, namely, two days after the Queen's arrival at Chantilly, no such cheering ray found entrance. It seemed, indeed, a fit place for melancholy imaginings; and to such sad purpose had Anne of Austria applied it. For some time she had been standing at one of the windows, leaning on the arm of Madame de Beaumont, and silently gazing with abstracted thoughts upon the open casements of the corridor on the other side, when the figures of Richelieu and Chavigni, passing by one of them, in their full robes, caught her eye; and withdrawing from the conspicuous situation in which she was placed, she remarked to the Marchioness what she had seen, and observed that they must be going to the council-chamber.

Thus began a conversation which soon turned to the King, and to his strange conduct, which ever since their arrival had continued in an increasing strain of petulance and ill-temper.

"Indeed, Madam," said the Marchioness de Beaumont, "your Majesty's gentleness is misapplied. Far be it from me to urge aught against my King; but there be some dispositions to have their vehemence checked and repelled; and it is well also for themselves, when they meet with one who will oppose them firmly and boldly."

"Perhaps, De Beaumont," replied the Queen, "if I had taken that course many years ago, it might have produced a happy effect; but now, alas! it would be in vain; and God knows whether it would have succeeded even then!"

As she spoke, the door of the gallery opened, and an officer of the Council appeared, notifying to the Queen that his Majesty the King demanded her presence in the council-chamber.

Anne of Austria turned to Madame de Beaumont with a look of melancholy foreboding. "More, more, more still to endure," she said: and then added, addressing the officer, "His Majesty's commands shall be instantly obeyed; so inform him, Sir.—De Beaumont, tell Mademoiselle de Hauteford that I shall be glad of her assistance too. You will go with me, of course."

Mademoiselle de Hauteford instantly came at the Queen's command, and approaching her with a sweet and placid smile, said a few words of comfort to her Royal mistress in so kind and gentle a manner, that the tears rose in the eyes of Anne of Austria.

"De Hauteford!" said she, "I feel a presentiment that we shall soon part, and therefore I speak to you now of what I never spoke before. I know how much I have to thank you for—I know how much you have rejected for my sake—The love of a King would have found few to refuse it. You have done so for my sake, and you will have your reward."

The eloquent blood spread suddenly over the beautiful countenance of the lady of honour. "Spare me, spare me, your Majesty," cried she, kissing the hand the Queen held out to her. "I thought that secret had been hidden in my bosom alone. But oh let me hope that, even had it not been for my love for your Majesty, I could still have resisted. Yes! yes!" continued she, clasping her hands, and murmuring to herself the name of a higher and holier King, "yes! yes! I could have resisted!"

The unusual energy with which the beautiful girl spoke, on all ordinary occasions so calm and imperturbable, showed the Queen how deeply her heart had taken part in that to which she alluded; and perhaps female curiosity might have led her to prolong the theme, though a painful one to both parties, had not the summons of the King required her immediate attention.

As they approached the council-chamber, Madame de Beaumont observed that the Queen's steps wavered.

"Take courage, Madam," said she. "For Heaven's sake, call up spirit to carry you through, whatever may occur."

"Fear not, De Beaumont," replied the Queen, though her tone betrayed the apprehension she felt. "They shall see that they cannot frighten me."

At that moment the *Huissier* threw open the door of the council-chamber, and the Queen with her ladies entered, and found themselves in the presence of the King and all his principal ministers. In the centre of the room, strewed with various papers and materials for writing, stood a long table, at the top of which, in a seat slightly raised above the rest, sat Louis himself, dressed, as was usual with him, in a suit of black silk, without any ornament whatever, except three rows of sugar-loaf buttons of polished jet,—if these could be considered as ornamental. His hat, indeed, which he continued to wear, was looped up with a small string of jewels; and the feather, which fell much on one side, was buttoned with a diamond of some value; but these were the only indications by which his apparel could have been distinguished from that of some poor *avoué*, or *greffier de la cour*.

On the right hand of the King was placed the Cardinal de Richelieu, in his robes; and on the left, was the Chancellor Seguier. Bouthilliers, Chavigni, Mazarin, and other members of the council, filled the rest of the seats round the table; but at the farther end was a vacant space, in front of which the Queen now presented herself, facing the chair of the King.

There was an angry spot on Louis's brow, and as Anne of Austria entered, he continued playing with the hilt of his sword, without once raising his eyes towards her. The Queen's heart sank, but still she bore an undismayed countenance, while the Cardinal fixed upon her the full glance of his dark commanding eyes, and rising from his seat, slightly inclined his head at her approach.

The rest of the Council rose, and Chavigni turned away his eyes, with an ill-defined sensation of pain and regret; but the more subtle Mazarin, ever watchful to court good opinion, whether for present, or for future purposes, glided

quietly round, and placed a chair for her at the table. It was an action not forgotten in after days.

A moment's pause ensued. As soon as the Queen was seated, Richelieu glanced his eye towards the countenance of the King, as if to instigate him to open the business of the day: but Louis's attention was deeply engaged in his sword-knot, or at least seemed to be so, and the Cardinal was at length forced to proceed himself.

"Your Majesty's presence has been desired by the King, who is like a God in justice and in equity," said Richelieu, proceeding in that bold and figurative style, in which all his public addresses were conceived, "in order to enable you to cast off, like a raiment that has been soiled by a foul touch, the accusations which have been secretly made against you, and to explain some part of your conduct, which, as clouds between the earth and the sun, have come between yourself and your royal husband, intercepting the beams of his princely approbation. All this your Majesty can doubtless do, and the King has permitted the Council to hear your exculpation from your own lips, that we may trample under our feet the foul suspicions that appear against you."

"Lord Cardinal," replied the Queen, calmly, but firmly, "I wonder at the boldness of your language. Remember, Sir, whom it is that you thus presume to address—The wife of your Sovereign, Sir, who sits there, bound to protect her from insult and from injury."

"Cease, cease, Madam!" cried Louis, breaking silence. "First prove yourself innocent, and then use the high tone of innocence, if you will."

"To you, my Lord," replied the Queen, "I am ready to answer every thing, truly and faithfully, as a good wife, and a good subject; but not to that audacious vassal, who, in oppressing and insulting me, but degrades your authority and weakens your power."

"Spare your invectives, Madam," said the Cardinal calmly, "for, if I be not much mistaken, before you leave this chamber you will be obliged to acknowledge all that is contained in the paper before me; in which case, the bad opinion of your Majesty would be as the roar of idle wind, that hurteth not the mariner on shore."

"My Lord and Sovereign," said the Queen, addressing Louis, without deigning to notice the Cardinal, "it seems that some evil is laid to my charge; will you condescend to inform me of what crime I am accused, that now calls your Majesty's anger upon me?—If loving you too well,—if lamenting your frequent absence from me,—if giving my whole time and care to your children, be no crimes, tell me, my Lord, tell me, what I have done."

"What you have done, Madam, is easily told," exclaimed Louis, his eyes flashing fire. "Give me that paper, Lord Cardinal;" and passing hastily from article to article of its contents, he continued: "Have you not, contrary to my express command, and the command of the Council, corresponded with Philip of Spain? Have you not played the spy upon the plans of my Government, and caused the defeat of my armies in Flanders, the losses of the Protestants in Germany, the failure of all our schemes in Italy, by the information you have conveyed? Have you not written to Don Francisco de Mello, and your cousin the Archduke? Have you not—"

"Never, never!" exclaimed the Queen, clasping her hands, "never, so help me Heaven!"

"What!" cried Louis, dashing the paper angrily upon the table. "Darest thou deny what is as evident as the sun in the noonday sky? Remember, Madam, that your minion, De Blenau, is in the Bastille, and will soon forfeit his life upon the scaffold, if his obstinacy does not make him die under the *question*."

"For poor De Blenau's sake, my Lord," replied the Queen,— "for the sake of as noble, and as innocent a man as ever was the victim of tyranny, I will tell you at once, that I have written to Philip of Spain—my own dear brother. And who can blame me, my Lord, for loving one who has always loved me? But I knew my duty better than ever once to mention even the little that I knew of the public affairs of this kingdom: and far less, your Majesty, did I pry into secret plans of State policy for the purpose of divulging them. My letters, my Lord, were wholly domestic. I spoke of myself, of my husband, of my children; I spoke as a woman, a wife, and a mother; but never, my Lord, as a Queen; and never, never as a spy.

"As to De Blenau, my Lord, let me assure you, that before he undertook to forward those letters, he exacted from me a promise, that they should never contain any thing which could impeach his honour, or his loyalty. This, my Lord, is all my crime, and this is the extent of his."

There was a degree of simplicity and truth in the manner of the Queen, which operated strongly on the mind of Louis. "But who," said he, "will vouch that those letters contained nothing treasonable? We have but your word, Madam; and you well know that we are at war with Spain, and cannot procure a sight of the originals."

"Luckily," replied Anne of Austria, her countenance brightening with a ray of hope, "they have all been read by one whom your Majesty yourself recommended to my friendship. Clara de Hauteford, you have seen them all. Speak! Tell the King the nature of their contents without fear and without favour."

Mademoiselle de Hauteford advanced from behind the Queen's chair; and the King, who, it was generally believed, had once passionately loved her, but had met with no return, now fixed his eyes intently upon the pale, beautiful creature, that, scarcely like a being of the earth, glided silently forward and placed herself directly opposite to him. Clara de Hauteford was devotedly attached to the Queen. Whether it sprang from that sense of duty which in general governed all her actions, or whether it was personal attachment, matters little, as the effect was the same, and she would, at no time, have considered her life too great a sacrifice to the interest of her mistress.

She advanced then before the Council, knowing that the happiness, if not the life of Anne of Austria, might depend upon her answer; and clasping her snowy hands together, she raised her eyes towards Heaven, "So help me God at my utmost need!" she said, with a clear, slow, energetic utterance, "no line that I have ever seen of her Majesty's writing—and I believe I have seen almost all she has written within the last five years—no line that I have seen, ever spoke any thing but the warmest attachment to my Lord the King; nor did any ever contain the slightest allusion to the politics of this kingdom, but were confined entirely to the subject of her domestic life;—nor even then," she continued, dropping her full blue eyes to the countenance of the King, and fixing them there, with a calm serious determined gaze, which overpowered the glance of the Monarch, and made his eyelid fall—"nor even then did they ever touch upon her domestic sorrows."

Richelieu saw that the King was moved: he knew also the influence of Mademoiselle de Hauteford, and he instantly resolved upon crushing her by one of those bold acts of power which he had so often attempted with impunity. Nor had he much hesitation in the present instance, knowing that Louis's superstitious belief in the predictions of the Astrologer had placed the Monarch's mind completely under his dominion. "Mademoiselle de Hauteford," said he in a stern voice, "answer me. Have you seen all the letters that the Queen has written to her

brother, Philip King of Spain, positively knowing them to be such?"

"So please your Eminence, I *have*," replied Mademoiselle de Hauteford.

"Well then," said Richelieu, rising haughtily from his chair while he spoke, "in so doing you have committed misprision of treason, and are therefore banished from this court and kingdom for ever; and if within sixteen days from this present, you have not removed yourself from the precincts of the realm, you shall be considered guilty of high treason, and arraigned as such, inasmuch as, according to your own confession, you have knowingly and wilfully, after a decree in council against it, concealed and abetted a correspondence between persons within the kingdom of France, and a power declaredly its enemy."

As the Cardinal uttered his sentence in a firm, deep, commanding voice, the King, who had at first listened to him with a look of surprise, and perhaps of anger, soon began to feel the habitual superiority of Richelieu, and shrunk back into himself, depressed and overawed: the Queen pressed her hand before her eyes; and Chavigni half raised himself, as if to speak, but instantly resumed his seat as his eye met that of the Cardinal.

It was Mademoiselle de Hauteford alone that heard her condemnation without apparent emotion. She merely bowed her head with a look of the most perfect resignation. "Your Eminence's will shall be obeyed," she replied, "and may a gracious God protect my innocent Mistress!" Thus saying, she again took her place behind the Queen's chair, with hardly a change of countenance—always pale, perhaps her face was a little paler but it was scarcely perceptible.

"And now," continued Richelieu in the same proud manner, assuming at once that power which he in reality possessed,—“and now let us proceed to the original matter, from which we have been diverted to sweep away a butterfly. Your Majesty confesses yourself guilty of treason, in corresponding with the enemies of the kingdom. I hold in my hand a paper to that effect, or something very similar, all drawn from irrefragable evidence upon the subject. This you may as well sign, and on that condition no farther notice shall be taken of the affair; but the matter shall be forgotten as an error in judgment."

"I have *not* confessed myself guilty of treason, arrogant Prelate," replied the Queen, "and I have not corresponded with Philip of Spain as an enemy of France, but as my own brother. Nor will I, while I have life, sign a paper so filled with falsehoods as any one must be that comes from your hand."

"Your Majesty sees," said Richelieu, turning to the King, from whom the faint sparks of energy he had lately shown were now entirely gone. "Is there any medium to be kept with a person so convicted of error, and so obstinate in the wrong? And is such a person fit to educate the children of France? Your Majesty has promised that the Dauphin and the Duke of Anjou shall be given into my charge."

"I have," said the weak Monarch, "and I will keep my promise."

"Never! never!" cried the Queen vehemently, "never, while Anne of Austria lives! Oh, my Lord!" she exclaimed, advancing, and casting herself at the feet of the King; with all the overpowering energy of maternal love, "consider that I am their mother!—Rob me not of my only hope,—rob me not of those dear children who have smiled and cheered me through all my sorrows. Oh, Louis! if you have the feelings of a father, if you have the feelings of a man, spare me this!"

The King turned away his head, and Richelieu, gliding behind the throne, placed himself at the Queen's side. "Sign the paper," said he, in a low deep tone, "sign the paper, and they shall not be taken from you."

"Any thing! any thing! but leave me my children!" exclaimed the Queen, taking the pen he offered her. "Have I your promise?"

"You have," replied he decidedly. "They shall not be taken from you."

"Well, then!" said Anne of Austria, receiving the paper, "I will sign it; but I call Heaven to witness that I am innocent; and you, gentlemen of the Council, to see that I sign a paper, the contents of which I know not, and part of which is certainly false." Thus saying, with a rapid hand she wrote her name at the bottom of the page, threw down the pen and quitted the apartment.

The Queen walked slowly, and in silence, to the apartments allotted to her use, without giving way to the various painful feelings that struggled in her bosom; but once arrived within the shelter of her own saloon, she sank into a chair, and burst into a flood of tears. Mademoiselle de Hauteford, who stood beside her, endeavoured in vain for some time to calm her agitation, but at length succeeding in a degree.

"Oh, Clara!" said the Queen, "you have ruined yourself for my sake."

"I hope, Madam," replied the young lady, "that I have done my duty, which were enough in itself to reconcile me to my fate; but if I could suppose that I have served your Majesty, I should be more than rewarded for any thing I may undergo."

"You have served me most deeply on this and every occasion," answered the Queen; "and the time may come, when the affection of Anne of Austria will not be what it is now,—the destruction of all that possess it.—But why comes Mademoiselle de Beaumont in such haste?" she continued, as Pauline, who had been absent in the gardens of the Palace, and unconscious of all that had lately passed, entered the saloon with hurry and anxiety in her countenance.

"Please your Majesty," said Pauline, and then suddenly stopped, seeing that the Queen had been weeping. "Proceed, proceed! wild rose," said Anne of Austria; "they are but tears—drops that signify nothing."

"As I was walking in the gardens but now," continued Pauline, "a little peasant boy came up to me, and asked if I could bring him to speech of your Majesty. I was surprised at his request, and asked him what was his business; when he told me that he brought you a letter from the Bastille. This seemed so important that I made bold to take him into the Palace by the private gate, and concealed him in my apartments, till I had informed you of it all."

"You did right, Pauline, you did right," replied the Queen. "It must surely be news from De Blenau. Bring the boy hither directly—not by the anteroom, but by the inner apartments—You, Clara, station Laporte at the top of the staircase, to see that no one approaches."

Pauline flew to execute the Queen's commands, and in a few minutes a clatter was heard in the inner chamber, not at all unlike the noise produced by that most unfortunate animal a cat, when some mischievous boys adorn her feet with walnut-shells.

The moment after, the door opened, and Pauline appeared leading in a fine curly-headed boy of about ten years

old. He was dressed in hodden grey, with a broad leathern belt round his waist, in which appeared a small axe and a knife, while his feet, displaying no stockings, but with the skin tanned to the colour of Russia leather, were thrust into a pair of unwieldy *sabots*, or wooden-shoes, which had caused the clatter aforesaid.

"Take off his *sabots*, take off his *sabots*," cried the Queen, putting her hands to her ears. "They will alarm the whole house."

"*Dame oui!*" cried the boy, slipping his feet out of their incumbrances. "*J'avons oublié, et vous aussi, Mademoiselle,*" turning to Pauline, who, anxious to hear of De Blenau, would have let him come in, if he had been shod like a horse.

The little messenger now paused for a moment, then having glanced his eye over the ladies at the other end of the room, as if to ascertain to which he was to deliver his credentials, advanced straight to the Queen, and falling down upon both his knees, tendered her a sealed packet.

"Well, my boy," said Anne of Austria, taking the letter, "whom does this come from?"

"My father, the Woodman of Mantes," replied the boy, "told me to give it into the Queen's own hand; and when I had done so, to return straight to him and not to wait, for fear of being discovered."

"And how do you know that I am the Queen?" asked Anne of Austria, who too often suffered her mind to be distracted from matters of grave importance by trifling objects of amusement. "That lady is the Queen," she continued, pointing to Madame de Beaumont, and playing upon the boy's simplicity.

"No, no," said Charles, the Woodman's son, "she stands and you sit; and besides, you told them to take off my *sabots*, as if you were used to order all about you."

"Well," rejoined the Queen, "you are right, my boy: go back to your father, and as a token that you have given the letter to the Queen, carry him back that ring;" and she took a jewel from her finger, and put it into the boy's hand. "Mademoiselle de Beaumont," she continued, "will you give this boy into the charge of Laporte, bidding him take him from the Palace by the most private way, and not to leave him till he is safe out of Chantilly."

According to Anne of Austria's command, Pauline conducted Charles to the head of the staircase, at which had been stationed Laporte, the confidential servant of the Queen, keeping watch to give notice of any one's approach. To him she delivered her charge with the proper directions, and then returned to the saloon, not a little anxious to learn the contents of De Blenau's letter. I will not try to explain her sensations. Let those who have been parted from some one that they love, who have been anxious for his safety, and terrified for his danger, who have waited in fear and agony for tidings long delayed—let them call up all that they felt, and tinging it with that shade of romance, which might be expected in the mind of a young, feeling, imaginative, Languedocian girl of 1643, they will have something like a picture of Pauline's sensations, without my helping them a bit.

"Come hither, my wild rose," said the Queen, as she saw her enter. "Here is a letter from De Blenau, full of sad news indeed. His situation is perilous in the extreme; and though I am the cause of all, I do not know how to aid him."

Pauline turned pale, but cast down her eyes, and remained without speaking.

"Surely, Pauline," said the Queen, misinterpreting her silence, "after the explanations I gave you some days ago, you can have no farther doubt of De Blenau's conduct?"

"Oh no indeed! Madam," replied Pauline, vehemently, "and now that I feel and know how very wrong those suspicions were, I would fain do something to atone for having formed them."

"Thou canst do nothing, my poor flower," said the Queen, with a melancholy smile. "However, read that letter, and thou wilt see that something must soon be done to save him, or his fate is sealed. De Blenau must be informed that I have acknowledged writing to my brother, and all the particulars connected therewith; for well I know that Richelieu will not be contented with my confession, but will attempt to wring something more from him, even by the *peine forte et dure*."

Pauline read, and re-read the letter, and each time she did so, the colour came and went in her cheek, and at every sentence she raised her large dark eyes to the Queen, as if inquiring what could be done for him. Each of the Queen's ladies was silent for a time, and then each proposed some plan, which was quickly discussed and rejected, as either too dangerous, or totally impracticable. One proposed to bribe the Governor of the Bastille to convey a letter to De Blenau, but that was soon rejected: another proposed to send Laporte, the Queen's valet de chambre, to try and gain admittance; but Laporte had once been confined there himself, and was well known to all the officers of the prison: and another mentioned Seguin, Anne of Austria's surgeon; but he also was not only too well known, but it appeared, from what De Blenau had informed the Queen of his conference with Richelieu, that the very words of the message which had been sent by him on the night of the young Count's rencontre with the robbers, had been communicated to the Cardinal; and the whole party forgot that Louise, the *soubrette*, had been present when it was delivered.

In the mean while, Pauline remained profoundly silent, occupied by many a bitter reflection, while a thousand confused schemes flitted across her mind, like bubbles floating on a stream, and breaking as soon as they were looked upon. At length, however, she started, as if some more feasible plan presented itself to her thoughts—"I will go!" exclaimed she,— "Please your Majesty, I will go."

"You, Pauline!" said the Queen, "you, my poor girl! You know not the difficulties of such an undertaking. What say you, Madame de Beaumont?"

"That I am pleased, Madam, to see my child show forth the spirit of her race," replied the Marchioness. "Nor do I doubt of her success; for sure I am Pauline would not propose a project which had no good foundation."

"Then say how you intend to manage it," said the Queen, with little faith in the practicability of Pauline's proposal. "I doubt me much, my sweet girl, they will never let you into the Bastille. Their hearts are as hard as the stones of the prison that they keep, and they will give you no ingress for love of your bright eyes."

"I do not intend to make that a plea," replied Pauline, smiling in youthful confidence; "but I will borrow one of my maid's dresses, and doubtless shall look as like a *soubrette* as any one. Claude directs us, here, to ask at the gate for Philip the woodman of Mantes. Now he will most likely be able to procure me admission; and if not, I can but give the message to him and be sent away again."

"Oh, no, no!" cried the Queen, "give no messages but in the last extremity. How do we know that this Woodman

might not betray us, and raise Richelieu's suspicions still more? If you can see De Blenau, well—I will give you a letter for him; but if not, only tell the Woodman to inform him, that I have confessed all. If that reach the tyrant's ears, it can do no harm. Your undertaking is bold, Pauline: think you your courage will hold out?"

The boundaries between emulation and jealousy are very frail, and Madame de Beaumont, who regarded the services which Mademoiselle de Hauteford had rendered the Queen with some degree of envy, now answered for her daughter's courage with more confidence than perhaps she felt. But Pauline's plan yet required great arrangement, even to give it the probability of success. With a thousand eyes continually upon their actions, it was no very easy matter even to quit Chantilly without calling down that observation and inquiry which would have been fatal to their project.

To obviate this difficulty, however, it was agreed that Pauline should accompany Mademoiselle de Hauteford, whose sentence of banishment required her immediate presence in Paris, for the arrangement of her affairs. On their arrival in that city, the two ladies were to take up their abode with the old Marchioness de Senecy, one of the Queen's most devoted adherents, and to determine their future proceedings by the information they received upon the spot.

The greatest rapidity, however, was necessary to any hope of success, and neither Pauline nor Mademoiselle de Hauteford lost any time in their preparations. The Queen's letter to De Blenau was soon written. Pauline borrowed from her maid Louise, the full dress of a Languedoc peasant, provided herself with a considerable sum of money, that no means might be left untried, and having taken leave of her mother, whose bold counsels tended to raise her spirits and uphold her resolution, she placed herself in the *chaise roulante* beside Mademoiselle de Hauteford, buoyed up with youthful confidence and enthusiasm.

It was rather an anxious moment, however, as they passed the gates of the Palace, which by some accident were shut. This caused a momentary delay, and several of the Cardinal's guard (for Richelieu assumed that of a bodyguard amongst other marks of royalty) gathered round the vehicle with the idle curiosity of an unemployed soldiery. Pauline's heart beat fast, but the moment after she was relieved by the appearance of the old *concierge*, or porter, who threw open the gates, and the carriage rolled out without any question being asked. Her mind, however, was not wholly relieved till they were completely free of the town of Chantilly, and till the carriage slowly mounting the first little hill, took a slight turn to avoid a steeper ascent, showing them the towers of the chateau and the course of the road they had already passed, without any human form that could afford subject for alarm.

Pauline, seeing that they were not followed, gave herself up to meditations of the future, firmly believing that their departure had entirely escaped the observation of the Cardinal. This, however, was not the case. He had been early informed that one of the Queen's carriages was in preparation to carry some of the ladies of honour to Paris; but concluding that it was nothing more than the effect of that sentence of banishment which he had himself pronounced against Mademoiselle de Hauteford, he suffered Pauline and her companion to depart without inquiry or obstruction; although some of the many tools of his power had shut the Palace gates, as if by accident, till his decision was known.

As the carriage rolled on, and Pauline reflected in silence upon the task she had undertaken, the bright colouring of the moment's enthusiasm faded away; the mists in which hope had concealed the rocks and precipices around her path, no longer intercepted her view, and the whole difficulties and dangers to which she exposed herself, presented themselves one after another to her sight. But the original motives still remained in full force. Her deep romantic attachment to De Blenau, her sense of duty to the Queen, and that generosity of purpose which would have led her at any time to risk her life to save the innocent—much more the innocent and loved—of these, nothing could deprive her; and these kept up her resolution, although the very interest which her heart took in the success of her endeavour, made her magnify the dangers, and tremble at the thought of failure.

CHAPTER VII.

Which shows what they did with De Blenau in the Bastille, and what he himself did to get out of it.

AS a young member of what is technically called the *lower house*, or otherwise the House of Commons, when first he goes down after his election to take the oaths and his seat, his heart fluttering both with pride and timidity, most conscientiously resolves to be independent in all his opinions, and determines heroically to have no party: so had I, when I entered upon the arduous duties of giving this work to the public in its present form, determined heroically to have no hero; but to do equal justice to all the several characters, and let each reader find a hero for himself.

However, pursuing the course of the abovementioned young member of the Commons House of Parliament, who soon begins to perceive, that it is as easy to eat oysters and brown sugar, as to vote with a party to whom he has a natural antipathy; or for the needle to fly from the magnet as for him to keep aloof from that faction to which individual interests, long-indulged habits, and early prejudices attach him; so, I soon began to find that my own feelings more particularly inclining me to the Count de Blenau, I unconsciously made him the hero of my tale, dilated on his history, enlarged upon his character, quitted him with regret, and returned to him with pleasure.

At present, however, the course of my tale naturally conducts me once more to the gloomy walls of the Bastille, to give some account of the circumstances which led to the latter events of the last chapter; and consequently I feel no hesitation in once more taking up the history of my Hero.

The sleep of the Count de Blenau was fully as sound within the Bastille as ever it had been in his own hotel at St. Germain: nor was it till the day was risen high that he awoke, on the first morning after his imprisonment.

It was some moments before he could remember his precise situation, so profound had been his sleep. But the unpleasant parts of our fate soon recall themselves to our senses, though we may forget them for a time; and the narrow windows, the iron door, and the untapestried walls, speedily brought back to De Blenau's recollection many a painful particular, to which sleep had given a temporary oblivion.

On rising, he missed in some degree the attendance to which he was accustomed; but nevertheless he contrived to get through the business of the toilet, without much difficulty; although no page was ready at his call, no groom prepared to adjust every part of his apparel. He then proceeded into the outer chamber, which he mentally termed his saloon, and would willingly have ordered his breakfast, but his apartments afforded no means of communicating with those below, except by the iron door already mentioned; the secret of which was of too great importance to be lost upon so trifling an occasion.

No remedy presented itself but patience, and proceeding to the window, which opened at will to admit the air, but which was strongly secured on the outside with massy iron bars, he endeavoured to amuse the time by looking into the court below, in which he could occasionally catch a glimpse of some of his fellow-prisoners, appearing and disappearing, as they sometimes emerged into the open space within his sight, and sometimes retired into the part, which the thickness of the walls in which the window was placed, hid from his view.

They were now apparently taking their morning's walk, and enjoying the privilege of conversing with each other—a privilege which De Blenau began to value more highly than ever he had done. Amongst those that he beheld were many whom he recognised, as having either known them personally, or having seen them at the court, or with the army; and the strange assemblage of all different parties which met his eye in the court-yard of the Bastille, fully convinced him, that under the administration of a man who lived in constant fear that his ill-gotten power would be snatched from him, safety was to be found in no tenets and in no station.

Here he beheld some that had been of the party of Mary de Medicis, and some who had been the avowed followers of Richelieu himself; some that the Minister suspected of being too much favoured by the King, and some, as in his own case, who had been attached to the Queen. One he saw who was supposed to have favoured the Huguenots in France, and one that had assisted the Catholic party in Germany.

"Well," thought De Blenau, "I am but one out of the many, and whatever plan I had pursued, most probably I should have found my way here somehow. Wealth and influence, in despotic governments, are generally like the plumes of the ostrich, which often cause her to be hunted down, but will not help her to fly."

Whilst engaged in such reflections, De Blenau heard the bolts of the door undrawn, and the Governor of the prison entered, followed by his servant loaded with the various requisites for so substantial a meal as a breakfast of that period. De Blenau and the Governor saluted each other with every outward form of civility; and the Count, perceiving that his *custodier* still lingered after the servant had disposed the various articles upon the table and had taken his departure, luckily remembered that this was one of the *jours maigres* of which he had heard, and invited his companion to partake of his morning meal. The Governor agreed to the proposal *sans cérémonie*, and having done ample justice to the dish of stewed partridges, which formed the principal ornament of the table, he himself finished a bottle of the celebrated wine of Suresnes, which is one of the things now lost to the *bons vivants* of Paris.

De Blenau was not so much importuned by hunger as to envy the Governor the very large share he appropriated of the viands before him; and he had plenty of leisure to remark, that his companion performed his feats of mastication with a wonderful degree of velocity. But the Governor had a reason for thus wishing to hurry, what was to him a very agreeable occupation, to its conclusion; for he had scarcely poured out the last goblet of his wine, and was still wiping and folding up his case-knife, (which, by the way, was the constant companion of high and low in those days, and the only implement they had for cutting their food,) when the door opened, and a servant appeared, giving the Governor a significant nod, which was answered by a sign of the same kind.

Upon this the man retired, and the door being closed, the well-filled official turned to De Blenau,—“I did not tell you before, Monsieur le Comte,” said he, “for fear of taking away your appetite; but we have had a message this morning from Monsieur Lafemas,—you have heard of Monsieur Lafemas, doubtless?—importing that he would soon be here to put some questions to you. Now, Monsieur de Blenau, you are a gentleman for whom I have a great regard, and I will give you a hint which may be of service to you. If in the examination which you are about to undergo, there be any questions to which you do not find it convenient to reply, do not refuse to answer them, but speak always in such a manner as to bear two interpretations, by which means I have known many a prisoner avoid the torture, and sometimes go on from examination to examination, till they gave him his liberty from pure

weariness."

De Blenau bowed, already determined as to the course he should pursue. "When do you expect this worthy Judge?" he demanded. "I am perfectly unconcerned as to his coming, let me assure you, though I feel obliged by your consideration for my appetite."

"He is here now, Sir," replied the Governor; "we had better, if you please, join him in the audience-hall. That servant came to announce his arrival."

"I will follow you instantly," replied the Count; upon which the Governor rose and opened the door.

The moment De Blenau had passed out, the guard, who had been stationed at the head of the stairs, followed at the distance of a couple of paces, while the Governor led the way. In this order they proceeded to the inner court, which they had to pass before they could reach the audience-chamber. This open space was still filled by the prisoners, who, glad the little liberty allowed them, seldom retired to their cells, except when obliged by the regulations of the prison. The moment De Blenau appeared in the court, there was a slight stir amongst its tenants, and the question of, "Who is he? who is he?" circulated rapidly among them.

"It is the Count de Blenau, by St. Louis!" exclaimed a deep voice, which De Blenau remembered to have heard somewhere before; but, though on looking round he saw several persons that he knew, he could not fix upon any one in particular as the one who had spoken.

He had not time, however, for more than a momentary glance, and was obliged to pass on to the door of the audience-hall, which opened into a little narrow passage leading from the court. Here De Blenau paused for an instant to collect his thoughts, and then followed the Governor, who had already entered.

The audience-hall of the Bastille was a large oblong chamber, dimly lighted by two high Gothic windows, which looked into the outer court. The scanty gleam of daylight which would have thus entered, had the space been open, was impeded by the dust and dirt of many a century, and by the thick crossing of the leaden framework, while its progress into the hall itself was also farther obstructed by several heavy columns which supported the high pointed arches of the roof.

This roof, the apartment having been originally intended for the chapel, would have afforded a relief to the dullness of the rest by its beautiful proportions, and the highly finished tracery with which it was adorned, had the eye been able to reach it; but the rays, which from the causes above mentioned were barely enough to illuminate the lower part of the hall, were lost before they could attain its height, leaving it in that profound obscurity, which cast a double gloom upon the space below.

The pavement of this melancholy hall was damp and decayed, many of the stones having strayed from their bed of mortar, and become vagrant about the apartment; and the furniture, if it might be so called, far from filling it, served only to show its size and emptiness. At the farther extremity was a long table, at the end of which, in a chair somewhat elevated, sat the Judge Lafemas, with a Clerk at a desk below him, and two or three Exempts standing round about.

Near the end next De Blenau was another chair, which he conceived to be placed for his use; while between two of the pillars, sitting on a curious machine, the use of which De Blenau at once suspected, appeared an ill-favoured muscular old man, whose lowering brow and doggedness of aspect seemed to speak of many a ruthless deed.

As the Count entered, the door closed after him with a loud clang; and advancing to the table, he took his seat in the vacant chair, while the Governor placed himself at a little distance between him and the Judge.

"Well, Monsieur de Blenau," said Lafemas in that sweet mild tone which he always assumed when not irritated by the taunts of Chavigni, "This is the last place where I could have wished to meet a nobleman whose general character has always engaged my most affectionate esteem."

De Blenau knew Lafemas to be one of the meanest and most viperous of the Cardinal's tools, and not feeling much moved to exchange courtesies with him, he merely acknowledged the Judge's salutation by a silent bow, while the other proceeded: "I have requested the pleasure of your society for a space, in order to ask you a few questions; your reply to which will, doubtless, soon procure your liberation from this unpleasant place."

"I trust so, Sir," replied the Count, "as the detention of an innocent person must occasion fully as much discredit to his Majesty's Government, as it does inconvenience to the person himself."

"You are quite right, you are quite right," rejoined the sweet-tongued Judge. "Indeed, my very object in coming is to obtain such answers from you as will convince the Cardinal de Richelieu, who, though a profound minister, is somewhat suspicious withal,—to convince him, I say, that you are innocent; of which, on my conscience, and as I believe in the Saviour, I have no doubt myself.—In the first place, then," he continued, "tell me as a friend, have you any acquaintance in Brussels?"

"I have!" replied De Blenau decidedly.

"That is honourable,—that is candid," said the Judge. "I told you, Monsieur le Gouverneur, that we should have no difficulty, and that Monsieur de Blenau would enable me easily to establish his innocence.—Pray do you correspond with these friends," he continued, "and by what means?"

"I do correspond with them; but seldom: and then by any means that occur."

"Monsieur de Blenau," exclaimed Lafemas, "I am enchanted with this frankness; but be a little more specific about the means. If you have no particular objection to confide in me, mention any channel that you call to mind, by which you have sent letters to the Low Countries."

De Blenau felt somewhat disgusted with the sweet and friendly manner of a man whose deeds spoke him as cruel and as bloody-minded as a famished tiger; and unwilling to be longer mocked with soft words, he replied, "Sometimes by the King's courier, Sir; sometimes by the Cardinal's: and once I remember having sent one by your cousin De Merceau, but I believe that letter never reached its destination; for you must recollect that De Merceau was hanged by Don Francisco de Mello, for ripping open the bag, and purloining the despatches."

"We have nothing to do with that, my dear Count," said Lafemas, struggling to maintain his placidity of demeanour.—"The next thing I have to inquire is,"—and he looked at a paper he held in his hand: "Have you ever conveyed any letters to the Low Countries for any one else?"

De Blenau answered in the affirmative; and the Judge proceeded with a series of questions, very similar to those which had been asked by Richelieu himself, artfully striving to entangle the prisoner by means of his own

admissions, so as to force him into farther confessions by the impossibility of receding. But beyond a certain point De Blenau would not proceed.

"Monsieur Lafemas," said he in a calm firm tone, "I perceive that you are going into questions which have already been asked me by his Eminence the Cardinal Prime Minister. The object in doing so is evidently to extort from me some contradiction which may criminate myself; and therefore henceforward I will reply to no such questions whatsoever. The Cardinal is in possession of my answers; and if you want them, you must apply to him."

"You mistake entirely, my dear Count," said Lafemas; "on my salvation, my only object is to serve you. You have already acknowledged that you have forwarded letters from the Queen,—why not now inform me to whom those letters were addressed? If those letters were not of a treasonable nature, why did she not send them by one of her own servants?"

"When a Queen of France is not allowed the common attendants which a simple gentlewoman can command, she may often be glad to use the servants and services of her friends. My own retinue, Sir, trebles that which the Queen has ever possessed at St. Germain's. But, without going into these particulars, your question is at once replied to by reminding you, that I am her Majesty's Chamberlain, and therefore her servant."

"Without there were something wrong, Monsieur de Blenau," said Lafemas, "you could have no objection to state whether you have or have not conveyed some letters from her Majesty to Don John of Austria, Don Francisco de Mello, or King Philip of Spain. It is very natural for a Queen to write to her near relations, surely!"

"I have already said," replied De Blenau, "that I shall reply to no such questions, the object of which is alone to entangle me."

"You know not what you are exposing yourself to," rejoined the Judge; "there are means within this prison which would easily compel an answer."

"None," replied De Blenau, firmly. "My resolution is taken, and no power on earth can shake it."

"Really, Monsieur de Blenau, it would hurt me to the heart to leave you to the dreadful fate which your mistaken determination is likely to call upon you. I could weep, truly I could weep, to think of what you are calling upon your own head;" and the Judge glanced his eye towards the machine, which we have already noticed, and from which the old man rose up, as if preparing for his task.

"You mean the torture?" said De Blenau, looking at it without a change of countenance. "But let me tell you, Monsieur Lafemas, that you dare not order it to a man of my rank, without an express warrant for the purpose; and, even if you had such authority, not all the torture in the world would wring one word from me. Ask that instrument of tyranny, Sir," and he pointed to the Executioner,— "ask him how the noble Caply died; and so would De Blenau also."

Lafemas looked at the Governor, and the Governor at the Executioner, and so round. One of the dreadful secrets of the Bastille had evidently escaped beyond those precincts to which they were fearfully confined; no one could divine how this had occurred, and each suspected the other. A temporary silence ensued, and then Lafemas proceeded:

"The torture! no, Monsieur de Blenau: God forbid that I should think of ordering such a thing! But let me advise you to answer; for I must, of course, report your refusal to the Cardinal Prime Minister, and you know that he is not likely to consider either your rank or your fortune, but will, in all probability, order you the Question ordinary and extraordinary instantly."

"The guilt be his then!" said De Blenau. "I have already told you my resolution, Sir; act upon it as you think fit."

Lafemas seemed at a loss, and a whispering consultation took place between him and the Secretary, who seemed to urge more vigorous measures than the Judge himself thought proper to pursue; for their conference was terminated by Lafemas exclaiming in a tone not sufficiently low to escape De Blenau's ear, "I dare not, I tell you—I dare not—I have no orders.—Monsieur de Blenau," he continued aloud, "you may now retire, and I must report your answers to the Cardinal. But let me advise you, as a sincere friend, to be prepared with a reply to the questions you have now refused to answer, before we next meet; for by that time I shall have received his Eminence's commands, which, I fear, will be more severe than my heart could wish."

De Blenau made no reply, but withdrew, escorted as before; and it were needless to deny, that, notwithstanding the coolness with which he had borne his examination, and the fortitude with which he was prepared to repel the worst that could be inflicted, his heart beat high as the door of the audience-hall closed behind him, and he looked forward to returning to his apartments with more pleasure than a captive usually regards the place of his confinement.

The many agitating circumstances which had passed since, had completely banished from his thoughts the voice which he had heard pronounce his name, on the first time of his crossing the court; but as he returned, his eye fell upon the form of a tall, strong man, standing under the archway; and he instantly recognized the Woodman of the forest of Mantes.

De Blenau had spoken to him a thousand times in his various hunting-excursions, and he could not help being astonished to meet him in such a place, little dreaming that he himself was the cause. "What, in the name of Heaven!" thought he, "can that man have done to merit confinement here? Surely, Richelieu, who affects to be an eagle of the highest flight, might stoop on nobler prey than that."

As these thoughts crossed his mind, he passed by the foot of the little tower, containing the staircase which communicated with his apartments by the iron door in the inner chamber. This had evidently been long disused; and on remembering the position of the two chambers which he occupied, he conceived that they must have been at one time quite distinct, with a separate entrance to each, the one being arrived at by the turret, and the other by the chief staircase. He had, however, only time to take a casual glance, and wisely refrained from making that very apparent; for the Governor, who walked beside him, kept his eyes almost constantly fixed upon him, as if to prevent any communication even by a sign with the other prisoners.

On arriving at his chamber, the Governor allowed him to pass in alone, and having fastened the door, returned to Lafemas, leaving De Blenau to meditate over his situation in solitude. The first pleasure of having escaped from immediate danger having subsided, there was nothing very cheering to contemplate in his position. His fate, though postponed, seemed inevitable. Richelieu, he knew, was no way scrupulous; and the only thing which honour could permit him to do, was to defend the Queen's secret with his life.

The Queen herself indeed might relieve him from his difficulty, if he could find any way of communicating with her. But in looking round for the means, absolute impossibility seemed to present itself on all sides. In vain he sought for expedients; his mind suggested none that a second thought confirmed. He once contemplated inducing the Governor to forward a letter by the temptation of a large bribe; but a moment's reflection showed him that it was a thousand to one that the smooth-spoken officer both accepted his bribe and betrayed his trust.

Many other plans were rejected in a like manner, from a conviction of their impracticability, till at length a vague thought of gaining an interview with the Woodman of Mantes, and, if possible, engaging him to bribe some of the inferior officers of the prison, crossed De Blenau's mind; and he was still endeavouring to regulate his ideas on the subject, when the bolts were once more withdrawn, and the Governor again entered the apartment.

"Let me congratulate you, Monsieur de Blenau," said he, with a look of sincere pleasure, which probably sprang more from the prospect of continued gain to himself than any abstract gratification in De Blenau's safety. "Monsieur Lafemas is gone, and as the Cardinal is at Chantilly, you will be safe for three or four days at least, as nothing can be decided till his Eminence returns."

De Blenau well knew how to estimate the kindness of his friend the Governor; but though he put its proper value upon it, and no more, he felt the necessity of striving to make his interested meanness act the part of real friendship.

"Well, Monsieur le Gouverneur," said he, assuming a cheerful air, "I suppose, then, that I shall remain with you a day or two longer; nor should I, indeed, care so much for the confinement, where I am so well treated, if I had some one to wait upon me whom I have been accustomed to."

"I do not know how that could be arranged," replied the Governor thoughtfully; "I would do any thing to serve you, Monsieur de Blenau, consistent with my duty, but this is quite contrary to my orders; and if I were to allow you one of my own servants, it would put me completely in his power."

"Oh, that would not do at all," said De Blenau; "but are there not some of the inferior prisoners—" The Governor's brow darkened.—"Of course," continued the Count, "you would have to pay them for their trouble—and I, of course, would reimburse you. If you think that three hundred crowns would induce one of them to wait on me for the time I am here, I would willingly pay the money into your hands, and you could make all the necessary arrangements for the purpose."

The countenance of the Governor gradually cleared up as De Blenau spoke, like a sheltered lake that, after having been agitated for a moment by some unwonted breeze, soon relapses into its calm tranquillity, when that which disturbed it has passed away. The idea of appropriating, with such unquestioned facility, the greater part of three hundred crowns, was the sun which thus speedily dispersed the clouds upon his brow: and he mused for a moment, calculating shrewdly the means of attaining his object.

"The worst of it is," said he at length, "that we have no inferior prisoners. They are all prisoners of State in the Bastille— But stay," he added, a felicitous idea crossing his mind, "I remember there was a man brought here this morning by Chavigni's people, and they told me to give him all possible liberty, and employ him in the prison if I could."

"That will just do then," said De Blenau, inwardly praying that it might be the honest Woodman of Mantes. "He can visit me here occasionally during the day, to see if I have need of him, and the guard at the door can take good care that I do not follow him out, which is all that your duty demands."

"Of course, of course," replied the Governor; "it is your safe custody alone which I have to look to: and farther, I am ordered to give you every convenience and attention, which warrants me in allowing you an attendant at least. But here comes your dinner, Sir."

"Dinner!" exclaimed De Blenau, "it surely is not yet noon." But so it proved: the time had passed more quickly than he thought: nor indeed had he any reason to regret the appearance of dinner, for the substantial and luxurious meal which was served up at his expense on that *jour maigre* did not prove any bad auxiliary in overcoming whatever scruple yet lingered about the mind of Monsieur le Gouverneur. At every mouthful of *Becasse*, his countenance became more placable and complacent, and while he was busily occupied in sopping the last morsels of his *Dorade* in the *sauce au cornichons*, and conveying them to the capacious aperture which stood open to receive them, our prisoner obtained his full consent that the person he had mentioned should have egress and regress of the apartment; for which liberty, however, De Blenau was obliged to pay down the sum of three hundred crowns under the specious name of wages to the attendant.

This arrangement, and the dinner, came to a conclusion much about the same time; and the Governor, who had probably been engaged with De Blenau's good cheer much longer than was quite consistent with his other duties, rose and retired, to seek the inferior prisoner whose name he could not remember, but whom he piously resolved to reward with a crown *per diem*, thinking that such unparalleled liberality ought to be recorded in letters of gold.

In regard to De Blenau, the Governor looked upon him as the goose with the golden eggs; but more prudent than the boy in the fable, he resolved to prolong his life to the utmost of his power, so long, at least, as he continued to produce that glittering ore which possessed such wonderful attraction in his eyes. De Blenau, however, was not the goose he thought him; and though he waited with some impatience to see if the person on whom so much might depend, were or were not his honest friend the Woodman, yet his thoughts were deeply engaged in revolving every means by which the cupidity of the Governor might be turned to his own advantage.

At length the bolts were undrawn, and the prisoner, fixing his eyes upon the door, beheld a little old man enter, with withered cheeks and sunken eyes; a greasy night-cap on his head, and a large knife suspended by the side of a long thin sword, which sometimes trailed upon the ground, and sometimes with reiterated blows upon the tendons of his meagre shanks, seemed to reproach them for the bent and cringing posture in which they carried the woodcock-like body that surmounted them.

"Well, Sir!" said De Blenau, not a little disappointed with this apparition; "are you the person whom the Governor has appointed to wait upon me?"

"*Oui, Monsieur,*" said the little man, laying his hand upon his heart, with a profound inclination of his head, in which he contrived to get that organ completely out of sight, and, like a tortoise, to have nothing but his back visible. "*Oui, Monsieur,* I am *Cuisinier Vivandier*, that is to say, formerly *Vivandier*; at present, *Cuisinier Aubergiste ici à la porte de la Bastille, tout près*. I have the honour to furnish the dinner for Monseigneur, and I have come for the plates."

"Oh, is that all!" cried De Blenau; "take them, take them, my good friend, and begone."

The little man vowed that Monseigneur did him too much honour, and gathering up his dishes with admirable dexterity, he held the heap with his left arm, reserving his right to lay upon his heart, in which position he addressed another profound bow to De Blenau, and left the apartment. The prisoner now waited some time, getting more and more impatient as the day wore on. At length, however, the door once more opened, and Philip the woodman himself appeared.

Between Philip and the young Count there was of course much to be explained, which, requiring no explanation to the reader, shall not be here recapitulated. Every circumstance, however, that Philip told, whether of his writing the letter to inform him of the plots of Chavigni and Lafemas, or of the manner and apparent reason of his being dragged from his cottage to the Bastille, concurred to give De Blenau greater confidence in his new ally; and perhaps Philip himself, from having suffered a good deal on De Blenau's account, felt but the greater inclination to hazard still more. Between two persons so inclined, preliminaries are soon adjusted: nor had De Blenau time to proceed with diplomatic caution, even had he had reason to suspect the sincerity of the Woodman. The dangers of his situation admitted no finesse; and, overleaping all ceremonies, he at once demanded if Philip would and could convey a letter from him to the Queen.

Of his willingness, the Woodman said, there was no doubt; and after a moment's thought he added, that he had reason to hope that opportunity also would be afforded him. "It will be dangerous," said he, "but I think I can do it."

"Tell me how, good friend," demanded De Blenau, "and depend upon it, whatever risks you run on my account, whether I live or die, you will be rewarded."

"I want no reward, Sir," answered Philip, "but a good cause and a good conscience; and I am sure, if I serve you, I am as well engaged as if I were cutting all the fagots in Mantes. But my plan is this: They tell me, that my children shall always be allowed to see me. Now I know my boy Charles, who is as active as a *picvert*, will not be long before he follows me. He will be here before nightfall, I am sure, and he shall take your letter to the Queen."

De Blenau remained silent for a moment. "Was it your son who brought your letter to me?" demanded he. The Woodman assented; and the Count continued: "He was a shrewd boy, then. At all events, it must be risked. Wait, I will write, and depend upon you."

The Woodman, however, urged that if he stayed so long, suspicion might be excited; and De Blenau suffered him to depart, desiring him to return in an hour, when the letter would be ready. During his absence, the prisoner wrote that epistle which we have already seen delivered. In it he told his situation, and the nature of the questions which had been asked him by Lafemas. He hinted also that his fate was soon likely to be decided; and desired, that any communication which it might be necessary to make to him, might be conveyed through the Woodman of Mantes.

More than one hour elapsed after this letter was written before Philip again appeared. When he did so, however, he seemed in some haste. "Monsieur le Comte," said he, "my son is here. They have let me take him into my cell to rest, but I dare not be absent more than a moment, for fear they suspect something. Is the letter ready?"

De Blenau placed it in his hand, and would fain have added some gold. "The Queen is at Chantilly," said he, "and your son will want money for his journey."

"No, no, Sir," replied Philip, "that is no stuff for a child. Let him have a broad-piece, if you like, to help him on, but no more."

"Well then," said the Count, "accept the rest for your services. I have more in that valise."

"Not so, either, Monseigneur," answered the Woodman. "Pay for what is done, when it is done;" and taking the letter and one gold piece, he left the apartment.

CHAPTER VIII.

Which shows that Accident holds Wisdom by the leg, and like a pig-driver with a pig, often makes her go forward by pulling her back.

THE heavy carriage which conveyed Pauline de Beaumont towards Paris rolled on with no great rapidity, and the time, to her anxious mind, seemed lengthened to an inconceivable degree. Towards night, every little town they entered she conceived to be the capital, and was not undeceived till Mademoiselle de Hauteford observed, that they had set out so late she was afraid they would be obliged to pass the night at Ecouen.

In her companion Pauline found but little to console or soothe her under the anxiety and fear which the dangerous enterprise she had undertaken naturally produced. Mademoiselle de Hauteford had little either of warmth of heart or gentleness of disposition; and such were the only qualities which could have assimilated with Pauline's feelings at that time.

In combating the passionate love with which the King had regarded her, Mademoiselle de Hauteford had entirely triumphed over her own heart, and having crushed every human sensation that it contained, she substituted a rigid principle of duty, which, like the mainspring of a piece of clock-work, originated all her actions, making them regular without energy and correct without feeling.

In the present instance, she seemed to look upon the task which Pauline had undertaken as a thing which ought to be done, and therefore that no doubt or hesitation of any kind could remain upon her mind. She talked calmly of all the difficulties and dangers which presented themselves, and of the best means of obviating them; but did not offer the least consolation to the fears of a young and inexperienced girl, who had taken upon herself a bold and perilous enterprise, in which her own happiness was at stake, as well as the lives and fortunes of others. The indifferent coolness with which she spoke of risks and obstacles was far from reassuring Pauline, who soon dropped the conversation, and sinking into herself, revolved all the circumstances in her mind; her heart sometimes beating high with hope, sometimes sickening at the thought of failure.

Thus in silence the travellers proceeded to Ecouen, where, from the lateness of the hour, they were obliged to pass the night; but leaving it early the next morning, they reached Paris in a short time, and alighted at the hotel of the Marchioness de Senecy. That Lady, it appeared, was absent, having left Paris some time before for a distant part of the country; but this was no disadvantage, as Mademoiselle de Hauteford was well known to the servants that remained in the house, and she did not in the least hesitate to take up her abode there on the service of the Queen, though the mistress of the mansion herself was absent.

At Ecouen, Pauline had dressed herself in the clothes of her maid Louise, and on alighting at the hotel de Senecy, was taken by the servants for the *soubrette* of Mademoiselle de Hauteford. All this was to her wish; and not a little delighted with the first success of her disguise, she affected the *ton paysan*, and treated the domestics with the same familiarity which they showed towards her.

An old and confidential servant of the Queen was the only male attendant who accompanied them to Paris, and he took especial care not to deceive the others in regard to Mademoiselle de Beaumont's rank, though he had more than once nearly betrayed the secret by smiling at the Lady's maid airs which Pauline contrived to assume. This task, however, was not of long duration; for Pauline's anxiety would not suffer her to remain inactive, and she accordingly pressed her companion to set out speedily for the Bastille, afraid that under any long delay her courage, which she felt to be failing every moment, might give way entirely, and that she might at length prove unequal to accomplish her undertaking.

Mademoiselle de Hauteford, whose acquaintance with the city qualified her to act as guide, readily agreed to proceed immediately on their expedition; and Pauline's disguise as *soubrette* not permitting her to make use of a mask like her companion, she covered her head as far as she could with a large capuchin of brown tafetas, which, however, was all-insufficient to conceal her face. This being done, she followed the Lady of honour into the street, and in a moment found herself immersed in all the bustle and confusion of the capital.

Poor Pauline's senses were almost bewildered by the crowd; but Mademoiselle de Hauteford, leaning on her arm, hurried her on as far as the Rue St. Antoine, where she stopped opposite to the Church of St. Gervais, or rather the narrow dirty street which leads towards it.

Here she directed Pauline straight on to the Bastille, and pointing out the church, told her that she would wait there for her return, offering up prayers for the success of her enterprise.

The magnificent peristyle of the Church of St. Gervais, which the celebrated De Brosse is said to have pronounced the most perfect of his works,—observing, like Solon on the Athenian Laws, that it was not, indeed, the best that could be formed, but the best that could be adapted to the old gothic building which he was directed to improve,—was then in the first gloss of its novelty, and amongst the many sombre smoky buildings that she had passed, offered to Pauline's eye a bright and conspicuous landmark, which she felt sure she could not mistake. She took, however, another glance, and then hurried on towards the Bastille.

Totally ignorant of Paris and all that it contained; young, beautiful and timid; engaged in an undertaking full of danger and difficulty, and dressed in a manner to which she was unaccustomed; Pauline de Beaumont shrank from the glance of the numerous passengers that thronged the Rue St. Antoine; and every eye which, attracted by her loveliness, or by the frightened haste with which she proceeded, gazed on her with more than common attention, she fancied could see into her bosom, and read the secret she was so anxious to conceal.

At length, however, her eye rested on a group of heavy towers, presenting nothing but massy stone walls, pierced with loop-holes, and surmounted at various distances with embrasures, through the aperture of which the threatening mouths of some large cannon were occasionally visible. Sweeping round this gloomy building was a broad fosse filled with water, which prevented all approach but at one particular point, where a drawbridge, suspended by two immense chains, gave access to the outer court. But even here no small precaution was taken to guard against any who came in other than friendly guise; for the gate which terminated the bridge on the inner side, besides the security afforded by its ponderous doors and barricadoes, possessed two flanking-towers, the artillery of which commanded the whole course of the approach.

Pauline had often heard the Bastille described, and its horrors detailed, by the guests who occasionally visited

her mother's château in Languedoc; but, whatever idea she had formed of it, the frowning strength and gloomy horrors which the original presented, far outdid the picture her imagination had drawn; and so strong was the sensation of fear which it produced upon her mind, that she had nearly turned back and run away the moment she beheld it. An instant's reflection, however, reawakened her courage.

"Claude de Blenau," she thought, "immured within those walls! and do I hesitate when his life, perhaps, depends upon my exertion?" That thought was enough to recall all her resolution; and rapidly crossing the drawbridge, she passed what is called the *grille*. But here her farther progress was stayed by a massy door covered with plates and studs of iron, which offered none of those happy contrivances either of modern or ancient days, by which people within are called upon to communicate with people without. There was no horn, as in the days of chivalry, and if there had been, Pauline could not have blown it; but still worse, there was neither bell nor knocker; and the door, far from imitating the gates of Dis, in standing open night and day, seemed most determinately shut, although the comparison might have held in many other respects. With shaking knees and trembling hands Pauline tried for some moments to gain admission, but in vain. The gate resisted all her weak efforts, her voice was scarcely audible, and vexed, wearied, and terrified, and not knowing what to do, she burst into a flood of tears.

At about a hundred yards on the other side of the fosse, forming one corner of the Rue St. Antoine, on the face of which it seemed a wart, or imposthume, stood a little narrow house of two stories high, the front of which displayed an immense board covered with a curious and remarkable device. This represented no other than the form of an immense wild boar, with a napkin tucked under his chin, seated at a table, on which smoked various savoury dishes, of which the above ferocious gentleman appeared to be partaking with a very wild-boarish appetite. Underneath all was written, in characters of such a size that those who ran might read, *Au Sanglier Gourmand*, and then followed a farther inscription, which went to state that Jacques Chatpilleur, *autrefois Vivandier de l'Armée de Perpignan, à présent Aubergiste Traiteur*, fed the hungry, and gave drink to those that thirsted, at all hours of the day and night.

Every one will allow that this man must have been blessed with a charitable disposition; and it so happened that, standing at his own door, with his heart opened by the benign influence of having cooked a dinner for the Count de Blenau, he beheld the ineffectual efforts of Pauline de Beaumont to gain admission into the Bastille.

The poor little man's heart was really moved; and skipping across the drawbridge, he was at her side in a moment. "What seek you, *charmante demoiselle*?" demanded the *aubergiste*, making her a low bow; and then observing her tears, he added, "*Ma pauvre fille*, do not weep. Do you wish to get in here?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Pauline; "but I cannot make them hear."

"There are many who want to get out, who cannot make them hear either," said the *aubergiste*: "but they shall hear me, at all events." So saying, he drew forth his knife, with a flourish which made Pauline start back, and applied the handle with such force to the gate of the prison, that the whole place echoed with the blows. Immediately, a little wicket was opened, and the head of a surly-looking Porter presented itself at the aperture.

"Philip the Woodman! Philip the Woodman!" said he, as soon as he heard Pauline's inquiries. "Who is he, I wonder? We have nothing to do with woodmen here. Oh, I remember the man. And we are to break through all rules and regulations for him, I suppose? But I can tell Monsieur Chavigni, or whoever gave the order, that I shall not turn the key for any one except at proper hours; so you cannot see him now, young woman—you cannot see him now."

"And is not this a proper hour?" asked Pauline. "I thought mid-day was the best time I could come."

"No!" answered the Porter, "I tell you no, my pretty demoiselle; this is the dinner-hour, so you must come again."

"When can I come then, Sir?" demanded Pauline, "for I have journeyed a long way to see him."

"Why, then you are in need of rest," replied the other, "so you will be all the better for waiting till evening. Come about seven o'clock, and you shall see him."

"Cannot I see him before that?" asked the young lady, terrified at the delay.

"No! no! no!" roared the Porter, and turned to shut the wicket; but bethinking him for a moment, he called after Mademoiselle de Beaumont—"Who shall I tell him wants him, when I see him?"

Pauline was unprepared with an answer, but the necessity of the moment made her reply, "His daughter;" trusting that, as there must be some understanding between him and De Blenau, the Woodman would conceive her errand, and not betray any surprise, whether he had a daughter or not.

During this conversation, the *aubergiste* had remained hard by, really compassionating Pauline's disappointment.

"*Ma pauvre fille*," said he, as the wicket closed, "I am very sorry that they treat you so; but they are great brutes in these prisons. *Bon Dieu!* you look very pale. Come in with me here to my little place, and take some soup, and rest yourself till the time comes round."

Pauline thanked him for his offer, but declined it, of course; telling him, that she was going to the house of a friend who waited for her; and then taking leave of the good *aubergiste*, she left him interested in her sorrow, and enchanted by her sweet manner.

"*La pauvette!*" said he, as he turned him home, "*Elle a bien l'air d'une femme de qualité ça. Il y a quelque chose la dessous, ou je me trompe.*"

In the mean while, Pauline returned to the Church of St. Gervais, where she found Mademoiselle de Hauteford still on her knees in the Chapel of St. Denis.

Pauline's recital of what had happened, called forth but few remarks from her companion, who only observed, that seven would be an unpleasant hour, for that by that time night began to fall. To Mademoiselle de Beaumont, however, night seemed more favourable to her enterprise than day, when the trepidation which she felt was visible to every passing eye; and she congratulated herself on the prospect of the darkness covering the agitation which might lead to suspicion if observed.

I shall not follow the two ladies through the remaining part of the day. Suffice it, that Mademoiselle de Hauteford employed herself in preparations for the long journey which the Cardinal's sentence of banishment required her to take, and that Pauline's time passed in anxiety and apprehension, till the hour came for her once more to visit the Bastille.

As soon as the long hand upon the dial pointed towards the Roman capitals IX. and the shorter one to VII. the two ladies set out in the same guise, and on the same route, as in the morning, with only this difference in their proceedings, that the old domestic of the Queen, who had accompanied them to Paris, received orders to follow at a few paces distance, well armed with sword and pistol.

It was now quite dark, and the streets not being so crowded as when she before passed through them, Pauline proceeded more calmly, except when the torch-bearers of some of the gay world of Paris flashed their flambeaux in her eyes as they lighted their lords along to party or spectacle. At the Church of St. Gervais she again left Mademoiselle de Hauteford with the servant; and now, well acquainted with the way, ran lightly along till she arrived at the Bastille, where, not giving her resolution time to fail, she passed the drawbridge, and entered the outer gate, which was at that moment open. Before her stood the figure of the Porter, enjoying the cool evening air that blew through the open gate into the court. His hand rested upon the edge of the door, and the moment Pauline entered, he pushed it to with a clang that made her heart sink.

"Whom have we here," said he, "that comes in so boldly? Oh, so! is it you, *ma belle demoiselle*?" he continued, as the light of the lanterns which hung under the arch fell upon her countenance:—"well, you shall see your father now. But first, I think, you had better go and speak to the Governor; he is a man of taste, and would like such a pretty prisoner, no doubt; perhaps he might find a warrant for your detention."

Pauline's heart sank at the idea of being carried before the Governor, well knowing how little competent she was to answer any inquiries concerning her errand; but the excess of fear will often give courage, and the most timid animals turn and resist when pressed to extremity. Thus Pauline summoned up all her resolution, and remembering the allusion which the Porter had made to Chavigni's orders in favour of the Woodman, she replied boldly: "This is no time for jesting, Sir! and as to detaining me, it would be as much as the Governor's post is worth, if it came to Monsieur de Chavigni's ears that he ever thought of such a thing."

"So, so!" cried the Porter with a grin, "you are a friend of Monsieur de Chavigni's. So—I thought there was something made him so careful of yon sour old Woodman. These great Statesmen must have their little relaxations. So that is it, Mademoiselle? He takes especial care of the father for the daughter's sake."

There was a drop or two of the warm blood of Languedoc flowing in Pauline's veins with all her gentleness, and her patience now became completely exhausted. "Well, Sir!" she answered, "all I have to say to you is, that if I meet with any insolence, it may cost you dear. So bring me to see my father, or refuse me at once."

"I am not going to refuse you, my pretty demoiselle," replied the Porter; "though, truly, you speak more like a lady of quality than a Woodman's daughter. Now I'll swear you are Madame la Comtesse's *suivante*. Nay, do not toss your head so impatiently; your father will be here in a minute; he knows of your having called at the wicket this morning, and is to come here to see you at seven—But here is the Governor, as I live—going to take a twilight walk, I suppose."

As he spoke, the Governor approached: "Whom have you got here, porter?" he asked, while he eyed Pauline with one of those cool luxurious glances that made her shrink.

"This is the Woodman's daughter, Sir," replied the man, "who wishes to speak with her father."

"By the keys of St. Peter! which are something in my own way," exclaimed the Governor, "thou art a beautiful daughter for a Woodman. Art thou sure thy mother did not help thee to a better parentage? What is thy father's name?"

Terrified, confused, and ignorant of the Woodman's name, Pauline faltered forth, unconscious of what she said, "I do not know."

"Ha! ha! ha! thou sayest well, my pretty damsel," cried the Governor laughing, and thinking that she answered his jest in kind. "It is a wise father that knows his own child; and why not a wise child that knows his own father? But without a joke, what is your supposed father's name?"

"My supposed father!" repeated Pauline, in the same state of perturbation; "Oh, Philip the Woodman."

"Nay, nay," replied the Governor, "that does not answer my meaning either. What is the surname of this Philip the Woodman?"

The impossibility of answering overpowered her. Pauline had not the most remote idea of Philip's name, and another instant would indubitably have betrayed all; but at the moment the Governor asked his question, Philip had entered the court. He had heard the last sentence, saw Pauline's embarrassment, and divining its cause, with quick presence of mind caught her in his arms, and kissed her on both cheeks, with that sort of fatherly affection which would have deceived the Governor's eyes by day, much less by the fainter light of the lanterns in the archway.

"My dear child!" cried he, "how art thou? and how is thy mother?" And then turning to the Governor, without giving her time to reply, he went on, "My name, Sir, which you were asking but now, is Philip Grissolles, but I am better known by the name of Philip the Woodman, and some folks add the name of the wood, and call me Philip the Woodman of Mantes."

"Philip Grissolles!" said the Governor; "very well, that will do. It was your surname that I wished to know, for it is not put down in the order for your detention, and it must be inserted in the books. And now, Monsieur Philip Grissolles, you may take your daughter to your cell; but remember that you have to wait upon the Count de Blenau in half an hour, by which time I shall have returned. You can leave your daughter in your cell till you have done attending the Count, if you like."

He then proceeded to the gate, and beckoning to the Porter, he whispered to him, "Do not let her go out till I come back. It is seldom that we have any thing like that in the Bastille! Doubtless, that Woodman would be glad to have her with him; if so, we will find her a cell."

Philip turned his ear to catch what the Governor was saying, but not being able to hear it distinctly, he addressed himself to Pauline loud enough to reach every one round. "Come," said he, "*ma fille*, you are frightened at all these towers and walls and places; but it is not so unpleasant after one is in it either. Take my arm, and I'll show you the way."

Pauline was glad to accept of his offer, for her steps faltered so much that she could hardly have proceeded without assistance; and thus, leaning on the Woodman, she was slowly conducted through a great many narrow passages, to the small vaulted chamber in which he was lodged.

As soon as they had entered, the Woodman shut the door, and placing for Pauline's use the only chair that the room contained, he began to pour forth a thousand excuses for the liberty he had taken with her cheek. "I hope you will consider, Mademoiselle, that there was no other way for me to act, in order to bring us out of the bad job we had fallen into. The Porter of the prison told me this morning that my daughter was coming to see me, and knowing very well I had no daughter, I guessed that it was some one on the Count de Blenau's account; but little did I think that it was you, Mademoiselle—you that I saw in the wood of Mantes on the day he was wounded."

Pauline was still too much agitated with all that had passed to make any reply, and sitting with her hands pressed over her eyes, her thoughts were all confusion, though one terrible remembrance still predominated, that she was there—in the very heart of the Bastille—far from all those on whom she was accustomed to rely—habited in a disguise foreign to her rank—acting an assumed character, and engaged in an enterprise of life and death.

All this was present to her, not so much as a thought, but as a feeling; and for a moment or two it deprived her not only of utterance, but of reflection. As her mind grew more calm, however, the great object for which she came began again to recover the ascendancy; and she gradually regained sufficient command over her ideas to comprehend the nature of the excuses which Philip was still offering for his presumption, as he termed it.

"You did perfectly right," replied Pauline; "and, having extricated us from a dangerous predicament, merit my sincere thanks. But now," she continued, "without loss of time I must see the Count de Blenau."

"See the Count de Blenau!" exclaimed Philip in astonishment. "Impossible, Mademoiselle! utterly impossible! I can deliver a letter or a message; but that is all I can do."

"Why not?" demanded Pauline. "For pity's sake, do not trifle with me. If you have free admission to his prison, why cannot you open the way to me?"

"Because, Mademoiselle, there is a sentinel at his door who would not allow you to pass," replied Philip. "I have no wish to trifle with you, indeed; but what you ask is merely impossible."

Pauline thought for a moment. "Cannot we bribe the sentinel?" she demanded. "Here is gold."

"That is not to be done either," answered Philip. "He is not allowed to speak to any one, or any one to speak to him. The first word, his fusil would be at my breast; and the second, he would fire: such are his orders, Mademoiselle, and be sure he would obey them."

"Well then," cried Pauline, "fly to the Count de Blenau, tell him that there is a lady here from the Queen, with a letter which she must not trust to any one else, and ask him what is to be done—but do not stay long, for I am afraid of remaining here by myself."

The Woodman promised not to be a moment, and hastened to the Count de Blenau's apartment, where the wary sentinel, as usual, examined him well to ascertain his identity before he gave him admission. He then entered and communicated as rapidly as possible to De Blenau the message he had received.

"It is Mademoiselle de Hauteford, without doubt," said De Blenau thoughtfully; "I must see her by all means."

"See her, Sir!" exclaimed Philip. "The guard will never let her pass. It is quite impossible."

"Not so impossible as you think. The gates of the inner court do not shut, I think, till nearly nine—Is there any one in the court?"

"No one, Sir," answered the Woodman; "all the State prisoners were locked up at six."

"Well then, Philip," proceeded De Blenau, "do you know a small tower in the court, where you just see through the archway part of an old flight of steps?"

"Oh yes, I know it well," replied Philip. "The tower is never used now, they tell me. There is a heap of rubbish in the doorway."

"Exactly," said the Count. "Now, my good Philip, bring the lady with all speed to that tower, and up the old flight of steps till you come to a small iron door: push that with your hand, and you will find that it brings you into the inner room, where I will wait for you."

Philip's joy and astonishment found vent in three *Bon Dieu's!* and three *Est-il possible's* and rushing away without more loss of time, he flew to Pauline, whose stay in his cell had been undisturbed by any thing but her own anxious fears. These, however, magnified every sound into the approach of some one to be dreaded. Even the footstep of the Woodman made her heart beat with alarm; but the news he brought far more than compensated for it, and, inspired with new hope, she followed him gladly through the gloomy passages which led to the inner court.

The darkness which pervaded the unlighted avenues of the Bastille was so great, that Pauline was obliged to follow close upon Philip's footsteps for fear of losing her way. The Woodman, however, was a little in advance, when a faint light showed that they were approaching the open air, and Pauline began to catch an indistinct glimpse of the dark towers that surrounded the inner court. But at that moment Philip drew back:—"There is some one in the court," he whispered: "Hark!"—and listening, she clearly heard the sound of measured steps crossing the open space before her.

"It is the guard," said the Woodman, in the same low voice; "they are going to relieve the sentinel at the Count's door." He now waited till they were heard ascending the stairs, and then, "Quick, follow me across the court, Mademoiselle," he said; "for they go through this passage on their return."

Pauline was about to follow him as he desired, but her dress caught upon one of the staples of the doorway. Philip attempted to disentangle it for her, but in vain, his efforts only fixed it the more. Pauline herself tried to tear it away, but the soubrette's stout serge-dress would not tear. In the mean time they heard the "*Qui vive?*" of the sentinel, the countersign returned, the relief of the guard; and by the time that Philip had by main strength torn away the dress from the staple that had caught it, the steps of the soldiers were again heard descending the staircase from the prison of De Blenau.

"For God's sake, Mademoiselle," whispered the Woodman, "run back as quickly as you can to my cell, for we cannot pass now without their seeing us. I will wait here, for they would hear my heavy feet in the passage, and follow us both; but if I can stop them a while, I will, to give you time."

Pauline doubted not that she could remember the turnings, and, gliding along as fast as possible, she endeavoured to find her way back. As she went, she heard some words pass between Philip and the guard; and immediately after, she distinguished that they had entered the passage, for the echoing tramp of their feet, reverberated by the low arches, seemed following close upon her. Terrified and agitated, she flew on with the speed

of lightning. But we all know how difficult it is to retrace any course we have pursued in the dark; and in her haste and confusion, Pauline lost the turning she ought to have taken, and, afraid of going back, even after she discovered her mistake, she paused for a moment in a state of alarm and suspense, little short of agony.

She could now distinctly hear the guard approaching, and not knowing where the passage might terminate, or what might obstruct the path, she felt her way with her hand along the wall, till at length she discovered a small recess, apparently one of those archways which gave entrance to the various cells, for beneath her fingers she felt the massy bolts and fastenings which secured it from without. She had scarce a moment to think, but, placing herself under the arch, she drew back as far as possible, in the hope that sheltered by the recess, and concealed by the darkness, the guard would pass her by unnoticed.

It was a dreadful moment for poor Pauline. The soldiers were not so near as the echoes of the place had led her to imagine; and she had several minutes to wait, holding her breath, and drawing herself in, as if to nothing, while the tramp of the armed feet came nearer and nearer, till at length she felt, or fancied that she felt, their clothes brush against her as they passed; and then heard their steps becoming fainter and more faint as they proceeded to some other part of the building.

It was not till all was again silent, that Pauline ventured, still trembling with the danger she had just escaped, to seek once more the path she had lost in her terror. But her search was now in vain; she had entirely forgot the turnings that she had taken in her flight, and in the darkness only went wandering on from one passage to another, starting at every sound, and always convinced that she was mistaken, but not knowing in what direction to seek the right.

At length, however, she found herself at a gateway which led into what seemed an open court, and imagining from the towers she saw round about, that she had arrived once more at the spot from which she had been frightened by the approach of the guards, she resolved again to seek more cautiously the cell of the Woodman, to which, of course, he would return in search of her. But as she turned to put this resolve in execution, she perceived a light coming down the passage towards her; and without giving herself a moment to reflect that it might possibly be the Woodman himself, fear seized her again, and darting across the court, she looked round for some place of concealment.

Exactly opposite, she perceived another archway similar to the one she had left, and concealing herself within it, she paused to see who it was that followed, it just occurring to her mind at that instant, that perhaps she was in full career away from the very person she wished to find. But, the moment after, the light appeared in the archway, and glancing on the face of the man who carried it, discovered to her the features of the Governor.

This sight was not calculated to allay her fears; but her alarm was infinitely increased when she perceived that he began crossing the court towards the spot where she stood. Flight again became her resource, and, turning to escape through the passages to which she supposed that archway led, as well as the others, she struck her foot against some steps and had nearly fallen. Recovering herself, however, without loss of time she began ascending the steps that lay before her, nor stopped, till reaching a small landing-place, she looked through one of the loopholes in the wall, and beheld the Governor directing his course to another part of the building.

Satisfied that he did not follow her, but faint and out of breath with the speed she had employed in her flight, Pauline paused for a moment's repose; and stretching out her hand, she leaned against a door which stood at the top of the staircase:—however, it afforded her no support, for the moment she touched it, it gave way under her hand, and flying open, discovered to her a well-lighted apartment. New terror seized upon Pauline; her eyes were dazzled by the sudden glare, and drawing back she would have fallen headlong down the stairs, but at that instant she was caught in the arms of De Blenau.

CHAPTER IX.

Which gets Pauline out, and Philip in, and leaves De Blenau in the middle.

THE tumult of joy and surprise—the mutual explanations—the delight of De Blenau—the relief to Pauline—with the thousand little *et-cetera* of such a meeting, I must leave to the reader's imagination, which will doubtless do much more justice to every circumstance than could the quill of a foolish bird such as I hold in my hand. Neither shall I dilate upon the surprise of Philip the woodman, when, on coming to inform De Blenau that he had lost the lady in the windings of the Bastille, he discovered that she had found her way to the object of her search without his sage guidance. One piece of information, however, he conveyed, which hurried their conference towards a conclusion. The Governor, he said, who had been absent, had returned, and was then engaged in visiting the western wards; and therefore he might be shortly expected in that part of the prison.

This unpalatable news reminded Pauline to deliver the letter from the Queen, which in the joy and agitation of their first meeting she had neglected to do. De Blenau looked it over with a hurried glance. "She commands me," said he, "to confess all exactly as it occurred; but on one or two points I have already refused to answer, and if I do so now without producing the Queen's warrant for my conduct, I shall be held a base coward, who betrays his trust for fear of the torture."

"And do you hesitate, Claude?" demanded Pauline, rather reproachfully—"do you hesitate to take the only means which can save you? Do you think nothing of what I feel? You, Claude, may be proof against corporeal torture; but I can not endure much longer the mental agony I have suffered since you have been confined here, especially when I reflected that even while you were acting most nobly, I was suspecting you ungenerously. If you love me as you profess, dear Claude, you will take the means that the Queen directs to ensure your safety."

"Well, dearest Pauline," replied De Blenau, yielding to the all-persuasive eloquence of woman's lips, "I will do as you wish, and endeavour to pursue such measures as will be both safe and honourable. But now conclude what you were telling me, of having lost yourself in the prison, and how you found your way hither."

It may be necessary to explain, that while this conversation had taken place between De Blenau and Pauline in the inner apartment, Philip the woodman had remained in the outer chamber, keeping watch with his ear to the door which communicated with the staircase, in order to apprise them in time of the Governor's approach. Pauline now had not time to conclude her little history of perilous escapes and dangers ere Philip entering from the outer chamber interrupted her: "Fly down the stairs, Mademoiselle," cried he, "and wait at the bottom till I join you. The Governor is coming, for I hear other steps on the stairs as well as those of the sentinel at the top."

Prisons are not places for great ceremonies, nor for all the mighty delicacies of general society; so Pauline suffered De Blenau to press his lips upon hers unreprieved, and then fled down the back staircase with the speed of light; after which the Count shut and bolted the iron door, and passed into the outer chamber, while the Woodman bustled about in the inner one, arranging the Count's apparel for the night, and appearing much more busy than he really was.

Thus every thing was as it should be when the Governor entered; but still there was an angry spot upon his brow, and with but a slight inclination to De Blenau, he looked through the door between the two chambers, saying, "Well, Mr. Woodman of Mantes, where is your daughter? She is not in your cell."

"You have made sure of that in person, I suppose," replied Philip, in his usual surly manner.

"Whether I have or not," answered the Governor, "does but little signify. I ask where is your daughter? We must have no strangers wandering about the Bastille."

"I know my child's beauty as well as you do, Monsieur," replied Philip, "and was too wise to leave her in my cell, where every one that chose would have liberty and time to affront her, while I was attending upon Monsieur le Comte here: so I made her come with me, and set her under the archway of the old tower to wait till I was done. Now, if Monsieur has done with me, I will go and conduct her to the outer gate, and never with my will shall she set her foot within these walls again."

"I have no farther need of you to-night, Philip," said De Blenau, as the Woodman stood at the door ready to depart; and then seeing that the Governor turned to follow him out, he added, "Monsieur le Gouverneur, will you sup with me this evening?"

Philip quitted the room, but the Governor was obliged to stay to reply. "With pleasure, Sir, with pleasure," said he. "I will be back with you immediately, before my servant brings the plates; but I must first take the liberty of seeing this demoiselle out of the prison gates." He then left De Blenau, and having bolted the door, followed the Woodman quickly down the steps. Philip, however, had gained so much upon him, that he had time to whisper to Pauline, whom he found waiting in the archway: "The Governor is coming, but do not be alarmed. Let him think that I bade you wait for me here till I had attended the Count."

Pauline, however, could not help being alarmed. While the excitement of her enterprise had continued, it afforded a false sort of courage, which carried her through; but now that her object was gained, all her native timidity returned, and she thought of encountering the Governor again with fear and trembling. Nor had she much time to recall her spirits before he himself joined them.

"Well, my fair demoiselle," he cried, "I think if I had known that you were waiting here all alone in the dark, I should have paid you a visit;" and he raised the lamp close to Pauline's face, which was as pale as death. "Why, you look as terrified," proceeded the Governor, "as if you had been committing murder. Well, I will light you out, and when you come to-morrow, you will not be so frightened. At what hour do you come, eh?"

"I desire that you would not come at all," said Philip aloud, as he followed the Governor, who was escorting Pauline along with an air of gallantry and badinage which did not at all set off his thin demure features to advantage, especially in the unbecoming light of the lamp that flickered upon them but at intervals, tipping all the acute angles of his countenance with not the most agreeable hue. "I desire that you would not come at all: you have been here once too often already. Let your brother Charles come the next time."

The Governor darted a glance at Philip, which certainly evinced that his face could take on, when it liked, an expression of hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness; and in a minute or two after, by some means, the lamp went out in his hands. "Here, Philip," cried he, "take the lamp, and get a light."

"Your pardon, Sir," answered the sturdy Woodman; "not till I have seen my daughter beyond the gates."

"Philip Grissolles, or Philip the Woodman, or whatever you call yourself," cried the Governor, "are you mad? Do you know what you are about? Go and fetch me a light instantly, or refuse me at your peril."

"I do refuse then," replied the Woodman, who had learned by conversation with the Porter and turnkeys, how much power the Governor had placed in his hands by permitting him to attend upon the Count de Blenau; "I am your prisoner, Sir," he continued, "but not your servant."

"I have allowed you to act as such in the prison," said the Governor, "and there are no servants here but mine."

"In suffering me to attend upon the Count de Blenau," rejoined Philip boldly, "you have outstepped your duty, and broken the express order of the Cardinal. So much have I learned since I came here—therefore allow my daughter to depart quietly, Sir. We shall find a light in the Porter's room."

"By Heavens! I have a mind to detain the girl all night, for your insolence," cried the Governor, stamping with rage.

"Oh, for God's sake do not!" exclaimed Pauline, clasping her hands; but Philip came close up to him,— "You dare not," said he, in a low voice; "for your head, you dare not." And then added aloud to Pauline, "Come along, my child; Monsieur le Gouverneur will let you out."

During this altercation they had continued to proceed; and the Governor, knowing that his violation of the Cardinal's commands with regard to the strict confinement of De Blenau, might bring his head to the block if sifted thoroughly, thought it best to abstain from irritating a person who not only possessed, but knew that he possessed, so much power. Not that he would not willingly have silenced the Woodman by some of those infallible means which were much resorted to in that day; but that he knew Chavigni was not easily satisfied on such points; and thus being in a situation which is popularly expressed by "the horns of a dilemma," like a good Christian as he was, he chose rather to risk discovery than commit a murder which would undoubtedly be found out. Under these circumstances, he permitted Philip and Pauline to proceed to the gates, and ordered the Porter to give the young lady egress, taking care, however, to follow them all the way till they arrived at the last gate opening upon the drawbridge, which, at the time they arrived, had not been yet raised for the evening.

Pauline's heart beat with glad impatience as the Janitor put his key into the lock, whose bolt grating harshly, as it was withdrawn, produced to her ears most excellent music.

It so unfortunately happened, however, that at the moment the gate swung heavily back upon its hinges, Charles, the Woodman's son, presented himself for admission; and having before had free access to his father, was proceeding calmly through the open door, without taking any notice of Mademoiselle de Beaumont, whom he did not recognize in her disguise.

"What!" exclaimed the Governor, whose Bastille habits rendered him quick to the slightest suspicion; "do you not speak to your sister?"

"Sister!" said the boy, confounded; "I have no sister!"

Pauline saw that in another moment all would be lost; and darting past the Governor, she was through the gate, and over the drawbridge in a moment.

"*Nom de Dieu!*" cried the Governor: "Follow her, Letrames!—quick, quick!"

The Turnkey was on Pauline's footsteps in a minute; but she had gained so much in the first instance, that she would certainly have escaped with ease, if an envious stone had not obstructed her path at the bottom of the glacis, and striking her foot, occasioned her to fall. Pauline uttered a scream of both pain and fear; and two steps would have brought the Turnkey to the spot where she lay, when suddenly a small, strange-shaped figure in white, skipped over her prostrate form, and interposed between her and her pursuer.

"*Ventre Saint Gris!*" cried the redoubtable Jacques Chatpilleur, *cuisinier aubergiste*, who thus came to her assistance—"You shall not touch her!" and drawing the long rapier that hung beside his carving-knife, he made a pass so near the breast of the Turnkey, that the official started back full ten paces, not knowing, in the dim light of the hour, what hobgoblin shape thus crossed his purpose. "*Maraud!*" continued the *aubergiste*, "Who are you that dare to injure this demoiselle? under the very walls of the Bastille, too, contrary to the peace and quiet of His Majesty's true subjects! Get thee gone! or I will spit thee like a *chapon de maine*, or rather skewer thee like an ortolan under the wings."

This professional allusion, together with a moment's reflection, enabled Letrames, the turnkey, to call to mind the *ancien vivandier*; and showering upon him a thousand harsh epithets for his interference, he called upon him to stand aside, and let him secure his prisoner; still, however, standing aloof from the point of the weapon,—for Jacques Chatpilleur, while *vivandier* to the army, had shown that he could gather laurels with his sword, as well as with his knife; and had as often, to use Sancho's expression, given his enemies a bellyfull of dry blows, as he had filled his friends with more dainty fare; with this difference, however, that the drubbings he bestowed gratis.

In the present instance, he either did not, or would not, know the Turnkey; and continued vociferating to him to hold off, and tell who he was, with such reiteration, that for some time the other had no opportunity of replying. At length, however, he roared, rather than said, "*Jacques Diable!* you know me well enough; I am Letrames, *Géolier au château.*"

The *aubergiste* looked over his shoulder, and seeing that Pauline was no longer visible, he very quietly put up his rapier, saying, "*Mais mon Dieu! mon ami*, why did you not tell me that before? *Je vous en demande mille pardons;*" and seizing the Turnkey in his arms, he embraced him, making a thousand excuses for having mistaken him, and hugging him with a sort of malicious affection, which quite put a stop to his pursuit of Pauline.

The only benediction that the gaoler thought proper to bestow on the little *aubergiste*, was a thousand curses, struggling all the time to free himself from the serpent folds of Chatpilleur's embrace. But it was not till the *aubergiste* had completely satisfied himself, that he suffered Letrames to escape, and then very composedly offered to assist him in the pursuit, which he well knew would now be ineffectual.

The darkness of the night had prevented this scene from being visible from the gates of the Bastille, and Letrames, on his return to the prison, was too wise to complain of the conduct of our friend Chatpilleur; a *vivandier* at the gates of the Bastille being much too convenient an acquaintance to be quarrelled with upon trifles.

During his absence, the wrath of the Governor turned upon Philip the woodman. "What is the meaning of this?"

Villain!" exclaimed he, "this is none of your daughter! Fouchard! La Heuterie!" he called aloud to some of his satellites—"quick! bring me a set of irons! we shall soon hear who this is, Monsieur Philip Grissoles!"

"You will never hear any thing from me more than you know already," replied Philip; "so put what irons on me you like. But you had better beware, Sir Governor; those that meddle with pitch will stick their fingers. You do not know what you may bring upon your head."

"Silence, fool!" cried the Governor, in a voice that made the archway ring; "you know not what you have brought upon your own head.—Fouchard! La Heuterie! I say, why are you so long? Oh, here you come at last. Now secure that fellow, and down with him to one of the black dungeons!—Porter, turn that young viper out," he continued, pointing to Charles, who stood trembling and weeping by his father's side; "Turn him out, I say!—we will have no more of these traitors than we have occasion for."

At the word the *dark dungeon*, Philip's courage had almost failed him, and it was not without an effort that he kept his sturdy limbs from betraying his emotion, while the gaolers began to place the irons on his wrists and ankles: but when he heard the order to drive forth his son, he made a strong effort and caught the boy in his arms: "God bless you, Charles! God bless you, my boy! and fear not for me," he exclaimed, "while there is a Power above."

It was a momentary solace to embrace his child, but the Porter soon tore the boy from his arms, and pushing him through the gate closed it after him, rejoicing that he should no more have to turn the key for any of the Woodman's family. "Now," said he, "now we shall have no more trouble; I hate to see all our good old rules and regulations broken through. I dare say if his Eminence the Cardinal—God protect him!—were to follow this Monsieur Chavigni's advice, we should have every thing out of order; and all the good store of chains and irons here in the lodge would get rusty for want of use."

"Peace, peace!" cried the Governor: "La Heuterie, take that fellow down, as I told you. He shall have the question to-morrow, and we shall see if he finds that so easy to bear. Away with him, quick!—A fool I was to be so deceived!—I suspected something when she stammered so about her father's name." So saying, he turned to hear the report of Letrames, who at that moment returned from his unsuccessful pursuit of Pauline.

In the mean while, the gaolers led Philip, who moved with difficulty in his heavy irons, across the first and second court, and opening a low door in the western tower displayed to his sight a flight of steps leading down to the lower dungeons. At this spot La Heuterie, who seemed superior in rank to his fellow-turnkey, lighted a torch that he had brought with him at his companion's lantern, and descending to the bottom of the steps, held it up on high to let Philip see his way down. The Woodman shuddered as he gazed at the deep gloomy chasm which presented itself but half seen by the glare of the torch, the light of which glancing upon the wall in different places, showed its green damp and ropy slime, without offering any definite limit to the dark and fearful vacuity. But he had no time to make any particular remark, for the second gaoler, who stood at his side, rudely forced him on; and descending the slippery stone steps, he found himself in a large long vault, paved with round stones, and filled with heavy subterranean air, which at first made the torch burn dim, and took away the Woodman's breath. As the light, however, spread slowly through the thick darkness, he could perceive three doors on either hand, which he conceived to give entrance to some of those under-ground dungeons, whose intrinsic horror, as well as the fearful uses to which they were often applied, had given a terrific fame to the name of the Bastille, and rendered it more dreaded than any other prison in France.

During this time they had paused a moment, moving the torch slowly about, as if afraid that it would be extinguished by the damp, but when the flame began to rise again, La Heuterie desired his companion to bring the prisoner to number six, and proceeding to the extremity of the vault, they opened the farthest door on the left, which led into a low damp cell, cold, narrow, and unfurnished, the very abode of horror and despair. Into this they pushed the unfortunate Woodman, following themselves, to see, as they said, if there was any straw.

"Have you brought some oil with you?" demanded La Heuterie, examining a rusty iron lamp that hung against the wall: "This is quite out."

"No, indeed," replied Fouchard, "and we cannot get any to-night: but he does not want it till day. It is time for him to go to sleep."

"No, no," rejoined the other, who seemed at least to have some human feeling; "do not leave the poor devil without light. Give him your lantern, man; you can fetch it to-morrow, when you come round to trim the lamps."

The man grumbled, but did as La Heuterie bade him; and having fastened the lantern on the hook where the lamp hung, they went away, leaving Philip to meditate over his fate in solitude.

"I have brought it on myself at last," thought the Woodman, as looking round him he found all the horrors he had dreamed of the Bastille more than realized; and his spirit sank within him. Cut off from all communication with any human being, he had now no means of making his situation known; and the horrible idea of the torture shook all his resolution and unmanned his heart.

It would hardly be fair to pursue the course of his reflections any farther; for if, when he remembered his happy cottage in the wood of Mantes, and his wife, and his little ones, a momentary thought of disclosing all he knew crossed the Woodman's mind, the next instant, the ruin of the Queen, the death of the good Count de Blenau, and a train of endless ills and horrors to those who confided in him, flashed across his imagination, and nerved his heart to better things. He called to mind every generous principle of his nature; and though but a humble peasant, he struggled nobly against the dishonouring power of fear.

Sleep, however, was out of the question; and he sat mournfully on the straw that had been placed for his bed, watching the light in the lantern, as inch by inch it burned away, till at last it gleamed for a moment in the socket—sank—rose again with a bright flash, and then became totally extinguished. He now remained in utter darkness, and a thousand vague and horrible fancies crowded upon his imagination while he sat there, calculating how near it was to day, when he fancied that even the momentary presence of the gaoler would prove some relief to the blank solitude of his situation. Hour after hour, however, passed away, and no glimpse of light told him it was morning. At length the door opened and the gaoler appeared, bringing with him a fresh lighted lamp, thus offering a frightful confirmation of Philip's fears that the beams of day never penetrated to the place of his confinement.

The gaoler took down the lantern, and having fastened the lamp in its place, gave to the unfortunate Woodman a loaf of bread and a pitcher of water. "Come!" exclaimed Fouchard, in a tone which spoke no great pleasure in the task; "get up; I am to take off your irons for you: and truly, there is no great use of them, for if you were the Devil

himself, you could not get out here."

"I suppose so," answered Philip. "But I trust that it will not be long before I am released altogether."

"Why, I should guess that it would not," answered the gaoler, in somewhat of a sarcastic tone, still continuing to unlock the irons; "People do not in general stay here very long."

"How so?" demanded Philip anxiously, misdoubting the tone in which the other spoke.

"Why," replied he, "you must know there are three ways, by one of which prisoners are generally released, as you say, *altogether*; and one way is as common as another, so far as my experience goes. Sometimes they die under the torture; at other times they are turned out to have their head struck off; or else they die of the damp: which last we call being *Home sick*." And with this very consolatory speech he bundled up the irons under his arm, and quitted the cell, taking care to fasten the door behind him.

CHAPTER X.

Showing what it is to be a day after the Fair; with sundry other matters, which the reader cannot fully comprehend without reading them.

HAVING now left the Woodman as unhappy as we could wish, and De Blenau very little better off than he was before; we must proceed with Pauline, and see what we can do for her in the same way.

It has been already said that, in the hurry of her flight, she struck her foot against a stone, and fell. This is an unpleasant accident at all times, and more especially when one is running away; but Pauline suffered it not to interrupt her flight one moment longer than necessary. Finding that some unexpected obstacle had delayed her pursuer as well as herself, she was upon her feet in a moment; and leaving him to arrange his difference with Monsieur Chatpilleur in the best way he could, she flew on towards the Rue Saint Antoine, without stopping to thank her deliverer; and, indeed, without knowing that the good *aubergiste*, taking a sincere interest in her fate, had, at the hour appointed, waited at the door of his auberge till he saw her enter the Bastille, and then, from some undefined feeling that all would not go right, had watched anxiously to see her safe out again.

The interest not being reciprocal, Pauline had forgot all about the *aubergiste*; and only seeing that some one obstructed her pursuer, she fled, as I have said before, to the Rue Saint Antoine. She passed Jacques Chatpilleur's little auberge, without any exchange of sentiment, even with the *Sanglier Gourmand*, and darted by the boutique of a *passemantier* with the same celerity. The next shop was a *marchand de broderie et de dentelle*, with a little passage, or *cul de sac*, between it and the following house, which was occupied by a *brocanteur*, both which trades requiring daylight in aid of their operations, were at that hour firmly closed with bolt and bar, nor shed one solitary ray to light the passenger along the streets.

Just as she had come opposite to the first of these, Pauline found some one seize her robe behind, and the next minute a large Spanish cloak was thrown over her head, while a gigantic pair of arms embracing her waist, raised her from the ground, and bore her along the street. Naturally conceiving that she was in the power of some of her pursuers from the Bastille, Pauline did not perceive, in the dreadful agitation of the moment, that she was carried in a different direction; and, giving herself up for lost, she yielded to her fate without scream or cry. Whoever it was that held her, carried her like a feather; but after striding along through several turnings, he paused, placed her on the ground, and still holding the cloak over her head with one hand, seemed to open a door with the other. The next moment he raised her again, though in a different position, and carried her up what was evidently a small winding staircase, at the top of which he again opened a door, where, even through the cloak, Pauline could perceive that they had entered some place which contained a powerful light. The moment the door was open, some one exclaimed, "It is her! Oh Jesu! yes, it is her!" in a voice which sounded so like that of her maid Louise that Pauline was more than ever bewildered. The person who had carried her, now placed her in a chair, and taking the additional security of tying the cloak over her head, communicated for a few minutes with the other person in whispers; after which Pauline fancied that some one quitted the room. The covering was then removed from her eyes, and she found herself in a small, meanly-furnished apartment, whose only occupant, besides herself, was a handsome man, of very gigantic proportions, and of that sort of daring aspect which smacked a little of the bravo. He was well dressed in a pourpoint of green lustring, braided with gold lace, slightly tarnished; the *haut-de-chausses* was of the same, tied down the side with red ribbons; and the cloak which he removed from Pauline's head seemed to form a part of the dress, though he had deprived himself of it for the moment, to answer the purpose in which we have seen it employed. On the whole, he was a good-looking cavalier, though there was a certain air of lawlessness in his countenance and mien which made Pauline shrink.

"Nay, do not be afraid, Mademoiselle," said he, with a strong Norman accent: "*Point de danger, point de danger*;" and he strove to reassure her to the best of his power. He possessed no great eloquence, however, at least of the kind calculated to calm a lady's fears; and the only thing which tended to give Pauline any relief, was the manifest respect with which he addressed her, standing cap in hand, and reiterating that no harm was intended or could happen to her.

She listened without attending, too much frightened to believe his words to their full extent, and striving to gain from the objects round about some more precise knowledge of her situation. She was evidently not in the Bastille; for the door of the room, instead of offering to her view bolts and bars, of such complicated forms that, like the mousetrap, they would have puzzled the man that made them, was only fastened by a single wooden lock, the key of which, like a dog's tongue in a hot day, kept lolling out with a negligent inclination towards the ground, very much at ease in its keyhole. The more Pauline gazed around her, the more she was bewildered; and after resolving twenty times to speak to the Norman, and as often failing in courage, she at last produced an articulate sound, which went to inquire where she was. The Norman, who had been walking up and down the room, as if waiting the arrival of some one, stopped in the midst, and making a low inclination, begged to assure Mademoiselle that she was in a place of safety.

The ice being broken, Pauline demanded, "Did not I hear the voice of my maid Louise?"

"No; it was my wife, Mademoiselle," replied her companion drily; and recommencing his perambulations, the young lady sank back into herself. At length a tap was heard at the door, and the Norman starting forward went on the outside, closing it after him, though not completely; and of the conversation which ensued between him and some other man, Pauline could catch detached sentences, which, though they served but little to elucidate her position to herself, may be of service to the reader.

At first all was conducted in a whisper, but the Norman soon broke forth, "Sachristie! I tell you she got in. I did not catch her till she was coming out."

"Monseigneur will be precious angry with us both," answered the other. "How I missed you, I cannot imagine; I only went to call upon *la petite Jeanette*, and did not stay five minutes."

"And I just stepped into the *Sanglier Gourmand*," rejoined our Norman, "which is opposite, you know. There I thought I could see all that went on. But that *maraud*, Jacques Chatpilleur, was always at his door about something; so finding that I could not get my second bottle of wine, I went down to the *cave* for it myself; and she must have passed while I was below."

"How did you find out, then, that she had got into the Bastille?" demanded the other.

The Norman's reply was delivered in so low a tone that Pauline could only distinguish the words—"Heard a scream—saw her running past like mad—threw the cloak over her, and brought her here."

"Perhaps she was not in, after all," rejoined the other; "but at all events, we must tell Monseigneur so. You swear you caught her just as she was going in, and I'll vow that I was there and saw you."

A new consultation seemed to take place; but the speakers proceeded so rapidly, that Pauline could not comprehend upon what it turned exactly, although she was herself evidently the subject of discussion. "Oh, she will not tell, for her own sake," said one of the voices. "She would be banished, to a certainty, if it was known that she got in; and as to the folks at the Bastille, be sure that they will hold their tongues."

Something was now said about a letter, and the voice of the Norman replied, "Monseigneur does not suppose that she had a letter. Oh, no! trust me, she had none. It was word of mouth work, be you sure. They were too cunning to send a letter which might be stopped upon her. No, no, they know something more than that."

"Well, then, the sooner we take her there, the better," rejoined the other; "the carriage is below, but you must blind her eyes, for she may know the liveries."

"Ah! your cursed livery betrayed us once before," answered the Norman. "*Holla! la haut! mon Ange*, give me a kerchief; I will tie her eyes with that, for the cloak almost smothers her, poor little soul!"

A light step was now heard coming down stairs, and a third person was added to the party without. What they said, Pauline could not make out; but though speaking in a whisper, she was still confident that she distinguished the voice of her maid Louise. "Harm!" said the Norman, after a moment, "we are going to do her no harm, *chère amie!* She will be down there in Maine, with the Countess, and as happy as a Princess. Give this gentleman the trunk-mail, and get yourself ready against I come back; for we have our journey to take too, you know, *ma petite femme.*"

The Norman now laid his hand upon the lock; there was a momentary bustle as of the party separating; and then entering the room, he informed Pauline that she must allow him to blindfold her eyes. Knowing that resistance was in vain, Pauline submitted with a good grace; and, her fears considerably allayed by the conversation she had overheard, attempted to draw from the Norman some farther information. But here he was inflexible; and having tied the handkerchief over her eyes, so as completely to prevent her seeing, he conducted her gently down the stairs, taking care to keep her from falling; and having arrived in the open air, lifted her lightly into a carriage, placed himself by her side, and gave orders to drive on.

The vehicle had not proceeded many minutes, when it again stopped; and Pauline was lifted out, conducted up a flight of stone steps, and then led into an apartment, where she was placed in a fauteuil, the luxurious softness of which bespoke a very different sort of furniture from that of the chamber which she had just left. There was now a little bustle, and a good deal of whispering, and then every one seemed to leave the room. Fancying herself alone, Pauline raised her hand, in order to remove the handkerchief from her eyes, at least for a moment; but a loud "*Prenez garde!*" from the Norman, stopped her in her purpose, and the next instant a door opened, and she heard steps approaching.

"Shut the door," said a voice she had never heard before. "Marteville, you have done well. Are you sure that she had no conversation with any one within the prison?"

"I will swear to it!" answered the Norman, with the stout asseveration of a determined liar. "Ask your man Chauvelin, Monseigneur; he was by, and saw me catch hold of her before she was at the gate."

"So he says," rejoined the other; "but now leave the room. I must have some conversation with this demoiselle myself. Wait for me without."

"Pardie!" muttered the Norman, as he withdrew; "he'll find it out now, and then I'm ruined."

"Mademoiselle de Beaumont," said the person that remained, "you have been engaged in a rash and dangerous enterprise—Had you succeeded in it, the Bastille must have been your doom, and severe judgment according to the law. By timely information on the subject, I have been enabled to save you from such a fate; but I am sorry to say that, for the safety of all parties, you must endure an absence from your friends for some time."

He paused, as if expecting a reply; and Pauline, after a moment's consideration, determined to answer, in order to draw from him, if possible, some farther information concerning the manner in which he had become acquainted with her movements, and also in regard to her future destination. "I perceive, Sir," said she, "from your conversation, that you belong to the same rank of society as myself; but I am at a loss to imagine how any gentleman presumes to attribute dangerous enterprises, and actions deserving imprisonment, to a lady, of whom he neither does, nor can know any thing."

"My dear young lady," replied her companion, "you make me smile. I did not think that I should have to put forth my diplomatic powers against so fair and so youthful an opponent. But allow me to remind you that, when young ladies of the highest rank are found masquerading in the streets at night, dressed in their servants' garments, they subject their conduct, perhaps, to worse misconstructions than that which I have put upon yours. But, Mademoiselle de Beaumont, I know you, and I know the spirit of your family too well to suppose that any thing but some great and powerful motive could induce you to appear as you do now. Withdraw that bandage from your eyes, (I have no fear of encountering them,) and look if that be a dress in which Mademoiselle de Beaumont should be seen."

Pauline's quick fingers instantly removed the handkerchief, and raising her eyes, she found that she was placed exactly before a tall Venetian mirror, which offered her a complete portrait of herself, sitting in an immense arm-chair of green velvet, and disguised in the costume of a Languedoc *paysanne*. The large *capote*, or hood, which she had worn, had been thrust back by the Norman, in order to blindfold her eyes, and her dark hair, all dishevelled, was hanging about her face in glossy confusion. The red serge *jupe* of Louise had acquired in the passages of the Bastille no inconsiderable portion of dust; and near the knee on which she had fallen at the foot of the glacis, it was stained with mire, as well as slightly torn. In addition to all this, appeared a large rent at the side, occasioned by the efforts of Philip the woodman to disengage it from the staple on which it had caught; and the black bodice had been broadly marked with green mould, in pressing against the wall while the guards passed so near to her.

Her face also was deathly pale, with all the alarm, agitation, and fatigue she had undergone; so that no person could be more different from the elegant and blooming Pauline de Beaumont than the figure which that mirror reflected. Pauline almost started when she beheld herself; but quickly recovering from her surprise, she cast her

eyes round the room, which was furnished in the most splendid and costly manner, and filled with a thousand objects of curiosity or luxury, procured from all the quarters of the globe.

Her attention, however, rested not upon any of these. Within a few paces of the chair in which she sat, stood a tall elegant man, near that period of life called the middle age, but certainly rather below than above the point to which the term is generally applied. He was splendidly dressed, according to the custom of the day; and the neat trimming of his beard and mustaches, the regular arrangement of his dark flowing hair, and the scrupulous harmony and symmetry of every part of his apparel, contradicted the thoughtful, dignified expression of his eyes, which seemed occupied with much higher thoughts. Vandyke has transmitted to us many such a physiognomy, and many such a dress; but few of his costumes are more splendid, or his countenances more dignified, than was that of the stranger who stood beside Mademoiselle de Beaumont.

He paused for a moment, giving her time to make what examination she liked of every thing in the apartment; and as her eye glanced to himself, demanded with a smile, "Well, Mademoiselle de Beaumont, do you recollect me?"

"Not in the least," replied Pauline: "I think, Sir, that we can never have seen each other before."

"Yes, we have," answered her companion, "but it was at a distance. However, now look in that glass, and tell me—Do you recollect *yourself*?"

"Hardly!" replied Pauline, with a blush, "hardly, indeed!"

"Well then, fair lady, I think that you will no longer demand my reasons for attributing to you dangerous enterprises, and actions, as you say, deserving imprisonment; but to put an end to your doubts at once, look at that order, where, I think, you will find yourself somewhat accurately described." And he handed to Pauline a small piece of parchment, beginning with the words of serious import '*De par le roy,*' and going on to order the arrest of the Demoiselle Pauline, daughter of the late Marquis de Beaumont, and of the Dame Anne de la Hautière; with all those good set terms and particulars, which left no room for mistake or quibble, even if it had been examined by the eyes of the sharpest lawyer of the *Cour des Aides*.

"What say you now, Mademoiselle de Beaumont?" demanded her companion, seeing her plunged in embarrassment and surprise.

"I have nothing to say, Sir," replied Pauline, "but that I must submit. However, I trust that, in common humanity, I shall be allowed to see my mother, either when I am in prison, or before I am conveyed thither."

"You mistake me," said the other; "you are not going to a prison. I only intend that you should take a little journey into the country; during the course of which all attention shall be paid to your comfort and convenience. Of course, young lady, when you undertook the difficult task of conveying a message from the Queen to a prisoner in the Bastille, you were prepared to risk the consequences. As you have not succeeded, no great punishment will fall upon you; but as it is absolutely necessary to the Government to prevent all communication between suspected parties, you must bear a temporary absence from the Court, till such time as this whole business be terminated; for neither the Queen, nor any one else, must know how far you have succeeded or failed."

Pauline pleaded hard to be allowed to see her mother, but in vain. The stranger was obdurate, and would listen to neither entreaties, promises, nor remonstrances. All she could obtain was, the assurance that Madame de Beaumont should be informed of her safety, and that, perhaps, after a time she might be permitted to write to her. "Listen to me," said the stranger, cutting short the prayers by which she was attempting to influence him. "I expect the King and Court from Chantilly within an hour; and before that time you must be out of Paris. For your convenience, a female servant shall attend you, and you will meet with all the respect due to your rank; but for your own sake, ask no questions, for I never permit my domestics to canvass my affairs with any one—nay, they are forbidden ever to mention my name, except for some express and permitted purpose. I will now leave you, and send Mathurine to your assistance, who will help you to change your dress from that *coffre*. You will then take some refreshment, and set out as speedily as possible. At the end of your journey, you will meet with one to whose care I have recommended you, and you will then learn in whose hands you are placed. At present, I have the honour of bidding you farewell."

The uncertainty of her fate, the separation from her mother, the vague uneasy fear attendant upon want of all knowledge of whither she was going, and the impossibility of communicating with her friends under any event, raised up images far more terrifying and horrible to the mind of Pauline, than almost any specific danger could have done; and, as her companion turned away, she hid her face in her hands and wept.

Hearing her sob, and perhaps attributing her tears to other motives, he returned for a moment, and said in a low voice: "Do not weep, my dear child! I give you my honour, that you will be well and kindly treated. But one thing I forgot to mention. I know that your object was to visit the Count de Blenau; and I know, also, that a personal interest had something to do in the matter. Now, Mademoiselle de Beaumont, I can feel for you; and it may be some comfort to know, that M. de Blenau has, at least, one person in the Council, who will strive to give to the proceedings against him as much leniency as circumstances will admit."

This said, he quitted the apartment, and in a moment after Pauline was joined by the female servant of whom he had spoken. She was a staid, reputable-looking woman, of about fifty, with a little of the primness of ancient maidenhood, but none of its acerbity. And, aware of Pauline's rank, she assisted her to disentangle herself from her uncomfortable disguise with silent respect, though she could not help murmuring to herself. "*Mon Dieu! Une demoiselle mise comme ça.*" She then called the young Lady's attention to the contents of the *coffre*, asking which dress she would choose to wear; when, to her surprise, Pauline found that it contained a considerable part of her own wardrobe. Forgetting the prohibition to ask questions, she could not help demanding of Mathurine how her clothes could come there; but the servant was either ignorant, or pretended to be so, and Pauline could obtain no information. As soon as she was dressed, some refreshments were placed on the table by Mathurine, who received them from a servant at one of the doors, which she immediately closed again, and pressed Pauline to eat. Pauline at first refused; but at length, to satisfy her companion, who continued to insist upon it with a degree of quiet, persevering civility, that would take no refusal, she took some of the coffee, which was at that time served up as a rarity. As soon as ever the domestic perceived that no entreaty would induce her to taste any thing else, she called in a servant to carry the *coffre* to the carriage, and then notified to Pauline that it was time for them to depart.

Pauline felt that all resistance or delay would be vain; and she accordingly followed Mathurine down a magnificent staircase into a court-yard, where stood a *chaise roulante*, the door of which was held open by the

Norman we have already mentioned, while two men-servants appeared ready mounted to follow the vehicle, as soon as it set out. Mathurine placed herself by Pauline's side when she had entered; and the Norman, having closed the door, opened the *porte-cochère* of the court, and the carriage drove out into the street.

We will not take the trouble of following Mademoiselle de Beaumont on her journey, which occupied that night and the two following days:—suffice it to say, that on the evening of the second day they arrived in the beautiful neighbourhood of Château du Loir. The smiling slopes, covered with the first vines; the rich fruit-trees hanging actually over the road, and dropping with the latest gifts of liberal Nature; the balmy air of a warm September evening; the rosy cheeks of the peasantry; and the clear, smooth windings of the river Loir,^[A] all announced that they were approaching the land of happy Touraine: and after putting her head more than once from the window, Mathurine, with a smile of pleasure, pointed forward, exclaiming, "*Voilà le Château.*"

[A] Not the Loire.

Pauline's eyes followed to the point where the other's hand directed them; and upon a high ground, rising gently above the trees which crowned a little projecting turn of the river, she beheld a group of towers and pinnacles, with the conical-slated roofs, multifarious weathercocks, long narrow windows, one turret upon the back of another, and all the other distinctive marks of an old French château.

CHAPTER XI.

In which De Blenau finds that he has got the rod in his own hand, and how he uses it; together with a curious account of a tremendous combat and glorious victory.

ICAN easily imagine myself, and I dare say the reader will not find much difficulty in fancying, that the Count de Blenau suffered not a little inquietude while he remained in uncertainty respecting Pauline's free exit from the Bastille.

Take and draw him, as Sterne did his captive. See him walking up and down the chamber with the anxiety of doubt upon his brow and in his heart, listening for every sound in the court-yard, catching the footstep of the sentinel at his door, and fancying it the return of the Governor,—hope struggling against fear, and fear remaining victor,—conjuring up a thousand wild, improbable events, and missing the true one; and, in short, making his bosom a *hell* wherein to torment his own heart.

Thus did Claude de Blenau, during that lapse of time which the Governor might reasonably be supposed to be occupied in the duties of his office. But when a longer time passed, and still no news arrived of Pauline's escape, the uncertainty became too great for mortal endurance; and he was about to risk all, by descending into the court through the turret, when the challenge of the sentinel announced the approach of some one, and in the next moment the Governor entered the room, his pale features flushed with anger, and his lip quivering with ill-subdued rage.

"Monsieur de Blenau!" said he, in a tone that he had never before presumed to use towards his wealthy prisoner, "here is something wrong. There has been a woman in the prison to-night, passing for that rascal Woodman's daughter: and I am given to understand, that she has brought either letter or message to you. But I will ascertain the truth—By Heaven! I will ascertain the truth!"

"Have you detained her, then?" exclaimed De Blenau, losing all caution in his fears for Pauline.

"Oh, ho! Monsieur le Comte," said the Governor, fixing on him his keen and angry eye; "then you do know that she has been here? But do you know, Sir, that it may cost me my head?"

"Very possibly, if you tell any body," replied De Blenau; who by this time had recovered his self-possession, and had, upon reconsideration, drawn from the Governor's speech a different conclusion from that which he had formed at first; feeling sure, that if Pauline had not escaped, his anger would have taken a calmer form. "Listen to me, Sir Governor," continued he firmly, after having determined in his own mind the line of conduct which he ought to pursue: "let us deal straightforwardly towards each other, and like friends as we have hitherto done. We are both in some degree in each other's power. On your part, do not attempt to entrap me into any acknowledgment, and I will show you that I will not make use of any advantage you may have given me——"

"I do not understand your meaning, Sir," cried the Governor, still angrily: "I have given you no advantage. By Heaven! I will have the apartment searched;—ay, Sir, and your person too."

"Will you so?" replied De Blenau, coolly drawing from his bosom the Queen's billet, and approaching the edge to the lamp so that it caught fire. The Governor started forward to seize it; but the strong arm of the Count held him at a distance, till the few lines the Queen had written were irretrievably destroyed; and then freeing him from his grasp, he pointed to a chair, saying, "Now, Monsieur le Gouverneur, sit down and listen to a few words of common sense." The Governor placed himself in the chair with a look of bitter malignity; but this softened down gradually into an expression of thoughtful cunning, as De Blenau proceeded—"Thus stands the case," said the Count; "I was committed to your charge, I think, with positive orders not to allow me communication with any person whatsoever—was it not so?" The Governor assented: "It so happened, however," continued the Count with a smile, "that at our very first interview, you conceived a friendship for me of the most liberal and disinterested nature," (the Governor bit his lip,) "a sort of love at first sight; and, for the sake of my accommodation, you not only broke through the positive commands of the Cardinal Prime Minister, in suffering me once to have communication with another person, but allowed such to take place at all times, according to my pleasure; and also took especial pains to procure the attendance of the person I wished, paying him with my money, for which, and other excellent purposes, you have, within the space of six days, received from me upwards of one thousand crowns."

The Governor winced most desperately; and fully convinced, that a tale so told, would readily convey his head under the axe of the executioner, if it reached the ears of Richelieu, he cursed himself for a fool, De Blenau for a knave, and Philip the woodman for something between the two; most devoutly wishing both the others at the Devil, so he could slip his own neck out of the halter.

De Blenau, without much skill in reading the mind's construction by the face, easily divined what was passing in his companion's bosom; and perceiving him to be much in the situation of a lame dog, he resolved still to apply the lash a little, before he helped him over the stile. "Well, Sir Governor," continued he; "now we will suppose, as a mere hypothesis to reason upon, that, through this very liberty which your disinterested kindness has allowed me, I have received those communications from without, which it was the Cardinal's great object to prevent. How ought you to act under such circumstances? Ought you to go to the stern, unrelenting Richelieu, and say to him,—'May it please your Eminence, I have intentionally and wilfully broken through every order you gave me—I have taken the utmost pains that they should not be observed; and I have so far succeeded in thwarting your designs, that Monsieur de Blenau, from whom I have received one thousand crowns, and from whom I expect a thousand more the moment he is liberated—I say, that this good friend of mine, and your enemy, has gained all the information which you wished to prevent,'—This would be a pretty confession of faith!"

De Blenau paused, and the Governor bit his lip; but after a moment, he looked the Count full in the face, and replied, "Perhaps it might be the best way."

De Blenau, however, was not to be deceived; he saw terror in the deadly hue of the Governor's pale cheek, and the anxious rolling of his sunken eye, and he went on—"Perhaps it might be the best way—to have your head struck off without delay; for what would your confession avail the Cardinal now, after the mischief is done?—Would it not be better to say to yourself,—'Here is a young nobleman, whom I believe to be innocent—for whom I have a regard—whom I have served already, and who is both willing and able to reward any one who does serve him; and who, lastly, will never betray me, let happen what will. Under these circumstances, should I not be a fool of the first water, to inquire into a matter, the truth of which I am very unlikely to discover, and which, if I do, it will be my duty

to disclose: whereas, standing as the affair does now, without my knowledge in the least, my ignorance makes my innocence, and I betray no one. Even supposing that the whole be found out, I am no worse than I was before, for the story can but be told at last; while, if the Count be liberated, which most likely he will, instead of losing my office, or my head, I shall gain a thousand crowns to indemnify me for all the trouble I have had, and shall ensure his friendship for life.' Now, Monsieur le Gouverneur, this is what you ought to say to yourself. In my opinion, the strength of argument is all on one side. Even if there were any thing to know, you would be a fool to investigate it, where you must of necessity be your own accuser; where all is to be lost, and nothing can be gained."

"You argue well, Monsieur de Blenau," answered the Governor, thoughtfully; "and your reasoning would be convincing, if it extended to all the circumstances of the case. But you do not know one half;—you do not know, that Chavigni, from whose eyes nothing seems hidden, knew of this girl's coming, and sent me an order to detain her, which that sottish fool the Porter never gave me till she had escaped—How am I to get over that, pray?"

"Then, positively, she has escaped?" demanded De Blenau.

"Yes, yes, she has escaped!" replied the Governor pettishly: "you seem to consider nothing but her; but, let me tell you, Monsieur de Blenau, that you are fully as much concerned as I am, for if they discover that she has got in, you will have a touch of the *peine forte et dure*, to make you confess who she is, and what she came for."

"Truly, I know not what can be done," answered the Count. "Chavigni seems to know all about it."

"No, no! he does not know all," replied the Governor; "for he says here, in his note, that if a young lady dressed in a *jupe* of red serge, with a black bodice, comes to the gate of the prison, asking any thing concerning the Count de Blenau, we are to detain her: now she never mentioned your name, and, God knows, I heeded not what she was dressed in."

"Then the matter is very simple," replied the Count; "no such person as he bade you detain, has been here. This is no matter of honour between man and man, where you are bound to speak your suspicions as well as your knowledge. No person has come to the gate of the prison asking any thing concerning me; and so answer Chavigni."

"But the Porter, Monsieur de Blenau," said the officer, anxiously,—“he may peach. All the other dependents on the prison are my own, placed by me, and would turn out were I to lose my office; but this porter was named by the Cardinal himself.—What is to be done with him?"

"Oh! fear not him," answered De Blenau; "as his negligence was the cause of your not receiving the order in time to render it effectual, your silence will be a favour to him."

"True! true!" cried the Governor, rubbing his hands with all the rapture of a man suddenly relieved from a mortal embarrassment: "True! true! I'll go and bully him directly—I'll threaten to inform the Cardinal, and Chavigni, and the whole Council; and then—when he begins to fancy that he feels the very rope round his neck—I'll relent, and be charitable, and agree to conceal his mistake, and to swear that the lady never came.—How will Chavigni know? She will never confess it herself, and at that hour it was too dark for any one to watch her up to the gates.—*Morbleu!* that will do precisely."

"I see little or no danger attending upon it," said the prisoner; "and, at all events, it is a great deal better than conveying your neck into the noose, which you would certainly do by confessing to Richelieu the circumstances as they have occurred."

"Well, well, we will risk it, at all events," replied the Governor, who, though not quite free from apprehension respecting the result, had now regained his usual sweet complacency of manner. "But one thing, Monsieur de Blenau, I am sure you will promise me; namely, that this attempt shall never be repeated, even if occasion should occur: and for the rest—with regard to your never betraying me, and other promises which your words imply, I will trust to your honour."

De Blenau readily agreed to what the Governor required, and repeated his promises never to disclose any thing that had occurred, and to reward his assistance with a thousand crowns, upon being liberated. Mindful of all who served him, he did not forget Philip the woodman; and deeply thankful for the escape of Pauline, was the more anxious to ascertain the fate of one who had so greatly contributed to the success of her enterprise.

"Speak not of him! speak not of him!" exclaimed the Governor, breaking forth into passion at De Blenau's inquiries. "This same skilful plotter attends upon you no longer. You will suffer some inconvenience for your scheme; but it is your fault, not mine, and you must put up with it as best you may."

"That I care not about," replied De Blenau. "But I insist upon it that he be treated with no severity. Mark me, Monsieur le Gouverneur: if I find that he is ill used, Chavigni shall hear of the whole business. I will risk any thing sooner than see a man suffer from his kindness for me."

"You paid him well, of course," said the Governor, drawing up his lip, "and he must take his chance. However, do not alarm yourself for him: he shall be taken care of—only, with your good leave, Seigneur Comte, you and he do not meet again within the walls of the Bastille.—But in the name of Heaven! what clatter is this at the door?" he exclaimed, starting from his chair, at a most unusual noise which proceeded from the staircase.

The Governor, indeed, had good reason to be astonished; for never was there a more strange and inconsistent sound heard within the walls of a prison, than that which saluted their ears. First came the "*Qui vive?*" of the sentinel; to which a voice roared out, "*Le Diable!*" "*Qui vive?*" cried the sentinel again, in a still sharper key. The answer to this was nothing but a clatter, as the Governor had expressed it, such as we might suppose produced by the blowing up of a steam-kitchen: then followed the discharge of the sentinel's firelock; and then sundry blows given and received upon some hard and sonorous substance, mingled with various oaths, execrations, and expletives then in use amongst the lower classes of his Christian Majesty's lieges, making altogether a most deafening din.

At this sound the Governor, as little able to conceive whence it originated as De Blenau himself, drew his sword, and throwing open the door, discovered the redoubtable Jacques Chatpilleur, *Cuisinier Aubergiste*, striding in triumph over the prostrate body of the sentinel, and waving over his head an immense stew-pan, being the weapon with which he had achieved the victory, and through which appeared a small round hole, caused by the ball of the soldier's firelock. In the mean while was to be seen the sentinel on the ground, his iron morion actually dented by the blows of his adversary, and his face and garments bedabbled, not with blood, indeed, but with the *Poulet en blanquette* and its white sauce, which had erst been tenant of the stew-pan.

"Victoria! Victoria! Victoria!" shouted the *aubergiste*, waving his stew-pan; "Twice have I conquered in one night! Can Mieleraye or Bouillon say that? Victoria! Victoria!" But here his triumph received a check; for looking into

the unhappy utensil, he suddenly perceived the loss of its contents, which had flown all over the place, the treacherous lid having detached itself during his conflict with the sentinel, and sought safety in flight down the stairs. "*Mon Poulet! mon Poulet!*" exclaimed he, in a tone of bitter despair, "*le nid y est, mais l'oiseau est parti*,—the nest is there, but the bird is flown. *Helas, mon Poulet! mon pauvre Poulet!*" and quitting the body of his prostrate foe, he advanced into the apartment with that sort of zig-zag motion which showed that the thin sinewy shanks which supported his woodcock-shaped upper man, were somewhat affected by a more than usual quantity of the generous grape.

The whole scene was so inexpressibly ludicrous, that De Blenau burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, in which the Governor could not help joining, notwithstanding his indignation at the treatment the sentinel had experienced. Recovering himself, however, he poured forth his wrath upon the *aubergiste* in no measured terms, demanding how he dared to conduct himself so in the Royal Chateau of the Bastille, and what had become of the Count de Blenau's supper, adding a few qualificatory epithets, which may as well be omitted.

"*Eh bien, Monsieur! Eh bien!*" cried the *aubergiste*, with very little respect for the Governor: "as for the gentleman there, lying on his belly, he ought to have let me in, and not fired his piece at me. He knew me well enough. He might have cried *Qui vive?* once,—that was well, as it is the etiquette."

"But why did you not answer him, *sacré maraud?*" cried the Governor.

"I did answer him," replied the other, stoutly. "He cried *Qui vive?* and I answered *Le Diable, car le Diable vive toujours*. And as for the supper, I have lost it all. *Je l'ai perdu entre deux mâtins*. The first was a greedy Norman vagabond, who feeds at my auberge; and while I was out for a minute, he whips me up my *matelot d'anguille* from out of the *casserole*, and my *dinde piquée* from the spit, and when I came back five minutes after, there was nothing left but bare bones and empty bottles. Pardie! And now I have bestowed on the head of that varlet a *poulet en blanquette* that might have comforted the stomach of a King. *Oh Dieu! Dieu! mes malheurs ne finiront jamais*. Oh! but I forgot," he continued, "there is still a *fricandeau à l'oseille* with a cold *paté*, that will do for want of a better. —*Monseigneur, votre serviteur*," and he bowed five or six times to De Blenau; "*Monsieur le Gouverneur, votre très humble*," and bowing round and round to every one, even to the sentinel, who by this time was beginning to recover his feet, the tipsy *aubergiste* staggered off, escaping the wrath of the Governor by the promise of the *fricandeau*, but not, however, without being threatened with punishment on the morrow.

CHAPTER XII.

The bureau of a Counsellor of State, or how things were managed in 1642.

"MARTEVILLE, you have served me essentially," said the Count de Chavigni as soon as he had left Pauline in what was called the ladies' hall of the Hotel de Bouthilliers, addressing the tall Norman, whom the reader has already recognised beyond a doubt. "You know I never suffer any good service to go without its reward; therefore I will now pay you yours, more especially as I have fresh demands to make upon your zeal. Let us see how our accounts stand;" and approaching a small table, which served both for the purposes of a writing-desk and also to support a strong ebony cabinet clasped with silver, he drew forth a bunch of keys and opened a drawer plated with iron, which contained a quantity of gold and silver coin. Chavigni then seated himself at the table, and the Norman standing on his right hand, they began regularly to balance accounts, the items of the Norman's charge being various services of rather a curious nature.

"For stopping the Archduke's courier," said Chavigni, "and taking from him his despatches—fifty crowns is enough for that."

"I demand no more," said Marteville; "any common thief could have done it."

"But, by the way, I hope you did not hurt him, for he came with a safe conduct."

"Hurt him! no," replied the Norman: "we are the best friends in the world. When I met him on the road, I told him civilly that I must have his despatches; and that I would either cut his throat or drink a bottle with him, whichever he liked: so he chose the latter, and when we parted, he promised to give me notice the next time he came on the same errand."

"The rascal!" said Chavigni, "that is the way we are served. But now we come to this business of the Count de Blenau—what do you expect for the whole concern?"

"Nay but, Monseigneur, you forget," exclaimed the other; "there is one little item before that. Put down,—for being an Astrologer."

"Why, I have given you fifty crowns on that account already," rejoined the Statesman; "you are exorbitant, Seigneur Marteville."

"That fifty crowns went for my expenses—all of it," replied the other. "There was my long black robe all covered with gimcracks; there was my leathern belt, painted with all the signs under heaven; there was my white beard, and wig, which cost me ten good crowns at the shop of Jansen the Peruquier: besides the harness of my horse, which was made to suit, and my Astrologer's bonnet, which kept all fast upon my head. Now, Monseigneur, you cannot give me less than fifty crowns, for being out two nights, and running the risk of being burnt alive."

"I think not," said Chavigni, "so let that pass. But to come to the other business."

"Why, first and foremost," replied the Norman, marking each article as he named it, by laying the index of his right hand upon one of the immense fingers of his left,— "For making love to Mademoiselle's maid."

"Nay, nay, nay!" cried Chavigni, "this is too much. That must be part of the dower I have promised with her, of which we will talk presently. But have you married her?"

"No," answered the Norman, "not yet. We will see about that hereafter."

Chavigni's cheek reddened, and his brow knit into a heavy frown. "No evasions, Sir. I commanded you, when you took her away last night from Chantilly, to marry her directly, and you agreed to do so. Why is it not done?"

"If the truth must be told, Monseigneur, it is not done, because it goes against a Norman gentleman's stomach to take up with any body's cast-offs."

"Do not be insolent, Sir," cried the Statesman. "Did I not give you my honour that your suspicion was false? Know, Sir, that though Chavigni may sometimes condescend to converse with you, or may appear to trifle for a moment with a girl like this Louise, it is merely to gain some greater object that he does so; and that unless it be for some State purpose, he never honours such beings with his thoughts."

"Well, well, Monseigneur," replied the other, seeing the fire that flashed in his Lord's eye, "I will marry her: *Foy de Normand!* Don't be angry; I will marry her."

"*Foy de Normand!* will not do," said Chavigni. "It must be this very night."

"*Eh bien! Eh bien! Soit,*" cried the Norman, and then muttered to himself with a grin, "I've four wives now living; a fifth won't make much difference."

"What murmur you, Sir?" demanded the Statesman. "Mark me! in one hour from hence you will find a priest and two witnesses in the Cardinal's chapel! When you are married, the priest will give you a certificate of the ceremony, carry it to my intendant, and upon the sight of it he will pay you the sum we agree upon. Now, proceed with your demands."

"Well then, Monseigneur," continued Marteville, "what is the information concerning Mademoiselle's coming to Paris worth?"

"It is worth a good deal," replied Chavigni, "and I will always pay more for knowledge of that kind than any acts of brute force. Set that down for a hundred crowns, and fifty more for catching the young lady, and bringing her here; making altogether two hundred and fifty."

"Yes, Sir, yes; but the *dot*—the dowry you mentioned," cried the Norman. "You have forgot that."

"No, I have not," replied Chavigni. "In favour of Louise, I will make the sum up one thousand crowns, which you will receive the moment you have married her."

"Oh! I'll marry her directly, if that be the case," cried the Norman. "*Morbleu!* that makes all the difference."

"But treat her kindly," said Chavigni. "With the stipend of a thousand crowns, which I allow you yearly, and what you can gain by particular services, you may live very well; and perhaps I may add some little gratification, if you please me in your conduct towards your wife."

"Oh! I'll be the tenderest husband living," cried the Norman, "since my gratification depends upon her's. But I'll run and fetch her to be married directly, if you will send the Priest, Monseigneur."

"Nay, stop a moment," said the Statesman. "You forget that I told you I had other journeys for you to take, and

other services for you to perform."

"No, Sir," answered the Norman, "all is prepared to set out this very night, if you will tell me my errand."

Chavigni paused for a moment, and remained in deep thought, gnawing his lip as if embarrassed by doubts as to the best manner of proceeding. "Mark me, Marteville," said he at length: "there are two or three sorts of scoundrels in the world, amongst whom I do not look upon you as the least." The Norman bowed with the utmost composure, very well aware of the place he held in Chavigni's opinion. "There are, however, some good points about you," continued the Statesman; at which Marteville bowed again. "You would rob, kill, and plunder, I believe, without remorse, any one you hated or did not care about; but I do not think you would forget a kindness or betray a trust."

"Never!" said the Norman: "red-hot pincers will not tear from me what is intrusted to my honour."

"So be it, then, in the present instance," said Chavigni; "for I am obliged to give you the knowledge of some things, and to enter into explanations with you, which I do not often do with any one. You must know, then, I have information that on the same day that Monsieur de Cinq Mars set out from Chantilly with Monsieur de Thou, the Duke of Orleans, with Montressor and St. Ibal, took their departure from Moulins, and the Count de Fontrailles from Paris. They all journeyed towards the same point in Champagne. I can trace Fontrailles to Troyes, the Duke and his companions to Villeneuve, and Cinq Mars and De Thou to Nogent, but no farther. All this might be accidental, but there are circumstances that create suspicion in my mind. Cinq Mars, when he set forth, gave out that he went to his estate near Troyes, in which I find he never set his foot; and when he returned, his conference with Louis was somewhat long. It might have been of hawks and hounds, it is true; but after it, the King's manner both to the Cardinal and myself was cold and haughty, and he suddenly took this resolution of coming to Paris himself to examine into the case of the young Count de Blenau:—in short, I suspect that some plot is on foot. What I require of you then is, to hasten down to Champagne; try to trace each of these persons, and discover if they had a conference, and where; find out the business that brought each of them so far, examine their track as you would the slot of a deer, and give me whatever information you collect; employ every means to gain a thorough knowledge of all their proceedings—force, should it be required—but let that be the last thing used. Here is this signet, upon the sight of which all the agents of Government in the different towns and villages will communicate with you." And he drew from his finger a small seal ring, which the Norman consigned to his pocket, his hands being somewhat too large to admit of his wearing it in the usual manner.

"The Duke of Orleans and his pack I know well," answered Marteville, "and also Cinq Mars and De Thou; but this Count de Fontrailles—what like is he, Monseigneur?"

"He is a little ugly mean-looking man," replied Chavigni; "he frequently dresses himself in grey, and looks like a sorcerer. Make him your first object; for if ever there was a devil of cunning upon earth, it is Fontrailles, and he is at the bottom of the plot if there be one."

"You traced him to Troyes, you say, Monseigneur? Had he any pretence of business there?"

"None," answered Chavigni; "my account says that he had no attendants with him, lodged at the *Auberge du Grand Soleil*, and was poorly dressed."

"I will trace him if he were the Devil himself," said the Norman; "and before I see you again, Monseigneur, I shall be able to account for each of these gentry."

"If you do," said Chavigni, "a thousand crowns is your reward; and if you discover any plot or treasonable enterprise, so that by your means they may be foiled and brought to justice, the thousand shall grow into ten thousand, and you shall have a place that will give you a life of luxury."

The Norman's eyes sparkled at the anticipation, and his imagination portrayed himself and his five wives living together in celestial harmony, drinking the best vintages of Burgundy and Epernay, eating of the fat of the land, and singing like mad. These blissful ideas were first interrupted by the sound of horses' feet in the court. "Hark!" cried Chavigni, "they are putting the horses to the carriage; go down, and see that all be prepared for the young lady's journey."

"Instantly," answered the Norman, "and after that I will carry Louise to the Priest, finger your Lordship's cash, and we will set off for Troyes."

"Do you intend to take her with you?" demanded Chavigni, in some surprise.

"Nay, my Lord, you would not wish me to leave my bride on our wedding night, surely," replied the Norman, in a mock sentimental tone. "But the truth is, I think she may be useful. Woman's wit will often find a way where man's wisdom looks in vain; and as I have now, thanks to your bounty, two good horses, I shall e'en set Louise upon one of them, and with the bridle rein over my arm lead her to Brie, where, with your good leave, we will sleep, and thence on upon our journey. Travelling with a woman, no one will suspect my real object, and I shall come sooner at my purpose."

"Well, so be it then," answered the Statesman. "You are now, as you wished to be, intrusted with an affair of more importance than stopping a courier, or carrying off a weak girl; and as the reward is greater, so would be the punishment in case you were to betray your trust. I rely on your honour; but let me hint at the same time, that there is such a thing as the rack, which has more than once been applied to persons who reveal State secrets. Keep good account of your expenses, and such as are truly incurred for the Government, the Government will pay."

Thus ended the conference between Chavigni and the Norman, neither of whom we shall follow much farther in this volume. Of Chavigni it is only necessary to say, that immediately after the departure of Pauline he proceeded to the Louvre to wait the arrival of Louis the Thirteenth, who soon after entered Paris, accompanied by the Queen, Cinq Mars, and all the usual attendants of the court, and followed by the Cardinal and those members of the Council who had not previously arrived along with Chavigni.

In regard to the Norman, inspired by the agreeable prospect of a thousand crowns, he was not long in visiting the Chapel of the Palais Cardinal, where the Priest speedily united him to a black-eyed damsel that he brought in his hand. Who this was, it does not suit me to discover to the reader. If he have found it out already, I cannot help it; but if he have not, I vow and protest that in the whole course of this true history I will afford him no farther explanation; no, not even in the last sentence of the last page of the last volume.

Immediately after their marriage the Norman put his bride upon horseback and proceeded to Brie, each carrying behind them a valise, containing a variety of articles which would doubtless greatly edify the reader to learn, but which unfortunately cannot now be detailed at full length, the schedule having been lost some years after

by one of their collateral descendants in the great fire of London, where it had found its way in consequence of the revocation of the edict of Nantes. All that can be affirmed with certainty is, that in the valise of the Norman were three shirts and a half with falling collars, according to the fashion of that day; a pourpoint or doublet of blue velvet, (which was his best,) and a cloak to match; also (of the same stuff) a *haut-de-chausses*, which was a machine then used for the same purpose as a pair of breeches now-a-days; and over and above all the rest was his Astrologer's robe and grey beard, folded round a supernumerary brace of pistols, and a small stiletto. Into the Lady's wardrobe we shall not inquire: suffice it to say, that it accompanied its mistress safe from Brie to Troyes, where, putting up at the *Grand Soleil*, the Norman began his perquisitions concerning Fontrailles.

Now having left all my friends and acquaintances at sixes and sevens, I shall close this volume; and if the reader be interested in their fate, he may go on to the next, in which I mean utterly to annihilate them all, leaving nothing behind but the sole of the Count de Blenau's shoe, with FINIS at the bottom of the page.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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Typographical error corrected by the etext transcriber:
aud the servant again=> and the servant again {pg 118}

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK RICHELIEU: A TALE OF FRANCE, V. 2/3 ***

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