

CINQ MARS

By ALFRED DE VIGNY

ALFRED DE VIGNY

The reputation of Alfred de Vigny has endured extraordinary vicissitudes in France. First he was lauded as the precursor of French romantic poetry and stately prose; then he sank in semi-oblivion, became the curiosity of criticism, died in retirement, and was neglected for a long time, until the last ten years or so produced a marked revolution of taste in France. The supremacy of Victor Hugo has been, if not questioned, at least mitigated; other poets have recovered from their obscurity. Lamartine shines now like a lamp relighted; and the pure, brilliant, and profoundly original genius of Alfred de Vigny now takes, for the first time, its proper place as one of the main illuminating forces of the nineteenth century.

It was not until one hundred years after this poet's birth that it became clearly recognized that he is one of the most important of all the great writers of France, and he is distinguished not only in fiction, but also in poetry and the drama. He is a follower of Andre Chenier, Lamartine, and Victor Hugo, a lyric sun, a philosophic poet, later, perhaps in consequence of the Revolution of 1830, becoming a "Symbolist." He has been held to occupy a middle ground between De Musset and Chenier, but he has also something suggestive of Madame de Stael, and, artistically, he has much in common with Chateaubriand, though he is more coldly impersonal and probably much more sincere in his philosophy. If Sainte-Beuve, however, calls the poet in his *Nouveaux Lundis* a "beautiful angel, who has been drinking vinegar," then the modern reader needs a strong caution against malice and raillery, if not jealousy and perfidy, although the article on De Vigny abounds otherwise with excessive critical cleverness.

At times, indeed, under the cruel deceptions of love, he seemed to lose faith in his idealism; his pessimism, nevertheless, always remained noble, restrained, sympathetic, manifesting itself not in appeals for condolence, but in pitying care for all who were near and dear to him. Yet his lofty prose and poetry, interpenetrated with the stern despair of pessimistic idealism, will always be unintelligible to the many. As a poet, De Vigny appeals to the chosen few alone. In his dramas his genius is more emancipated from himself, in his novels most of all. It is by these that he is most widely known, and by these that he exercised the greatest influence on the literary life of his generation.

Alfred-Victor, Count de Vigny, was born in Loches, Touraine, March 27, 1797. His father was an army officer, wounded in the Seven Years' War. Alfred, after having been well educated, also selected a military career and received a commission in the "Mousquetaires Rouges," in 1814, when barely seventeen. He served until 1827, "twelve long years of peace," then resigned. Already in 1822 appeared a volume of 'Poemes' which was hardly noticed, although containing poetry since become important to the evolution of French verse: 'La Neige, le Coy, le Deluge, Elva, la Frigate', etc., again collected in 'Poemes antiques et modernes' (1826). Other poems were published after his death in 'Les Destinies' (1864).

Under the influence of Walter Scott, he wrote a historical romance in 1826, 'Cinq-Mars, ou une Conjuration sans Louis XIII'. It met with the most brilliant and decided success and was crowned by the Academy. Cinq-Mars will always be remembered as the earliest romantic novel in France and the greatest and most dramatic picture of Richelieu now extant. De Vigny was a convinced Anglophile, well acquainted with the writings of Shakespeare and Milton, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Matthew Arnold, and Leopardi. He also married an English lady in 1825--Lydia Bunbury.

Other prose works are 'Stello' (1832), in the manner of Sterne and Diderot, and 'Servitude et Grandeur militaire' (1835), the language of which is as caustic as that of Merimee. As a dramatist, De Vigny produced a translation of 'Othello--Le More de Venice' (1829); also 'La Marechale d'Ancre' (1832); both met with moderate success only. But a decided "hit" was 'Chatterton' (1835), an adaption from his prose-work 'Stello, ou les Diables bleus'; it at once established his reputation on the stage; the applause was most prodigious, and in the annals of the French theatre can only be compared with that of 'Le Cid'. It was a great victory for the Romantic School, and the type of Chatterton, the slighted poet, "the marvellous boy, the sleepless soul that perished in his pride," became contagious as erstwhile did the type of Werther.

For twenty years before his death Alfred de Vigny wrote nothing. He lived in retirement, almost a recluse, in La Charente, rarely visiting Paris. Admitted into L'Academie Francaise in 1845, he describes in his 'Journal d'un Poete' his academic visits and the reception held out to him by the members of L'Institut. This work appeared posthumously in 1867.

He died in Paris, September 17, 1863.

CHARLES DE MAZADE
de l'Academie Francaise.

PREFACE

Considering Alfred de Vigny first as a writer, it is evident that he wished the public to regard him as different from the other romanticists of his day; in fact, in many respects, his method presents a striking contrast to theirs. To their brilliant facility, their prodigious abundance, and the dazzling luxury of color in their pictures of life he opposes a style always simple, pure, clear, with delicacy of touch, careful drawing of character, correct locution, and absolute chastity. Yet, even though he had this marked regard for purity in literary style, no writer had more dislike of mere pedantry. His high ideal in literary art and his self-respect inspired him with an invincible repugnance toward the artificialities of style of that period, which the romanticists--above all, Chateaubriand, their master--had so much abused.

Every one knows of the singular declaration made by Chateaubriand to Joubert, while relating the details of a nocturnal voyage: "The moon shone upon me in a slender crescent, and that prevented me from writing an untruth, for I feel sure that had not the moon been there I should have said in my letter that it was shining, and then you would have convicted me of an error in my almanac!"

This habit of sacrificing truth and exactitude of impression, for the sake of producing a harmonious phrase or a picturesque suggestion, disgusted Alfred de Vigny. "The worst thing about writers is that they care very little whether what they write is true, so long as they only write," we read on one page of his Journal. He adds, "They should seek words only in their own consciences." On another page he says: "The most serious lack in literary work is sincerity. Perceiving clearly that the combination of technical labor and research for effective expression, in producing literary work, often leads us to a paradox, I have resolved to sacrifice all to conviction and truth, so that this precious element of sincerity, complete and profound, shall dominate my books and give to them the sacred character which the divine presence of truth always gives."

Besides sincerity, De Vigny possessed, in a high degree, a gift which was not less rare in that age--good taste. He had taste in the art of writing, a fine literary tact, a sense of proportion, a perception of delicate shades of expression, an instinct that told him what to say and what to suppress, to insinuate, or to be left to the understanding. Even

in his innovations in form, in his boldness of style, he showed a rare discretion; never did he do violence to the genius of the French language, and one may apply to him without reserve the eulogy that Quintilian pronounced upon Horace: 'Verbis felicissime audax'.

He cherished also a fixed principle that art implied selection. He was neither idealist nor realist, in the exclusive and opposing sense in which we understand these terms; he recommended a scrupulous observance of nature, and that every writer should draw as close to it as possible, but only in order to interpret it, to reveal it with a true feeling, yet without a too intimate analysis, and that no one should attempt to portray it exactly or servilely copy it. "Of what use is art," he says, "if it is only a reduplication of existence? We see around us only too much of the sadness and disenchantment of reality." The three novels that compose the volume 'Servitude et Grandeur militaire' are, in this respect, models of romantic composition that never will be surpassed, bearing witness to the truth of the formula followed by De Vigny in all his literary work: "Art is the chosen truth."

If, as a versifier, Alfred de Vigny does not equal the great poets of his time, if they are his superiors in distinction and brilliancy, in richness of vocabulary, freedom of movement, and variety of rhythm, the cause is to be ascribed less to any lack of poetic genius than to the nature of his inspiration, even to the laws of poesy, and to the secret and irreducible antinomy that exists between art and thought. When, for example, Theophile Gautier reproached him with being too little impressed with the exigencies of rhyme, his criticism was not well grounded, for richness of rhyme, though indispensable in works of descriptive imagination, has no 'raison d'etre' in poems dominated by sentiment and thought. But, having said that, we must recognize in his poetry an element, serious, strong, and impressive, characteristic of itself alone, and admire, in the strophes of 'Mozse', in the imprecations of 'Samson', and in the 'Destinees', the majestic simplicity of the most beautiful Hebraic verse.

Moreover, the true originality of De Vigny does not lie in the manner of composition; it was primarily in the role of precursor that he played his part on the stage of literature. Let us imagine ourselves at the period about the beginning of the year 1822. Of the three poets who, in making their literary debuts, had just published the 'Meditations, Poemes antiques et modernes, and Odes', only one had, at that time, the instinct of renewal in the spirit of French poesy, and a sense of the manner in which this must be accomplished; and that one was not Lamartine, and certainly it was not Victor Hugo.

Sainte-Beuve has said, with authority, that in Lamartine there is something suggestive of Millevoye, of Voltaire (he of the charming epistles), and of Fontanes; and Victor Hugo wrote with very little variation from the technical form of his predecessors. "But with Alfred de Vigny," he says, "we seek in vain for a resemblance to any French poetry preceding his work. For example, where can we find anything resembling 'Moise, Eloa, Doloeida'? Where did he find his inspiration for style and composition in these poems? If the poets of the Pleiades of the Restoration seem to have found their inspiration within themselves, showing no trace of connection with the literature of the past, thus throwing into confusion old habits of taste and of routine, certain it is that among them Alfred de Vigny should be ranked first."

Even in the collection that bears the date of 1822, some years before the future author of *Legende des Siecles* had taken up romanticism, Alfred de Vigny had already conceived the idea of setting forth, in a series of little epics, the migrations of the human soul throughout the ages. "One feels," said he in his Preface, "a keen intellectual delight in transporting one's self, by mere force of thought, to a period of antiquity; it resembles the pleasure an old man feels in recalling first his early youth, and then the whole course of his life. In the age of simplicity, poetry was devoted entirely to the beauties of the physical forms of nature and of man; each step in advance that it has made since then toward our own day of civilization and of sadness, seems to have

blended it more and more with our arts, and even with the sufferings of our souls. At present, with all the serious solemnity of Religion and of Destiny, it lends to them their chief beauty. Never discouraged, Poetry has followed Man in his long journey through the ages, like a sweet and beautiful companion. I have attempted, in our language, to show some of her beauties, in following her progress toward the present day."

The arrangement of the poems announced in this Preface is tripartite, like that of the 'Legende des Siecles: Poemes antiques, poemes judaiques, poemes modernes.--Livre mystique, livre antique, livre moderne'. But the name of precursor would be a vain title if all that were necessary to merit it was the fact that one had been the first to perceive a new path to literary glory, to salute it from a distance, yet never attempt to make a nearer approach.

In one direction at least, Alfred de Vigny was a true innovator, in the broadest and most meritorious sense of the word: he was the creator of philosophic poetry in France. Until Jocelyn appeared, in 1836, the form of poetic expression was confined chiefly to the ode, the ballad, and the elegy; and no poet, with the exception of the author of 'Moise' and 'Eloa', ever dreamed that abstract ideas and themes dealing with the moralities could be expressed in the melody of verse.

To this priority, of which he knew the full value, Alfred de Vigny laid insistent claim. "The only merit," he says in one of his prefaces, "that any one ever has disputed with me in this sort of composition is the honor of having promulgated in France all works of the kind in which philosophic thought is presented in either epic or dramatic form."

But it was not alone priority in the sense of time that gave him right of way over his contemporaries; he was the most distinguished representative of poetic philosophy of his generation. If the phrases of Lamartine seem richer, if his flight is more majestic, De Vigny's range is surer and more powerful. While the philosophy of the creator of 'Les Harmonies' is uncertain and inconsistent, that of the poet of 'Les Destinees' is strong and substantial, for the reason that the former inspires more sentiment than ideas, while the latter, soaring far above the narrow sphere of personal emotion, writes of everything that occupies the intellect of man.

Thus, by his vigor and breadth of thought, by his profound understanding of life, by the intensity of his dreams, Alfred de Vigny is superior to Victor Hugo, whose genius was quite different, in his power to portray picturesque scenes, in his remarkable fecundity of imagination, and in his sovereign mastery of technique.

But nowhere in De Vigny's work is that superiority of poetic thought so clearly shown as in those productions wherein the point of departure was farthest from the domain of intellect, and better than any other has he understood that truth proclaimed by Hegel: "The passions of the soul and the affections of the heart are matter for poetic expression only in so far as they are general, solid, and eternal."

De Vigny was also the only one among our poets that had a lofty ideal of woman and of love. And in order to convince one's self of this it is sufficient to reread successively the four great love-poems of that period: 'Le Lac, La Tristesse d'Olympio, Le Souvenir, and La Colere de Samson'.

Lamartine's conception of love was a sort of mild ecstasy, the sacred rapture in which the senses play no part, and noble emotions that cause neither trouble nor remorse. He ever regarded love as a kind of sublime and passionate religion, of which 'Le Lac' was the most beautiful hymn, but in which the image of woman is so vague that she almost seems to be absent.

On the other hand, what is 'La Tristesse d'Olympio' if not an admirable but common poetic rapture, a magnificent summary of the sufferings of the heart--a bit of lyric writing equal to the most beautiful canzoni of the

Italian masters, but wherein we find no idea of love, because all is artificial and studied; no cry from the soul is heard,--no trace of passion appears.

After another fashion the same criticism applies to *Le Souvenir*; it was written under a stress of emotion resulting from too recent events; and the imagination of the author, subservient to a memory relentlessly faithful, as is often the case with those to whom passion is the chief principle of inspiration, was far from fulfilling the duties of his high vocation, which is to purify the passions of the poet from individual and accidental characteristics in order to leave unhampered whatever his work may contain that is powerful and imperishable.

Alfred de Vigny alone, of the poets of his day, in his '*Colere de Samson*', has risen to a just appreciation of woman and of love; his ideal is grand and tragic, it is true, and reminds one of that gloomy passage in *Ecclesiastes* which says: "Woman is more bitter than death, and her arms are like chains."

It is by this character of universality, of which all his writings show striking evidence, that Alfred de Vigny is assured of immortality. A heedless generation neglected him because it preferred to seek subjects in strong contrast to life of its own time. But that which was not appreciated by his contemporaries will be welcomed by posterity. And when, in French literature, there shall remain of true romanticism only a slight trace and the memory of a few great names, the author of the '*Destinees*' will still find an echo in all hearts.

No writer, no matter how gifted, immortalizes himself unless he has crystallized into expressive and original phrase the eternal sentiments and yearnings of the human heart. "A man does not deserve the name of poet unless he can express personal feeling and emotion, and only that man is worthy to be called a poet who knows how to assimilate the varied emotions of mankind." If this fine phrase of Goethe's is true, if true poetry is only that which implies a mastery of spiritual things as well as of human emotion, Alfred de Vigny is assuredly one of our greatest poets, for none so well as he has realized a complete vision of the universe, no one has brought before the world with more boldness the problem of the soul and that of humanity. Under the title of poet he belongs not only to our national literature, but occupies a distinctive place in the world of intellect, with Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe, among those inspired beings who transmit throughout succeeding centuries the light of reason and the traditions of the loftiest poetic thought.

Alfred de Vigny was elected to a chair in the French Academy in 1846 and died at Paris, September 17, 1863.

GASTON BOISSIER
Secrétaire Perpetuel de l'Académie Française.

TRUTH IN ART

The study of social progress is to-day not less needed in literature than is the analysis of the human heart. We live in an age of universal investigation, and of exploration of the sources of all movements. France, for example, loves at the same time history and the drama, because the one explores the vast destinies of humanity, and the other the individual lot of man. These embrace the whole of life. But it is the province of religion, of philosophy, of pure poetry only, to go beyond life, beyond time, into eternity.

Of late years (perhaps as a result of our political changes) art has borrowed from history more than ever. All of us have our eyes fixed on our chronicles, as though, having reached manhood while going on toward greater things, we had stopped a moment to cast up the account of our

youth and its errors. We have had to double the interest by adding to it recollection.

As France has carried farther than other nations this love of facts, and as I had chosen a recent and well-remembered epoch, it seemed to me that I ought not to imitate those foreigners who in their pictures barely show in the horizon the men who dominate their history. I placed ours in the foreground of the scene; I made them leading actors in this tragedy, wherever I endeavored to represent the three kinds of ambition by which we are influenced, and with them the beauty of self-sacrifice to a noble ideal. A treatise on the fall of the feudal system; on the position, at home and abroad, of France in the seventeenth century; on foreign alliances; on the justice of parliaments or of secret commissions, or on accusations of sorcery, would not perhaps have been read. But the romance was read.

I do not mean to defend this last form of historical composition, being convinced that the real greatness of a work lies in the substance of the author's ideas and sentiments, and not in the literary form in which they are dressed. The choice of a certain epoch necessitates a certain treatment--to another epoch it would be unsuitable; these are mere secrets of the workshop of thought which there is no need of disclosing. What is the use of theorizing as to wherein lies the charm that moves us? We hear the tones of the harp, but its graceful form conceals from us its frame of iron. Nevertheless, since I have been convinced that this book possesses vitality, I can not help throwing out some reflections on the liberty which the imagination should employ in weaving into its tapestry all the leading figures of an age, and, to give more consistency to their acts, in making the reality of fact give way to the idea which each of them should represent in the eyes of posterity; in short, on the difference which I find between Truth in art and the True in fact.

Just as we descend into our consciences to judge of actions which our minds can not weigh, can we not also search in ourselves for the feeling which gives birth to forms of thought, always vague and cloudy? We shall find in our troubled hearts, where discord reigns, two needs which seem at variance, but which merge, as I think, in a common source--the love of the true, and the love of the fabulous.

On the day when man told the story of his life to man, history was born. Of what use is the memory of facts, if not to serve as an example of good or of evil? But the examples which the slow train of events presents to us are scattered and incomplete. They lack always a tangible and visible coherence leading straight on to a moral conclusion. The acts of the human race on the world's stage have doubtless a coherent unity, but the meaning of the vast tragedy enacted will be visible only to the eye of God, until the end, which will reveal it perhaps to the last man. All systems of philosophy have sought in vain to explain it, ceaselessly rolling up their rock, which, never reaching the top, falls back upon them--each raising its frail structure on the ruins of the others, only to see it fall in its turn.

I think, then, that man, after having satisfied his first longing for facts, wanted something fuller--some grouping, some adaptation to his capacity and experience, of the links of this vast chain of events which his sight could not take in. Thus he hoped to find in the historic recital examples which might support the moral truths of which he was conscious. Few single careers could satisfy this longing, being only incomplete parts of the elusive whole of the history of the world; one was a quarter, as it were, the other a half of the proof; imagination did the rest and completed them. From this, without doubt, sprang the fable. Man created it thus, because it was not given him to see more than himself and nature, which surrounds him; but he created it true with a truth all its own.

This Truth, so beautiful, so intellectual, which I feel, I see, and long to define, the name of which I here venture to distinguish from that of the True, that I may the better make myself understood, is the soul of all the arts. It is the selection of the characteristic token in all the

beauties and the grandeurs of the visible True; but it is not the thing itself, it is something better: it is an ideal combination of its principal forms, a luminous tint made up of its brightest colors, an intoxicating balm of its purest perfumes, a delicious elixir of its best juices, a perfect harmony of its sweetest sounds--in short, it is a concentration of all its good qualities. For this Truth, and nothing else, should strive those works of art which are a moral representation of life-dramatic works. To attain it, the first step is undoubtedly to learn all that is true in fact of every period, to become deeply imbued with its general character and with its details; this involves only a cheap tribute of attention, of patience, and of memory: But then one must fix upon some chosen centre, and group everything around it; this is the work of imagination, and of that sublime common-sense which is genius itself.

Of what use were the arts if they were only the reproduction and the imitation of life? Good heavens! we see only too clearly about us the sad and disenchanting reality--the insupportable lukewarmness of feeble characters, of shallow virtues and vices, of irresolute loves, of tempered hates, of wavering friendships, of unsettled beliefs, of constancy which has its height and its depth, of opinions which evaporate. Let us dream that once upon a time have lived men stronger and greater, who were more determined for good or for evil; that does us good. If the paleness of your True is to follow us into art, we shall close at once the theatre and the book, to avoid meeting it a second time. What is wanted of works which revive the ghosts of human beings is, I repeat, the philosophical spectacle of man deeply wrought upon by the passions of his character and of his epoch; it is, in short, the artistic Truth of that man and that epoch, but both raised to a higher and ideal power, which concentrates all their forces. You recognize this Truth in works of the imagination just as you cry out at the resemblance of a portrait of which you have never seen the original; for true talent paints life rather than the living.

To banish finally the scruples on this point of the consciences of some persons, timorous in literary matters, whom I have seen affected with a personal sorrow on viewing the rashness with which the imagination sports with the most weighty characters of history, I will hazard the assertion that, not throughout this work, I dare not say that, but in many of these pages, and those perhaps not of the least merit, history is a romance of which the people are the authors. The human mind, I believe, cares for the True only in the general character of an epoch. What it values most of all is the sum total of events and the advance of civilization, which carries individuals along with it; but, indifferent to details, it cares less to have them real than noble or, rather, grand and complete.

Examine closely the origin of certain deeds, of certain heroic expressions, which are born one knows not how; you will see them leap out ready-made from hearsay and the murmurs of the crowd, without having in themselves more than a shadow of truth, and, nevertheless, they will remain historical forever. As if by way of pleasantry, and to put a joke upon posterity, the public voice invents sublime utterances to mark, during their lives and under their very eyes, men who, confused, avow themselves as best they may, as not deserving of so much glory--

[In our time has not a Russian General denied the fire of Moscow, which we have made heroic, and which will remain so? Has not a French General denied that utterance on the field of Waterloo which will immortalize it? And if I were not withheld by my respect for a sacred event, I might recall that a priest has felt it to be his duty to disavow in public a sublime speech which will remain the noblest that has ever been pronounced on a scaffold: "Son of Saint Louis, rise to heaven!" When I learned not long ago its real author, I was overcome by the destruction of my illusion, but before long I was consoled by a thought that does honor to humanity in my eyes. I feel that France has consecrated this speech, because she felt the need of reestablishing herself in her own eyes, of blinding herself to her awful error, and of believing that then and there an honest man was found who dared to speak aloud.]

and as not being able to support so high renown. In vain; their disclaimers are not received. Let them cry out, let them write, let them print, let them sign--they are not listened to. These utterances are inscribed in bronze; the poor fellows remain historical and sublime in spite of themselves. And I do not find that all this is done in the ages of barbarism alone; it is still going on, and it molds the history of yesterday to the taste of public opinion--a Muse tyrannical and capricious, which preserves the general purport and scorns detail.

Which of you knows not of such transformation? Do you not see with your own eyes the chrysalis fact assume by degrees the wings of fiction? Half formed by the necessities of the time, a fact is hidden in the ground obscure and incomplete, rough, misshapen, like a block of marble not yet rough-hewn. The first who unearth it, and take it in hand, would wish it differently shaped, and pass it, already a little rounded, into other hands; others polish it as they pass it along; in a short time it is exhibited transformed into an immortal statue. We disclaim it; witnesses who have seen and heard pile refutations upon explanations; the learned investigate, pore over books, and write. No one listens to them any more than to the humble heroes who disown it; the torrent rolls on and bears with it the whole thing under the form which it has pleased it to give to these individual actions. What was needed for all this work? A nothing, a word; sometimes the caprice of a journalist out of work. And are we the losers by it? No. The adopted fact is always better composed than the real one, and it is even adopted only because it is better. The human race feels a need that its destinies should afford it a series of lessons; more careless than we think of the reality of facts, it strives to perfect the event in order to give it a great moral significance, feeling sure that the succession of scenes which it plays upon earth is not a comedy, and that since it advances, it marches toward an end, of which the explanation must be sought beyond what is visible.

For my part, I acknowledge my gratitude to the voice of the people for this achievement; for often in the finest life are found strange blemishes and inconsistencies which pain me when I see them. If a man seems to me a perfect model of a grand and noble character, and if some one comes and tells me of a mean trait which disfigures him, I am saddened by it, even though I do not know him, as by a misfortune which affects me in person; and I could almost wish that he had died before the change in his character.

Thus, when the Muse (and I give that name to art as a whole, to everything which belongs to the domain of imagination, almost in the same way as the ancients gave the name of Music to all education), when the Muse has related, in her impassioned manner, the adventures of a character whom I know to have lived; and when she reshapes his experiences into conformity with the strongest idea of vice or virtue which can be conceived of him--filling the gaps, veiling the incongruities of his life, and giving him that perfect unity of conduct which we like to see represented even in evil--if, in addition to this, she preserves the only thing essential to the instruction of the world, the spirit of the epoch, I know no reason why we should be more exacting with her than with this voice of the people which every day makes every fact undergo so great changes.

The ancients carried this liberty even into history; they wanted to see in it only the general march, and broad movements of peoples and nations; and on these great movements, brought to view in courses very distinct and very clear, they placed a few colossal figures--symbols of noble character and of lofty purpose.

One might almost reckon mathematically that, having undergone the double composition of public opinion and of the author, their history reaches us at third hand and is thus separated by two stages from the original fact.

It is because in their eyes history too was a work of art; and in consequence of not having realized that such is its real nature, the whole Christian world still lacks an historical monument like those which

dominate antiquity and consecrate the memory of its destinies--as its pyramids, its obelisks, its pylons, and its porticos still dominate the earth which was known to them, and thereby commemorate the grandeur of antiquity.

If, then, we find everywhere evidence of this inclination to desert the positive, to bring the ideal even into historic annals, I believe that with greater reason we should be completely indifferent to historical reality in judging the dramatic works, whether poems, romances, or tragedies, which borrow from history celebrated characters. Art ought never to be considered except in its relations with its ideal beauty. Let it be said that what is true in fact is secondary merely; it is only an illusion the more with which it adorns itself--one of our prejudices which it respects. It can do without it, for the Truth by which it must live is the truth of observation of human nature, and not authenticity of fact. The names of the characters have nothing to do with the matter. The idea is everything; the proper name is only the example and the proof of the idea.

So much the better for the memory of those who are chosen to represent philosophical or moral ideas; but, once again, that is not the question. The imagination can produce just as fine things without them; it is a power wholly creative; the imaginary beings which it animates are endowed with life as truly as the real beings which it brings to life again. We believe in Othello as we do in Richard III., whose tomb is in Westminster; in Lovelace and Clarissa as in Paul and Virginia, whose tombs are in the Isle of France. It is with the same eye that we must watch the performance of its characters, and demand of the Muse only her artistic Truth, more lofty than the True--whether collecting the traits of a character dispersed among a thousand entire individuals, she composes from them a type whose name alone is imaginary; or whether she goes to their tomb to seek and to touch with her galvanic current the dead whose great deeds are known, forces them to arise again, and drags them dazzled to the light of day, where, in the circle which this fairy has traced, they re-assume unwillingly their passions of other days, and begin again in the sight of their descendants the sad drama of life.

ALFRED DE VIGNY.

1827.

CINQ-MARS

BOOK 1.

CHAPTER I

THE ADIEU

Fare thee well! and if forever,
Still forever fare thee well!

LORD BYRON.

Do you know that charming part of our country which has been called the garden of France--that spot where, amid verdant plains watered by wide streams, one inhales the purest air of heaven?

If you have travelled through fair Touraine in summer, you have no doubt followed with enchantment the peaceful Loire; you have regretted the impossibility of determining upon which of its banks you would choose to dwell with your beloved. On its right bank one sees valleys dotted with white houses surrounded by woods, hills yellow with vines or white with

the blossoms of the cherry-tree, walls covered with honeysuckles, rose-gardens, from which pointed roofs rise suddenly. Everything reminds the traveller either of the fertility of the land or of the antiquity of its monuments; and everything interests him in the work of its busy inhabitants.

Nothing has proved useless to them; it seems as if in their love for so beautiful a country--the only province of France never occupied by foreigners--they have determined not to lose the least part of its soil, the smallest grain of its sand. Do you fancy that this ruined tower is inhabited only by hideous night-birds? No; at the sound of your horse's hoofs, the smiling face of a young girl peeps out from the ivy, whitened with the dust from the road. If you climb a hillside covered with vines, a light column of smoke shows you that there is a chimney at your feet; for the very rock is inhabited, and families of vine-dressers breathe in its caverns, sheltered at night by the kindly earth which they laboriously cultivate during the day. The good people of Touraine are as simple as their life, gentle as the air they breathe, and strong as the powerful earth they dig. Their countenances, like their characters, have something of the frankness of the true people of St. Louis; their chestnut locks are still long and curve around their ears, as in the stone statues of our old kings; their language is the purest French, with neither slowness, haste, nor accent--the cradle of the language is there, close to the cradle of the monarchy.

But the left bank of the stream has a more serious aspect; in the distance you see Chambord, which, with its blue domes and little cupolas, appears like some great city of the Orient; there is Chanteloup, raising its graceful pagoda in the air. Near these a simpler building attracts the eyes of the traveller by its magnificent situation and imposing size; it is the chateau of Chaumont. Built upon the highest hill of the shore, it frames the broad summit with its lofty walls and its enormous towers; high slate steeples increase their loftiness, and give to the building that conventual air, that religious form of all our old chateaux, which casts an aspect of gravity over the landscape of most of our provinces. Black and tufted trees surround this ancient mansion, resembling from afar the plumes that encircled the hat of King Henry. At the foot of the hill, connected with the chateau by a narrow path, lies a pretty village, whose white houses seem to have sprung from the golden sand; a chapel stands halfway up the hill; the lords descended and the villagers ascended to its altar--the region of equality, situated like a neutral spot between poverty and riches, which have been too often opposed to each other in bitter conflict.

Here, one morning in the month of June, 1639, the bell of the chateau having, as usual, rung at midday, the dinner-hour of the family, occurrences of an unusual kind were passing in this ancient dwelling. The numerous domestics observed that in repeating the morning prayers before the assembled household, the Marechale d'Effiat had spoken with a broken voice and with tears in her eyes, and that she had appeared in a deeper mourning than was customary. The people of the household and the Italians of the Duchesse de Mantua, who had at that time retired for a while to Chaumont, saw with surprise that sudden preparations were being made for departure. The old domestic of the Marechal d'Effiat (who had been dead six months) had taken again to his travelling-boots, which he had sworn to abandon forever. This brave fellow, named Grandchamp, had followed the chief of the family everywhere in the wars, and in his financial work; he had been his equerry in the former, and his secretary in the latter. He had recently returned from Germany, to inform the mother and the children of the death of the Marechal, whose last sighs he had heard at Luzzelstein. He was one of those faithful servants who are become too rare in France; who suffer with the misfortunes of the family, and rejoice with their joys; who approve of early marriages, that they may have young masters to educate; who scold the children and often the fathers; who risk death for them; who serve without wages in revolutions; who toil for their support; and who in prosperous times follow them everywhere, or exclaim at their return, "Behold our vines!" He had a severe and remarkable face, a coppery complexion, and silver-gray hair, in which, however, some few locks, black as his heavy eyebrows, made him

appear harsh at first; but a gentle countenance softened this first impression. At present his voice was loud. He busied himself much that day in hastening the dinner, and ordered about all the servants, who were in mourning like himself.

"Come," said he, "make haste to serve the dinner, while Germain, Louis, and Etienne saddle their horses; Monsieur Henri and I must be far away by eight o'clock this evening. And you, gentlemen, Italians, have you warned your young Princess? I wager that she is gone to read with her ladies at the end of the park, or on the banks of the lake. She always comes in after the first course, and makes every one rise from the table."

"Ah, my good Grandchamp," said in a low voice a young maid servant who was passing, "do not speak of the Duchess; she is very sorrowful, and I believe that she will remain in her apartment. Santa Maria! what a shame to travel to-day! to depart on a Friday, the thirteenth of the month, and the day of Saint Gervais and of Saint-Protas--the day of two martyrs! I have been telling my beads all the morning for Monsieur de Cinq-Mars; and I could not help thinking of these things. And my mistress thinks of them too, although she is a great lady; so you need not laugh!"

With these words the young Italian glided like a bird across the large dining-room, and disappeared down a corridor, startled at seeing the great doors of the salon opened.

Grandchamp had hardly heard what she had said, and seemed to have been occupied only with the preparations for dinner; he fulfilled the important duties of major-domo, and cast severe looks at the domestics to see whether they were all at their posts, placing himself behind the chair of the eldest son of the house. Then all the inhabitants of the mansion entered the salon. Eleven persons seated themselves at table. The Marechale came in last, giving her arm to a handsome old man, magnificently dressed, whom she placed upon her left hand. She seated herself in a large gilded arm-chair at the middle of one side of the table, which was oblong in form. Another seat, rather more ornamented, was at her right, but it remained empty. The young Marquis d'Effiat, seated in front of his mother, was to assist her in doing the honors of the table. He was not more than twenty years old, and his countenance was insignificant; much gravity and distinguished manners proclaimed, however, a social nature, but nothing more. His young sister of fourteen, two gentlemen of the province, three young Italian noblemen of the suite of Marie de Gonzaga (Duchesse de Mantua), a lady-in-waiting, the governess of the young daughter of the Marechale, and an abbe of the neighborhood, old and very deaf, composed the assembly. A seat at the right of the elder son still remained vacant.

The Marechale, before seating herself, made the sign of the cross, and repeated the Benedicite aloud; every one responded by making the complete sign, or upon the breast alone. This custom was preserved in many families in France up to the Revolution of 1789; some still practise it, but more in the provinces than in Paris, and not without some hesitation and some preliminary words upon the weather, accompanied by a deprecatory smile when a stranger is present--for it is too true that virtue also has its blush.

The Marechale possessed an imposing figure, and her large blue eyes were remarkably beautiful. She did not appear to have yet attained her forty-fifth year; but, oppressed with sorrow, she walked slowly and spoke with difficulty, closing her eyes, and allowing her head to droop for a moment upon her breast, after she had been obliged to raise her voice. At such efforts her hand pressed to her bosom showed that she experienced sharp pain. She saw therefore with satisfaction that the person who was seated at her left, having at the beginning engrossed the conversation, without having been requested by any one to talk, persisted with an imperturbable coolness in engrossing it to the end of the dinner. This was the old Marechal de Bassompierre; he had preserved with his white locks an air of youth and vivacity curious to see. His noble and polished manners showed

a certain gallantry, antiquated like his costume--for he wore a ruff in the fashion of Henri IV, and the slashed sleeves fashionable in the former reign, an absurdity which was unpardonable in the eyes of the beaux of the court. This would not have appeared more singular than anything else at present; but it is admitted that in every age we laugh at the costume of our fathers, and, except the Orientals, I know of no people who have not this fault.

One of the Italian gentlemen had hardly finished asking the Marechal what he thought of the way in which the Cardinal treated the daughter of the Duc de Mantua, when he exclaimed, in his familiar language:

"Heavens, man! what are you talking about? what do I comprehend of this new system under which France is living? We old companions-in-arms of his late Majesty can ill understand the language spoken by the new court, and that in its turn does not comprehend ours. But what do I say? We speak no language in this sad country, for all the world is silent before the Cardinal; this haughty little, vassal looks upon us as merely old family portraits, which occasionally he shortens by the head; but happily the motto always remains. Is it not true, my dear Puy-Laurens?"

This guest was about the same age as the Marechal, but, being more grave and cautious, he answered in vague and few words, and made a sign to his contemporary in order to induce him to observe the unpleasant emotions which he had caused the mistress of the house by reminding her of the recent death of her husband and in speaking thus of the minister, his friend. But it was in vain, for Bassompierre, pleased with the sign of half-approval, emptied at one draught a great goblet of wine--a remedy which he lauds in his Memoirs as infallible against the plague and against reserve; and leaning back to receive another glass from his esquire, he settled himself more firmly than ever upon his chair, and in his favorite ideas.

"Yes, we are in the way here; I said so the other day to my dear Duc de Guise, whom they have ruined. They count the minutes that we have to live, and shake the hour-glass to hasten the descent of its sands. When Monsieur le Cardinal-Duc observes in a corner three or four of our tall figures, who never quitted the side of the late King, he feels that he is unable to move those statues of iron, and that to do it would require the hand of a great man; he passes quickly by, and dares not meddle with us, who fear him not. He believes that we are always conspiring; and they say at this very moment that there is talk of putting me in the Bastille."

"Eh! Monsieur le Marechal, why do you delay your departure?" said the Italian. "I know of no place, except Flanders, where you can find shelter."

"Ah, Monsieur! you do not know me. So far from flying, I sought out the King before his departure, and told him that I did so in order to save people the trouble of looking for me; and that if I knew when he wished to send me, I would go myself without being taken. He was as kind as I expected him to be, and said to me, 'What, my old friend, could you have thought that I desired to send you there? You know well that I love you.'"

"Ah, my dear Marechal, let me compliment you," said Madame d'Effiat, in a soft voice. "I recognize the benevolence of the King in these words; he remembers the affection which the King, his father, had toward you. It appears to me that he always accorded to you all that you desired for your friends," she added, with animation, in order to put him into the track of praise, and to beguile him from the discontent which he had so loudly declared.

"Assuredly, Madame," answered he; "no one is more willing to recognize his virtues than Francois de Bassompierre. I shall be faithful to him to the end, because I gave myself, body and fortune, to his father at a ball; and I swear that, with my consent at least, none of my family shall ever fail in their duties toward the King of France. Although the

Besteins are foreigners and Lorrains, a shake of the hand from Henri IV gained us forever. My greatest grief has been to see my brother die in the service of Spain; and I have just written to my nephew to say that I shall disinherit him if he has passed over to the Emperor, as report says he has."

One of the gentlemen guests who had as yet been silent, and who was remarkable for the profusion of knots, ribbons, and tags which covered his dress, and for the black cordon of the Order of St. Michael which decorated his neck, bowed, observing that it was thus all faithful subjects ought to speak.

"I' faith, Monsieur de Launay, you deceive yourself very much," said the Marechal, to whom the recollection of his ancestors now occurred; "persons of our blood are subjects only at our own pleasure, for God has caused us to be born as much lords of our lands as the King is of his. When I came to France, I came at my ease, accompanied by my gentlemen and pages. I perceive, however, that the farther we go, the more we lose sight of this idea, especially at the court. But here is a young man who arrives very opportunely to hear me."

The door indeed opened, and a young man of fine form entered. He was pale; his hair was brown, his eyes were black, his expression was sad and reckless. This was Henri d'Effiat, Marquis de Cinq-Mars (a name taken from an estate of his family). His dress and his short cloak were black; a collar of lace fell from his neck halfway down his breast; his stout, small, and very wide-spurred boots made so much noise upon the flags of the salon that his approach was heard at a distance. He walked directly toward the Marechale, bowed low, and kissed her hand.

"Well, Henri," she said, "are your horses ready? At what hour do you depart?"

"Immediately after dinner, Madame, if you will allow me," said he to his mother, with the ceremonious respect of the times; and passing behind her, he saluted M. de Bassompierre before seating himself at the left of his eldest brother.

"Well," said the Marechal, continuing to eat with an excellent appetite, "you are about to depart, my son; you are going to the court--a slippery place nowadays. I am sorry for your sake that it is not now what it used to be. In former times, the court was simply the drawing-room of the King, in which he received his natural friends: nobles of great family, his peers, who visited him to show their devotion and their friendship, lost their money with him, and accompanied him in his pleasure parties, but never received anything from him, except permission to bring their vassals with them, to break their heads in his service. The honors a man of quality received did not enrich him, for he paid for them out of his purse. I sold an estate for every grade I received; the title of colonel-general of the Swiss cost me four hundred thousand crowns, and at the baptism of the present King I had to buy a costume that cost me a hundred thousand francs."

"Ah!" said the mistress of the house, smiling, "you must acknowledge for once that you were not obliged to do that. We have all heard of your splendid dress of pearls; but I should be much vexed were it still the custom to wear such."

"Oh, Madame la Marquise, do not fear, those times of magnificence never will return. We committed follies, no doubt, but they proved our independence; it is clear that it would then have been hard to convert from their allegiance to the King adherents who were attached to him by love alone, and whose coronets contained as many diamonds as his own locked-up crown. It is also certain that ambition could not then attack all classes, since such expenses could come only from rich hands, and since gold comes only from mines. Those great houses, which are being so furiously assailed, were not ambitious, and frequently, desiring no employment from the Government, maintained their places at court by their own weight, existed upon their own foundation, and might say, as one of

them did say, 'The Prince condescends not; I am Rohan.' It was the same with every noble family, to which its own nobility sufficed; the King himself expressed it in writing to one of my friends: 'Money is not a common thing between gentlemen like you and me.'"

"But, Monsieur le Marechal," coldly, and with extreme politeness, interrupted M. de Launay, who perhaps intended to anger him, "this independence has produced as many civil wars and revolts as those of Monsieur de Montmorency."

"Monsieur! I can not consent to hear these things spoken," said the fiery Marechal, leaping up in his armchair. "Those revolts and wars had nothing to do with the fundamental laws of the State, and could no more have overturned the throne than a duel could have done so. Of all the great party-chiefs, there was not one who would not have laid his victory at the feet of the King, had he succeeded, knowing well that all the other lords who were as great as himself would have abandoned the enemy of the legitimate sovereign. Arms were taken against a faction, and not against the sovereign authority; and, this destroyed, everything went on again in the old way. But what have you done in crushing us? You have crushed the arm of the throne, and have not put anything in its place. Yes, I no longer doubt that the Cardinal-Duke will wholly accomplish his design; the great nobility will leave and lose their lands, and, ceasing to be great proprietors, they will cease to be a great power. The court is already no more than a palace where people beg; by and by it will become an antechamber, when it will be composed only of those who constitute the suite of the King. Great names will begin by ennobling vile offices; but, by a terrible reaction, those offices will end by rendering great names vile. Estranged from their homes, the nobility will be dependent upon the employments which they shall have received; and if the people, over whom they will no longer have any influence, choose to revolt--"

"How gloomy you are to-day, Marechal!" interrupted the Marquise; "I hope that neither I nor my children will ever see that time. I no longer perceive your cheerful disposition, now that you talk like a politician. I expected to hear you give advice to my son. Henri, what troubles you? You seem very absent."

Cinq-Mars, with eyes fixed upon the, great bay window of the dining-room, looked sorrowfully upon the magnificent landscape. The sun shone in full splendor, and colored the sands of the Loire, the trees, and the lawns with gold and emerald. The sky was azure, the waves were of a transparent yellow, the islets of a vivid green; behind their rounded outlines rose the great sails of the merchant-vessels, like a fleet in ambuscade.

"O Nature, Nature!" he mused; "beautiful Nature, farewell! Soon will my heart cease to be of simplicity enough to feel your charm, soon you will no longer please my eyes. This heart is already burned by a deep passion; and the mention of the interests of men stirs it with hitherto unknown agitation. I must, however, enter this labyrinth; I may, perchance, lose myself there, but for Marie--"

At this moment, aroused by the words of his mother, and fearing to exhibit a childish regret at leaving his beautiful country and his family, he said:

"I am thinking, Madame, of the road which I shall take to Perpignan, and also of that which shall bring me back to you."

"Do not forget to take that of Poitiers, and to go to Loudun to see your old tutor, our good Abbe Quillet; he will give you useful advice about the court. He is on very good terms with the Duc de Bouillon; and besides, though he may not be very necessary to you, it is a mark of deference which you owe him."

"Is it, then, to the siege of Perpignan that you are going, my boy?" asked the old Marechal, who began to think that he had been silent a long

time. "Ah! it is well for you. Plague upon it! a siege! 'tis an excellent opening. I would have given much had I been able to assist the late King at a siege, upon my arrival in his court; it would have been better to be disembowelled then than at a tourney, as I was. But we were at peace; and I was compelled to go and shoot the Turks with the Rosworm of the Hungarians, in order that I might not afflict my family by my idleness. For the rest, may his Majesty receive you as kindly as his father received me! It is true that the King is good and brave; but they have unfortunately taught him that cold Spanish etiquette which arrests all the impulses of the heart. He restrains himself and others by an immovable presence and an icy look; as for me, I confess that I am always waiting for the moment of thaw, but in vain. We were accustomed to other manners from the witty and simple-hearted Henri; and we were at least free to tell him that we loved him."

Cinq-Mars, with eyes fixed upon those of Bassompierre, as if to force himself to attend to his discourse, asked him what was the manner of the late king in conversation.

"Lively and frank," said he. "Some time after my arrival in France, I played with him and with the Duchesse de Beaufort at Fontainebleau; for he wished, he said, to win my gold-pieces, my fine Portugal money. He asked me the reason why I came into this country. 'Truly, Sire,' said I, frankly, 'I came with no intention of enlisting myself in your service, but only to pass some time at your court, and afterward at that of Spain; but you have charmed me so much that, instead of going farther, if you desire my service, I will devote myself to you till death.' Then he embraced me, and assured me that I could not find a better master, or one who would love me more. Alas! I have found it so. And for my part, I sacrificed everything to him, even my love; and I would have done more, had it been possible to do more than renounce Mademoiselle de Montmorency."

The good Marechal had tears in his eyes; but the young Marquis d'Effiat and the Italians, looking at one another, could not help smiling to think that at present the Princesse de Conde was far from young and pretty. Cinq-Mars noticed this interchange of glances, and smiled also, but bitterly.

"Is it true then," he thought, "that the affections meet the same fate as the fashions, and that the lapse of a few years can throw the same ridicule upon a costume and upon love? Happy is he who does not outlive his youth and his illusions, and who carries his treasures with him to the grave!"

But--again, with effort breaking the melancholy course of his thoughts, and wishing that the good Marechal should read nothing unpleasant upon the countenances of his hosts, he said:

"People spoke, then, with much freedom to King Henri? Possibly, however, he found it necessary to assume that tone at the beginning of his reign; but when he was master did he change it?"

"Never! no, never, to his last day, did our great King cease to be the same. He did not blush to be a man, and he spoke to men with force and sensibility. Ah! I fancy I see him now, embracing the Duc de Guise in his carriage, on the very day of his death; he had just made one of his lively pleasantries to me, and the Duke said to him, 'You are, in my opinion, one of the most agreeable men in the world, and destiny ordained us for each other. For, had you been but an ordinary man, I should have taken you into my service at whatever price; but since heaven ordained that you should be born a great King, it is inevitable that I belong to you.' Oh, great man!" cried Bassompierre, with tears in his eyes, and perhaps a little excited by the frequent bumpers he had drunk, "you said well, 'When you have lost me you will learn my value.'"

During this interlude, the guests at the table had assumed various attitudes, according to their position in public affairs. One of the Italians pretended to chat and laugh in a subdued manner with the young

daughter of the Marechale; the other talked to the deaf old Abbe, who, with one hand behind his ear that he might hear, was the only one who appeared attentive. Cinq-Mars had sunk back into his melancholy abstraction, after throwing a glance at the Marechal, as one looks aside after throwing a tennis-ball until its return; his elder brother did the honors of the table with the same calm. Puy-Laurens observed the mistress of the house with attention; he was devoted to the Duc d'Orleans, and feared the Cardinal. As for the Marechale, she had an anxious and afflicted air. Careless words had often recalled the death of her husband or the departure of her son; and, oftener still, she had feared lest Bassompierre should compromise himself. She had touched him many times, glancing at the same time toward M. de Launay, of whom she knew little, and whom she had reason to believe devoted to the prime minister; but to a man of his character, such warnings were useless. He appeared not to notice them; but, on the contrary, crushing that gentleman with his bold glance and the sound of his voice, he affected to turn himself toward him, and to direct all his conversation to him. M. de Launay assumed an air of indifference and of assenting politeness, which he preserved until the moment when the folding-doors opened, and "Mademoiselle la Duchesse de Mantua" was announced.

The conversation which we have transcribed so lengthily passed, in reality, with rapidity; and the repast was only half over when the arrival of Marie de Gonzaga caused the company to rise. She was small, but very well made, and although her eyes and hair were black, her complexion was as dazzling as the beauty of her skin. The Marechale arose to acknowledge her rank, and kissed her on the forehead, in recognition of her goodness and her charming age.

"We have waited a long time for you to-day, dear Marie," she said, placing the Duchess beside her; "fortunately, you remain with me to replace one of my children, who is about to depart."

The young Duchess blushed, lowered her head and her eyes, in order that no one might see their redness, and said, timidly:

"Madame, that may well be, since you have taken toward me the place of a mother;" and a glance thrown at Cinq-Mars, at the other end of the table, made him turn pale.

This arrival changed the conversation; it ceased to be general, and each guest conversed in a low voice with his neighbor. The Marechal alone continued to utter a few sentences concerning the magnificence of the old court, his wars in Turkey, the tournaments, and the avarice of the new court; but, to his great regret, no one made any reply, and the company were about to leave the table, when, as the clock struck two, five horses appeared in the courtyard. Four were mounted by servants, cloaked and armed; the other horse, black and spirited, was held by old Grandchamp--it was his master's steed.

"Ah!" exclaimed Bassompierre; "see, our battlehorses are saddled and bridled. Come, young man, we must say, with our old Marot:

'Adieu la cour, adieu les dames!
Adieu les filles et les femmes!
Adieu vous dy pour quelque temps;
Adieu vos plaisans parse-temps!
Adieu le bal, adieu la dance;
Adieu mesure, adieu cadance,
Tabourins, Hautbois, Violons,
Puisqu'a la guerre nous allons!'"

These old verses and the air of the Marechal made all the guests laugh, except three persons.

"Heavens!" he continued, "it seems to me as if, like him, I were only seventeen years old; he will return to us covered with embroidery. Madame, we must keep his chair vacant for him."

The Marechale suddenly grew pale, and left the table in tears; every one rose with her; she took only two steps, and sank into another chair. Her sons and her daughter and the young Duchess gathered anxiously around her, and heard her say, amid the sighs and tears which she strove to restrain:

"Pardon, my friends! it is foolish of me--childish; but I am weak at present, and am not mistress of myself. We were thirteen at table; and you, my dear Duchess, were the cause of it. But it is very wrong of me to show so much weakness before him. Farewell, my child; give me your forehead to kiss, and may God conduct you! Be worthy of your name and of your father."

Then, as Homer says, "smiling under tears," she raised herself, pushed her son from her, and said:

"Come, let me see you on horseback, fair sir!"

The silent traveller kissed the hands of his mother, and made a low bow to her; he bowed also to the Duchess, without raising his eyes. Then, embracing his elder brother, pressing the hand of the Marechal, and kissing the forehead of his young sister almost simultaneously, he went forth, and was on horseback in an instant. Every one went to the windows which overlooked the court, except Madame d'Effiat, who was still seated and suffering.

"He sets off at full gallop. That is a good sign," said the Marechal, laughing.

"Oh, heavens!" cried the young Princess, retiring from the bay-window.

"What is the matter?" said the mother.

"Nothing, nothing!" said M. de Launay. "Your son's horse stumbled under the gateway; but he soon pulled him up. See, he salutes us from the road."

"Another ominous presage!" said the Marquise, upon retiring to her apartments.

Every one imitated her by being silent or speaking low.

The day was sad, and in the evening the supper was silent at the chateau of Chaumont.

At ten o'clock that evening, the old Marechal, conducted by his valet, retired to the northern tower near the gateway, and opposite the river. The heat was extreme; he opened the window, and, enveloping himself in his great silk robe, placed a heavy candlestick upon the table and desired to be left alone. His window looked out upon the plain, which the moon, in her first quarter, indistinctly lighted; the sky was charged with thick clouds, and all things disposed the mind to melancholy. Although Bassompierre had nothing of the dreamer in his character, the tone which the conversation had taken at dinner returned to his memory, and he reconsidered his life, the sad changes which the new reign had wrought in it, a reign which seemed to have breathed upon him a wind of misfortune--the death of a cherished sister; the irregularities of the heir of his name; the loss of his lands and of his favor; the recent fate of his friend, the Marechal d'Effiat, whose chambers he now occupied. All these thoughts drew from him an involuntary sigh, and he went to the window to breathe.

At that moment he fancied he heard the tramp of a troop of horse at the side of the wood; but the wind rising made him think that he had been mistaken, and, as the noise suddenly ceased, he forgot it. He still watched for some time all the lights of the chateau, which were successively extinguished, after winding among the windows of the staircases and rambling about the courtyards and the stables. Then, leaning back in his great tapestried armchair, his elbow resting on the

table, he abandoned himself to his reflections. After a while, drawing from his breast a medallion which hung concealed, suspended by a black ribbon, he said:

"Come, my good old master, talk with me as you have so often talked; come, great King, forget your court for the smile of a true friend; come, great man, consult me concerning ambitious Austria; come, inconstant chevalier, speak to me of the lightness of thy love, and of the fidelity of thine inconstancy; come, heroic soldier, complain to me again that I obscure you in combat. Ah, had I only done it in Paris! Had I only received thy wound? With thy blood the world has lost the benefits of thine interrupted reign--"

The tears of the Marechal obscured the glass that covered the large medallion, and he was effacing them with respectful kisses, when, his door being roughly opened, he quickly drew his sword.

"Who goes there?" he cried, in his surprise, which was much increased when he saw M. de Launay, who, hat in hand, advanced toward him, and said to him, with embarrassment:

"Monsieur, it is with a heart pierced with grief that I am forced to tell you that the King has commanded me to arrest you. A carriage awaits you at the gate, attended by thirty of the Cardinal-Duke's musketeers."

Bassompierre had not risen: and he still held the medallion in his right hand, and the sword in the other. He tendered it disdainfully to this man, saying:

"Monsieur, I know that I have lived too long, and it is that of which I was thinking; in the name of the great Henri, I restore this sword peacefully to his son. Follow me."

He accompanied these words with a look so firm that De Launay was depressed, and followed him with drooping head, as if he had himself been arrested by the noble old man, who, seizing a flambeau, issued from the court and found all the doors opened by horse-guards, who had terrified the people of the chateau in the name of the King, and commanded silence. The carriage was ready, and departed rapidly, followed by many horses. The Marechal, seated beside M. de Launay, was about to fall asleep, rocked by the movement of the vehicle, when a voice cried to the driver, "Stop!" and, as he continued, a pistol-shot followed. The horses stopped.

"I declare, Monsieur, that this is done without my participation," said Bassompierre. Then, putting his head out at the door, he saw that they were in a little wood, and that the road was too narrow to allow the horses to pass to either the right or the left of the carriage--a great advantage for the aggressors, since the musketeers could not advance. He tried to see what was going on when a cavalier, having in his hand a long sword, with which he parried the strokes of the guard, approached the door, crying:

"Come, come, Monsieur le Marechal!"

"What! is that you, you madcap, Henri, who are playing these pranks? Gentlemen, let him alone; he is a mere boy."

And, as De Launay called to the musketeers to cease, Bassompierre recognized the cavalier.

"And how the devil came you here?" cried Bassompierre. "I thought you were at Tours, or even farther, if you had done your duty; but here you are returned to make a fool of yourself."

"Truly, it was not for you I returned, but for a secret affair," said Cinq-Mars, in a lower tone; "but, as I take it, they are about to introduce you to the Bastille, and I am sure you will not betray me, for that delightful edifice is the very Temple of Discretion. Yet had you

thought fit," he continued, aloud, "I should have released you from these gentlemen in the wood here, which is so dense that their horses would not have been able to stir. A peasant informed me of the insult passed upon us, more than upon you, by this violation of my father's house."

"It is the King's order, my boy, and we must respect his will; reserve your ardor for his service, though I thank you with all my heart. Now farewell, and let me proceed on my agreeable journey."

De Launay interposed, "I may inform you, Monsieur de Cinq-Mars, that I have been desired by the King himself to assure Monsieur le Marechal, that he is deeply afflicted at the step he has found it necessary to take, and that it is solely from an apprehension that Monsieur le Marechal may be led into evil that his Majesty requests him to remain for a few days in the Bastille."--[He remained there twelve years.]

Bassompierre turned his head toward Cinq-Mars with a hearty laugh. "You see, my friend, how we young men are placed under guardianship; so take care of yourself."

"I will go, then," said Henri; "this is the last time I shall play the knight-errant for any one against his will;" and, reentering the wood as the carriage dashed off at full speed, he proceeded by narrow paths toward the castle, followed at a short distance by Grandchamp and his small escort.

On arriving at the foot of the western tower, he reined in his horse. He did not alight, but, approaching so near the wall that he could rest his foot upon an abutment, he stood up, and raised the blind of a window on the ground-floor, made in the form of a portcullis, such as is still seen on some ancient buildings.

It was now past midnight, and the moon was hidden behind the clouds. No one but a member of the family could have found his way through darkness so profound. The towers and the roof formed one dark mass, which stood out in indistinct relief against the sky, hardly less dark; no light shone throughout the chateau, wherein all inmates seemed buried in slumber. Cinq-Mars, enveloped in a large cloak, his face hidden under the broad brim of his hat, awaited in suspense a reply to his signal.

It came; a soft voice was heard from within:

"Is that you, Monsieur Cinq-Mars?"

"Alas, who else should it be? Who else would return like a criminal to his paternal house, without entering it, without bidding one more adieu to his mother? Who else would return to complain of the present, without a hope for the future, but I?"

The gentle voice replied, but its tones were agitated, and evidently accompanied with tears: "Alas! Henri, of what do you complain? Have I not already done more, far more than I ought? It is not my fault, but my misfortune, that my father was a sovereign prince. Can one choose one's birthplace or one's rank, and say for example, 'I will be a shepherdess?' How unhappy is the lot of princesses! From the cradle, the sentiments of the heart are prohibited to them; and when they have advanced beyond childhood, they are ceded like a town, and must not even weep. Since I have known you, what have I not done to bring my future life within the reach of happiness, in removing it far from a throne? For two years I have struggled in vain, at once against my evil fortune, that separates me from you, and against you, who estrange me from the duty I owe to my family. I have sought to spread a belief that I was dead; I have almost longed for revolutions. I should have blessed a change which deprived me of my rank, as I thanked Heaven when my father was dethroned; but the court wonders at my absence; the Queen requires me to attend her. Our dreams are at an end, Henri; we have already slumbered too long. Let us awake, be courageous, and think no more of those dear two years--forget all in the one recollection of our great resolve. Have but one thought;

be ambitious for--be ambitious--for my sake."

"Must we, then, indeed, forget all, Marie?" murmured Cinq-Mars.

She hesitated.

"Yes, forget all--that I myself have forgotten." Then, after a moment's pause, she continued with earnestness: "Yes, forget our happy days together, our long evenings, even our walks by the lake and through the wood; but keep the future ever in mind. Go, Henri; your father was Marechal. Be you more; be you Constable, Prince. Go; you are young, noble, rich, brave, beloved--"

"Beloved forever?" said Henri.

"Forever; for life and for eternity."

Cinq-Mars, tremulously extending his hand to the window, exclaimed:

"I swear, Marie, by the Virgin, whose name you bear, that you shall be mine, or my head shall fall on the scaffold!"

"Oh, Heaven! what is it you say?" she cried, seizing his hand in her own. "Swear to me that you will share in no guilty deeds; that you will never forget that the King of France is your master. Love him above all, next to her who will sacrifice all for you, who will await you amid suffering and sorrow. Take this little gold cross and wear it upon your heart; it has often been wet with my tears, and those tears will flow still more bitterly if ever you are faithless to the King. Give me the ring I see on your finger. Oh, heavens, my hand and yours are red with blood!"

"Oh, only a scratch. Did you hear nothing, an hour ago?"

"No; but listen. Do you hear anything now?"

"No, Marie, nothing but some bird of night on the tower."

"I heard whispering near us, I am sure. But whence comes this blood? Tell me, and then depart."

"Yes, I will go, while the clouds are still dark above us. Farewell, sweet soul; in my hour of danger I will invoke thee as a guardian angel. Love has infused the burning poison of ambition into my soul, and for the first time I feel that ambition may be ennobled by its aim. Farewell! I go to accomplish my destiny."

"And forget not mine."

"Can they ever be separated?"

"Never!" exclaimed Marie, "but by death."

"I fear absence still more," said Cinq-Mars.

"Farewell! I tremble; farewell!" repeated the beloved voice, and the window was slowly drawn down, the clasped hands not parting till the last moment.

The black horse had all the while been pawing the earth, tossing his head with impatience, and whinnying. Cinq-Mars, as agitated and restless as his steed, gave it the rein; and the whole party was soon near the city of Tours, which the bells of St. Gatien had announced from afar. To the disappointment of old Grandchamp, Cinq-Mars would not enter the town, but proceeded on his way, and five days later he entered, with his escort, the old city of Loudun in Poitou, after an uneventful journey.

CHAPTER II

THE STREET

Je m'avancais d'un pas penible et mal assure vers le but
de ce convoi tragique.--NODIER, 'Smarra'.

The reign of which we are about to paint a few years--a reign of feebleness, which was like an eclipse of the crown between the splendors of Henri IV and those of Louis le Grand--afflicts the eyes which contemplate it with dark stains of blood, and these were not all the work of one man, but were caused by great and grave bodies. It is melancholy to observe that in this age, still full of disorder, the clergy, like a nation, had its populace, as it had its nobility, its ignorant and its criminal prelates, as well as those who were learned and virtuous. Since that time, its remnant of barbarism has been refined away by the long reign of Louis XIV, and its corruptions have been washed out in the blood of the martyrs whom it offered up to the revolution of 1793.

We felt it necessary to pause for a moment to express this reflection before entering upon the recital of the facts presented by the history of this period, and to intimate that, notwithstanding this consolatory reflection, we have found it incumbent upon us to pass over many details too odious to occupy a place in our pages, sighing in spirit at those guilty acts which it was necessary to record, as in relating the life of a virtuous old man, we should lament over the impetuositities of his passionate youth, or over the corrupt tendencies of his riper age.

When the cavalcade entered the narrow streets of Loudun, they heard strange noises all around them. The streets were filled with agitated masses; the bells of the church and of the convent were ringing furiously, as if the town was in flames; and the whole population, without paying any attention to the travellers, was pressing tumultuously toward a large edifice that adjoined the church. Here and there dense crowds were collected, listening in silence to some voice that seemed raised in exhortation, or engaged in emphatic reading; then, furious cries, mingled with pious exclamations, arose from the crowd, which, dispersing, showed the travellers that the orator was some Capuchin or Franciscan friar, who, holding a wooden crucifix in one hand, pointed with the other to the large building which was attracting such universal interest.

"Jesu Maria!" exclaimed an old woman, "who would ever have thought that the Evil Spirit would choose our old town for his abode?"

"Ay, or that the pious Ursulines should be possessed?" said another.

"They say that the demon who torments the Superior is called Legion," cried a third:

"One demon, say you?" interrupted a nun; "there were seven in her poor body, whereunto, doubtless, she had attached too much importance, by reason of its great beauty, though now 'tis but the receptacle of evil spirits. The prior of the Carmelites yesterday expelled the demon Eazas through her mouth; and the reverend Father Lactantius has driven out in like manner the demon Beherit. But the other five will not depart, and when the holy exorcists (whom Heaven support!) summoned them in Latin to withdraw, they replied insolently that they would not go till they had proved their power, to the conviction even of the Huguenots and heretics, who, misbelieving wretches! seem to doubt it. The demon Elimi, the worst of them all, as you know, has threatened to take off Monsieur de Laubardemont's skull-cap to-day, and to dangle it in the air at Miserere."

"Holy Virgin!" rejoined the first speaker, "I'm all of a tremble! And to think that many times I have got this magician Urbain to say masses for me!"

"For myself," exclaimed a girl, crossing herself; "I too confessed to him ten months ago! No doubt I should have been possessed myself, but for the relic of Saint-Genevieve I luckily had about me, and--"

"Luckily, indeed, Martine," interposed a fat gossip; "for--no offence!--you, as I remember, were long enough with the handsome sorcerer."

"Pshaw!" said a young soldier, who had joined the group, smoking his pipe, "don't you know that pretty Martine was dispossessed a month ago."

The girl blushed, and drew the hood of her black cloak over her face. The elder gossips cast a glance of indignation at the reckless trooper, and finding themselves now close to the door of the building, and thus sure of making their way in among the first when it should be thrown open, sat down upon the stone bench at the side, and, talking of the latest wonders, raised the expectations of all as to the delight they were about to have in being spectators of something marvellous--an apparition, perhaps, but at the very least, an administration of the torture.

"Is it true, aunt," asked Martine of the eldest gossip, "that you have heard the demons speak?"

"Yes, child, true as I see you; many and many can say the same; and it was to convince you of it I brought you with me here, that you may see the power of the Evil One."

"What kind of voice has he?" continued the girl, glad to encourage a conversation which diverted from herself the invidious attention procured her by the soldier's raillery.

"Oh, he speaks with a voice like that of the Superior herself, to whom Our Lady be gracious! Poor young woman! I was with her yesterday a long time; it was sad to see her tearing her breast, turning her arms and her legs first one way and then another, and then, all of a sudden, twisting them together behind her back. When the holy Father Lactantius pronounced the name of Urbain Grandier, foam came out of her mouth, and she talked Latin for all the world as if she were reading the Bible. Of course, I did not understand what she said, and all I can remember of it now is, 'Urbanus Magicus rosas diabolica,' which they tell me means that the magician Urbain had bewitched her with some roses the Devil had given him; and so it must have been, for while Father Lactantius spoke, out of her ears and neck came a quantity of flame-colored roses, all smelling of sulphur so strongly that the judge-Advocate called out for every one present to stop their noses and eyes, for that the demons were about to come out."

"Ah, look there now!" exclaimed with shrill voices and a triumphant air the whole bevy of assembled women, turning toward the crowd, and more particularly toward a group of men attired in black, among whom was standing the young soldier who had cut his joke just before so unceremoniously.

"Listen to the noisy old idiots!" exclaimed the soldier. "They think they're at the witches' Sabbath, but I don't see their broomsticks."

"Young man, young man!" said a citizen, with a sad air, "jest not upon such subjects in the open air, or, in such a time as this, the wind may become gushing flames and destroy you."

"Pooh! I laugh at your exorcists!" returned the soldier; "my name is Grand-Ferre, and I've got here a better exorciser than any of you can show."

And significantly grasping the handle of his rapier in one hand, with the other he twisted up his blond moustache, as he looked fiercely around; but meeting no glance which returned the defiance of his own, he slowly withdrew, left foot foremost, and strolled along the dark, narrow streets with all the reckless nonchalance of a young soldier who has just donned

his uniform, and a profound contempt for all who wear not a military coat.

In the meantime eight or ten of the more substantial and rational inhabitants traversed in a body, slowly and silently, the agitated throng; they seemed overwhelmed with amazement and distress at the agitation and excitement they witnessed everywhere, and as each new instance of the popular frenzy appeared, they exchanged glances of wonder and apprehension. Their mute depression communicated itself to the working-people, and to the peasants who had flocked in from the adjacent country, and who, all sought a guide for their opinions in the faces of the principal townsmen, also for the most part proprietors of the surrounding districts. They saw that something calamitous was on foot, and resorted accordingly to the only remedy open to the ignorant and the beguiled--apathetic resignation.

Yet, in the character of the French peasant is a certain scoffing finesse of which he makes effective use, sometimes with his equals, and almost invariably with his superiors. He puts questions to power as embarrassing as are those which infancy puts to mature age. He affects excessive humility, in order to confuse him whom he addresses with the very height of his isolated elevation. He exaggerates the awkwardness of his manner and the rudeness of his speech, as a means of covering his real thoughts under the appearance of mere uncouthness; yet, despite all his self-command, there is something in his air, certain fierce expressions which betray him to the close observer, who discerns in his sardonic smile, and in the marked emphasis with which he leans on his long staff, the hopes that secretly nourish his soul, and the aid upon which he ultimately relies.

One of the oldest of the peasants whom we have indicated came on vigorously, followed by ten or twelve young men, his sons and nephews, all wearing the broad-brimmed hat and the blue frock or blouse of the ancient Gauls, which the peasants of France still wear over their other garments, as peculiarly adapted to their humid climate and their laborious habits.

When the old man had reached the group of personages of whom we have just spoken, he took off his hat--an example immediately followed by his whole family--and showed a face tanned with exposure to the weather, a forehead bald and wrinkled with age, and long, white hair. His shoulders were bent with years and labor, but he was still a hale and sturdy man. He was received with an air of welcome, and even of respect, by one of the gravest of the grave group he had approached, who, without uncovering, however, extended to him his hand.

"What! good Father Guillaume Leroux!" said he, "and have you, too, left our farm of La Chenaie to visit the town, when it's not market-day? Why, 'tis as if your oxen were to unharness themselves and go hunting, leaving their work to see a poor rabbit run down!"

"Faith, Monsieur le Comte du Lude," replied the farmer, "for that matter, sometimes the rabbit runs across our path of itself; but, in truth, I've a notion that some of the people here want to make fools of us, and so I've come to see about it."

"Enough of that, my friend," returned the Count; "here is Monsieur Fournier, the Advocate, who assuredly will not deceive you, for he resigned his office of Attorney-General last night, that he might henceforth devote his eloquence to the service of his own noble thoughts. You will hear him, perhaps, to-day, though truly, I dread his appearing for his own sake as much as I desire it for that of the accused."

"I care not for myself," said Fournier; "truth is with me a passion, and I would have it taught in all times and all places."

He that spoke was a young man, whose face, pallid in the extreme, was full of the noblest expression. His blond hair, his light-blue eyes, his thinness, the delicacy of his frame, made him at first sight seem younger

than he was; but his thoughtful and earnest countenance indicated that mental superiority and that precocious maturity of soul which are developed by deep study in youth, combined with natural energy of character. He was attired wholly in black, with a short cloak in the fashion of the day, and carried under his left arm a roll of documents, which, when speaking, he would take in the right hand and grasp convulsively, as a warrior in his anger grasps the pommel of his sword. At one moment it seemed as if he were about to unfurl the scroll, and from it hurl lightning upon those whom he pursued with looks of fiery indignation--three Capuchins and a Franciscan, who had just passed.

"Pere Guillaume," pursued M. du Lude, "how is it you have brought with you only your sons, and they armed with their staves?"

"Faith, Monsieur, I have no desire that our girls should learn to dance of the nuns; and, moreover, just now the lads with their staves may bestir themselves to better purpose than their sisters would."

"Take my advice, my old friend," said the Count, "and don't bestir yourselves at all; rather stand quietly aside to view the procession which you see approaching, and remember that you are seventy years old."

"Ah!" murmured the old man, drawing up his twelve sons in double military rank, "I fought under good King Henriot, and can play at sword and pistol as well as the worthy 'ligueurs';" and shaking his head he leaned against a post, his knotty staff between his crossed legs, his hands clasped on its thick butt-end, and his white, bearded chin resting on his hands. Then, half closing his eyes, he appeared lost in recollections of his youth.

The bystanders observed with interest his dress, slashed in the fashion of Henri IV, and his resemblance to the Bearnese monarch in the latter years of his life, though the King's hair had been prevented by the assassin's blade from acquiring the whiteness which that of the old peasant had peacefully attained. A furious pealing of the bells, however, attracted the general attention to the end of the great street, down which was seen filing a long procession, whose banners and glittering pikes rose above the heads of the crowd, which successively and in silence opened a way for the at once absurd and terrible train.

First, two and two, came a body of archers, with pointed beards and large plumed hats, armed with long halberds, who, ranging in a single file on each side of the middle of the street, formed an avenue along which marched in solemn order a procession of Gray Penitents--men attired in long, gray robes, the hoods of which entirely covered their heads; masks of the same stuff terminated below their chins in points, like beards, each having three holes for the eyes and nose. Even at the present day we see these costumes at funerals, more especially in the Pyrenees. The Penitents of Loudun carried enormous wax candles, and their slow, uniform movement, and their eyes, which seemed to glitter under their masks, gave them the appearance of phantoms.

The people expressed their various feelings in an undertone:

"There's many a rascal hidden under those masks," said a citizen.

"Ay, and with a face uglier than the mask itself," added a young man.

"They make me afraid," tremulously exclaimed a girl.

"I'm only afraid for my purse," said the first speaker.

"Ah, heaven! there are our holy brethren, the Penitents," cried an old woman, throwing back her hood, the better to look at them. "See the banner they bear! Ah, neighbors, 'tis a joyful thing to have it among us! Beyond a doubt it will save us; see, it shows the devil in flames, and a monk fastening a chain round his neck, to keep him in hell. Ah, here come the judges--noble gentlemen! dear gentlemen! Look at their red robes; how beautiful! Blessed be the Virgin, they've been well

chosen!"

"Every man of them is a personal enemy of the Cure," whispered the Count du Lude to the advocate Fournier, who took a note of the information.

"Don't you know them, neighbors?" pursued the shrill, sharp voice of the old woman, as she elbowed one and pinched another of those near her to attract their attention to the objects of her admiration; "see, there's excellent Monsieur Mignon, whispering to Messieurs the Counsellors of the Court of Poitiers; Heaven bless them all, say I!"

"Yes, there are Roatin, Richard, and Chevalier--the very men who tried to have him dismissed a year ago," continued M. du Lude, in undertones, to the young advocate, who, surrounded and hidden from public observation by the group of dark-clad citizens, was writing down his observations in a note-book under his cloak.

"Here; look, look!" screamed the woman. "Make way! here's Monsieur Barre, the Cure of Saint-Jacques at Chinon."

"A saint!" murmured one bystander.

"A hypocrite!" exclaimed a manly voice.

"See how thin he is with fasting!"

"See how pale he is with remorse!"

"He's the man to drive away devils!"

"Yes, but not till he's done with them for his own purposes."

The dialogue was interrupted by the general exclamation, "How beautiful she is!"

The Superior of the Ursulines advanced, followed by all her nuns. Her white veil was raised; in order that the people might see the features of the possessed ones, it had been ordered that it should be thus with her and six of the sisterhood. Her attire had no distinguishing feature, except a large rosary extending from her neck nearly to her feet, from which hung a gold cross; but the dazzling pallor of her face, rendered still more conspicuous by the dark hue of her capuchon, at once fixed the general gaze upon her. Her brilliant, dark eyes, which bore the impress of some deep and burning passion, were crowned with eyebrows so perfectly arched that Nature herself seemed to have taken as much pains to form them as the Circassian women to pencil theirs artistically; but between them a slight fold revealed the powerful agitation within. In her movements, however, and throughout her whole bearing, she affected perfect calm; her steps were slow and measured, and her beautiful hands were crossed on her bosom, as white and motionless as those of the marble statues joined in eternal prayer.

"See, aunt," ejaculated Martine, "see how Sister Agnes and Sister Claire are weeping, next to the Superior!"

"Ay, niece, they weep because they are the prey of the demon."

"Or rather," interposed the same manly voice that spoke before, "because they repent of having mocked Heaven."

A deep silence now pervaded the multitude; not a word was heard, not a movement, hardly a breath. Every one seemed paralyzed by some sudden enchantment, when, following the nuns, among four Penitents who held him in chains, appeared the Cure of the Church of Ste. Croix, attired in his pastor's robe. His was a noble, fine face, with grandeur in its whole expression, and gentleness in every feature. Affecting no scornful indifference to his position, he looked calmly and kindly around, as if he sought on his dark path the affectionate glances of those who loved him. Nor did he seek in vain; here and there he encountered those

glances, and joyfully returned them. He even heard sobs, and he saw hands extended toward him, many of which grasped weapons. But no gesture of his encouraged these mute offers of aid; he lowered his eyes and went on, careful not to compromise those who so trusted in him, or to involve them in his own misfortunes. This was Urbain Grandier.

Suddenly the procession stopped, at a sign from the man who walked apart, and who seemed to command its progress. He was tall, thin, sallow; he wore a long black robe, with a cap of the same material and color; he had the face of a Don Basilio, with the eye of Nero. He motioned the guards to surround him more closely, when he saw with affright the dark group we have mentioned, and the strong-limbed and resolute peasants who seemed in attendance upon them. Then, advancing somewhat before the Canons and Capuchins who were with him, he pronounced, in a shrill voice, this singular decree:

"We, Sieur de Laubardemont, referendary, being delegated and invested with discretionary power in the matter of the trial of the magician Urbain Grandier, upon the various articles of accusation brought against him, assisted by the reverend Fathers Mignon, canon, Barre, cure of St. Jacques at Chinon, Father Lactantius, and all the other judges appointed to try the said magician, have decreed as follows:

"Primo: the factitious assembly of proprietors, noble citizens of this town and its environs, is dissolved, as tending to popular sedition; its proceedings are declared null, and its letter to the King, against us, the judges, which has been intercepted, shall be publicly burned in the marketplace as calumniating the good Ursulines and the reverend fathers and judges.

"Secundo: it is forbidden to say, publicly or in private, that the said nuns are not possessed by the Evil Spirit, or to doubt of the power of the exorcists, under pain of a fine of twenty thousand livres, and corporal punishment.

"Let the bailiffs and sheriffs obey this. Given the eighteenth of June, in the year of grace 1639."

Before he had well finished reading the decree, the discordant blare of trumpets, bursting forth at a prearranged signal, drowned, to a certain extent, the murmurs that followed its proclamation, amid which Laubardemont urged forward the procession, which entered the great building already referred to--an ancient convent, whose interior had crumbled away, its walls now forming one vast hall, well adapted for the purpose to which it was about to be applied. Laubardemont did not deem himself safe until he was within the building and had heard the heavy, double doors creak on their hinges as, closing, they excluded the furious crowd without.

CHAPTER III

THE GOOD PRIEST

L'homme de paix me parla ainsi.--VICAIRE SAVOYARD.

Now that the diabolical procession is in the arena destined for its spectacle, and is arranging its sanguinary representation, let us see what Cinq-Mars had been doing amid the agitated throng. He was naturally endowed with great tact, and he felt that it would be no easy matter for him to attain his object of seeing the Abbe Quillet, at a time when public excitement was at its height. He therefore remained on horseback with his four servants in a small, dark street that led into the main thoroughfare, whence he could see all that passed. No one at first paid any attention to him; but when public curiosity had no other aliment,

he became an object of general interest. Weary of so many strange scenes, the inhabitants looked upon him with some exasperation, and whispered to one another, asking whether this was another exorcist come among them. Feeling that it was time to take a decided course, he advanced with his attendants, hat in hand, toward the group in black of whom we have spoken, and addressing him who appeared its chief member, said, "Monsieur, where can I find Monsieur l'Abbe Quillet?"

At this name, all regarded him with an air of terror, as if he had pronounced that of Lucifer. Yet no anger was shown; on the contrary, it seemed that the question had favorably changed for him the minds of all who heard him. Moreover, chance had served him well in his choice; the Comte du Lude came up to his horse, and saluting him, said, "Dismount, Monsieur, and I will give you some useful information concerning him."

After speaking a while in whispers, the two gentlemen separated with all the ceremonious courtesy of the time. Cinq-Mars remounted his black horse, and passing through numerous narrow streets, was soon out of the crowd with his retinue.

"How happy I am!" he soliloquized, as he went his way; "I shall, at all events, for a moment see the good and kind clergyman who brought me up; even now I recall his features, his calm air, his voice so full of gentleness."

As these tender thoughts filled his mind, he found himself in the small, dark street which had been indicated to him; it was so narrow that the knee-pieces of his boots touched the wall on each side. At the end of the street he came to a one-storied wooden house, and in his eagerness knocked at the door with repeated strokes.

"Who is there?" cried a furious voice within; and at the same moment, the door opening revealed a little short, fat man, with a very red face, dressed in black, with a large white ruff, and riding-boots which engulfed his short legs in their vast depths. In his hands were a pair of horse-pistols.

"I will sell my life dearly!" he cried; "and--"

"Softly, Abbe, softly," said his pupil, taking his arm; "we are friends."

"Ah, my son, is it you?" said the good man, letting fall his pistols, which were picked up by a domestic, also armed to the teeth. "What do you here? The abomination has entered the town, and I only await the night to depart. Make haste within, my dear boy, with your people. I took you for the archers of Laubardemont, and, faith, I intended to take a part somewhat out of my line. You see the horses in the courtyard there; they will convey me to Italy, where I shall rejoin our friend, the Duc de Bouillon. Jean! Jean! hasten and close the great gate after Monsieur's domestics, and recommend them not to make too much noise, although for that matter we have no habitation near us."

Grandchamp obeyed the intrepid little Abbe, who then embraced Cinq-Mars four consecutive times, raising himself on the points of his boots, so as to attain the middle of his pupil's breast. He then hurried him into a small room, which looked like a deserted granary; and seating him beside himself upon a black leather trunk, he said, warmly:

"Well, my son, whither go you? How came Madame la Marechale to allow you to come here? Do you not see what they are doing against an unhappy man, whose death alone will content them? Alas, merciful Heaven! is this the first spectacle my dear pupil is to see? And you at that delightful period of life when friendship, love, confidence, should alone encompass you; when all around you should give you a favorable opinion of your species, at your very entry into the great world! How unfortunate! alas, why did you come?"

When the good Abbe had followed up this lamentation by pressing affectionately both hands of the young traveller in his own, so red and

wrinkled, the latter answered:

"Can you not guess, my dear Abbe, that I came to Loudun because you are here? As to the spectacle you speak of, it appears to me simply ridiculous; and I swear that I do not a whit the less on its account love that human race of which your virtues and your good lessons have given me an excellent idea. As to the five or six mad women who--"

"Let us not lose time; I will explain to you all that matter; but answer me, whither go you, and for what?"

"I am going to Perpignan, where the Cardinal-Duke is to present me to the King."

At this the worthy but hasty Abbe rose from his box, and walked, or rather ran, to and fro, stamping. "The Cardinal! the Cardinal!" he repeated, almost choking, his face becoming scarlet, and the tears rising to his eyes; "My poor child! they will destroy him! Ah, mon Dieu! what part would they have him play there? What would they do with him? Ah, who will protect thee, my son, in that dangerous place?" he continued, reseating himself, and again taking his pupil's hands in his own with a paternal solicitude, as he endeavored to read his thoughts in his countenance.

"Why, I do not exactly know," said Cinq-Mars, looking up at the ceiling; "but I suppose it will be the Cardinal de Richelieu, who was the friend of my father."

"Ah, my dear Henri, you make me tremble; he will ruin you unless you become his docile instrument. Alas, why can not I go with you? Why must I act the young man of twenty in this unfortunate affair? Alas, I should be perilous to you; I must, on the contrary, conceal myself. But you will have Monsieur de Thou near you, my son, will you not?" said he, trying to reassure himself; "he was your friend in childhood, though somewhat older than yourself. Heed his counsels, my child, he is a wise young man of mature reflection and solid ideas."

"Oh, yes, my dear Abbe, you may depend upon my tender attachment for him; I never have ceased to love him."

"But you have ceased to write to him, have you not?" asked the good Abbe, half smilingly.

"I beg your pardon, my dear Abbe, I wrote to him once, and again yesterday, to inform him that the Cardinal has invited me to court."

"How! has he himself desired your presence?"

Cinq-Mars hereupon showed the letter of the Cardinal-Duke to his mother, and his old preceptor grew gradually calmer.

"Ah, well!" said he to himself, "this is not so bad, perhaps, after all. It looks promising; a captain of the guards at twenty--that sounds well!" and the worthy Abbe's face became all smiles.

The young man, delighted to see these smiles, which so harmonized with his own thoughts, fell upon the neck of the Abbe and embraced him, as if the good man had thus assured to him a futurity of pleasure, glory, and love.

But the good Abbe, with difficulty disengaging himself from this warm embrace, resumed his walk, his reflections, and his gravity. He coughed often and shook his head; and Cinq-Mars, not venturing to pursue the conversation, watched him, and became sad as he saw him become serious.

The old man at last sat down, and in a mournful tone addressed his pupil:

"My friend, my son, I have for a moment yielded like a father to your hopes; but I must tell you, and it is not to afflict you, that they

appear to me excessive and unnatural. If the Cardinal's sole aim were to show attachment and gratitude toward your family, he would not have carried his favors so far; no, the extreme probability is that he has designs upon you. From what has been told him, he thinks you adapted to play some part, as yet impossible for us to divine, but which he himself has traced out in the deepest recesses of his mind. He wishes to educate you for this; he wishes to drill you into it. Allow me the expression in consideration of its accuracy, and think seriously of it when the time shall come. But I am inclined to believe that, as matters are, you would do well to follow up this vein in the great mine of State; in this way high fortunes have begun. You must only take heed not to be blinded and led at will. Let not favors dazzle you, my poor child, and let not elevation turn your head. Be not so indignant at the suggestion; the thing has happened to older men than yourself. Write to me often, as well as to your mother; see Monsieur de Thou, and together we will try to keep you in good counsel. Now, my son, be kind enough to close that window through which the wind comes upon my head, and I will tell you what has been going on here."

Henri, trusting that the moral part of the discourse was over, and anticipating nothing in the second part but a narrative more or less interesting, closed the old casement, festooned with cobwebs, and resumed his seat without speaking.

"Now that I reflect further," continued the Abbe, "I think it will not perhaps be unprofitable for you to have passed through this place, although it be a sad experience you shall have acquired; but it will supply what I may not have formerly told you of the wickedness of men. I hope, moreover, that the result will not be fatal, and that the letter we have written to the King will arrive in time."

"I heard that it had been intercepted," interposed Cinq-Mars.

"Then all is over," said the Abbe Quillet; "the Cure is lost. But listen. God forbid, my son, that I, your old tutor, should seek to assail my own work, and attempt to weaken your faith! Preserve ever and everywhere that simple creed of which your noble family has given you the example, which our fathers possessed in a still higher degree than we, and of which the greatest captains of our time are not ashamed. Always, while you wear a sword, remember that you hold it for the service of God. But at the same time, when you are among men, avoid being deceived by the hypocrite. He will encompass you, my son; he will assail you on the vulnerable side of your ingenuous heart, in addressing your religion; and seeing the extravagance of his affected zeal, you will fancy yourself lukewarm as compared with him. You will think that your conscience cries out against you; but it will not be the voice of conscience that you hear. And what cries would not that conscience send forth, how fiercely would it not rise upon you, did you contribute to the destruction of innocence by invoking Heaven itself as a false witness against it?"

"Oh, my father! can such things be possible?" exclaimed Henri d'Effiat, clasping his hands.

"It is but too true," continued the Abbe; "you saw a partial execution of it this morning. God grant you may not witness still greater horrors! But listen! whatever you may see, whatever crime they dare to commit, I conjure you, in the name of your mother and of all that you hold dear, say not a word; make not a gesture that may indicate any opinion whatever. I know the impetuous character that you derive from the Marechal, your father; curb it, or you are lost. These little ebullitions of passion give but slight satisfaction, and bring about great misfortunes. I have observed you give way to them too much. Oh, did you but know the advantage that a calm temper gives one over men! The ancients stamped it on the forehead of the divinity as his finest attribute, since it shows that he is superior to our fears and to our hopes, to our pleasures and to our pains. Therefore, my dear child, remain passive in the scenes you are about to witness; but see them you must. Be present at this sad trial; for me, I must suffer the consequences of my schoolboy folly. I will relate it to you; it will

prove to you that with a bald head one may be as much a child as with your fine chestnut curls."

And the excellent old Abbe, taking his pupil's head affectionately between his hands, continued:

"Like other people, my dear son, I was curious to see the devils of the Ursulines; and knowing that they professed to speak all languages, I was so imprudent as to cease speaking Latin and to question them in Greek. The Superior is very pretty, but she does not know Greek! Duncan, the physician, observed aloud that it was surprising that the demon, who knew everything, should commit barbarisms and solecisms in Latin, and not be able to answer in Greek. The young Superior, who was then upon her bed, turned toward the wall to weep, and said in an undertone to Father Barre, 'I can not go on with this, father.' I repeated her words aloud, and infuriated all the exorcists; they cried out that I ought to know that there are demons more ignorant than peasants, and said that as to their power and physical strength, it could not be doubted, since the spirits named Gresil des Trones, Aman des Puissance, and Asmodeus, had promised to carry off the calotte of Monsieur de Laubardemont. They were preparing for this, when the physician Duncan, a learned and upright man, but somewhat of a scoffer, took it into his head to pull a cord he discovered fastened to a column like a bell-rope, and which hung down just close to the referendary's head; whereupon they called him a Huguenot, and I am satisfied that if Marechal de Breze were not his protector, it would have gone ill with him. The Comte du Lude then came forward with his customary 'sang-froid', and begged the exorcists to perform before him. Father Lactantius, the Capuchin with the dark visage and hard look, proceeded with Sister Agnes and Sister Claire; he raised both his hands, looking at them as a serpent would look at two dogs, and cried in a terrible voice, 'Quis to misit, Diabole?' and the two sisters answered, as with one voice, 'Urbanus.' He was about to continue, when Monsieur du Lude, taking out of his pocket, with an air of veneration, a small gold box, said that he had in it a relic left by his ancestors, and that though not doubting the fact of the possession, he wished to test it. Father Lactantius seized the box with delight, and hardly had he touched the foreheads of the two sisters with it when they made great leaps and twisted about their hands and feet. Lactantius shouted forth his exorcisms; Barre threw himself upon his knees with all the old women; and Mignon and the judges applauded. The impassible Laubardemont made the sign of the cross, without being struck dead for it! When Monsieur du Lude took back his box the nuns became still. 'I think,' said Lactantius, insolently, 'that--you will not question your relics now.' 'No more than I do the possession,' answered Monsieur du Lude, opening his box and showing that it was empty. 'Monsieur, you mock us,' said Lactantius. I was indignant at these mummeries, and said to him, 'Yes, Monsieur, as you mock God and men.' And this, my dear friend, is the reason why you see me in my seven-league boots, so heavy that they hurt my legs, and with pistols; for our friend Laubardemont has ordered my person to be seized, and I don't choose it to be seized, old as it is."

"What, is he so powerful, then?" cried Cinq-Mars.

"More so than is supposed--more so than could be believed. I know that the possessed Abbess is his niece, and that he is provided with an order in council directing him to judge, without being deterred by any appeals lodged in Parliament, the Cardinal having prohibited the latter from taking cognizance of the matter of Urbain Grandier."

"And what are his offences?" asked the young man, already deeply interested.

"Those of a strong mind and of a great genius, an inflexible will which has irritated power against him, and a profound passion which has driven his heart and him to commit the only mortal sin with which I believe he can be reproached; and it was only by violating the sanctity of his private papers, which they tore from Jeanne d'Estievre, his mother, an old woman of eighty, that they discovered his love for the beautiful Madeleine de Brou. This girl had refused to marry, and wished to take

the veil. May that veil have concealed from her the spectacle of this day! The eloquence of Grandier and his angelic beauty drove the women half mad; they came miles and miles to hear him. I have seen them swoon during his sermons; they declared him an angel, and touched his garment and kissed his hands when he descended from the pulpit. It is certain that, unless it be his beauty, nothing could equal the sublimity of his discourses, ever full of inspiration. The pure honey of the gospel combined on his lips with the flashing flame of the prophecies; and one recognized in the sound of his voice a heart overflowing with holy pity for the evils to which mankind are subject, and filled with tears, ready to flow for us."

The good priest paused, for his own voice and eyes were filled with tears; his round and naturally Joyous face was more touching than a graver one under the same circumstances, for it seemed as if it bade defiance to sadness. Cinq-Mars, even more moved, pressed his hand without speaking, fearful of interrupting him. The Abbe took out a red handkerchief, wiped his eyes, and continued:

"This is the second attack upon Urbain by his combined enemies. He had already been accused of bewitching the nuns; but, examined by holy prelates, by enlightened magistrates, and learned physicians, he was immediately acquitted, and the judges indignantly imposed silence upon these devils in human form. The good and pious Archbishop of Bordeaux, who had himself chosen the examiners of these pretended exorcists, drove the prophets away and shut up their hell. But, humiliated by the publicity of the result, annoyed at seeing Grandier kindly received by our good King when he threw himself at his feet at Paris, they saw that if he triumphed they were lost, and would be universally regarded as impostors. Already the convent of the Ursulines was looked upon only as a theatre for disgraceful comedies, and the nuns themselves as shameless actresses. More than a hundred persons, furious against the Cure, had compromised themselves in the hope of destroying him. Their plot, instead of being abandoned, has gained strength by its first check; and here are the means that have been set to work by his implacable enemies.

"Do you know a man called 'L'Eminence Grise', that formidable Capuchin whom the Cardinal employs in all things, consults upon some, and always despises? It was to him that the Capuchins of Loudun addressed themselves. A woman of this place, of low birth, named Hamon, having been so fortunate as to please the Queen when she passed through Loudun, was taken into her service. You know the hatred that separates her court from that of the Cardinal; you know that Anne of Austria and Monsieur de Richelieu have for some time disputed for the King's favor, and that, of her two sons, France never knew in the evening which would rise next morning. During a temporary eclipse of the Cardinal, a satire appeared, issuing from the planetary system of the Queen; it was called, 'La cordonniere de la seine-mere'. Its tone and language were vulgar; but it contained things so insulting about the birth and person of the Cardinal that the enemies of the minister took it up and gave it a publicity which irritated him. It revealed, it is said, many intrigues and mysteries which he had deemed impenetrable. He read this anonymous work, and desired to know its author. It was just at this time that the Capuchins of this town wrote to Father Joseph that a constant correspondence between Grandier and La Hamon left no doubt in their minds as to his being the author of this diatribe. It was in vain that he had previously published religious books, prayers, and meditations, the style of which alone ought to have absolved him from having put his hand to a libel written in the language of the marketplace; the Cardinal, long since prejudiced against Urbain, was determined to fix upon him as the culprit. He remembered that when he was only prior of Coussay, Grandier disputed precedence with him and gained it; I fear this achievement of precedence in life will make poor Grandier precede the Cardinal in death also."

A melancholy smile played upon the lips of the good Abbe as he uttered this involuntary pun.

"What! do you think this matter will go so far as death?"

"Ay, my son, even to death; they have already taken away all the documents connected with his former absolution that might have served for his defence, despite the opposition of his poor mother, who preserved them as her son's license to live. Even now they affect to regard a work against the celibacy of priests, found among his papers, as destined to propagate schism. It is a culpable production, doubtless, and the love which dictated it, however pure it may be, is an enormous sin in a man consecrated to God alone; but this poor priest was far from wishing to encourage heresy, and it was simply, they say, to appease the remorse of Mademoiselle de Brou that he composed the work. It was so evident that his real faults would not suffice to condemn him to death that they have revived the accusation of sorcery, long since disposed of; but, feigning to believe this, the Cardinal has established a new tribunal in this town, and has placed Laubardemont at its head, a sure sign of death. Heaven grant that you never become acquainted with what the corruption of governments call coups-d'etat!"

At this moment a terrible shriek sounded from beyond the wall of the courtyard; the Abbe arose in terror, as did Cinq-Mars.

"It is the cry of a woman," said the old man.

"'Tis heartrending!" exclaimed Cinq-Mars. "What is it?" he asked his people, who had all rushed out into the courtyard.

They answered that they heard nothing further.

"Well, well," said the Abbe, "make no noise." He then shut the window, and put his hands before his eyes.

"Ah, what a cry was that, my son!" he said, with his face of an ashy paleness--"what a cry! It pierced my very soul; some calamity has happened. Ah, holy Virgin! it has so agitated me that I can talk with you no more. Why did I hear it, just as I was speaking to you of your future career? My dear child, may God bless you! Kneel!"

Cinq-Mars did as he was desired, and knew by a kiss upon his head that he had been blessed by the old man, who then raised him, saying:

"Go, my son, the time is advancing; they might find you with me. Go, leave your people and horses here; wrap yourself in a cloak, and go; I have much to write ere the hour when darkness shall allow me to depart for Italy."

They embraced once more, promising to write to each other, and Henri quitted the house. The Abby, still following him with his eyes from the window, cried:

"Be prudent, whatever may happen," and sent him with his hands one more paternal blessing, saying, "Poor child! poor child!"

CHAPTER IV

THE TRIAL

Oh, vendetta di Dio, quanto to dei
Esser temuta da ciascun che legge
Cio, che fu manifesto agli occhi miei.--DANTE.

Notwithstanding the custom of having secret trials, freely countenanced by Richelieu, the judges of the Cure of Loudun had resolved that the court should be open to the public; but they soon repented this measure. They were all interested in the destruction of Urbain Grandier; but they desired that the indignation of the country should in some degree sanction the sentence of death they had received orders to pass and to carry into effect.

Laubardemont was a kind of bird of prey, whom the Cardinal always let loose when he required a prompt and sure agent for his vengeance; and on this occasion he fully justified the choice that had been made of him. He committed but one error--that of allowing a public trial, contrary to the usual custom; his object had been to intimidate and to dismay. He dismayed, indeed, but he created also a feeling of indignant horror.

The throng without the gates had waited there two hours, during which time the sound of hammers indicated that within the great hall they were hastily completing their mysterious preparations. At length the archers laboriously turned upon their hinges the heavy gates opening into the street, and the crowd eagerly rushed in. The young Cinq-Mars was carried along with the second enormous wave, and, placed behind a thick column, stood there, so as to be able to see without being seen. He observed with vexation that the group of dark-clad citizens was near him; but the great gates, closing, left the part of the court where the people stood in such darkness that there was no likelihood of his being recognized. Although it was only midday, the hall was lighted with torches; but they were nearly all placed at the farther end, where rose the judges' bench behind a long table. The chairs, tables, and steps were all covered with black cloth, and cast a livid hue over the faces of those near them. A seat reserved for the prisoner was placed upon the left, and on the crape robe which covered him flames were represented in gold embroidery to indicate the nature of the offence. Here sat the accused, surrounded by archers, with his hands still bound in chains, held by two monks, who, with simulated terror, affected to start from him at his slightest motion, as if they held a tiger or enraged wolf, or as if the flames depicted on his robe could communicate themselves to their clothing. They also carefully kept his face from being seen in the least degree by the people.

The impassible countenance of M. de Laubardemont was there to dominate the judges of his choice; almost a head taller than any of them, he sat upon a seat higher than theirs, and each of his glassy and uneasy glances seemed to convey a command. He wore a long, full scarlet robe, and a black cap covered his head; he seemed occupied in arranging papers, which he then passed to the judges. The accusers, all ecclesiastics, sat upon the right hand of the judges; they wore their albs and stoles. Father Lactantius was distinguishable among them by his simple Capuchin habit, his tonsure, and the extreme hardness of his features. In a side gallery sat the Bishop of Poitiers, hidden from view; other galleries were filled with veiled women. Below the bench of judges a group of men and women, the dregs of the populace, stood behind six young Ursuline nuns, who seemed full of disgust at their proximity; these were the witnesses.

The rest of the hall was filled with an enormous crowd, gloomy and silent, clinging to the arches, the gates, and the beams, and full of a terror which communicated itself to the judges, for it arose from an interest in the accused. Numerous archers, armed with long pikes, formed an appropriate frame for this lugubrious picture.

At a sign from the President, the witnesses withdrew through a narrow door opened for them by an usher. As the Superior of the Ursulines passed M. de Laubardemont she was heard to say to him, "You have deceived me, Monsieur." He remained immovable, and she went on. A profound silence reigned throughout the whole assembly.

Rising with all the gravity he could assume, but still with visible agitation, one of the judges, named Houmain, judge-Advocate of Orleans, read a sort of indictment in a voice so low and hoarse that it was impossible to follow it. He made himself heard only when what he had to say was intended to impose upon the minds of the people. He divided the evidence into two classes: one, the depositions of seventy-two witnesses; the other, more convincing, that resulting from "the exorcisms of the reverend fathers here present," said he, crossing himself.

Fathers Lactantius, Barre, and Mignon bowed low, repeating the sacred sign.

"Yes, my lords," said Houmain, addressing the judges, "this bouquet of white roses and this manuscript, signed with the blood of the magician, a counterpart of the contract he has made with Lucifer, and which he was obliged to carry about him in order to preserve his power, have been recognized and brought before you. We read with horror these words written at the bottom of the parchment: 'The original is in hell, in Lucifer's private cabinet.'"

A roar of laughter, which seemed to come from stentorian lungs, was heard in the throng. The president reddened, and made a sign to the archers, who in vain endeavored to discover the disturber. The judge-Advocate continued:

"The demons have been forced to declare their names by the mouths of their victims. Their names and deeds are deposited upon this table. They are called Astaroth, of the order of Seraphim; Eazas, Celsus, Acaos, Cedron, Asmodeus, of the order of Thrones; Alex, Zebulon, Cham, Uriel, and Achas, of the order of Principalities, and so on, for their number is infinite. For their actions, who among us has not been a witness of them?"

A prolonged murmur arose from the gathering, but, upon some halberdiers advancing, all became silent.

"We have seen, with grief, the young and respectable Superior of the Ursulines tear her bosom with her own hands and grovel in the dust; we have seen the sisters, Agnes, Claire, and others, deviate from the modesty of their sex by impassioned gestures and unseemly laughter. When impious men have inclined to doubt the presence of the demons, and we ourselves felt our convictions shaken, because they refused to answer to unknown questions in Greek or Arabic, the reverend fathers have, to establish our belief, deigned to explain to us that the malignity of evil spirits being extreme, it was not surprising that they should feign this ignorance in order that they might be less pressed with questions; and that in their answers they had committed various solecisms and other grammatical faults in order to bring contempt upon themselves, so that out of this disdain the holy doctors might leave them in quiet. Their hatred is so inveterate that just before performing one of their miraculous feats, they suspended a rope from a beam in order to involve the reverend personages in a suspicion of fraud, whereas it has been deposed on oath by credible people that there never had been a cord in that place.

"But, my lords, while Heaven was thus miraculously explaining itself by the mouths of its holy interpreters, another light has just been thrown upon us. At the very time the judges were absorbed in profound meditation, a loud cry was heard near the hall of council; and upon going to the spot, we found the body of a young lady of high birth. She had just exhaled her last breath in the public street, in the arms of the reverend Father Mignon, Canon; and we learned from the said father here present, and from several other grave personages, that, suspecting the young lady to be possessed, by reason of the current rumor for some time past of the admiration Urbain Grandier had for her, an idea of testing it happily occurred to the Canon, who suddenly said, approaching her, 'Grandier has just been put to death,' whereat she uttered one loud scream and fell dead, deprived by the demon of the time necessary for giving her the assistance of our holy Mother, the Catholic Church."

A murmur of indignation arose from the crowd, among whom the word "Assassin" was loudly reechoed; the halberdiers commanded silence with a loud voice, but it was obtained rather by the judge resuming his address, the general curiosity triumphing.

"Oh, infamy!" he continued, seeking to fortify himself by exclamations; "upon her person was found this work, written by the hand of Urbain Grandier," and he took from among his papers a book bound in parchment.

"Heavens!" cried Urbain from his seat.

"Look to your prisoner!" cried the judge to the archers who surrounded him.

"No doubt the demon is about to manifest himself," said Father Lactantius, in a sombre voice; "tighten his bonds." He was obeyed.

The judge-Advocate continued, "Her name was Madeleine de Brou, aged nineteen."

"O God! this is too much!" cried the accused, as he fell fainting on the ground.

The assembly was deeply agitated; for a moment there was an absolute tumult.

"Poor fellow! he loved her," said some.

"So good a lady!" cried the women.

Pity began to predominate. Cold water was thrown upon Grandier, without his being taken from the court, and he was tied to his seat. The Judge-Advocate went on:

"We are directed to read the beginning of this book to the court," and he read as follows:

"'It is for thee, dear and gentle Madeleine, in order to set at rest thy troubled conscience, that I have described in this book one thought of my soul. All those thoughts tend to thee, celestial creature, because in thee they return to the aim and object of my whole existence; but the thought I send thee, as 'twere a flower, comes from thee, exists only in thee, and returns to thee alone.

"'Be not sad because thou lovest me; be not afflicted because I adore thee. The angels of heaven, what is it that they do? The souls of the blessed, what is it that is promised them? Are we less pure than the angels? Are our souls less separated from the earth than they will be after death? Oh, Madeleine, what is there in us wherewith the Lord can be displeased? Can it be that we pray together, that with faces prostrate in the dust before His altars, we ask for early death to take us while yet youth and love are ours? Or that, musing together beneath the funereal trees of the churchyard, we yearned for one grave, smiling at the idea of death, and weeping at life? Or that, when thou kneelest before me at the tribunal of penitence, and, speaking in the presence of God, canst find naught of evil to reveal to me, so wholly have I kept thy soul in the pure regions of heaven? What, then, could offend our Creator? Perhaps--yes! perhaps some spirit of heaven may have envied me my happiness when on Easter morn I saw thee kneeling before me, purified by long austerities from the slight stain which original sin had left in thee! Beautiful, indeed, wert thou! Thy glance sought thy God in heaven, and my trembling hand held His image to thy pure lips, which human lip had never dared to breathe upon. Angelic being! I alone participated in the secret of the Lord, in the one secret of the entire purity of thy soul; I it was that united thee to thy Creator, who at that moment descended also into my bosom. Ineffable espousals, of which the Eternal himself was the priest, you alone were permitted between the virgin and her pastor! the sole joy of each was to see eternal happiness beginning for the other, to inhale together the perfumes of heaven, to drink in already the harmony of the spheres, and to feel assured that our souls, unveiled to God and to ourselves alone, were worthy together to adore Him.

"'What scruple still weighs upon thy soul, O my sister? Dost thou think I have offered too high a worship to thy virtue? Fearest thou so pure an admiration should deter me from that of the Lord?'"

Houmain had reached this point when the door through which the witnesses had withdrawn suddenly opened. The judges anxiously whispered together. Laubardemont, uncertain as to the meaning of this, signed to the fathers to let him know whether this was some scene executed by their orders; but, seated at some distance from him, and themselves taken by surprise, they could not make him understand that they had not prepared this interruption. Besides, ere they could exchange looks, to the amazement of the assembly, three women, 'en chemise', with naked feet, each with a cord round her neck and a wax taper in her hand, came through the door and advanced to the middle of the platform. It was the Superior of the Ursulines, followed by Sisters Agnes and Claire. Both the latter were weeping; the Superior was very pale, but her bearing was firm, and her eyes were fixed and tearless. She knelt; her companions followed her example. Everything was in such confusion that no one thought of checking them; and in a clear, firm voice she pronounced these words, which resounded in every corner of the hall:

"In the name of the Holy Trinity, I, Jeanne de Belfiel, daughter of the Baron de Cose, I, the unworthy Superior of the Convent of the Ursulines of Loudun, ask pardon of God and man for the crime I have committed in accusing the innocent Urbain Grandier. My possession was feigned, my words were dictated; remorse overwhelms me."

"Bravo!" cried the spectators, clapping their hands. The judges arose; the archers, in doubt, looked at the president; he shook in every limb, but did not change countenance.

"Let all be silent," he said, in a sharp voice; "archers, do your duty."

This man felt himself supported by so strong a hand that nothing could affright him--for no thought of Heaven ever visited him.

"What think you, my fathers?" said he, making a sign to the monks.

"That the demon seeks to save his friend. Obmutesce, Satanas!" cried Father Lactantius, in a terrible voice, affecting to exorcise the Superior.

Never did fire applied to gunpowder produce an effect more instantaneous than did these two words. Jeanne de Belfiel started up in all the beauty of twenty, which her awful nudity served to augment; she seemed a soul escaped from hell appearing to, her seducer. With her dark eyes she cast fierce glances upon the monks; Lactantius lowered his beneath that look. She took two steps toward him with her bare feet, beneath which the scaffolding rung, so energetic was her movement; the taper seemed, in her hand, the sword of the avenging angel.

"Silence, impostor!" she cried, with warmth; "the demon who possessed me was yourself. You deceived me; you said he was not to be tried. To-day, for the first time, I know that he is to be tried; to-day, for the first time, I know that he is to be murdered. And I will speak!"

"Woman, the demon bewilders thee."

"Say, rather, that repentance enlightens me. Daughters, miserable as myself, arise; is he not innocent?"

"We swear he is," said the two young lay sisters, still kneeling and weeping, for they were not animated with so strong a resolution as that of the Superior.

Agnes, indeed, had hardly uttered these words when turning toward the people, she cried, "Help me! they will punish me; they will kill me!" And hurrying away her companion, she drew her into the crowd, who affectionately received them. A thousand voices swore to protect them. Imprecations arose; the men struck their staves against the floor; the officials dared not prevent the people from passing the sisters on from one to another into the street.

During this strange scene the amazed and panic-struck judges whispered; M. Laubardemont looked at the archers, indicating to them the points they were especially to watch, among which, more particularly, was that occupied by the group in black. The accusers looked toward the gallery of the Bishop of Poitiers, but discovered no expression in his dull countenance. He was one of those old men of whom death appears to take possession ten years before all motion entirely ceases in them. His eyes seemed veiled by a half sleep; his gaping mouth mumbled a few vague and habitual words of prayer without meaning or application; the entire amount of intelligence he retained was the ability to distinguish the man who had most power, and him he obeyed, regardless at what price. He had accordingly signed the sentence of the doctors of the Sorbonne which declared the nuns possessed, without even deducing thence the consequence of the death of Urbain; the rest seemed to him one of those more or less lengthy ceremonies, to which he paid not the slightest attention--accustomed as he was to see and live among them, himself an indispensable part and parcel of them. He therefore gave no sign of life on this occasion, merely preserving an air at once perfectly noble and expressionless.

Meanwhile, Father Lactantius, having had a moment to recover from the sudden attack made upon him, turned toward the president and said:

"Here is a clear proof, sent us by Heaven, of the possession, for the Superior never before has forgotten the modesty and severity of her order."

"Would that all the world were here to see me!" said Jeanne de Belfiel, firm as ever. "I can not be sufficiently humiliated upon earth, and Heaven will reject me, for I have been your accomplice."

Perspiration appeared upon the forehead of Laubardemont, but he tried to recover his composure. "What absurd tale is this, Sister; what has influenced you herein?"

The voice of the girl became sepulchral; she collected all her strength, pressed her hand upon her heart as if she desired to stay its throbbing, and, looking at Urbain Grandier, answered, "Love."

A shudder ran through the assembly. Urbain, who since he had fainted had remained with his head hanging down as if dead, slowly raised his eyes toward her, and returned entirely to life only to undergo a fresh sorrow. The young penitent continued:

"Yes, the love which he rejected, which he never fully knew, which I have breathed in his discourses, which my eyes drew in from his celestial countenance, which his very counsels against it have increased.

"Yes, Urbain is pure as an angel, but good as a man who has loved. I

knew

not that he had loved! It is you," she said more energetically, pointing to Lactantius, Barre, and Mignon, and changing her passionate accents for those of indignation--"it is you who told me that he loved; you, who this morning have too cruelly avenged me by killing my rival with a word. Alas, I only sought to separate them! It was a crime; but, by my mother, I am an Italian! I burned with love, with jealousy; you allowed me to see Urbain, to have him as a friend, to see him daily." She was silent for a moment, then exclaimed, "People, he is innocent! Martyr, pardon me, I embrace thy feet!"

She prostrated herself before Urbain and burst into a torrent of tears.

Urbain raised his closely bound hands, and giving her his benediction, said, gently:

"Go, Sister; I pardon thee in the name of Him whom I shall soon see. I have before said to you, and you now see, that the passions work much

evil, unless we seek to turn them toward heaven."

The blood rose a second time to Laubardemont's forehead. "Miscreant!" he exclaimed, "darest thou pronounce the words of the Church?"

"I have not quitted her bosom," said Urbain.

"Remove the girl," said the President.

When the archers went to obey, they found that she had tightened the cord round her neck with such force that she was of a livid hue and almost lifeless. Fear had driven all the women from the assembly; many had been carried out fainting, but the hall was no less crowded. The ranks thickened, for the men out of the streets poured in.

The judges arose in terror, and the president attempted to have the hall cleared; but the people, putting on their hats, stood in alarming immobility. The archers were not numerous enough to repel them. It became necessary to yield; and accordingly Laubardemont in an agitated voice announced that the council would retire for half an hour. He broke up the sitting; the people remained gloomily, each man fixed firmly to his place.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Adopted fact is always better composed than the real one
Advantage that a calm temper gives one over men
Art is the chosen truth
Artificialities of style of that period
Artistic Truth, more lofty than the True
As Homer says, "smiling under tears"
Difference which I find between Truth in art and the True in fac
Happy is he who does not outlive his youth
He did not blush to be a man, and he spoke to men with force
History too was a work of art
In every age we laugh at the costume of our fathers
It is not now what it used to be
It is too true that virtue also has its blush
Lofty ideal of woman and of love
Money is not a common thing between gentlemen like you and me
Monsieur, I know that I have lived too long
Neither idealist nor realist
No writer had more dislike of mere pedantry
Offices will end by rendering great names vile
Princesses ceded like a town, and must not even weep
Principle that art implied selection
Recommended a scrupulous observance of nature
Remedy infallible against the plague and against reserve
True talent paints life rather than the living
Truth, I here venture to distinguish from that of the True
Urbain Grandier
What use is the memory of facts, if not to serve as an example
Woman is more bitter than death, and her arms are like chains
Yes, we are in the way here

By ALFRED DE VIGNY

BOOK 2.

CHAPTER V

THE MARTYRDOM

'La torture interroge, et la douleur repond.'
RAYNOURARD, Les Templiers.

The continuous interest of this half-trial, its preparations, its interruptions, all had held the minds of the people in such attention that no private conversations had taken place. Some irrepressible cries had been uttered, but simultaneously, so that no man could accuse his neighbor. But when the people were left to themselves, there was an explosion of clamorous sentences.

There was at this period enough of primitive simplicity among the lower classes for them to be persuaded by the mysterious tales of the political agents who were deluding them; so that a large portion of the throng in the hall of trial, not venturing to change their judgment, though upon the manifest evidence just given them, awaited in painful suspense the return of the judges, interchanging with an air of mystery and inane importance the usual remarks prompted by imbecility on such occasions.

"One does not know what to think, Monsieur?"

"Truly, Madame, most extraordinary things have happened."

"We live in strange times!"

"I suspected this; but, i' faith, it is not wise to say what one thinks."

"We shall see what we shall see," and so on--the unmeaning chatter of the crowd, which merely serves to show that it is at the command of the first who chooses to sway it. Stronger words were heard from the group in black.

"What! shall we let them do as they please, in this manner? What! dare to burn our letter to the King!"

"If the King knew it!"

"The barbarian impostors! how skilfully is their plot contrived! What! shall murder be committed under our very eyes? Shall we be afraid of these archers?"

"No, no, no!" rang out in trumpet-like tones.

Attention was turned toward the young advocate, who, standing on a branch, began tearing to pieces a roll of paper; then he cried:

"Yes, I tear and scatter to the winds the defence I had prepared for the accused. They have suppressed discussion; I am not allowed to speak for him. I can only speak to you, people; I rejoice that I can do so. You heard these infamous judges. Which of them can hear the truth? Which of them is worthy to listen to an honest man? Which of them will dare to meet his gaze? But what do I say? They all know the truth. They carry it in their guilty breasts; it stings their hearts like a serpent. They tremble in their lair, where doubtless they are devouring their victim; they tremble because they have heard the cries of three deluded women. What was I about to do? I was about to speak in behalf of Urbain Grandier! But what eloquence could equal that of those unfortunates? What words could better have shown you his innocence? Heaven has taken

up arms for him in bringing them to repentance and to devotion; Heaven will finish its work--"

"Vade retro, Satanas," was heard through a high window in the hall.

Fournier stopped for a moment, then said:

"You hear these voices parodying the divine language? If I mistake not, these instruments of an infernal power are, by this song, preparing some new spell."

"But," cried those who surrounded him, "what shall we do? What have they done with him?"

"Remain here; be immovable, be silent," replied the young advocate. "The inertia of a people is all-powerful; that is its true wisdom, that its strength. Observe them closely, and in silence; and you will make them tremble."

"They surely will not dare to appear here again," said the Comte du Lude.

"I should like to look once more at the tall scoundrel in red," said Grand-Ferre, who had lost nothing of what had occurred.

"And that good gentleman, the Cure," murmured old Father Guillaume Leroux, looking at all his indignant parishioners, who were talking together in a low tone, measuring and counting the archers, ridiculing their dress, and beginning to point them out to the observation of the other spectators.

Cinq-Mars, still leaning against the pillar behind which he had first placed himself, still wrapped in his black cloak, eagerly watched all that passed, lost not a word of what was said, and filled his heart with hate and bitterness. Violent desires for slaughter and revenge, a vague desire to strike, took possession of him, despite himself; this is the first impression which evil produces on the soul of a young man. Later, sadness takes the place of fury, then indifference and scorn, later still, a calculating admiration for great villains who have been successful; but this is only when, of the two elements which constitute man, earth triumphs over spirit.

Meanwhile, on the right of the hall near the judges' platform, a group of women were watching attentively a child about eight years old, who had taken it into his head to climb up to a cornice by the aid of his sister Martine, whom we have seen the subject of jest with the young soldier, Grand-Ferre. The child, having nothing to look at after the court had left the hall, had climbed to a small window which admitted a faint light, and which he imagined to contain a swallow's nest or some other treasure for a boy; but after he was well established on the cornice, his hands grasping the bars of an old shrine of Jerome, he wished himself anywhere else, and cried out:

"Oh, sister, sister, lend me your hand to get down!"

"What do you see there?" asked Martine.

"Oh, I dare not tell; but I want to get down," and he began to cry.

"Stay there, my child; stay there!" said all the women. "Don't be afraid; tell us all that you see."

"Well, then, they've put the Cure between two great boards that squeeze his legs, and there are cords round the boards."

"Ah! that is the rack," said one of the townsmen. "Look again, my little friend, what do you see now?"

The child, more confident, looked again through the window, and then, withdrawing his head, said:

"I can not see the Cure now, because all the judges stand round him, and are looking at him, and their great robes prevent me from seeing. There are also some Capuchins, stooping down to whisper to him."

Curiosity attracted more people to the boy's perch; every one was silent, waiting anxiously to catch his words, as if their lives depended on them.

"I see," he went on, "the executioner driving four little pieces of wood between the cords, after the Capuchins have blessed the hammer and nails. Ah, heavens! Sister, how enraged they seem with him, because he will not speak. Mother! mother! give me your hand, I want to come down!"

Instead of his mother, the child, upon turning round, saw only men's faces, looking up at him with a mournful eagerness, and signing him to go on. He dared not descend, and looked again through the window, trembling.

"Oh! I see Father Lactantius and Father Barre themselves forcing in more pieces of wood, which squeeze his legs. Oh, how pale he is! he seems praying. There, his head falls back, as if he were dying! Oh, take me away!"

And he fell into the arms of the young Advocate, of M. du Lude, and of Cinq-Mars, who had come to support him.

"Deus stetit in synagoga deorum: in medio autem Deus dijudicat--" chanted strong, nasal voices, issuing from the small window, which continued in full chorus one of the psalms, interrupted by blows of the hammer--an infernal deed beating time to celestial songs. One might have supposed himself near a smithy, except that the blows were dull, and manifested to the ear that the anvil was a man's body.

"Silence!" said Fournier, "He speaks. The chanting and the blows stop."

A weak voice within said, with difficulty, "Oh, my fathers, mitigate the rigor of your torments, for you will reduce my soul to despair, and I might seek to destroy myself!"

At this the fury of the people burst forth like an explosion, echoing along the vaulted roofs; the men sprang fiercely upon the platform, thrust aside the surprised and hesitating archers; the unarmed crowd drove them back, pressed them, almost suffocated them against the walls, and held them fast, then dashed against the doors which led to the torture chamber, and, making them shake beneath their blows, threatened to drive them in; imprecations resounded from a thousand menacing voices and terrified the judges within.

"They are gone; they have taken him away!" cried a man who had climbed to the little window.

The multitude at once stopped short, and changing the direction of their steps, fled from this detestable place and spread rapidly through the streets, where an extraordinary confusion prevailed.

Night had come on during the long sitting, and the rain was pouring in torrents. The darkness was terrifying. The cries of women slipping on the pavement or driven back by the horses of the guards; the shouts of the furious men; the ceaseless tolling of the bells which had been keeping time with the strokes of the question;

[Torture ('Question') was regulated in scrupulous detail by Holy Mother The Church: The ordinary question was regulated for minor infractions and used for interrogating women and children. For more serious crimes the suspect (and sometimes the witnesses) were put to the extraordinary question by the officiating priests. D.W.]

the roll of distant thunder--all combined to increase the disorder. If the ear was astonished, the eyes were no less so. A few dismal torches

lighted up the corners of the streets; their flickering gleams showed soldiers, armed and mounted, dashing along, regardless of the crowd, to assemble in the Place de St. Pierre; tiles were sometimes thrown at them on their way, but, missing the distant culprit, fell upon some unoffending neighbor. The confusion was bewildering, and became still more so, when, hurrying through all the streets toward the Place de St. Pierre, the people found it barricaded on all sides, and filled with mounted guards and archers. Carts, fastened to the posts at each corner, closed each entrance, and sentinels, armed with arquebuses, were stationed close to the carts. In the centre of the Place rose a pile composed of enormous beams placed crosswise upon one another, so as to form a perfect square; these were covered with a whiter and lighter wood; an enormous stake arose from the centre of the scaffold. A man clothed in red and holding a lowered torch stood near this sort of mast, which was visible from a long distance. A huge chafing-dish, covered on account of the rain, was at his feet.

At this spectacle, terror inspired everywhere a profound silence; for an instant nothing was heard but the sound of the rain, which fell in floods, and of the thunder, which came nearer and nearer.

Meanwhile, Cinq-Mars, accompanied by MM. du Lude and Fournier and all the more important personages of the town, had sought refuge from the storm under the peristyle of the church of Ste.-Croix, raised upon twenty stone steps. The pile was in front, and from this height they could see the whole of the square. The centre was entirely clear, large streams of water alone traversed it; but all the windows of the houses were gradually lighted up, and showed the heads of the men and women who thronged them.

The young D'Effiat sorrowfully contemplated this menacing preparation. Brought up in sentiments of honor, and far removed from the black thoughts which hatred and ambition arouse in the heart of man, he could not conceive that such wrong could be done without some powerful and secret motive. The audacity of such a condemnation seemed to him so enormous that its very cruelty began to justify it in his eyes; a secret horror crept into his soul, the same that silenced the people. He almost forgot the interest with which the unhappy Urbain had inspired him, in thinking whether it were not possible that some secret correspondence with the infernal powers had justly provoked such excessive severity; and the public revelations of the nuns, and the statement of his respected tutor, faded from his memory, so powerful is success, even in the eyes of superior men! so strongly does force impose upon men, despite the voice of conscience!

The young traveller was asking himself whether it were not probable that the torture had forced some monstrous confession from the accused, when the obscurity which surrounded the church suddenly ceased. Its two great doors were thrown open; and by the light of an infinite number of flambeaux, appeared all the judges and ecclesiastics, surrounded by guards. Among them was Urbain, supported, or rather carried, by six men clothed as Black Penitents--for his limbs, bound with bandages saturated with blood, seemed broken and incapable of supporting him. It was at most two hours since Cinq-Mars had seen him, and yet he could hardly recognize the face he had so closely observed at the trial. All color, all roundness of form had disappeared from it; a livid pallor covered a skin yellow and shining like ivory; the blood seemed to have left his veins; all the life that remained within him shone from his dark eyes, which appeared to have grown twice as large as before, as he looked languidly around him; his long, chestnut hair hung loosely down his neck and over a white shirt, which entirely covered him--or rather a sort of robe with large sleeves, and of a yellowish tint, with an odor of sulphur about it; a long, thick cord encircled his neck and fell upon his breast. He looked like an apparition; but it was the apparition of a martyr.

Urbain stopped, or, rather, was set down upon the peristyle of the church; the Capuchin Lactantius placed a lighted torch in his right hand, and held it there, as he said to him, with his hard inflexibility:

"Do penance, and ask pardon of God for thy crime of magic."

The unhappy man raised his voice with great difficulty, and with his eyes to heaven said:

"In the name of the living God, I cite thee, Laubardemont, false judge, to appear before Him in three years. They have taken away my confessor, and I have been fain to pour out my sins into the bosom of God Himself, for my enemies surround me. I call that God of mercy to witness I never have dealt in magic. I have known no mysteries but those of the Catholic religion, apostolic and Roman, in which I die; I have sinned much against myself, but never against God and our Lord--"

"Cease!" cried the Capuchin, affecting to close his mouth ere he could pronounce the name of the Saviour. "Obdurate wretch, return to the demon who sent thee!"

He signed to four priests, who, approaching with sprinklers in their hands, exorcised with holy water the air the magician breathed, the earth he touched, the wood that was to burn him. During this ceremony, the judge-Advocate hastily read the decree, dated the 18th of August, 1639, declaring Urbain Grandier duly attainted and convicted of the crime of sorcery, witchcraft, and possession, in the persons of sundry Ursuline nuns of Loudun, and others, laymen, etc.

The reader, dazzled by a flash of lightning, stopped for an instant, and, turning to M. de Laubardemont, asked whether, considering the awful weather, the execution could not be deferred till the next day.

"The decree," coldly answered Laubardemont, "commands execution within twenty-four hours. Fear not the incredulous people; they will soon be convinced."

All the most important persons of the town and many strangers were under the peristyle, and now advanced, Cinq-Mars among them.

"The magician never has been able to pronounce the name of the Saviour, and repels his image."

Lactantius at this moment issued from the midst of the Penitents, with an enormous iron crucifix in his hand, which he seemed to hold with precaution and respect; he extended it to the lips of the sufferer, who indeed threw back his head, and collecting all his strength, made a gesture with his arm, which threw the cross from the hands of the Capuchin.

"You see," cried the latter, "he has thrown down the cross!"

A murmur arose, the meaning of which was doubtful.

"Profanation!" cried the priests.

The procession moved toward the pile.

Meanwhile, Cinq-Mars, gliding behind a pillar, had eagerly watched all that passed; he saw with astonishment that the cross, in falling upon the steps, which were more exposed to the rain than the platform, smoked and made a noise like molten lead when thrown into water. While the public attention was elsewhere engaged, he advanced and touched it lightly with his bare hand, which was immediately scorched. Seized with indignation, with all the fury of a true heart, he took up the cross with the folds of his cloak, stepped up to Laubardemont, and, striking him with it on the forehead, cried:

"Villain, I brand thee with the mark of this red-hot iron!"

The crowd heard these words and rushed forward.

"Arrest this madman!" cried the unworthy magistrate.

He was himself seized by the hands of men who cried, "Justice! justice, in the name of the King!"

"We are lost!" said Lactantius; "to the pile, to the pile!"

The Penitents dragged Urbain toward the Place, while the judges and archers reentered the church, struggling with the furious citizens; the executioner, having no time to tie up the victim, hastened to lay him on the wood, and to set fire to it. But the rain still fell in torrents, and each piece of wood had no sooner caught the flame than it became extinguished. In vain did Lactantius and the other canons themselves seek to stir up the fire; nothing could overcome the water which fell from heaven.

Meanwhile, the tumult which had begun in the peristyle of the church extended throughout the square. The cry of "Justice!" was repeated and circulated, with the information of what had been discovered; two barricades were forced, and despite three volleys of musketry, the archers were gradually driven back toward the centre of the square. In vain they spurred their horses against the crowd; it overwhelmed them with its swelling waves. Half an hour passed in this struggle, the guards still receding toward the pile, which they concealed as they pressed closer upon it.

"On! on!" cried a man; "we will deliver him; do not strike the soldiers, but let them fall back. See, Heaven will not permit him to die! The fire is out; now, friend, one effort more! That is well! Throw down that horse! Forward! On!"

The guard was broken and dispersed on all sides. The crowd rushed to the pile, but no more light was there: all had disappeared, even the executioner. They tore up and threw aside the beams; one of them was still burning, and its light showed under a mass of ashes and ensanguined mire a blackened hand, preserved from the fire by a large iron bracelet and chain. A woman had the courage to open it; the fingers clasped a small ivory cross and an image of St. Magdalen.

"These are his remains," she said, weeping.

"Say, the relics of a martyr!" exclaimed a citizen, baring his head.

CHAPTER VI

THE DREAM

Meanwhile, Cinq-Mars, amid the excitement which his outbreak had provoked, felt his left arm seized by a hand as hard as iron, which, drawing him from the crowd to the foot of the steps, pushed him behind the wall of the church, and he then saw the dark face of old Grandchamp, who said to him in a sharp voice:

"Sir, your attack upon thirty musketeers in a wood at Chaumont was nothing, because we were near you, though you knew it not, and, moreover, you had to do with men of honor; but here 'tis different. Your horses and people are at the end of the street; I request you to mount and leave the town, or to send me back to Madame la Marechale, for I am responsible for your limbs, which you expose so freely."

Cinq-Mars was somewhat astonished at this rough mode of having a service done him, was not sorry to extricate himself thus from the affair, having had time to reflect how very awkward it might be for him to be recognized, after striking the head of the judicial authority, the agent of the very Cardinal who was to present him to the King. He observed also that around him was assembled a crowd of the lowest class of people, among whom he blushed to find himself. He therefore followed his old

domestic without argument, and found the other three servants waiting for him. Despite the rain and wind he mounted, and was soon upon the highroad with his escort, having put his horse to a gallop to avoid pursuit.

He had, however, hardly left Loudun when the sandy road, furrowed by deep ruts completely filled with water, obliged him to slacken his pace. The rain continued to fall heavily, and his cloak was almost saturated. He felt a thicker one thrown over his shoulders; it was his old valet, who had approached him, and thus exhibited toward him a maternal solicitude.

"Well, Grandchamp," said Cinq-Mars, "now that we are clear of the riot, tell me how you came to be there when I had ordered you to remain at the Abbe's."

"Parbleu, Monsieur!" answered the old servant, in a grumbling tone, "do you suppose that I should obey you any more than I did Monsieur le Marechal? When my late master, after telling me to remain in his tent, found me behind him in the cannon's smoke, he made no complaint, because he had a fresh horse ready when his own was killed, and he only scolded me for a moment in his thoughts; but, truly, during the forty years I served him, I never saw him act as you have in the fortnight I have been with you. Ah!" he added with a sigh, "things are going strangely; and if we continue thus, there's no knowing what will be the end of it."

"But knowest thou, Grandchamp, that these scoundrels had made the crucifix red hot?--a thing at which no honest man would have been less enraged than I."

"Except Monsieur le Marechal, your father, who would not have done at all what you have done, Monsieur."

"What, then, would he have done?"

"He would very quietly have let this cure be burned by the other cures, and would have said to me, 'Grandchamp, see that my horses have oats, and let no one steal them'; or, 'Grandchamp, take care that the rain does not rust my sword or wet the priming of my pistols'; for Monsieur le Marechal thought of everything, and never interfered in what did not concern him. That was his great principle; and as he was, thank Heaven, alike good soldier and good general, he was always as careful of his arms as a recruit, and would not have stood up against thirty young gallants with a dress rapier."

Cinq-Mars felt the force of the worthy servitor's epigrammatic scolding, and feared that he had followed him beyond the wood of Chaumont; but he would not ask, lest he should have to give explanations or to tell a falsehood or to command silence, which would at once have been taking him into confidence on the subject. As the only alternative, he spurred his horse and rode ahead of his old domestic; but the latter had not yet had his say, and instead of keeping behind his master, he rode up to his left and continued the conversation.

"Do you suppose, Monsieur, that I should allow you to go where you please? No, Monsieur, I am too deeply impressed with the respect I owe to Madame la Marquise, to give her an opportunity of saying to me: 'Grandchamp, my son has been killed with a shot or with a sword; why were you not before him?' Or, 'He has received a stab from the stiletto of an Italian, because he went at night beneath the window of a great princess; why did you not seize the assassin?' This would be very disagreeable to me, Monsieur, for I never have been reproached with anything of the kind. Once Monsieur le Marechal lent me to his nephew, Monsieur le Comte, to make a campaign in the Netherlands, because I know Spanish. I fulfilled the duty with honor, as I always do. When Monsieur le Comte received a bullet in his heart, I myself brought back his horses, his mules, his tent, and all his equipment, without so much as a pocket-handkerchief being missed; and I can assure you that the horses were as well dressed and harnessed when we reentered Chaumont as if Monsieur le Comte had been about to go a-hunting. And, accordingly, I received nothing but

compliments and agreeable things from the whole family, just in the way I like."

"Well, well, my friend," said Henri d'Effiat, "I may some day, perhaps, have these horses to take back; but in the mean time take this great purse of gold, which I have well-nigh lost two or three times, and thou shalt pay for me everywhere. The money wearies me."

"Monsieur le Marechal did not so, Monsieur. He had been superintendent of finances, and he counted every farthing he paid out of his own hand. I do not think your estates would have been in such good condition, or that you would have had so much money to count yourself, had he done otherwise; have the goodness, therefore, to keep your purse, whose contents, I dare swear, you do not know."

"Faith, not I."

Grandchamp sent forth a profound sigh at his master's disdainful exclamation.

"Ah, Monsieur le Marquis! Monsieur le Marquis! When I think that the great King Henri, before my eyes, put his chamois gloves into his pocket to keep the rain from spoiling them; when I think that Monsieur de Rosni refused him money when he had spent too much; when I think--"

"When thou dost think, thou art egregiously tedious, my old friend," interrupted his master; "and thou wilt do better in telling me what that black figure is that I think I see walking in the mire behind us."

"It looks like some poor peasant woman who, perhaps, wants alms of us. She can easily follow us, for we do not go at much of a pace in this sand, wherein our horses sink up to the hams. We shall go to the Landes perhaps some day, Monsieur, and you will see a country all the same as this sandy road, and great, black firs all the way along. It looks like a churchyard; this is an exact specimen of it. Look, the rain has ceased, and we can see a little ahead; there is nothing but furze-bushes on this great plain, without a village or a house. I don't know where we can pass the night; but if you will take my advice, you will let us cut some boughs and bivouac where we are. You shall see how, with a little earth, I can make a hut as warm as a bed."

"I would rather go on to the light I see in the horizon," said Cinq-Mars; "for I fancy I feel rather feverish, and I am thirsty. But fall back, I would ride alone; rejoin the others and follow."

Grandchamp obeyed; he consoled himself by giving Germain, Louis, and Etienne lessons in the art of reconnoitring a country by night.

Meanwhile, his young master was overcome with fatigue. The violent emotions of the day had profoundly affected his mind; and the long journey on horseback, the last two days passed almost without nourishment, owing to the hurried pressure of events, the heat of the sun by day, the icy coldness of the night, all contributed to increase his indisposition and to weary his delicate frame. For three hours he rode in silence before his people, yet the light he had seen in the horizon seemed no nearer; at last he ceased to follow it with his eyes, and his head, feeling heavier and heavier, sank upon his breast. He gave the reins to his tired horse, which of its own accord followed the high-road, and, crossing his arms, allowed himself to be rocked by the monotonous motion of his fellow-traveller, which frequently stumbled against the large stones that strewed the road. The rain had ceased, as had the voices of his domestics, whose horses followed in the track of their master's. The young man abandoned himself to the bitterness of his thoughts; he asked himself whether the bright object of his hopes would not flee from him day by day, as that phosphoric light fled from him in the horizon, step by step. Was it probable that the young Princess, almost forcibly recalled to the gallant court of Anne of Austria, would always refuse the hands, perhaps royal ones, that would be offered to her? What chance that she would resign herself to renounce a present

throne, in order to wait till some caprice of fortune should realize romantic hopes, or take a youth almost in the lowest rank of the army and lift him to the elevation she spoke of, till the age of love should be passed? How could he be certain that even the vows of Marie de Gonzaga were sincere?

"Alas!" he said, "perhaps she has blinded herself as to her own sentiments; the solitude of the country had prepared her soul to receive deep impressions. I came; she thought I was he of whom she had dreamed. Our age and my love did the rest. But when at court, she, the companion of the Queen, has learned to contemplate from an exalted position the greatness to which I aspire, and which I as yet see only from a very humble distance; when she shall suddenly find herself in actual possession of the future she aims at, and measures with a more correct eye the long road I have to travel; when she shall hear around her vows like mine, pronounced by lips which could undo me with a word, with a word destroy him whom she awaits as her husband, her lord--oh, madman that I have been!--she will see all her folly, and will be incensed at mine."

Thus did doubt, the greatest misery of love, begin to torture his unhappy heart; he felt his hot blood rush to his head and oppress it. Ever and anon he fell forward upon the neck of his horse, and a half sleep weighed down his eyes; the dark firs that bordered the road seemed to him gigantic corpses travelling beside him. He saw, or thought he saw, the same woman clothed in black, whom he had pointed out to Grandchamp, approach so near as to touch his horse's mane, pull his cloak, and then run off with a jeering laugh; the sand of the road seemed to him a river running beneath him, with opposing current, back toward its source. This strange sight dazzled his worn eyes; he closed them and fell asleep on his horse.

Presently, he felt himself stopped, but he was numbed with cold and could not move. He saw peasants, lights, a house, a great room into which they carried him, a wide bed, whose heavy curtains were closed by Grandchamp; and he fell asleep again, stunned by the fever that whirled in his ears.

Dreams that followed one another more rapidly than grains of sand before the wind rushed through his brain; he could not catch them, and moved restlessly on his bed. Urbain Grandier on the rack, his mother in tears, his tutor armed, Bassompierre loaded with chains, passed before him, making signs of farewell; at last, as he slept, he instinctively put his hand to his head to stay the passing dream, which then seemed to unfold itself before his eyes like pictures in shifting sands.

He saw a public square crowded with a foreign people, a northern people, who uttered cries of joy, but they were savage cries; there was a line of guards, ferocious soldiers--these were Frenchmen. "Come with me," said the soft voice of Marie de Gonzaga, who took his hand. "See, I wear a diadem; here is thy throne, come with me." And she hurried him on, the people still shouting. He went on, a long way. "Why are you sad, if you are a queen?" he said, trembling. But she was pale, and smiled and spoke not. She ascended, step after step, up to a throne, and seated herself. "Mount!" said she, forcibly pulling his hand. But, at every movement, the massive stairs crumbled beneath his feet, so that he could not ascend. "Give thanks to love," she continued; and her hand, now more powerful, raised him to the throne. The people still shouted. He bowed low to kiss that helping hand, that adored hand; it was the hand of the executioner!

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Cinq-Mars, as, heaving a deep sigh, he opened his eyes. A flickering lamp lighted the ruinous chamber of the inn; he again closed his eyes, for he had seen, seated on his bed, a woman, a nun, young and beautiful! He thought he was still dreaming, but she grasped his hand firmly. He opened his burning eyes, and fixed them upon her.

"Is it you, Jeannede Belfiel? The rain has drenched your veil and your black hair! Why are you here, unhappy woman?"

"Hark! awake not my Urbain; he sleeps there in the next room. Ay, my hair is indeed wet, and my feet--see, my feet that were once so white, see how the mud has soiled them. But I have made a vow--I will not wash them till I have seen the King, and until he has granted me Urbain's pardon. I am going to the army to find him; I will speak to him as Grandier taught me to speak, and he will pardon him. And listen, I will also ask thy pardon, for I read it in thy face that thou, too, art condemned to death. Poor youth! thou art too young to die, thy curling hair is beautiful; but yet thou art condemned, for thou hast on thy brow a line that never deceives. The man thou hast struck will kill thee. Thou hast made too much use of the cross; it is that which will bring evil upon thee. Thou hast struck with it, and thou wearest it round thy neck by a hair chain. Nay, hide not thy face; have I said aught to afflict thee, or is it that thou lovest, young man? Ah, reassure thyself, I will not tell all this to thy love. I am mad, but I am gentle, very gentle; and three days ago I was beautiful. Is she also beautiful? Ah! she will weep some day! Yet, if she can weep, she will be happy!"

And then suddenly Jeanne began to recite the service for the dead in a monotonous voice, but with incredible rapidity, still seated on the bed, and turning the beads of a long rosary.

Suddenly the door opened; she looked up, and fled through another door in the partition.

"What the devil's that--an imp or an angel, saying the funeral service over you, and you under the clothes, as if you were in a shroud?"

This abrupt exclamation came from the rough voice of Grandchamp, who was so astonished at what he had seen that he dropped the glass of lemonade he was bringing in. Finding that his master did not answer, he became still more alarmed, and raised the bedclothes. Cinq-Mars's face was crimson, and he seemed asleep, but his old domestic saw that the blood rushing to his head had almost suffocated him; and, seizing a jug full of cold water, he dashed the whole of it in his face. This military remedy rarely fails to effect its purpose, and Cinq-Mars returned to himself with a start.

"Ah! it is thou, Grandchamp; what frightful dreams I have had!"

"Peste! Monsieur le Marquis, your dreams, on the contrary, are very pretty ones. I saw the tail of the last as I came in; your choice is not bad."

"What dost mean, blockhead?"

"Nay, not a blockhead, Monsieur; I have good eyes, and I have seen what I have seen. But, really ill as you are, Monsieur le Marechal would never--"

"Thou art utterly doting, my friend; give me some drink, I am parched with thirst. Oh, heavens! what a night! I still see all those women."

"All those women, Monsieur? Why, how many are here?"

"I am speaking to thee of a dream, blockhead. Why standest there like a post, instead of giving me some drink?"

"Enough, Monsieur; I will get more lemonade." And going to the door, he called over the staircase, "Germain! Etienne! Louis!"

The innkeeper answered from below: "Coming, Monsieur, coming; they have been helping me to catch the madwoman."

"What mad-woman?" said Cinq-Mars, rising in bed.

The host entered, and, taking off his cotton cap, said, respectfully:

"Oh, nothing, Monsieur le Marquis, only a madwoman that came here last night on foot, and whom we put in the next room; but she has escaped, and we have not been able to catch her."

"Ah!" exclaimed Cinq-Mars, returning to himself and putting his hand to his eyes, "it was not a dream, then. And my mother, where is she? and the Marechal, and--Ah! and yet it is but a fearful dream! Leave me."

As he said this, he turned toward the wall, and again pulled the clothes over his head.

The innkeeper, in amazement, touched his forehead three times with his finger, looking at Grandchamp as if to ask him whether his master were also mad.

Grandchamp motioned him away in silence, and in order to watch the rest of the night by the side of Cinq-Mars, who was in a deep sleep, he seated himself in a large armchair, covered with tapestry, and began to squeeze lemons into a glass of water with an air as grave and severe as Archimedes calculating the condensing power of his mirrors.

CHAPTER VII

THE CABINET

Men have rarely the courage to be wholly good or wholly bad.
MACHIAVELLI.

Let us leave our young traveller sleeping; he will soon pursue a long and beautiful route. Since we are at liberty to turn to all points of the map, we will fix our eyes upon the city of Narbonne.

Behold the Mediterranean, not far distant, washing with its blue waters the sandy shores. Penetrate into that city resembling Athens; and to find him who reigns there, follow that dark and irregular street, mount the steps of the old archiepiscopal palace, and enter the first and largest of its apartments.

This was a very long salon, lighted by a series of high lancet windows, of which the upper part only retained the blue, yellow, and red panes that shed a mysterious light through the apartment. A large round table occupied its entire breadth, near the great fireplace; around this table, covered with a colored cloth and scattered with papers and portfolios, were seated, bending over their pens, eight secretaries copying letters which were handed to them from a smaller table. Other men quietly arranged the completed papers in the shelves of a bookcase, partly filled with books bound in black.

Notwithstanding the number of persons assembled in the room, one might have heard the movements of the wings of a fly. The only interruption to the silence was the sound of pens rapidly gliding over paper, and a shrill voice dictating, stopping every now and then to cough. This voice proceeded from a great armchair placed beside the fire, which was blazing, notwithstanding the heat of the season and of the country. It was one of those armchairs that you still see in old castles, and which seem made to read one's self to sleep in, so easy is every part of it. The sitter sinks into a circular cushion of down; if the head leans back, the cheeks rest upon pillows covered with silk, and the seat juts out so far beyond the elbows that one may believe the provident upholsterers of our forefathers sought to provide that the book should make no noise in falling so as to awaken the sleeper.

But we will quit this digression, and speak of the man who occupied the chair, and who was very far from sleeping. He had a broad forehead, bordered with thin white hair, large, mild eyes, a wan face, to which a small, pointed, white beard gave that air of subtlety and finesse

noticeable in all the portraits of the period of Louis XIII. His mouth was almost without lips, which Lavater deems an indubitable sign of an evil mind, and it was framed in a pair of slight gray moustaches and a 'royale'--an ornament then in fashion, which somewhat resembled a comma in form. The old man wore a close red cap, a large 'robe-dechambre', and purple silk stockings; he was no less a personage than Armand Duplessis, Cardinal de Richelieu.

Near him, around the small table, sat four youths from fifteen to twenty years of age; these were pages, or domestics, according to the term then in use, which signified familiars, friends of the house. This custom was a relic of feudal patronage, which still existed in our manners. The younger members of high families received wages from the great lords, and were devoted to their service in all things, challenging the first comer at the wish of their patron. The pages wrote letters from the outline previously given them by the Cardinal, and after their master had glanced at them, passed them to the secretaries, who made fair copies. The Duke, for his part, wrote on his knee private notes upon small slips of paper, inserting them in almost all the packets before sealing them, which he did with his own hand.

He had been writing a short time, when, in a mirror before him, he saw the youngest of his pages writing something on a sheet of paper much smaller than the official sheet. He hastily wrote a few words, and then slipped the paper under the large sheet which, much against his inclination, he had to fill; but, seated behind the Cardinal, he hoped that the difficulty with which the latter turned would prevent him from seeing the little manoeuvre he had tried to exercise with much dexterity. Suddenly Richelieu said to him, dryly, "Come here, Monsieur Olivier."

These words came like a thunder-clap on the poor boy, who seemed about sixteen. He rose at once, however, and stood before the minister, his arms hanging at his side and his head lowered.

The other pages and the secretaries stirred no more than soldiers when a comrade is struck down by a ball, so accustomed were they to this kind of summons. The present one, however, was more energetic than usual.

"What were you writing?"

"My lord, what your Eminence dictated."

"What!"

"My lord, the letter to Don Juan de Braganza."

"No evasions, Monsieur; you were writing something else."

"My lord," said the page, with tears in his eyes, "it was a letter to one of my cousins."

"Let me see it."

The page trembled in every limb and was obliged to lean against the chimney-piece, as he said, in a hardly audible tone, "It is impossible."

"Monsieur le Vicomte Olivier d'Entraigues," said the minister, without showing the least emotion, "you are no longer in my service." The page withdrew. He knew that there was no reply; so, slipping his letter into his pocket, and opening the folding-doors just wide enough to allow his exit, he glided out like a bird escaped from the cage.

The minister went on writing the note upon his knee.

The secretaries redoubled their silent zeal, when suddenly the two wings of the door were thrown back and showed, standing in the opening, a Capuchin, who, bowing, with his arms crossed over his breast, seemed waiting for alms or for an order to retire. He had a dark complexion, and was deeply pitted with smallpox; his eyes, mild, but somewhat

squinting, were almost hidden by his thick eyebrows, which met in the middle of his forehead; on his mouth played a crafty, mischievous, and sinister smile; his beard was straight and red, and his costume was that of the order of St. Francis in all its repulsiveness, with sandals on his bare feet, that looked altogether unfit to tread upon carpet.

Such as he was, however, this personage appeared to create a great sensation throughout the room; for, without finishing the phrase, the line, or even the word begun, every person rose and went out by the door where he was still standing--some saluting him as they passed, others turning away their heads, and the young pages holding their fingers to their noses, but not till they were behind him, for they seemed to have a secret fear of him. When they had all passed out, he entered, making a profound reverence, because the door was still open; but, as soon as it was shut, unceremoniously advancing, he seated himself near the Cardinal, who, having recognized him by the general movement he created, saluted him with a dry and silent inclination of the head, regarding him fixedly, as if awaiting some news and unable to avoid knitting his brows, as at the aspect of a spider or some other disagreeable creature.

The Cardinal could not resist this movement of displeasure, because he felt himself obliged, by the presence of his agent, to resume those profound and painful conversations from which he had for some days been free, in a country whose pure air, favorable to him, had somewhat soothed the pain of his malady; that malady had changed to a slow fever, but its intervals were long enough to enable him to forget during its absence that it must return. Giving, therefore, a little rest to his hitherto indefatigable mind, he had been awaiting, for the first time in his life perhaps, without impatience, the return of the couriers he had sent in all directions, like the rays of a sun which alone gave life and movement to France. He had not expected the visit he now received, and the sight of one of those men, whom, to use his own expression, he "steeped in crime," rendered all the habitual disquietudes of his life more present to him, without entirely dissipating the cloud of melancholy which at that time obscured his thoughts.

The beginning of his conversation was tinged with the gloomy hue of his late reveries; but he soon became more animated and vigorous than ever, when his powerful mind had reentered the real world.

His confidant, seeing that he was expected to break the silence, did so in this abrupt fashion:

"Well, my lord, of what are you thinking?"

"Alas, Joseph, of what should we all think, but of our future happiness in a better life? For many days I have been reflecting that human interests have too much diverted me from this great thought; and I repent me of having spent some moments of my leisure in profane works, such as my tragedies, 'Europe' and 'Mirame,' despite the glory they have already gained me among our brightest minds--a glory which will extend unto futurity."

Father Joseph, full of what he had to say, was at first surprised at this opening; but he knew his master too well to betray his feelings, and, well skilled in changing the course of his ideas, replied:

"Yes, their merit is very great, and France will regret that these immortal works are not followed by similar productions."

"Yes, my dear Joseph; but it is in vain that such men as Boisrobert, Claveret, Colletet, Corneille, and, above all, the celebrated Mairet, have proclaimed these tragedies the finest that the present or any past age has produced. I reproach myself for them, I swear to you, as for a mortal sin, and I now, in my hours of repose, occupy myself only with my 'Methode des Controverses', and my book on the 'Perfection du Chretien.' I remember that I am fifty-six years old, and that I have an incurable malady."

"These are calculations which your enemies make as precisely as your Eminence," said the priest, who began to be annoyed with this conversation, and was eager to talk of other matters.

The blood mounted to the Cardinal's face.

"I know it! I know it well!" he said; "I know all their black villainy, and I am prepared for it. But what news is there?"

"According to our arrangement, my lord, we have removed Mademoiselle d'Hautefort, as we removed Mademoiselle de la Fayette before her. So far it is well; but her place is not filled, and the King--"

"Well!"

"The King has ideas which he never had before."

"Ha! and which come not from me? 'Tis well, truly," said the minister, with an ironic sneer.

"What, my lord, leave the place of the favorite vacant for six whole days? It is not prudent; pardon me for saying so."

"He has ideas--ideas!" repeated Richelieu, with a kind of terror; "and what are they?"

"He talks of recalling the Queen-mother," said the Capuchin, in a low voice; "of recalling her from Cologne."

"Marie de Medicis!" cried the Cardinal, striking the arms of his chair with his hands. "No, by Heaven, she shall not again set her foot upon the soil of France, whence I drove her, step by step! England has not dared to receive her, exiled by me; Holland fears to be crushed by her; and my kingdom to receive her! No, no, such an idea could not have originated with himself! To recall my enemy! to recall his mother! What perfidy! He would not have dared to think of it."

Then, having mused for a moment, he added, fixing a penetrating look still full of burning anger upon Father Joseph:

"But in what terms did he express this desire? Tell me his precise words."

"He said publicly; and in the presence of Monsieur: 'I feel that one of the first duties of a Christian is to be a good son, and I will resist no longer the murmurs of my conscience.'"

"Christian! conscience! these are not his expressions. It is Father Caussin--it is his confessor who is betraying me," cried the Cardinal. "Perfidious Jesuit! I pardoned thee thy intrigue with La Fayette; but I will not pass over thy secret counsels. I will have this confessor dismissed, Joseph; he is an enemy to the State, I see it clearly. But I myself have acted with negligence for some days past; I have not sufficiently hastened the arrival of the young d'Effiat, who will doubtless succeed. He is handsome and intellectual, they say. What a blunder! I myself merit disgrace. To leave that fox of a Jesuit with the King, without having given him my secret instructions, without a hostage, a pledge, or his fidelity to my orders! What neglect! Joseph, take a pen, and write what I shall dictate for the other confessor, whom we will choose better. I think of Father Sirmond."

Father Joseph sat down at the large table, ready to write, and the Cardinal dictated to him those duties, of a new kind, which shortly afterward he dared to have given to the King, who received them, respected them, and learned them by heart as the commandments of the Church. They have come down to us, a terrible monument of the empire that a man may seize upon by means of circumstances, intrigues, and audacity:

"I. A prince should have a prime minister, and that minister three qualities: (1) He should have no passion but for his prince; (2) He should be able and faithful; (3) He should be an ecclesiastic.

"II. A prince ought perfectly to love his prime minister.

"III. Ought never to change his prime minister.

"IV. Ought to tell him all things.

"V. To give him free access to his person.

"VI. To give him sovereign authority over his people.

"VII. Great honors and large possessions.

"VIII. A prince has no treasure more precious than his prime minister.

"IX. A prince should not put faith in what people say against his prime minister, nor listen to any such slanders.

"X. A prince should reveal to his prime minister all that is said against him, even though he has been bound to keep it secret.

"XI. A prince should prefer not only the well-being of the State, but also his prime minister, to all his relations."

Such were the commandments of the god of France, less astonishing in themselves than the terrible naivete which made him bequeath them to posterity, as if posterity also must believe in him.

While he dictated his instructions, reading them from a small piece of paper, written with his own hand, a deep melancholy seemed to possess him more and more at each word; and when he had ended, he fell back in his chair, his arms crossed, and his head sunk on his breast.

Father Joseph, dropping his pen, arose and was inquiring whether he were ill, when he heard issue from the depths of his chest these mournful and memorable words:

"What utter weariness! what endless trouble! If the ambitious man could see me, he would flee to a desert. What is my power? A miserable reflection of the royal power; and what labors to fix upon my star that incessantly wavering ray! For twenty years I have been in vain attempting it. I can not comprehend that man. He dare not flee me; but they take him from me--he glides through my fingers. What things could I not have done with his hereditary rights, had I possessed them? But, employing such infinite calculation in merely keeping one's balance, what of genius remains for high enterprises? I hold Europe in my hand, yet I myself am suspended by a trembling hair. What is it to me that I can cast my eyes confidently over the map of Europe, when all my interests are concentrated in his narrow cabinet, and its few feet of space give me more trouble to govern than the whole country besides? See, then, what it is to be a prime minister! Envy me, my guards, if you can."

His features were so distorted as to give reason to fear some accident; and at the same moment he was seized with a long and violent fit of coughing, which ended in a slight hemorrhage. He saw that Father Joseph, alarmed, was about to seize a gold bell that stood on the table, and, suddenly rising with all the vivacity of a young man, he stopped him, saying:

"'Tis nothing, Joseph; I sometimes yield to these fits of depression; but they do not last long, and I leave them stronger than before. As for my health, I know my condition perfectly; but that is not the business in hand. What have you done at Paris? I am glad to know the King has

arrived in Bearn, as I wished; we shall be able to keep a closer watch upon him. How did you induce him to come away?"

"A battle at Perpignan."

"That is not bad. Well, we can arrange it for him; that occupation will do as well as another just now. But the young Queen, what says she?"

"She is still furious against you; her correspondence discovered, the questioning to which you had subjected her--"

"Bah! a madrigal and a momentary submission on my part will make her forget that I have separated her from her house of Austria and from the country of her Buckingham. But how does she occupy herself?"

"In machinations with Monsieur. But as we have his entire confidence, here are the daily accounts of their interviews."

"I shall not trouble myself to read them; while the Duc de Bouillon remains in Italy I have nothing to fear in that quarter. She may have as many petty plots with Gaston in the chimney-corner as she pleases; he never got beyond his excellent intentions, forsooth! He carries nothing into effect but his withdrawal from the kingdom. He has had his third dismissal; I will manage a fourth for him whenever he pleases; he is not worth the pistol-shot you had the Comte de Soissons settled with, and yet the poor Comte had scarce more energy than he."

And the Cardinal, reseating himself in his chair, began to laugh gayly enough for a statesman.

"I always laugh when I think of their expedition to Amiens. They had me between them, Each had fully five hundred gentlemen with him, armed to the teeth, and all going to despatch me, like Concini; but the great Vitry was not there. They very quietly let me talk for an hour with them about the hunt and the Fete Dieu, and neither of them dared make a sign to their cut-throats. I have since learned from Chavigny that for two long months they had been waiting that happy moment. For myself, indeed, I observed nothing, except that little villain, the Abbe de Gondi,-- [Afterward Cardinal de Retz.]--who prowled near me, and seemed to have something hidden under his sleeve; it was he that made me get into the coach."

"Apropos of the Abbe, my lord, the Queen insists upon making him coadjutor."

"She is mad! he will ruin her if she connects herself with him; he's a musketeer in canonicals, the devil in a cassock. Read his 'Histoire de Fiesque'; you may see himself in it. He will be nothing while I live."

"How is it that with a judgment like yours you bring another ambitious man of his age to court?"

"That is an entirely different matter. This young Cinq-Mars, my friend, will be a mere puppet. He will think of nothing but his ruff and his shoulder-knots; his handsome figure assures me of this. I know that he is gentle and weak; it was for this reason I preferred him to his elder brother. He will do whatever we wish."

"Ah, my lord," said the monk, with an expression of doubt, "I never place much reliance on people whose exterior is so calm; the hidden flame is often all the more dangerous. Recollect the Marechal d'Effiat, his father."

"But I tell you he is a boy, and I shall bring him up; while Gondi is already an accomplished conspirator, an ambitious knave who sticks at nothing. He has dared to dispute Madame de la Meilleraie with me. Can you conceive it? He dispute with me! A petty priestling, who has no other merit than a little lively small-talk and a cavalier air. Fortunately, the husband himself took care to get rid of him."

Father Joseph, who listened with equal impatience to his master when he spoke of his 'bonnes fortunes' or of his verses, made, however, a grimace which he meant to be very sly and insinuating, but which was simply ugly and awkward; he fancied that the expression of his mouth, twisted about like a monkey's, conveyed, "Ah! who can resist your Eminence?" But his Eminence only read there, "I am a clown who knows nothing of the great world"; and, without changing his voice, he suddenly said, taking up a despatch from the table:

"The Duc de Rohan is dead, that is good news; the Huguenots are ruined. He is a lucky man. I had him condemned by the Parliament of Toulouse to be torn in pieces by four horses, and here he dies quietly on the battlefield of Rheinfeld. But what matters? The result is the same. Another great head is laid low! How they have fallen since that of Montmorency! I now see hardly any that do not bow before me. We have already punished almost all our dupes of Versailles; assuredly they have nothing with which to reproach me. I simply exercise against them the law of retaliation, treating them as they would have treated me in the council of the Queen-mother. The old dotard Bassompierre shall be doomed for perpetual imprisonment, and so shall the assassin Marechal de Vitry, for that was the punishment they voted me. As for Marillac, who counselled death, I reserve death for him at the first false step he makes, and I beg thee, Joseph, to remind me of him; we must be just to all. The Duc de Bouillon still keeps up his head proudly on account of his Sedan, but I shall make him yield. Their blindness is truly marvellous! They think themselves all free to conspire, not perceiving that they are merely fluttering at the ends of the threads that I hold in my hand, and which I lengthen now and then to give them air and space. Did the Huguenots cry out as one man at the death of their dear duke?"

"Less so than at the affair of Loudun, which is happily concluded."

"What! Happily? I hope that Grandier is dead?"

"Yes; that is what I meant. Your Eminence may be fully satisfied. All was settled in twenty-four hours. He is no longer thought of. Only Laubardemont committed a slight blunder in making the trial public. This caused a little tumult; but we have a description of the rioters, and measures have been taken to seek them out."

"This is well, very well. Urbain was too superior a man to be left there; he was turning Protestant. I would wager that he would have ended by abjuring. His work against the celibacy of priests made me conjecture this; and in cases of doubt, remember, Joseph, it is always best to cut the tree before the fruit is gathered. These Huguenots, you see, form a regular republic in the State. If once they had a majority in France, the monarchy would be lost, and they would establish some popular government which might be durable."

"And what deep pain do they daily cause our holy Father the Pope!" said Joseph.

"Ah," interrupted the Cardinal, "I see; thou wouldst remind me of his obstinacy in not giving thee the hat. Be tranquil; I will speak to-day on the subject to the new ambassador we are sending, the Marechal d'Estrees, and he will, on his arrival, doubtless obtain that which has been in train these two years--thy nomination to the cardinalate. I myself begin to think that the purple would become thee well, for it does not show blood-stains."

And both burst into laughter--the one as a master, overwhelming the assassin whom he pays with his utter scorn; the other as a slave, resigned to all the humiliation by which he rises.

The laughter which the ferocious pleasantry of the old minister had excited had hardly subsided, when the door opened, and a page announced several couriers who had arrived simultaneously from different points. Father Joseph arose, and, leaning against the wall like an Egyptian

mummy, allowed nothing to appear upon his face but an expression of stolid contemplation. Twelve messengers entered successively, attired in various disguises; one appeared to be a Swiss soldier, another a sutler, a third a master-mason. They had been introduced into the palace by a secret stairway and corridor, and left the cabinet by a door opposite that at which they had entered, without any opportunity of meeting one another or communicating the contents of their despatches. Each laid a rolled or folded packet of papers on the large table, spoke for a moment with the Cardinal in the embrasure of a window and withdrew. Richelieu had risen on the entrance of the first messenger, and, careful to do all himself, had received them all, listened to all, and with his own hand had closed the door upon all. When the last was gone, he signed to Father Joseph, and, without speaking, both proceeded to unfold, or, rather, to tear open, the packets of despatches, and in a few words communicated to each other the substance of the letters.

"The Due de Weimar pursues his advantage; the Duc Charles is defeated. Our General is in good spirits; here are some of his lively remarks at table. Good!"

"Monseigneur le Vicomte de Turenne has retaken the towns of Lorraine; and here are his private conversations--"

"Oh! pass over them; they can not be dangerous. He is ever a good and honest man, in no way mixing himself up with politics; so that some one gives him a little army to play at chess with, no matter against whom, he is content. We shall always be good friends."

"The Long Parliament still endures in England. The Commons pursue their project; there are massacres in Ireland. The Earl of Strafford is condemned to death."

"To death! Horrible!"

"I will read: 'His Majesty Charles I has not had the courage to sign the sentence, but he has appointed four commissioners.'"

"Weak king, I abandon thee! Thou shalt have no more of our money. Fall, since thou art ungrateful! Unhappy Wentworth!"

A tear rose in the eyes of Richelieu as he said this; the man who had but now played with the lives of so many others wept for a minister abandoned by his prince. The similarity between that position and his own affected him, and it was his own case he deplored in the person of the foreign minister. He ceased to read aloud the despatches that he opened, and his confidant followed his example. He examined with scrupulous attention the detailed accounts of the most minute and secret actions of each person of any importance-accounts which he always required to be added to the official despatches made by his able spies. All the despatches to the King passed through his hands, and were carefully revised so as to reach the King amended to the state in which he wished him to read them. The private notes were all carefully burned by the monk after the Cardinal had ascertained their contents. The latter, however, seemed by no means satisfied, and he was walking quickly to and fro with gestures expressive of anxiety, when the door opened, and a thirteenth courier entered. This one seemed a boy hardly fourteen years old; he held under his arm a packet sealed with black for the King, and gave to the Cardinal only a small letter, of which a stolen glance from Joseph could collect but four words. The Cardinal started, tore the billet into a thousand pieces, and, bending down to the ear of the boy, spoke to him for a long time; all that Joseph heard was, as the messenger went out:

"Take good heed to this; not until twelve hours from this time."

During this aside of the Cardinal, Joseph was occupied in concealing an infinite number of libels from Flanders and Germany, which the minister always insisted upon seeing, however bitter they might be to him. In this respect, he affected a philosophy which he was far from possessing, and to deceive those around him he would sometimes pretend that his

enemies were not wholly wrong, and would outwardly laugh at their pleasantries; but those who knew his character better detected bitter rage lurking under this apparent moderation, and knew that he was never satisfied until he had got the hostile book condemned by the parliament to be burned in the Place de Greve, as "injurious to the King, in the person of his minister, the most illustrious Cardinal," as we read in the decrees of the time, and that his only regret was that the author was not in the place of his book--a satisfaction he gave himself whenever he could, as in the case of Urbain Grandier.

It was his colossal pride which he thus avenged, without avowing it even to himself--nay, laboring for a length of time, sometimes for a whole twelvemonth together, to persuade himself that the interest of the State was concerned in the matter. Ingenious in connecting his private affairs with the affairs of France, he had convinced himself that she bled from the wounds which he received. Joseph, careful not to irritate his ill-temper at this moment, put aside and concealed a book entitled 'Mystres Politiques du Cardinal de la Rochelle'; also another, attributed to a monk of Munich, entitled 'Questions quolibetiques, ajustees au temps present, et Impiete Sanglante du dieu Mars'. The worthy advocate Aubery, who has given us one of the most faithful histories of the most eminent Cardinal, is transported with rage at the mere title of the first of these books, and exclaims that "the great minister had good reason to glorify himself that his enemies, inspired against their will with the same enthusiasm which conferred the gift of rendering oracles upon the ass of Balaam, upon Caiaphas and others, who seemed most unworthy of the gift of prophecy, called him with good reason Cardinal de la Rochelle, since three years after their writing he reduced that town; thus Scipio was called Africanus for having subjugated that PROVINCE!" Very little was wanting to make Father Joseph, who had necessarily the same feelings, express his indignation in the same terms; for he remembered with bitterness the ridiculous part he had played in the siege of Rochelle, which, though not a province like Africa, had ventured to resist the most eminent Cardinal, and into which Father Joseph, piquing himself on his military skill, had proposed to introduce the troops through a sewer. However, he restrained himself, and had time to conceal the libel in the pocket of his brown robe ere the minister had dismissed his young courier and returned to the table.

"And now to depart, Joseph," he said. "Open the doors to all that court which besieges me, and let us go to the King, who awaits me at Perpignan; this time I have him for good."

The Capuchin drew back, and immediately the pages, throwing open the gilded doors, announced in succession the greatest lords of the period, who had obtained permission from the King to come and salute the minister. Some, even, under the pretext of illness or business, had departed secretly, in order not to be among the last at Richelieu's reception; and the unhappy monarch found himself almost as alone as other kings find themselves on their deathbeds. But with him, the throne seemed, in the eyes of the court, his dying couch, his reign a continual last agony, and his minister a threatening successor.

Two pages, of the first families of France, stood at the door, where the ushers announced each of the persons whom Father Joseph had found in the ante room. The Cardinal, still seated in his great arm chair, remained motionless as the common couriers entered, inclined his head to the more distinguished, and to princes alone put his hands on the elbows of his chair and slightly rose; each person, having profoundly saluted him, stood before him near the fireplace, waited till he had spoken to him, and then, at a wave of his hand, completed the circuit of the room, and went out by the same door at which he had entered, paused for a moment to salute Father Joseph, who aped his master, and who for that reason had been named "his Gray Eminence," and at last quitted the palace, unless, indeed, he remained standing behind the chair, if the minister had signified that he should, which was considered a token of very great favor.

He allowed to pass several insignificant persons, and many whose merits

were useless to him; the first whom he stopped in the procession was the Marechal d'Estrees, who, about to set out on an embassy to Rome, came to make his adieux; those behind him stopped short. This circumstance warned the courtiers in the anteroom that a longer conversation than usual was on foot, and Father Joseph, advancing to the threshold, exchanged with the Cardinal a glance which seemed to say, on the one side, "Remember the promise you have just made me," on the other, "Set your mind at rest." At the same time, the expert Capuchin let his master see that he held upon his arm one of his victims, whom he was forming into a docile instrument; this was a young gentleman who wore a very short green cloak, a pourpoint of the same color, close-fitting red breeches, with glittering gold garters below the knee—the costume of the pages of Monsieur. Father Joseph, indeed, spoke to him secretly, but not in the way the Cardinal imagined; for he contemplated being his equal, and was preparing other connections, in case of defection on the part of the prime minister.

"Tell Monsieur not to trust in appearances, and that he has no servant more faithful than I. The Cardinal is on the decline, and my conscience tells me to warn against his faults him who may inherit the royal power during the minority. To give your great Prince a proof of my faith, tell him that it is intended to arrest his friend, Puy-Laurens, and that he had better be kept out of the way, or the Cardinal will put him in the Bastille."

While the servant was thus betraying his master, the master, not to be behindhand with him, betrayed his servant. His self-love, and some remnant of respect to the Church, made him shudder at the idea of seeing a contemptible agent invested with the same hat which he himself wore as a crown, and seated as high as himself, except as to the precarious position of minister. Speaking, therefore, in an undertone to the Marechal d'Estrees, he said:

"It is not necessary to importune Urbain VIII any further in favor of the Capuchin you see yonder; it is enough that his Majesty has deigned to name him for the cardinalate. One can readily conceive the repugnance of his Holiness to clothe this mendicant in the Roman purple."

Then, passing on to general matters, he continued:

"Truly, I know not what can have cooled the Holy Father toward us; what have we done that was not for the glory of our Holy Mother, the Catholic Church?"

"I myself said the first mass at Rochelle, and you see for yourself, Monsieur le Marechal, that our habit is everywhere; and even in your armies, the Cardinal de la Vallette has commanded gloriously in the palatinate."

"And has just made a very fine retreat," said the Marechal, laying a slight emphasis upon the word.

The minister continued, without noticing this little outburst of professional jealousy, and raising his voice, said:

"God has shown that He did not scorn to send the spirit of victory upon his Levites, for the Duc de Weimar did not more powerfully aid in the conquest of Lorraine than did this pious Cardinal, and never was a naval army better commanded than by our Archbishop of Bordeaux at Rochelle."

It was well known that at this very time the minister was incensed against this prelate, whose haughtiness was so overbearing, and whose impertinent ebullitions were so frequent as to have involved him in two very disagreeable affairs at Bordeaux. Four years before, the Duc d'Epemnon, then governor of Guyenne, followed by all his train and by his troops, meeting him among his clergy in a procession, had called him an insolent fellow, and given him two smart blows with his cane; whereupon the Archbishop had excommunicated him. And again, recently, despite this lesson, he had quarrelled with the Marechal de Vitry, from whom he had

received "twenty blows with a cane or stick, which you please," wrote the Cardinal Duke to the Cardinal de la Vallette, "and I think he would like to excommunicate all France." In fact, he did excommunicate the Marechal's baton, remembering that in the former case the Pope had obliged the Duc d'Epernon to ask his pardon; but M. Vitry, who had caused the Marechal d'Ancre to be assassinated, stood too high at court for that, and the Archbishop, in addition to his beating, got well scolded by the minister.

M. d'Estrees thought, therefore, sagely that there might be some irony in the Cardinal's manner of referring to the warlike talents of the Archbishop, and he answered, with perfect sang-froid:

"It is true, my lord, no one can say that it was upon the sea he was beaten."

His Eminence could not restrain a smile at this; but seeing that the electrical effect of that smile had created others in the hall, as well as whisperings and conjectures, he immediately resumed his gravity, and familiarly taking the Marechal's arm, said:

"Come, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, you are ready at repartee. With you I should not fear Cardinal Albornos, or all the Borgias in the world--no, nor all the efforts of their Spain with the Holy Father."

Then, raising his voice, and looking around, as if addressing himself to the silent, and, so to speak, captive assembly, he continued:

"I hope that we shall no more be reproached, as formerly, for having formed an alliance with one of the greatest men of our day; but as Gustavus Adolphus is dead, the Catholic King will no longer have any pretext for soliciting the excommunication of the most Christian King. How say you, my dear lord?" addressing himself to the Cardinal de la Vallette, who now approached, fortunately without having heard the late allusion to himself. "Monsieur d'Estrees, remain near our chair; we have still many things to say to you, and you are not one too many in our conversations, for we have no secrets. Our policy is frank and open to all men; the interest of his Majesty and of the State--nothing more."

The Marechal made a profound bow, fell back behind the chair of the minister, and gave place to the Cardinal de la Vallette, who, incessantly bowing and flattering and swearing devotion and entire obedience to the Cardinal, as if to expiate the obduracy of his father, the Duc d'Epernon, received in return a few vague words, to no meaning or purpose, the Cardinal all the while looking toward the door, to see who should follow. He had even the mortification to find himself abruptly interrupted by the minister, who cried at the most flattering period of his honeyed discourse:

"Ah! is that you at last, my dear Fabert? How I have longed to see you, to talk of the siege!"

The General, with a brusque and awkward manner, saluted the Cardinal-Generalissimo, and presented to him the officers who had come from the camp with him. He talked some time of the operations of the siege, and the Cardinal seemed to be paying him court now, in order to prepare him afterward for receiving his orders even on the field of battle; he spoke to the officers who accompanied him, calling them by their names, and questioning them about the camp.

They all stood aside to make way for the Duc d'Angouleme--that Valois, who, having struggled against Henri IV, now prostrated himself before Richelieu. He solicited a command, having been only third in rank at the siege of Rochelle. After him came young Mazarin, ever supple and insinuating, but already confident in his fortune.

The Duc d'Halluin came after them; the Cardinal broke off the compliments he was addressing to the others, to utter, in a loud voice:

"Monsieur le Duc, I inform you with pleasure that the King has made you a marshal of France; you will sign yourself Schomberg, will you not, at Leucate, delivered, as we hope, by you? But pardon me, here is Monsieur de Montauron, who has doubtless something important to communicate."

"Oh, no, my lord, I would only say that the poor young man whom you deigned to consider in your service is dying of hunger."

"Pshaw! at such a moment to speak of things like this! Your little Corneille will not write anything good; we have only seen 'Le Cid' and 'Les Horaces' as yet. Let him work, let him work! it is known that he is in my service, and that is disagreeable. However, since you interest yourself in the matter, I give him a pension of five hundred crowns on my privy purse."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer retired, charmed with the liberality of the minister, and went home to receive with great affability the dedication of Cinna, wherein the great Corneille compares his soul to that of Augustus, and thanks him for having given alms 'a quelques Muses'.

The Cardinal, annoyed by this importunity, rose, observing that the day was advancing, and that it was time to set out to visit the King.

At this moment, and as the greatest noblemen present were offering their arms to aid him in walking, a man in the robe of a referendary advanced toward him, saluting him with a complacent and confident smile which astonished all the people there, accustomed to the great world, seeming to say: "We have secret affairs together; you shall see how agreeable he makes himself to me. I am at home in his cabinet." His heavy and awkward manner, however, betrayed a very inferior being; it was Laubardemont.

Richelieu knit his brows when he saw him, and cast a glance at Joseph; then, turning toward those who surrounded him, he said, with bitter scorn:

"Is there some criminal about us to be apprehended?"

Then, turning his back upon the discomfited Laubardemont, the Cardinal left him redder than his robe, and, preceded by the crowd of personages who were to escort him in carriages or on horseback, he descended the great staircase of the palace.

All the people and the authorities of Narbonne viewed this royal departure with amazement.

The Cardinal entered alone a spacious square litter, in which he was to travel to Perpignan, his infirmities not permitting him to go in a coach, or to perform the journey on horseback. This kind of moving chamber contained a bed, a table, and a small chair for the page who wrote or read for him. This machine, covered with purple damask, was carried by eighteen men, who were relieved at intervals of a league; they were selected among his guards, and always performed this service of honor with uncovered heads, however hot or wet the weather might be. The Duc d'Angouleme, the Marechals de Schomberg and d'Estrees, Fabert, and other dignitaries were on horseback beside the litter; after them, among the most prominent were the Cardinal de la Vallette and Mazarin, with Chavigny, and the Marechal de Vitry, anxious to avoid the Bastille, with which it was said he was threatened.

Two coaches followed for the Cardinal's secretaries, physicians, and confessor; then eight others, each with four horses, for his gentlemen, and twenty-four mules for his luggage. Two hundred musketeers on foot marched close behind him, and his company of men-at-arms of the guard and his light-horse, all gentlemen, rode before and behind him on splendid horses.

Such was the equipage in which the prime minister proceeded to Perpignan;

the size of the litter often made it necessary to enlarge the roads, and knock down the walls of some of the towns and villages on the way, into which it could not otherwise enter, "so that," say the authors and manuscripts of the time, full of a sincere admiration for all this luxury--"so that he seemed a conqueror entering by the breach. "We have sought in vain with great care in these documents, for any account of proprietors or inhabitants of these dwellings so making room for his passage who shared in this admiration; but we have been unable to find any mention of such.

CHAPTER VIII

THE INTERVIEW

The pompous cortege of the Cardinal halted at the beginning of the camp. All the armed troops were drawn up in the finest order; and amid the sound of cannon and the music of each regiment the litter traversed a long line of cavalry and infantry, formed from the outermost tent to that of the minister, pitched at some distance from the royal quarters, and which its purple covering distinguished at a distance. Each general of division obtained a nod or a word from the Cardinal, who at length reaching his tent and, dismissing his train, shut himself in, waiting for the time to present himself to the King. But, before him, every person of his escort had repaired thither individually, and, without entering the royal abode, had remained in the long galleries covered with striped stuff, and arranged as became avenues leading to the Prince. The courtiers walking in groups, saluted one another and shook hands, regarding each other haughtily, according to their connections or the lords to whom they belonged. Others whispered together, and showed signs of astonishment, pleasure, or anger, which showed that something extraordinary had taken place. Among a thousand others, one singular dialogue occurred in a corner of the principal gallery.

"May I ask, Monsieur l'Abbe, why you look at me so fixedly?"

"Parbleu! Monsieur de Launay, it is because I'm curious to see what you will do. All the world abandons your Cardinal-Duke since your journey into Touraine; if you do not believe it, go and ask the people of Monsieur or of the Queen. You are behind-hand ten minutes by the watch with the Cardinal de la Vallette, who has just shaken hands with Rochefort and the gentlemen of the late Comte de Soissons, whom I shall regret as long as I live."

"Monsieur de Gondi, I understand you; is it a challenge with which you honor me?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Comte," answered the young Abbe, saluting him with all the gravity of the time; "I sought an occasion to challenge you in the name of Monsieur d'Attichi, my friend, with whom you had something to do at Paris."

"Monsieur l'Abbe, I am at your command. I will seek my seconds; do you the same."

"On horseback, with sword and pistol, I suppose?" added Gondi, with the air of a man arranging a party of pleasure, lightly brushing the sleeve of his cassock.

"If you please," replied the other. And they separated for a time, saluting one another with the greatest politeness, and with profound bows.

A brilliant crowd of gentlemen circulated around them in the gallery. They mingled with it to procure friends for the occasion. All the elegance of the costumes of the day was displayed by the court that morning--small cloaks of every color, in velvet or in satin, embroidered

with gold or silver; crosses of St. Michael and of the Holy Ghost; the ruffs, the sweeping hat-plumes, the gold shoulder-knots, the chains by which the long swords hung: all glittered and sparkled, yet not so brilliantly as did the fiery glances of those warlike youths, or their sprightly conversation, or their intellectual laughter. Amid the assembly grave personages and great lords passed on, followed by their numerous gentlemen.

The little Abbe de Gondi, who was very shortsighted, made his way through the crowd, knitting his brows and half shutting his eyes, that he might see the better, and twisting his moustache, for ecclesiastics wore them in those days. He looked closely at every one in order to recognize his friends, and at last stopped before a young man, very tall and dressed in black from head to foot; his sword, even, was of quite dark, bronzed steel. He was talking with a captain of the guards, when the Abbe de Gondi took him aside.

"Monsieur de Thou," said he, "I need you as my second in an hour, on horseback, with sword and pistol, if you will do me that honor."

"Monsieur, you know I am entirely at your service on all occasions. Where shall we meet?"

"In front of the Spanish bastion, if you please."

"Pardon me for returning to a conversation that greatly interests me. I will be punctual at the rendezvous."

And De Thou quitted him to rejoin the Captain. He had said all this in the gentlest of voices with unalterable coolness, and even with somewhat of an abstracted manner.

The little Abbe squeezed his hand with warm satisfaction, and continued his search.

He did not so easily effect an agreement with the young lords to whom he addressed himself; for they knew him better than did De Thou, and when they saw him coming they tried to avoid him, or laughed at him openly, and would not promise to serve him.

"Ah, Abbe! there you are hunting again; I'll swear it's a second you want," said the Duc de Beaufort.

"And I wager," added M. de la Rochefoucauld, "that it's against one of the Cardinal-Duke's people."

"You are both right, gentlemen; but since when have you laughed at affairs of honor?"

"The saints forbid I should," said M. de Beaufort. "Men of the sword like us ever reverence tierce, quarte, and octave; but as for the folds of the cassock, I know nothing of them."

"Pardieu! Monsieur, you know well enough that it does not embarrass my wrist, as I will prove to him who chooses; as to the gown itself, I should like to throw it into the gutter."

"Is it to tear it that you fight so often?" asked La Rochefoucauld. "But remember, my dear Abbe, that you yourself are within it."

Gondi turned to look at the clock, wishing to lose no more time in such sorry jests; but he had no better success elsewhere. Having stopped two gentlemen in the service of the young Queen, whom he thought ill-affected toward the Cardinal, and consequently glad to measure weapons with his creatures, one of them said to him very gravely:

"Monsieur de Gondi, you know what has just happened; the King has said aloud, 'Whether our imperious Cardinal wishes it or not, the widow of Henri le Grand shall no longer remain in exile.' Imperious! the King

never before said anything so strong as that, Monsieur l'Abbe, mark that. Imperious! it is open disgrace. Certainly no one will dare to speak to him; no doubt he will quit the court this very day."

"I have heard this, Monsieur, but I have an affair--"

"It is lucky for you he stopped short in the middle of your career."

"An affair of honor--"

"Whereas Mazarin is quite a friend of yours."

"But will you, or will you not, listen to me?"

"Yes, a friend indeed! your adventures are always uppermost in his thoughts. Your fine duel with Monsieur de Coutenan about the pretty little pin-maker,--he even spoke of it to the King. Adieu, my dear Abbe, we are in great haste; adieu, adieu!" And, taking his friend's arm, the young mocker, without listening to another word, walked rapidly down the gallery and disappeared in the throng.

The poor Abbe was much mortified at being able to get only one second, and was watching sadly the passing of the hour and of the crowd, when he perceived a young gentleman whom he did not know, seated at a table, leaning on his elbow with a pensive air; he wore mourning which indicated no connection with any great house or party, and appeared to await, without any impatience, the time for attending the King, looking with a heedless air at those who surrounded him, and seeming not to notice or to know any of them.

Gondi looked at him a moment, and accosted him without hesitation:

"Monsieur, I have not the honor of your acquaintance, but a fencing-party can never be unpleasant to a man of honor; and if you will be my second, in a quarter of an hour we shall be on the ground. I am Paul de Gondi; and I have challenged Monsieur de Launay, one of the Cardinal's clique, but in other respects a very gallant fellow."

The unknown, apparently not at all surprised at this address, replied, without changing his attitude: "And who are his seconds?"

"Faith, I don't know; but what matters it who serves him? We stand no worse with our friends for having exchanged a thrust with them."

The stranger smiled nonchalantly, paused for an instant to pass his hand through his long chestnut hair, and then said, looking idly at a large, round watch which hung at his waist:

"Well, Monsieur, as I have nothing better to do, and as I have no friends here, I am with you; it will pass the time as well as anything else."

And, taking his large, black-plumed hat from the table, he followed the warlike Abbe, who went quickly before him, often running back to hasten him on, like a child running before his father, or a puppy that goes backward and forward twenty times before it gets to the end of a street.

Meanwhile, two ushers, attired in the royal livery, opened the great curtains which separated the gallery from the King's tent, and silence reigned. The courtiers began to enter slowly, and in succession, the temporary dwelling of the Prince. He received them all gracefully, and was the first to meet the view of each person introduced.

Before a very small table surrounded with gilt armchairs stood Louis XIII, encircled by the great officers of the crown. His dress was very elegant: a kind of fawn-colored vest, with open sleeves, ornamented with shoulder-knots and blue ribbons, covered him down to the waist. Wide breeches reached to the knee, and the yellow-and-red striped stuff of which they were made was ornamented below with blue ribbons. His riding-boots, reaching hardly more than three inches above the ankle, were

turned over, showing so lavish a lining of lace that they seemed to hold it as a vase holds flowers. A small mantle of blue velvet, on which was embroidered the cross of the Holy Ghost, covered the King's left arm, which rested on the hilt of his sword.

His head was uncovered, and his pale and noble face was distinctly visible, lighted by the sun, which penetrated through the top of the tent. The small, pointed beard then worn augmented the appearance of thinness in his face, while it added to its melancholy expression. By his lofty brow, his classic profile, his aquiline nose, he was at once recognized as a prince of the great race of Bourbon. He had all the characteristic traits of his ancestors except their penetrating glance; his eyes seemed red from weeping, and veiled with a perpetual drowsiness; and the weakness of his vision gave him a somewhat vacant look.

He called around him, and was attentive to, the greatest enemies of the Cardinal, whom he expected every moment; and, balancing himself with one foot over the other, an hereditary habit of his family, he spoke quickly, but pausing from time to time to make a gracious inclination of the head, or a gesture of the hand, to those who passed before him with low reverences.

The court had been thus paying its respects to the King for two hours before the Cardinal appeared; the whole court stood in close ranks behind the Prince, and in the long galleries which extended from his tent. Already longer intervals elapsed between the names of the courtiers who were announced.

"Shall we not see our cousin the Cardinal?" said the King, turning, and looking at Montresor, one of Monsieur's gentlemen, as if to encourage him to answer.

"He is said to be very ill just now, Sire," was the answer.

"And yet I do not see how any but your Majesty can cure him," said the Duc de Beaufort.

"We cure nothing but the king's evil," replied Louis; "and the complaints of the Cardinal are always so mysterious that we own we can not understand them."

The Prince thus essayed to brave his minister, gaining strength in jests, the better to break his yoke, insupportable, but so difficult to remove. He almost thought he had succeeded in this, and, sustained by the joyous air surrounding him, he already privately congratulated himself on having been able to assume the supreme empire, and for the moment enjoyed all the power of which he fancied himself possessed. An involuntary agitation in the depth of his heart had warned him indeed that, the hour passed, all the burden of the State would fall upon himself alone; but he talked in order to divert the troublesome thought, and, concealing from himself the doubt he had of his own inability to reign, he set his imagination to work upon the result of his enterprises, thus forcing himself to forget the tedious roads which had led to them. Rapid phrases succeeded one another on his lips.

"We shall soon take Perpignan," he said to Fabert, who stood at some distance.

"Well, Cardinal, Lorraine is ours," he added to La Vallette. Then, touching Mazarin's arm:

"It is not so difficult to manage a State as is supposed, eh?"

The Italian, who was not so sure of the Cardinal's disgrace as most of the courtiers, answered, without compromising himself:

"Ah, Sire, the late successes of your Majesty at home and abroad prove your sagacity in choosing your instruments and in directing them, and--"

But the Duc de Beaufort, interrupting him with that self-confidence, that loud voice and overbearing air, which subsequently procured him the surname of Important, cried out, vehemently:

"Pardieu! Sire, it needs only to will. A nation is driven like a horse, with spur and bridle; and as we are all good horsemen, your Majesty has only to choose among us."

This fine sally had not time to take effect, for two ushers cried, simultaneously, "His Eminence!"

The King's face flushed involuntarily, as if he had been surprised en flagrant delit. But immediately gaining confidence, he assumed an air of resolute haughtiness, which was not lost upon the minister.

The latter, attired in all the pomp of a cardinal, leaning upon two young pages, and followed by his captain of the guards and more than five hundred gentlemen attached to his house, advanced toward the King slowly and pausing at each step, as if forced to it by his sufferings, but in reality to observe the faces before him. A glance sufficed.

His suite remained at the entrance of the royal tent; of all those within it, not one was bold enough to salute him, or to look toward him. Even La Vallette feigned to be occupied in a conversation with Montresor; and the King, who desired to give him an unfavorable reception, greeted him lightly and continued a private conversation in a low voice with the Duc de Beaufort.

The Cardinal was therefore forced, after the first salute, to stop and pass to the side of the crowd of courtiers, as if he wished to mingle with them, but in reality to test them more closely; they all recoiled as at the sight of a leper. Fabert alone advanced toward him with the frank, brusque air habitual with him, and, making use of the terms belonging to his profession, said:

"Well, my lord, you make a breach in the midst of them like a cannon-ball; I ask pardon in their name."

"And you stand firm before me as before the enemy," said the Cardinal; "you will have no cause to regret it in the end, my dear Fabert."

Mazarin also approached the Cardinal, but with caution, and, giving to his mobile features an expression of profound sadness, made him five or six very low bows, turning his back to the group gathered around the King, so that in the latter quarter they might be taken for those cold and hasty salutations which are made to a person one desires to be rid of, and, on the part of the Duke, for tokens of respect, blended with a discreet and silent sorrow.

The minister, ever calm, smiled disdainfully; and, assuming that firm look and that air of grandeur which he always wore in the hour of danger, he again leaned upon his pages, and, without waiting for a word or a glance from his sovereign, he suddenly resolved upon his line of conduct, and walked directly toward him, traversing the whole length of the tent. No one had lost sight of him, although all affected not to observe him. Every one now became silent, even those who were conversing with the King. All the courtiers bent forward to see and to hear.

Louis XIII turned toward him in astonishment, and, all presence of mind totally failing him, remained motionless and waited with an icy glance—his sole force, but a force very effectual in a prince.

The Cardinal, on coming close to the monarch, did not bow; and, without changing his attitude, with his eyes lowered and his hands placed on the shoulders of the two boys half bending, he said:

"Sire, I come to implore your Majesty at length to grant me the retirement for which I have long sighed. My health is failing; I feel that my life will soon be ended. Eternity approaches me, and before

rendering an account to the eternal King, I would render one to my earthly sovereign. It is eighteen years, Sire, since you placed in my hands a weak and divided kingdom; I return it to you united and powerful. Your enemies are overthrown and humiliated. My work is accomplished. I ask your Majesty's permission to retire to Cîteaux, of which I am abbot, and where I may end my days in prayer and meditation."

The King, irritated by some haughty expressions in this address, showed none of the signs of weakness which the Cardinal had expected, and which he had always seen in him when he had threatened to resign the management of affairs. On the contrary, feeling that he had the eyes of the whole court upon him, Louis looked upon him with the air of a king, and coldly replied:

"We thank you, then, for your services, Monsieur le Cardinal, and wish you the repose you desire."

Richelieu was deeply moved, but no indication of his anger appeared upon his countenance. "Such was the coldness with which you left Montmorency to die," he said to himself; "but you shall not escape me thus." He then continued aloud, bowing at the same time:

"The only recompense I ask for my services is that your Majesty will deign to accept from me, as a gift, the Palais-Cardinal I have erected at my own expense in Paris."

The King, astonished, bowed his assent. A murmur of surprise for a moment agitated the attentive court.

"I also throw myself at your Majesty's feet, to beg that you will grant me the revocation of an act of rigor, which I solicited (I publicly confess it), and which I perhaps regarded too hastily beneficial to the repose of the State. Yes, when I was of this world, I was too forgetful of my early sentiments of personal respect and attachment, in my eagerness for the public welfare; but now that I already enjoy the enlightenment of solitude, I see that I have done wrong, and I repent."

The attention of the spectators was redoubled, and the uneasiness of the King became visible.

"Yes, there is one person, Sire, whom I have always loved, despite her wrong toward you, and the banishment which the affairs of the kingdom forced me to bring about for her; a person to whom I have owed much, and who should be very dear to you, notwithstanding her armed attempts against you; a person, in a word, whom I implore you to recall from exile--the Queen Marie de Medicis, your mother!"

The King uttered an involuntary exclamation, so little did he expect to hear that name. A repressed agitation suddenly appeared upon every face. All waited in silence the King's reply. Louis XIII looked for a long time at his old minister without speaking, and this look decided the fate of France; in that instant he called to mind all the indefatigable services of Richelieu, his unbounded devotion, his wonderful capacity, and was surprised at himself for having wished to part with him. He felt deeply affected at this request, which had probed for the exact cause of his anger at the bottom of his heart, and uprooted it, thus taking from his hands the only weapon he had against his old servant. Filial love brought words of pardon to his lips and tears into his eyes. Rejoicing to grant what he desired most of all things in the world, he extended his hands to the Duke with all the nobleness and kindness of a Bourbon. The Cardinal bowed and respectfully kissed it; and his heart, which should have burst with remorse, only swelled in the joy of a haughty triumph.

The King, deeply touched, abandoning his hand to him, turned gracefully toward his court and said, with a trembling voice:

"We often deceive ourselves, gentlemen, and especially in our knowledge of so great a politician as this."

"I hope he will never leave us, since his heart is as good as his head."

Cardinal de la Vallette instantly seized the sleeve of the King's mantle, and kissed it with all the ardor of a lover, and the young Mazarin did much the same with Richelieu himself, assuming, with admirable Italian suppleness, an expression radiant with joy and tenderness. Two streams of flatterers hastened, one toward the King, the other toward the minister; the former group, not less adroit than the second, although less direct, addressed to the Prince thanks which could be heard by the minister, and burned at the feet of the one incense which was intended for the other. As for Richelieu, bowing and smiling to right and left, he stepped forward and stood at the right hand of the King as his natural place. A stranger entering would rather have thought, indeed, that it was the King who was on the Cardinal's left hand. The Marechal d'Estrees, all the ambassadors, the Duc d'Angouleme, the Due d'Halluin (Schomberg), the Marechal de Chatillon, and all the great officers of the crown surrounded him, each waiting impatiently for the compliments of the others to be finished, in order to pay his own, fearing lest some one else should anticipate him with the flattering epigram he had just improvised, or the phrase of adulation he was inventing.

As for Fabert, he had retired to a corner of the tent, and seemed to have paid no particular attention to the scene. He was chatting with Montresor and the gentlemen of Monsieur, all sworn enemies of the Cardinal, because, out of the throng he avoided, he had found none but these to speak to. This conduct would have seemed extremely tactless in one less known; but although he lived in the midst of the court, he was ever ignorant of its intrigues. It was said of him that he returned from a battle he had gained, like the King's hunting-horse, leaving the dogs to caress their master and divide the quarry, without seeking even to remember the part he had had in the triumph.

The storm, then, seemed entirely appeased, and to the violent agitations of the morning succeeded a gentle calm. A respectful murmur, varied with pleasant laughter and protestations of attachment, was all that was heard in the tent. The voice of the Cardinal arose from time to time: "The poor Queen! We shall, then, soon again see her! I never had dared to hope for such happiness while I lived!" The King listened to him with full confidence, and made no attempt to conceal his satisfaction. "It was assuredly an idea sent to him from on high," he said; "this good Cardinal, against whom they had so incensed me, was thinking only of the union of my family. Since the birth of the Dauphin I have not tasted greater joy than at this moment. The protection of the Holy Virgin is manifested over our kingdom."

At this moment, a captain of the guards came up and whispered in the King's ear.

"A courier from Cologne?" said the King; "let him wait in my cabinet."

Then, unable to restrain his impatience, "I will go! I will go!" he said, and entered alone a small, square tent attached to the larger one. In it he saw a young courier holding a black portfolio, and the curtains closed upon the King.

The Cardinal, left sole master of the court, concentrated all its homage; but it was observed that he no longer received it with his former presence of mind. He inquired frequently what time it was, and exhibited an anxiety which was not assumed; his hard, unquiet glances turned toward the smaller tent. It suddenly opened; the King appeared alone, and stopped on the threshold. He was paler than usual, and trembled in every limb; he held in his hand a large letter with five black seals.

"Gentlemen," said he, in a loud but broken voice, "the Queen has just died at Cologne; and I perhaps am not the first to hear of it," he added, casting a severe look toward the impassible Cardinal, "but God knows all! To horse in an hour, and attack the lines! Marechals, follow me." And he turned his back abruptly, and reentered his cabinet with them.

The court retired after the minister, who, without giving any sign of sorrow or annoyance, went forth as gravely as he had entered, but now a victor.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Doubt, the greatest misery of love
Never interfered in what did not concern him
So strongly does force impose upon men
The usual remarks prompted by imbecility on such occasions

CINQ MARS

By ALFRED DE VIGNY

BOOK 3.

CHAPTER IX

THE SIEGE

There are moments in our life when we long ardently for strong excitement to drown our petty griefs--times when the soul, like the lion in the fable, wearied with the continual attacks of the gnat, earnestly desires a mightier enemy and real danger. Cinq-Mars found himself in this condition of mind, which always results from a morbid sensibility in the organic constitution and a perpetual agitation of the heart. Weary of continually turning over in his mind a combination of the events which he desired, and of those which he dreaded; weary of calculating his chances to the best of his power; of summoning to his assistance all that his education had taught him concerning the lives of illustrious men, in order to compare it with his present situation; oppressed by his regrets, his dreams, predictions, fancies, and all that imaginary world in which he had lived during his solitary journey--he breathed freely upon finding himself thrown into a real world almost as full of agitation; and the realizing of two actual dangers restored circulation to his blood, and youth to his whole being.

Since the nocturnal scene at the inn near Loudun, he had not been able to resume sufficient empire over his mind to occupy himself with anything save his cherished though sad reflections; and consumption was already threatening him, when happily he arrived at the camp of Perpignan, and happily also had the opportunity of accepting the proposition of the Abbe de Gondi--for the reader has no doubt recognized Cinq-Mars in the person of that young stranger in mourning, so careless and so melancholy, whom the duellist in the cassock invited to be his second.

He had ordered his tent to be pitched as a volunteer in the street of the camp assigned to the young noblemen who were to be presented to the King and were to serve as aides-de-camp to the Generals; he soon repaired thither, and was quickly armed, horsed, and cuirassed, according to the custom of the time, and set out alone for the Spanish bastion, the place

of rendezvous. He was the first arrival, and found that a small plot of turf, hidden among the works of the besieged place, had been well chosen by the little Abbe for his homicidal purposes; for besides the probability that no one would have suspected officers of engaging in a duel immediately beneath the town which they were attacking, the body of the bastion separated them from the French camp, and would conceal them like an immense screen. It was wise to take these precautions, for at that time it cost a man his head to give himself the satisfaction of risking his body.

While waiting for his friends and his adversaries, Cinq-Mars had time to examine the southern side of Perpignan, before which he stood. He had heard that these works were not those which were to be attacked, and he tried in vain to account for the besieger's projects. Between this southern face of the town, the mountains of Albere, and the Col du Perthus, there might have been advantageous lines of attack, and redoubts against the accessible point; but not a single soldier was stationed there. All the forces seemed directed upon the north of Perpignan, upon the most difficult side, against a brick fort called the Castillet, which surmounted the gate of Notre-Dame. He discovered that a piece of ground, apparently marshy, but in reality very solid, led up to the very foot of the Spanish bastion; that this post was guarded with true Castilian negligence, although its sole strength lay entirely in its defenders; for its battlements, almost in ruin, were furnished with four pieces of cannon of enormous calibre, embedded in the turf, and thus rendered immovable, and impossible to be directed against a troop advancing rapidly to the foot of the wall.

It was easy to see that these enormous pieces had discouraged the besiegers from attacking this point, and had kept the besieged from any idea of addition to its means of defence. Thus, on the one side, the vedettes and advanced posts were at a distance, and on the other, the sentinels were few and ill supported. A young Spaniard, carrying a long gun, with its rest suspended at his side and the burning match in his right hand, who was walking with nonchalance upon the rampart, stopped to look at Cinq-Mars, who was riding about the ditches and moats.

"Senor caballero," he cried, "are you going to take the bastion by yourself on horseback, like Don Quixote--Quixada de la Mancha?"

At the same time he detached from his side the iron rest, planted it in the ground, and supported upon it the barrel of his gun in order to take aim, when a grave and older Spaniard, enveloped in a dirty brown cloak, said to him in his own tongue:

"'Ambrosio de demonio', do you not know that it is forbidden to throw away powder uselessly, before sallies or attacks are made, merely to have the pleasure of killing a boy not worth your match? It was in this very place that Charles the Fifth threw the sleeping sentinel into the ditch and drowned him. Do your duty, or I shall follow his example."

Ambrosio replaced the gun upon his shoulder, the rest at his side, and continued his walk upon the rampart.

Cinq-Mars had been little alarmed at this menacing gesture, contenting himself with tightening the reins of his horse and bringing the spurs close to his sides, knowing that with a single leap of the nimble animal he should be carried behind the wall of a hut which stood near by, and should thus be sheltered from the Spanish fusil before the operation of the fork and match could be completed. He knew, too, that a tacit convention between the two armies prohibited marksmen from firing upon the sentinels; each party would have regarded it as assassination. The soldier who had thus prepared to attack Cinq-Mars must have been ignorant of this understanding. Young D'Effiat, therefore, made no visible movement; and when the sentinel had resumed his walk upon the rampart, he again betook himself to his ride upon the turf, and presently saw five cavaliers directing their course toward him. The first two, who came on at full gallop, did not salute him, but, stopping close to him, leaped to the ground, and he found himself in the arms of the Counsellor de Thou,

who embraced him tenderly, while the little Abbe de Gondi, laughing heartily, cried:

"Behold another Orestes recovering his Pylades, and at the moment of immolating a rascal who is not of the family of the King of kings, I assure you."

"What! is it you, my dear Cinq-Mars?" cried De Thou; "and I knew not of your arrival in the camp! Yes, it is indeed you; I recognize you, although you are very pale. Have you been ill, my dear friend? I have often written to you; for my boyish friendship has always remained in my heart."

"And I," answered Henri d'Effiat, "I have been very culpable toward you; but I will relate to you all the causes of my neglect. I can speak of them, but I was ashamed to write them. But how good you are! Your friendship has never relaxed."

"I knew you too well," replied De Thou; "I knew that there could be no real coldness between us, and that my soul had its echo in yours."

With these words they embraced once more, their eyes moist with those sweet tears which so seldom flow in one's life, but with which it seems, nevertheless, the heart is always charged, so much relief do they give in flowing.

This moment was short; and during these few words, Gondi had been pulling them by their cloaks, saying:

"To horse! to horse, gentlemen! Pardieu! you will have time enough to embrace, if you are so affectionate; but do not delay. Let our first thought be to have done with our good friends who will soon arrive. We are in a fine position, with those three villains there before us, the archers close by, and the Spaniards up yonder! We shall be under three fires."

He was still speaking, when De Launay, finding himself at about sixty paces from his opponents, with his seconds, who were chosen from his own friends rather than from among the partisans of the Cardinal, put his horse to a canter, advanced gracefully toward his young adversaries, and gravely saluted them.

"Gentlemen, I think that we shall do well to select our men, and to take the field; for there is talk of attacking the lines, and I must be at my post."

"We are ready, Monsieur," said Cinq-Mars; "and as for selecting opponents, I shall be very glad to become yours, for I have not forgotten the Marechal de Bassompierre and the wood of Chaumont. You know my opinion concerning your insolent visit to my mother."

"You are very young, Monsieur. In regard to Madame, your mother, I fulfilled the duties of a man of the world; toward the Marechal, those of a captain of the guard; here, those of a gentleman toward Monsieur l'Abbe, who has challenged me; afterward I shall have that honor with you."

"If I permit you," said the Abbe, who was already on horseback.

They took sixty paces of ground--all that was afforded them by the extent of the meadow that enclosed them. The Abbe de Gondi was stationed between De Thou and his friend, who sat nearest the ramparts, upon which two Spanish officers and a score of soldiers stood, as in a balcony, to witness this duel of six persons--a spectacle common enough to them. They showed the same signs of joy as at their bullfights, and laughed with that savage and bitter laugh which their temperament derives from their admixture of Arab blood.

At a sign from Gondi, the six horses set off at full gallop, and met,

without coming in contact, in the middle of the arena; at that instant, six pistol-shots were heard almost together, and the smoke covered the combatants.

When it dispersed, of the six cavaliers and six horses but three men and three animals were on their legs. Cinq-Mars was on horseback, giving his hand to his adversary, as calm as himself; at the other end of the field, De Thou stood by his opponent, whose horse he had killed, and whom he was helping to rise. As for Gondi and De Launay, neither was to be seen. Cinq-Mars, looking about for them anxiously, perceived the Abbe's horse, which, caracoling and curvetting, was dragging after him the future cardinal, whose foot was caught in the stirrup, and who was swearing as if he had never studied anything but the language of the camp. His nose and hands were stained and bloody with his fall and with his efforts to seize the grass; and he was regarding with considerable dissatisfaction his horse, which in spite of himself he irritated with his spurs, making its way to the trench, filled with water, which surrounded the bastion, when, happily, Cinq-Mars, passing between the edge of the swamp and the animal, seized its bridle and stopped its career.

"Well, my dear Abbe, I see that no great harm has come to you, for you speak with decided energy."

"Corbleu!" cried Gondi, wiping the dust out of his eyes, "to fire a pistol in the face of that giant I had to lean forward and rise in my stirrups, and thus I lost my balance; but I fancy that he is down, too."

"You are right, sir," said De Thou, coming up; "there is his horse swimming in the ditch with its master, whose brains are blown out. We must think now of escaping."

"Escaping! That, gentlemen, will be rather difficult," said the adversary of Cinq-Mars, approaching. "Hark! there is the cannon-shot, the signal for the attack. I did not expect it would have been given so soon. If we return we shall meet the Swiss and the foot-soldiers, who are marching in this direction."

"Monsieur de Fontrailles says well," said De Thou; "but if we do not return, here are these Spaniards, who are running to arms, and whose balls we shall presently have whistling about our heads."

"Well, let us hold a council," said Gondi; "summon Monsieur de Montresor, who is uselessly occupied in searching for the body of poor De Launay. You have not wounded him, Monsieur De Thou?"

"No, Monsieur l'Abbe; not every one has so good an aim as you," said Montresor, bitterly, limping from his fall. "We shall not have time to continue with the sword."

"As to continuing, I will not consent to it, gentlemen," said Fontrailles; "Monsieur de Cinq-Mars has behaved too nobly toward me. My pistol went off too soon, and his was at my very cheek--I feel the coldness of it now--but he had the generosity to withdraw it and fire in the air. I shall not forget it; and I am his in life and in death."

"We must think of other things now," interrupted Cinq-Mars; "a ball has just whistled past my ear. The attack has begun on all sides; and we are surrounded by friends and by enemies."

In fact, the cannonading was general; the citadel, the town, and the army were covered with smoke. The bastion before them as yet was unassailed, and its guards seemed less eager to defend it than to observe the fate of the other fortifications.

"I believe that the enemy has made a sally," said Montresor, "for the smoke has cleared from the plain, and I see masses of cavalry charging under the protection of the battery."

"Gentlemen," said Cinq-Mars, who had not ceased to observe the walls,

"there is a very decided part which we could take, an important share in this--we might enter this ill-guarded bastion."

"An excellent idea, Monsieur," said Fontrailles; "but we are but five against at least thirty, and are in plain sight and easily counted."

"Faith, the idea is not bad," said Gondi; "it is better to be shot up there than hanged down here, as we shall be if we are found, for De Launay must be already missed by his company, and all the court knows of our quarrel."

"Parbleu! gentlemen," said Montresor, "help is coming to us."

A numerous troop of horse, in great disorder, advanced toward them at full gallop; their red uniform made them visible from afar. It seemed to be their intention to halt on the very ground on which were our embarrassed duellists, for hardly had the first cavalier reached it when cries of "Halt!" were repeated and prolonged by the voices of the chiefs who were mingled with their cavaliers.

"Let us go to them; these are the men-at-arms of the King's guard," said Fontrailles. "I recognize them by their black cockades. I see also many of the light-horse with them; let us mingle in the disorder, for I fancy they are 'ramenes'."

This is a polite phrase signifying in military language "put to rout." All five advanced toward the noisy and animated troops, and found that this conjecture was right. But instead of the consternation which one might expect in such a case, they found nothing but a youthful and rattling gayety, and heard only bursts of laughter from the two companies.

"Ah, pardieu! Cahuzac," said one, "your horse runs better than mine; I suppose you have exercised it in the King's hunts!"

"Ah, I see, 'twas that we might be the sooner rallied that you arrived here first," answered the other.

"I think the Marquis de Coislin must be mad, to make four hundred of us charge eight Spanish regiments."

"Ha! ha! Locmaria, your plume is a fine ornament; it looks like a weeping willow. If we follow that, it will be to our burial."

"Gentlemen, I said to you before," angrily replied the young officer, "that I was sure that Capuchin Joseph, who meddles in everything, was mistaken in telling us to charge, upon the part of the Cardinal. But would you have been satisfied if those who have the honor of commanding you had refused to charge?"

"No, no, no!" answered all the young men, at the same time forming themselves quickly into ranks.

"I said," interposed the old Marquis de Coislin, who, despite his white head, had all the fire of youth in his eyes, "that if you were commanded to mount to the assault on horseback, you would do it."

"Bravo! bravo!" cried all the men-at-arms, clapping their hands.

"Well, Monsieur le Marquis," said Cinq-Mars, approaching, "here is an opportunity to execute what you have promised. I am only a volunteer; but an instant ago these gentlemen and I examined this bastion, and I believe that it is possible to take it."

"Monsieur, we must first examine the ditch to see--"

At this moment a ball from the rampart of which they were speaking struck in the head the horse of the old captain, laying it low.

"Locmaria, De Mouy, take the command, and to the assault!" cried the two noble companies, believing their leader dead.

"Stop a moment, gentlemen," said old Coislin, rising, "I will lead you, if you please. Guide us, Monsieur volunteer, for the Spaniards invite us to this ball, and we must reply politely."

Hardly had the old man mounted another horse, which one of his men brought him, and drawn his sword, when, without awaiting his order, all these ardent youths, preceded by Cinq-Mars and his friends, whose horses were urged on by the squadrons behind, had thrown themselves into the morass, wherein, to their great astonishment and to that of the Spaniards, who had counted too much upon its depth, the horses were in the water only up to their hams; and in spite of a discharge of grape-shot from the two largest pieces, all reached pell-mell a strip of land at the foot of the half-ruined ramparts. In the ardor of the rush, Cinq-Mars and Fontrailles, with the young Locmaria, forced their horses upon the rampart itself; but a brisk fusillade killed the three animals, which rolled over their masters.

"Dismount all, gentlemen!" cried old Coislin; "forward with pistol and sword! Abandon your horses!"

All obeyed instantly, and threw themselves in a mass upon the breach.

Meantime, De Thou, whose coolness never quitted him any more than his friendship, had not lost sight of the young Henri, and had received him in his arms when his horse fell. He helped him to rise, restored to him his sword, which he had dropped, and said to him, with the greatest calmness, notwithstanding the balls which rained on all sides:

"My friend, do I not appear very ridiculous amid all this skirmish, in my costume of Counsellor in Parliament?"

"Parbleu!" said Montresor, advancing, "here's the Abbe, who quite justifies you."

And, in fact, little Gondi, pushing on among the light horsemen, was shouting, at the top of his voice: "Three duels and an assault. I hope to get rid of my cassock at last!"

Saying this, he cut and thrust at a tall Spaniard.

The defence was not long. The Castilian soldiers were no match for the French officers, and not one of them had time or courage to recharge his carbine.

"Gentlemen, we will relate this to our mistresses in Paris," said Locmaria, throwing his hat into the air; and Cinq-Mars, De Thou, Coislin, De Mouy, Londigny, officers of the red companies, and all the young noblemen, with swords in their right hands and pistols in their left, dashing, pushing, and doing each other by their eagerness as much harm as they did the enemy, finally rushed upon the platform of the bastion, as water poured from a vase, of which the opening is too small, leaps out in interrupted gushes.

Disdaining to occupy themselves with the vanquished soldiers, who cast themselves at their feet, they left them to look about the fort, without even disarming them, and began to examine their conquest, like schoolboys in vacation, laughing with all their hearts, as if they were at a pleasure-party.

A Spanish officer, enveloped in his brown cloak, watched them with a sombre air.

"What demons are these, Ambrosio?" said he to a soldier. "I never have met with any such before in France. If Louis XIII has an entire army thus composed, it is very good of him not to conquer all Europe."

"Oh, I do not believe they are very numerous; they must be some poor adventurers, who have nothing to lose and all to gain by pillage."

"You are right," said the officer; "I will try to persuade one of them to let me escape."

And slowly approaching, he accosted a young light-horseman, of about eighteen, who was sitting apart from his comrades upon the parapet. He had the pink-and-white complexion of a young girl; his delicate hand held an embroidered handkerchief, with which he wiped his forehead and his golden locks. He was consulting a large, round watch set with rubies, suspended from his girdle by a knot of ribbons.

The astonished Spaniard paused. Had he not seen this youth overthrow his soldiers, he would not have believed him capable of anything beyond singing a romance, reclined upon a couch. But, filled with the suggestion of Ambrosio, he thought that he might have stolen these objects of luxury in the pillage of the apartments of a woman; so, going abruptly up to him, he said:

"Hombre! I am an officer; will you restore me to liberty, that I may once more see my country?"

The young Frenchman looked at him with the gentle expression of his age, and, thinking of his own family, he said:

"Monsieur, I will present you to the Marquis de Coislin, who will, I doubt not, grant your request; is your family of Castile or of Aragon?"

"Your Coislin will ask the permission of somebody else, and will make me wait a year. I will give you four thousand ducats if you will let me escape."

That gentle face, those girlish features, became infused with the purple of fury; those blue eyes shot forth lightning; and, exclaiming, "Money to me! away, fool!" the young man gave the Spaniard a ringing box on the ear. The latter, without hesitating, drew a long poniard from his breast, and, seizing the arm of the Frenchman, thought to plunge it easily into his heart; but, nimble and vigorous, the youth caught him by the right arm, and, lifting it with force above his head, sent it back with the weapon it held upon the head of the Spaniard, who was furious with rage.

"Eh! eh! Softly, Olivier!" cried his comrades, running from all directions; "there are Spaniards enough on the ground already."

And they disarmed the hostile officer.

"What shall we do with this lunatic?" said one.

"I should not like to have him for my valet-dechambre," returned another.

"He deserves to be hanged," said a third; "but, faith, gentlemen, we don't know how to hang. Let us send him to that battalion of Swiss which is now passing across the plain."

And the calm and sombre Spaniard, enveloping himself anew in his cloak, began the march of his own accord, followed by Ambrosio, to join the battalion, pushed by the shoulders and urged on by five or six of these young madcaps.

Meantime, the first troop of the besiegers, astonished at their success, had followed it out to the end; Cinq-Mars, so advised by the aged Coislin, had made with him the circuit of the bastion, and found to their vexation that it was completely separated from the city, and that they could not follow up their advantage. They, therefore, returned slowly to the platform, talking by the way, to rejoin De Thou and the Abbe de Gondi, whom they found laughing with the young light-horsemen.

"We have Religion and justice with us, gentlemen; we could not fail to triumph."

"No doubt, for they fought as hard as we."

There was silence at the approach of Cinq-Mars, and they remained for an instant whispering and asking his name; then all surrounded him, and took his hand with delight.

"Gentlemen, you are right," said their old captain; "he is, as our fathers used to say, the best doer of the day. He is a volunteer, who is to be presented today to the King by the Cardinal."

"By the Cardinal! We will present him ourselves. Ah, do not let him be a Cardinalist; he is too good a fellow for that!" exclaimed all the young men, with vivacity.

"Monsieur, I will undertake to disgust you with him," said Olivier d'Entraigues, approaching Cinq-Mars, "for I have been his page. Rather serve in the red companies; come, you will have good comrades there."

The old Marquis saved Cinq-Mars the embarrassment of replying, by ordering the trumpets to sound and rally his brilliant companies. The cannon was no longer heard, and a soldier announced that the King and the Cardinal were traversing the lines to examine the results of the day. He made all the horses pass through the breach, which was tolerably wide, and ranged the two companies of cavalry in battle array, upon a spot where it seemed impossible that any but infantry could penetrate.

CHAPTER X

THE RECOMPENSE

Cardinal Richelieu had said to himself, "To soften the first paroxysm of the royal grief, to open a source of emotions which shall turn from its sorrow this wavering soul, let this city be besieged; I consent. Let Louis go; I will allow him to strike a few poor soldiers with the blows which he wishes, but dares not, to inflict upon me. Let his anger drown itself in this obscure blood; I agree. But this caprice of glory shall not derange my fixed designs; this city shall not fall yet. It shall not become French forever until two years have past; it shall come into my nets only on the day upon which I have fixed in my own mind. Thunder, bombs, and cannons; meditate upon your operations, skilful captains; hasten, young warriors. I shall silence your noise, I shall dissipate your projects, and make your efforts abortive; all shall end in vain smoke, for I shall conduct in order to mislead you."

This is the substance of what passed in the bald head of the Cardinal before the attack of which we have witnessed a part. He was stationed on horseback, upon one of the mountains of Salces, north of the city; from this point he could see the plain of Roussillon before him, sloping to the Mediterranean. Perpignan, with its ramparts of brick, its bastions, its citadel, and its spire, formed upon this plain an oval and sombre mass on its broad and verdant meadows; the vast mountains surrounded it, and the valley, like an enormous bow curved from north to south, while, stretching its white line in the east, the sea looked like its silver cord. On his right rose that immense mountain called the Canigou, whose sides send forth two rivers into the plain below. The French line extended to the foot of this western barrier. A crowd of generals and of great lords were on horseback behind the minister, but at twenty paces' distance and profoundly silent.

Cardinal Richelieu had at first followed slowly the line of operations, but had later returned and stationed himself upon this height, whence his eye and his thought hovered over the destinies of besiegers and besieged.

The whole army had its eyes upon him, and could see him from every point. All looked upon him as their immediate chief, and awaited his gesture before they acted. France had bent beneath his yoke a long time; and admiration of him shielded all his actions to which another would have been often subjected. At this moment, for instance, no one thought of smiling, or even of feeling surprised, that the cuirass should clothe the priest; and the severity of his character and aspect suppressed every thought of ironical comparisons or injurious conjectures. This day the Cardinal appeared in a costume entirely martial: he wore a reddish-brown coat, embroidered with gold, a water-colored cuirass, a sword at his side, pistols at his saddle-bow, and he had a plumed hat; but this he seldom put on his head, which was still covered with the red cap. Two pages were behind him; one carried his gauntlets, the other his casque, and the captain of his guards was at his side.

As the King had recently named him generalissimo of his troops, it was to him that the generals sent for their orders; but he, knowing only too well the secret motives of his master's present anger, affected to refer to that Prince all who sought a decision from his own mouth. It happened as he had foreseen; for he regulated and calculated the movements of that heart as those of a watch, and could have told with precision through what sensations it had passed. Louis XIII came and placed himself at his side; but he came as a pupil, forced to acknowledge that his master is in the right. His air was haughty and dissatisfied, his language brusque and dry. The Cardinal remained impassible. It was remarked that the King, in consulting him, employed the words of command, thus reconciling his weakness and his power of place, his irresolution and his pride, his ignorance and his pretensions, while his minister dictated laws to him in a tone of the most profound obedience.

"I will have them attack immediately, Cardinal," said the Prince on coming up; "that is to say," he added, with a careless air, "when all your preparations are made, and you have fixed upon the hour with our generals."

"Sire, if I might venture to express my judgment, I should be glad did your Majesty think proper to begin the attack in a quarter of an hour, for that will give time enough to advance the third line."

"Yes, yes; you are right, Monsieur le Cardinal! I think so, too. I will go and give my orders myself; I wish to do everything myself. Schomberg, Schomberg! in a quarter of an hour I wish to hear the signal-gun; I command it."

And Schomberg, taking the command of the right wing, gave the order, and the signal was made.

The batteries, arranged long since by the Marechal de la Meilleraie, began to batter a breach, but slowly, because the artillerymen felt that they had been directed to attack two impregnable points; and because, with their experience, and above all with the common sense and quick perception of French soldiers, any one of them could at once have indicated the point against which the attack should have been directed. The King was surprised at the slowness of the firing.

"La Meilleraie," said he, impatiently, "these batteries do not play well; your cannoneers are asleep."

The principal artillery officers were present as well as the Marechal; but no one answered a syllable. They had looked toward the Cardinal, who remained as immovable as an equestrian statue, and they imitated his example. The answer must have been that the fault was not with the soldiers, but with him who had ordered this false disposition of the batteries; and this was Richelieu himself, who, pretending to believe them more useful in that position, had stopped the remarks of the chiefs.

The King, astonished at this silence, and, fearing that he had committed some gross military blunder by his question, blushed slightly, and, approaching the group of princes who had accompanied him, said, in order

to reassure himself:

"D'Angouleme, Beaufort, this is very tiresome, is it not? We stand here like mummies."

Charles de Valois drew near and said:

"It seems to me, Sire, that they are not employing here the machines of the engineer Pompee-Targon."

"Parbleu!" said the Duc de Beaufort, regarding Richelieu fixedly, "that is because we were more eager to take Rochelle than Perpignan at the time that Italian came. Here we have not an engine ready, not a mine, not a petard beneath these walls; and the Marechal de la Meilleraie told me this morning that he had proposed to bring some with which to open the breach. It was neither the Castillet, nor the six great bastions which surround it, nor the half-moon, we should have attacked. If we go on in this way, the great stone arm of the citadel will show us its fist a long time yet."

The Cardinal, still motionless, said not a single word; he only made a sign to Fabert, who left the group in attendance, and ranged his horse behind that of Richelieu, close to the captain of his guards.

The Duc de la Rochefoucauld, drawing near the King, said:

"I believe, Sire, that our inactivity makes the enemy insolent, for look! here is a numerous sally, directing itself straight toward your Majesty; and the regiments of Biron and De Ponts fall back after firing."

"Well!" said the King, drawing his sword, "let us charge and force those villains back again. Bring on the cavalry with me, D'Angouleme. Where is it, Cardinal?"

"Behind that hill, Sire, there are in column six regiments of dragoons, and the carabineers of La Roque; below you are my men-at-arms and my light horse, whom I pray your Majesty to employ, for those of your Majesty's guard are ill guided by the Marquis de Coislin, who is ever too zealous. Joseph, go tell him to return."

He whispered to the Capuchin, who had accompanied him, huddled up in military attire, which he wore awkwardly, and who immediately advanced into the plain.

In the mean time, the compact columns of the old Spanish infantry issued from the gate of Notre-Dame like a dark and moving forest, while from another gate proceeded the heavy cavalry, which drew up on the plain. The French army, in battle array at the foot of the hill where the King stood, behind fortifications of earth, behind redoubts and fascines of turf, perceived with alarm the men-at-arms and the light horse pressed between these two forces, ten times their superior in numbers.

"Sound the charge!" cried Louis XIII; "or my old Coislin is lost."

And he descended the hill, with all his suite as ardent as himself; but before he reached the plain and was at the head of his musketeers, the two companies had taken their course, dashing off with the rapidity of lightning, and to the cry of "Vive le Roi!" They fell upon the long column of the enemy's cavalry like two vultures upon a serpent; and, making a large and bloody gap, they passed beyond, and rallied behind the Spanish bastion, leaving the enemy's cavalry so astonished that they thought only of re-forming their own ranks, and not of pursuing.

The French army uttered a burst of applause; the King paused in amazement. He looked around him, and saw a burning desire for attack in all eyes; the valor of his race shone in his own. He paused yet another instant in suspense, listening, intoxicated, to the roar of the cannon, inhaling the odor of the powder; he seemed to receive another life, and to become once more a Bourbon. All who looked on him felt as if they

were commanded by another man, when, raising his sword and his eyes toward the sun, he cried:

"Follow me, brave friends! here I am King of France!"

His cavalry, deploying, dashed off with an ardor which devoured space, and, raising billows of dust from the ground, which trembled beneath them, they were in an instant mingled with the Spanish cavalry, and both were swallowed up in an immense and fluctuating cloud.

"Now! now!" cried the Cardinal, in a voice of thunder, from his elevation, "now remove the guns from their useless position! Fabert, give your orders; let them be all directed upon the infantry which slowly approaches to surround the King. Haste! save the King!"

Immediately the Cardinal's suite, until then sitting erect as so many statues, were in motion. The generals gave their orders; the aides-de-camp galloped off into the plain, where, leaping over the ditches, barriers, and palisades, they arrived at their destination as soon as the thought that directed them and the glance that followed them.

Suddenly the few and interrupted flashes which had shone from the discouraged batteries became a continual and immense flame, leaving no room for the smoke, which rose to the sky in an infinite number of light and floating wreaths; the volleys of cannon, which had seemed like far and feeble echoes, changed into a formidable thunder whose roll was as rapid as that of drums beating the charge; while from three opposite points large red flashes from fiery mouths fell upon the dark columns which issued from the besieged city.

Meantime, without changing his position, but with ardent eyes and imperative gestures, Richelieu ceased not to multiply his orders, casting upon those who received them a look which implied a sentence of death if he was not instantly obeyed.

"The King has overthrown the cavalry; but the foot still resist. Our batteries have only killed, they have not conquered. Forward with three regiments of infantry instantly, Gassion, La Meilleraie, and Lesdiguières! Take the enemy's columns in flank. Order the rest of the army to cease from the attack, and to remain motionless throughout the whole line. Bring paper! I will write myself to Schomberg."

A page alighted and advanced, holding a pencil and paper. The minister, supported by four men of his suite, also alighted, but with difficulty, uttering a cry, wrested from him by pain; but he conquered it by an effort, and seated himself upon the carriage of a cannon. The page presented his shoulder as a desk; and the Cardinal hastily penned that order which contemporary manuscripts have transmitted to us, and which might well be imitated by the diplomatists of our day, who are, it seems, more desirous to maintain themselves in perfect balance between two ideas than to seek those combinations which decide the destinies of the world, regarding the clear and obvious dictates of true genius as beneath their profound subtlety.

"M. le Marechal, do not risk anything, and reflect before you attack. When you are thus told that the King desires you not to risk anything, you are not to understand that his Majesty forbids you to fight at all; but his intention is that you do not engage in a general battle unless it be with a notable hope of gain from the advantage which a favorable situation may present, the responsibility of the battle naturally falling upon you."

These orders given, the old minister, still seated upon the gun-carriage, his arms resting upon the touch-hole, and his chin upon his arms, in the attitude of one who adjusts and points a cannon, continued in silence to watch the battle, like an old wolf, which, sated with victims and torpid with age, contemplates in the plain the ravages of a lion among a herd of cattle, which he himself dares not attack. From time to time his eye brightens; the smell of blood rejoices him, and he laps his burning

tongue over his toothless jaw.

On that day, it was remarked by his servants--or, in other words, by all surrounding him--that from the time of his rising until night he took no nourishment, and so fixed all the application of his soul on the events which he had to conduct that he triumphed over his physical pains, seeming, by forgetting, to have destroyed them. It was this power of attention, this continual presence of mind, that raised him almost to genius. He would have attained it quite, had he not lacked native elevation of soul and generous sensibility of heart.

Everything happened upon the field of battle as he had wished, fortune attending him there as well as in the cabinet. Louis XIII claimed with eager hand the victory which his minister had procured for him; he had contributed himself, however, only that grandeur which consists in personal valor.

The cannon had ceased to roar when the broken columns of infantry fell back into Perpignan; the remainder had met the same fate, was already within the walls, and on the plain no living man was to be seen, save the glittering squadrons of the King, who followed him, forming ranks as they went.

He returned at a slow walk, and contemplated with satisfaction the battlefield swept clear of enemies; he passed haughtily under the very fire of the Spanish guns, which, whether from lack of skill, or by a secret agreement with the Prime Minister, or from very shame to kill a king of France, only sent after him a few balls, which, passing two feet above his head, fell in front of the lines, and merely served to increase the royal reputation for courage.

At every step, however, that he took toward the spot where Richelieu awaited him, the King's countenance changed and visibly fell; he lost all the flush of combat; the noble sweat of triumph dried upon his brow. As he approached, his usual pallor returned to his face, as if having the right to sit alone on a royal head; his look lost its fleeting fire, and at last, when he joined the Cardinal, a profound melancholy entirely possessed him. He found the minister as he had left him, on horseback; the latter, still coldly respectful, bowed, and after a few words of compliment, placed himself near Louis to traverse the lines and examine the results of the day, while the princes and great lords, riding at some distance before and behind, formed a crowd around them.

The wily minister was careful not to say a word or to make a gesture that could suggest the idea that he had had the slightest share in the events of the day; and it was remarkable that of all those who came to hand in their reports, there was not one who did not seem to divine his thoughts, and exercise care not to compromise his occult power by open obedience. All reports were made to the King. The Cardinal then traversed, by the side of the Prince, the right of the camp, which had not been under his view from the height where he had remained; and he saw with satisfaction that Schomberg, who knew him well, had acted precisely as his master had directed, bringing into action only a few of the light troops, and fighting just enough not to incur reproach for inaction, and not enough to obtain any distinct result. This line of conduct charmed the minister, and did not displease the King, whose vanity cherished the idea of having been the sole conqueror that day. He even wished to persuade himself, and to have it supposed, that all the efforts of Schomberg had been fruitless, saying to him that he was not angry with him, that he had himself just had proof that the enemy before him was less despicable than had been supposed.

"To show you that you have lost nothing in our estimation," he added, "we name you a knight of our order, and we give you public and private access to our person."

The Cardinal affectionately pressed his hand as he passed him, and the Marechal, astonished at this deluge of favors, followed the Prince with his bent head, like a culprit, recalling, to console himself, all the

brilliant actions of his career which had remained unnoticed, and mentally attributing to them these unmerited rewards to reconcile them to his conscience.

The King was about to retrace his steps, when the Duc de Beaufort, with an astonished air, exclaimed:

"But, Sire, have I still the powder in my eyes, or have I been sun-struck? It appears to me that I see upon yonder bastion several cavaliers in red uniforms who greatly resemble your light horse whom we thought to be killed."

The Cardinal knitted his brows.

"Impossible, Monsieur," he said; "the imprudence of Monsieur de Coislin has destroyed his Majesty's men-at-arms and those cavaliers. It is for that reason I ventured just now to say to the King that if the useless corps were suppressed, it might be very advantageous from a military point of view."

"Pardieu! your Eminence will pardon me," answered the Duc de Beaufort; "but I do not deceive myself, and there are seven or eight of them driving prisoners before them."

"Well! let us go to the point," said the King; "if I find my old Coislin there I shall be very glad."

With great caution, the horses of the King and his suite passed across the marsh, and with infinite astonishment their riders saw on the ramparts the two red companies in battle array as on parade.

"Vive Dieu!" cried Louis; "I think that not one of them is missing! Well, Marquis, you keep your word--you take walls on horseback."

"In my opinion, this point was ill chosen," said Richelieu, with disdain; "it in no way advances the taking of Perpignan, and must have cost many lives."

"Faith, you are right," said the King, for the first time since the intelligence of the Queen's death addressing the Cardinal without dryness; "I regret the blood which must have been spilled here."

"Only two of our young men have been wounded in the attack, Sire," said old Coislin; "and we have gained new companions-in-arms, in the volunteers who guided us."

"Who are they?" said the Prince.

"Three of them have modestly retired, Sire; but the youngest, whom you see, was the first who proposed the assault, and the first to venture his person in making it. The two companies claim the honor of presenting him to your Majesty."

Cinq-Mars, who was on horseback behind the old captain, took off his hat and showed his pale face, his large, dark eyes, and his long, chestnut hair.

"Those features remind me of some one," said the King; "what say you, Cardinal?"

The latter, who had already cast a penetrating glance at the newcomer, replied:

"Unless I am mistaken, this young man is--"

"Henri d'Effiat," said the volunteer, bowing.

"Sire, it is the same whom I had announced to your Majesty, and who was to have been presented to you by me; the second son of the Marechal."

"Ah!" said Louis, warmly, "I am glad to see the son of my old friend presented by this bastion. It is a suitable introduction, my boy, for one bearing your name. You will follow us to the camp, where we have much to say to you. But what! you here, Monsieur de Thou? Whom have you come to judge?"

"Sire," answered Coislin, "he has condemned to death, without judging, sundry Spaniards, for he was the second to enter the place."

"I struck no one, Monsieur," interrupted De Thou reddening; "it is not my business. Herein I have no merit; I merely accompanied my friend, Monsieur de Cinq-Mars."

"We approve your modesty as well as your bravery, and we shall not forget this. Cardinal, is there not some presidency vacant?"

Richelieu did not like De Thou. And as the sources of his dislike were always mysterious, it was difficult to guess the cause of this animosity; it revealed itself in a cruel word that escaped him. The motive was a passage in the history of the President De Thou--the father of the young man now in question--wherein he stigmatized, in the eyes of posterity, a granduncle of the Cardinal, an apostate monk, sullied with every human vice.

Richelieu, bending to Joseph's ear, whispered:

"You see that man; his father put my name into his history. Well, I will put his into mine." And, truly enough, he subsequently wrote it in blood. At this moment, to avoid answering the King, he feigned not to have heard his question, and to be wholly intent upon the merit of Cinq-Mars and the desire to see him well placed at court.

"I promised you beforehand to make him a captain in my guards," said the Prince; "let him be nominated to-morrow. I would know more of him, and raise him to a higher fortune, if he pleases me. Let us now retire; the sun has set, and we are far from our army. Tell my two good companies to follow us."

The minister, after repeating the order, omitting the implied praise, placed himself on the King's right hand, and the whole court quitted the bastion, now confided to the care of the Swiss, and returned to the camp.

The two red companies defiled slowly through the breach which they had effected with such promptitude; their countenances were grave and silent.

Cinq-Mars went up to his friend.

"These are heroes but ill recompensed," said he; "not a favor, not a compliment."

"I, on the other hand," said the simple De Thou "I, who came here against my will--receive one. Such are courts, such is life; but above us is the true judge, whom men can not blind."

"This will not prevent us from meeting death tomorrow, if necessary," said the young Olivier, laughing.

CHAPTER XI

THE BLUNDERS

In order to appear before the King, Cinq-Mars had been compelled to mount the charger of one of the light horse, wounded in the affair, having lost his own at the foot of the rampart. As the two companies were marching out, he felt some one touch his shoulder, and, turning round, saw old

Grandchamp leading a very beautiful gray horse.

"Will Monsieur le Marquis mount a horse of his own?" said he. "I have put on the saddle and housings of velvet embroidered in gold that remained in the trench. Alas, when I think that a Spaniard might have taken it, or even a Frenchman! For just now there are so many people who take all they find, as if it were their own; and then, as the proverb says, 'What falls in the ditch is for the soldier.' They might also have taken the four hundred gold crowns that Monsieur le Marquis, be it said without reproach, forgot to take out of the holsters. And the pistols! Oh, what pistols! I bought them in Germany; and here they are as good as ever, and with their locks perfect. It was quite enough to kill the poor little black horse, that was born in England as sure as I was at Tours in Touraine, without also exposing these valuables to pass into the hands of the enemy."

While making this lamentation, the worthy man finished saddling the gray horse. The column was long enough filing out to give him time to pay scrupulous attention to the length of the stirrups and of the bands, all the while continuing his harangue.

"I beg your pardon, Monsieur, for being somewhat slow about this; but I sprained my arm slightly in lifting Monsieur de Thou, who himself raised Monsieur le Marquis during the grand scuffle."

"How camest thou there at all, stupid?" said Cinq-Mars. "That is not thy business. I told thee to remain in the camp."

"Oh, as to remaining in the camp, that is out of the question. I can't stay there; when I hear a musket-shot, I should be ill did I not see the flash. As for my business, that is to take care of your horses, and you are on them. Monsieur, think you I should not have saved, had I been able, the life of the poor black horse down there in the trench? Ah, how I loved him!--a horse that gained three races in his time--a time too short for those who loved him as I loved him! He never would take his corn but from his dear Grandchamp; and then he would caress me with his head. The end of my left ear that he carried away one day--poor fellow!--proves it, for it was not out of ill-will he bit it off; quite the contrary. You should have heard how he neighed with rage when any one else came near him; that was the reason why he broke Jean's leg. Good creature, I loved him so!

"When he fell I held him on one side with one hand and M. de Locmaria with the other. I thought at first that both he and that gentleman would recover; but unhappily only one of them returned to life, and that was he whom I least knew. You seem to be laughing at what I say about your horse, Monsieur; you forget that in times of war the horse is the soul of the cavalier. Yes, Monsieur, his soul; for what is it that intimidates the infantry? It is the horse! It certainly is not the man, who, once seated, is little more than a bundle of hay. Who is it that performs the fine deeds that men admire? The horse. There are times when his master, who a moment before would rather have been far away, finds himself victorious and rewarded for his horse's valor, while the poor beast gets nothing but blows. Who is it that gains the prize in the race? The horse, that sups hardly better than usual, while the master pockets the gold, and is envied by his friends and admired by all the lords as if he had run himself. Who is it that hunts the roebuck, yet puts but a morsel in his own mouth? Again, the horse; sometimes the horse is even eaten himself, poor animal! I remember in a campaign with Monsieur le Marechal, it happened that-- But what is the matter, Monsieur, you grow pale?"

"Bind up my leg with something--a handkerchief, a strap, or what you will. I feel a burning pain there; I know not what."

"Your boot is cut, Monsieur. It may be some ball; however, lead is the friend of man."

"It is no friend of mine, at all events."

"Ah, who loves, chastens! Lead must not be ill spoken of!
What is that--"

While occupied in binding his master's leg below the knee, the worthy Grandchamp was about to hold forth in praise of lead as absurdly as he had in praise of the horse, when he was forced, as well as Cinq-Mars, to hear a warm and clamorous dispute among some Swiss soldiers who had remained behind the other troops. They were talking with much gesticulation, and seemed busied with two men among a group of about thirty soldiers.

D'Effiat, still holding out his leg to his servant, and leaning on the saddle of his horse, tried, by listening attentively, to understand the subject of the colloquy; but he knew nothing of German, and could not comprehend the dispute. Grandchamp, who, still holding the boot, had also been listening very seriously, suddenly burst into loud laughter, holding his sides in a manner not usual with him.

"Ha, ha, ha! Monsieur, here are two sergeants disputing which they ought to hang of the two Spaniards there; for your red comrades did not take the trouble to tell them. One of the Swiss says that it's the officer, the other that it's the soldier; a third has just made a proposition for meeting the difficulty."

"And what does he say?"

"He suggests that they hang them both."

"Stop! stop!" cried Cinq-Mars to the soldiers, attempting to walk; but his leg would not support him.

"Put me on my horse, Grandchamp."

"Monsieur, you forget your wound."

"Do as I command, and then mount thyself."

The old servant grumblingly obeyed, and then galloped off, in fulfilment of another imperative order, to stop the Swiss, who were just about to hang their two prisoners to a tree, or to let them hang themselves; for the officer, with the sang-froid of his nation, had himself passed the running noose of a rope around his own neck, and, without being told, had ascended a small ladder placed against the tree, in order to tie the other end of the rope to one of its branches. The soldier, with the same calm indifference, was looking on at the Swiss disputing around him, while holding the ladder.

Cinq-Mars arrived in time to save them, gave his name to the Swiss sergeant, and, employing Grandchamp as interpreter, said that the two prisoners were his, and that he would take them to his tent; that he was a captain in the guards, and would be responsible for them. The German, ever exact in discipline, made no reply; the only resistance was on the part of the prisoner. The officer, still on the top of the ladder, turned round, and speaking thence as from a pulpit, said, with a sardonic laugh:

"I should much like to know what you do here? Who told you I wished to live?"

"I do not ask to know anything about that," said Cinq-Mars; "it matters not to me what becomes of you afterward. All I propose now is to prevent an act which seems to me unjust and cruel. You may kill yourself afterward, if you like."

"Well said," returned the ferocious Spaniard; "you please me. I thought at first you meant to affect the generous in order to oblige me to be grateful, which is a thing I detest. Well, I consent to come down; but I shall hate you as much as ever, for you are a Frenchman. Nor do I thank

you, for you only discharge a debt you owe me, since it was I who this morning kept you from being shot by this young soldier while he was taking aim at you; and he is a man who never missed a chamois in the mountains of Leon."

"Be it as you will," said Cinq-Mars; "come down."

It was his character ever to assume with others the mien they wore toward him; and the rudeness of the Spaniard made him as hard as iron toward him.

"A proud rascal that, Monsieur," said Grandchamp; "in your place Monsieur le Marechal would certainly have left him on his ladder. Come, Louis, Etienne, Germain, escort Monsieur's prisoners--a fine acquisition, truly! If they bring you any luck, I shall be very much surprised."

Cinq-Mars, suffering from the motion of his horse, rode only at the pace of his prisoners on foot, and was accordingly at a distance behind the red companies, who followed close upon the King. He meditated on his way what it could be that the Prince desired to say to him. A ray of hope presented to his mind the figure of Marie de Mantua in the distance; and for a moment his thoughts were calmed. But all his future lay in that brief sentence--"to please the King"; and he began to reflect upon all the bitterness in which his task might involve him.

At that moment he saw approaching his friend, De Thou, who, anxious at his remaining behind, had sought him in the plain, eager to aid him if necessary.

"It is late, my friend; night approaches. You have delayed long; I feared for you. Whom have you here? What has detained you? The King will soon be asking for you."

Such were the rapid inquiries of the young counsellor, whose anxiety, more than the battle itself, had made him lose his accustomed serenity.

"I was slightly wounded; I bring a prisoner, and I was thinking of the King. What can he want me for, my friend? What must I do if he proposes to place me about his person? I must please him; and at this thought--shall I own it?--I am tempted to fly. But I trust that I shall not have that fatal honor. 'To please,' how humiliating the word! 'to obey' quite the opposite! A soldier runs the chance of death, and there's an end. But in what base compliances, what sacrifices of himself, what compositions with his conscience, what degradation of his own thought, may not a courtier be involved! Ah, De Thou, my dear De Thou! I am not made for the court; I feel it, though I have seen it but for a moment. There is in my temperament a certain savageness, which education has polished only on the surface. At a distance, I thought myself adapted to live in this all-powerful world; I even desired it, led by a cherished hope of my heart. But I shuddered at the first step; I shuddered at the mere sight of the Cardinal. The recollection of the last of his crimes, at which I was present, kept me from addressing him. He horrifies me; I never can endure to be near him. The King's favor, too, has that about it which dismays me, as if I knew it would be fatal to me."

"I am glad to perceive this apprehension in you; it may be most salutary," said De Thou, as they rode on. "You are about to enter into contact with power. Before, you did not even conceive it; now you will touch it with your very hand. You will see what it is, and what hand hurls the lightning. Heaven grant that that lightning may never strike you! You will probably be present in those councils which regulate the destiny of nations; you will see, you will perchance originate, those caprices whence are born sanguinary wars, conquests, and treaties; you will hold in your hand the drop of water which swells into mighty torrents. It is only from high places that men can judge of human affairs; you must look from the mountaintop ere you can appreciate the littleness of those things which from below appear to us great."

"Ah, were I on those heights, I should at least learn the lesson you

speaking of; but this Cardinal, this man to whom I must be under obligation, this man whom I know too well by his works--what will he be to me?"

"A friend, a protector, no doubt," answered De Thou.

"Death were a thousand times preferable to his friendship! I hate his whole being, even his very name; he spills the blood of men with the cross of the Redeemer!"

"What horrors are you saying, my friend? You will ruin yourself if you reveal your sentiments respecting the Cardinal to the King."

"Never mind; in the midst of these tortuous ways, I desire to take a new one, the right line. My whole opinion, the opinion of a just man, shall be unveiled to the King himself, if he interrogate me, even should it cost me my head. I have at last seen this King, who has been described to me as so weak; I have seen him, and his aspect has touched me to the heart in spite of myself. Certainly, he is very unfortunate, but he can not be cruel; he will listen to the truth."

"Yes; but he will not dare to make it triumph," answered the sage De Thou. "Beware of this warmth of heart, which often draws you by sudden and dangerous movements. Do not attack a colossus like Richelieu without having measured him."

"That is just like my tutor, the Abbe Quillet. My dear and prudent friend, neither the one nor the other of you know me; you do not know how weary I am of myself, and whither I have cast my gaze. I must mount or die."

"What! already ambitious?" exclaimed De Thou, with extreme surprise.

His friend inclined his head upon his hands, abandoning the reins of his horse, and did not answer.

"What! has this selfish passion of a riper age obtained possession of you at twenty, Henri? Ambition is the saddest of all hopes."

"And yet it possesses me entirely at present, for I see only by means of it, and by it my whole heart is penetrated."

"Ah, Cinq-Mars, I no longer recognize you! how different you were formerly! I do not conceal from you that you appear to me to have degenerated. In those walks of our childhood, when the life, and, above all, the death of Socrates, caused tears of admiration and envy to flow from our eyes; when, raising ourselves to the ideal of the highest virtue, we wished that those illustrious sorrows, those sublime misfortunes, which create great men, might in the future come upon us; when we constructed for ourselves imaginary occasions of sacrifices and devotion--if the voice of a man had pronounced, between us two, the single word, 'ambition,' we should have believed that we were touching a serpent."

De Thou spoke with the heat of enthusiasm and of reproach. Cinq-Mars went on without answering, and still with his face in his hands. After an instant of silence he removed them, and allowed his eyes to be seen, full of generous tears. He pressed the hand of his friend warmly, and said to him, with a penetrating accent:

"Monsieur de Thou, you have recalled to me the most beautiful thoughts of my earliest youth. Do not believe that I have fallen; I am consumed by a secret hope which I can not confide even to you. I despise, as much as you, the ambition which will seem to possess me. All the world will believe in it; but what do I care for the world? As for you, noble friend, promise me that you will not cease to esteem me, whatever you may see me do. I swear that my thoughts are as pure as heaven itself!"

"Well," said De Thou, "I swear by heaven that I believe you blindly; you give me back my life!"

They shook hands again with effusion of heart, and then perceived that they had arrived almost before the tent of the King.

Day was nearly over; but one might have believed that a softer day was rising, for the moon issued from the sea in all her splendor. The transparent sky of the south showed not a single cloud, and it seemed like a veil of pale blue sown with silver spangles; the air, still hot, was agitated only by the rare passage of breezes from the Mediterranean; and all sounds had ceased upon the earth. The fatigued army reposed beneath their tents, the line of which was marked by the fires, and the besieged city seemed oppressed by the same slumber; upon its ramparts nothing was to be seen but the arms of the sentinels, which shone in the rays of the moon, or the wandering fire of the night-rounds. Nothing was to be heard but the gloomy and prolonged cries of its guards, who warned one another not to sleep.

It was only around the King that all things waked, but at a great distance from him. This Prince had dismissed all his suite; he walked alone before his tent, and, pausing sometimes to contemplate the beauty of the heavens, he appeared plunged in melancholy meditation. No one dared to interrupt him; and those of the nobility who had remained in the royal quarters had gathered about the Cardinal, who, at twenty paces from the King, was seated upon a little hillock of turf, fashioned into a seat by the soldiers. There he wiped his pale forehead, fatigued with the cares of the day and with the unaccustomed weight of a suit of armor; he bade adieu, in a few hurried but always attentive and polite words, to those who came to salute him as they retired. No one was near him now except Joseph, who was talking with Laubardemont. The Cardinal was looking at the King, to see whether, before reentering, this Prince would not speak to him, when the sound of the horses of Cinq-Mars was heard. The Cardinal's guards questioned him, and allowed him to advance without followers, and only with De Thou.

"You are come too late, young man, to speak with the King," said the Cardinal-Duke with a sharp voice. "One can not make his Majesty wait."

The two friends were about to retire, when the voice of Louis XIII himself made itself heard. This Prince was at that moment in one of those false positions which constituted the misfortune of his whole life. Profoundly irritated against his minister, but not concealing from himself that he owed the success of the day to him, desiring, moreover, to announce to him his intention to quit the army and to raise the siege of Perpignan, he was torn between the desire of speaking to the Cardinal and the fear lest his anger might be weakened. The minister, upon his part, dared not be the first to speak, being uncertain as to the thoughts which occupied his master, and fearing to choose his time ill, but yet not able to decide upon retiring. Both found themselves precisely in the position of two lovers who have quarrelled and desire to have an explanation, when the King, seized with joy the first opportunity of extricating himself. The chance was fatal to the minister. See upon what trifles depend those destinies which are called great.

"Is it not Monsieur de Cinq-Mars?" said the King, in a loud voice. "Let him approach; I am waiting for him."

Young D'Effiat approached on horseback, and at some paces from the King desired to set foot to earth; but hardly had his leg touched the ground when he dropped upon his knees.

"Pardon, Sire!" said he, "I believe that I am wounded;" and the blood issued violently from his boot.

De Thou had seen him fall, and had approached to sustain him. Richelieu seized this opportunity of advancing also, with dissembled eagerness.

"Remove this spectacle from the eyes of the King," said he. "You see very well that this young man is dying."

"Not at all," said Louis, himself supporting him; "a king of France knows how to see a man die, and has no fear of the blood which flows for him. This young man interests me. Let him be carried into my tent, and let my doctors attend him. If his wound is not serious, he shall come with me to Paris, for the siege is suspended, Monsieur le Cardinal. Such is my desire; other affairs call me to the centre of the kingdom. I will leave you here to command in my absence. This is what I desired to say to you."

With these words the King went abruptly into his tent, preceded by his pages and his officers, carrying flambeaux.

The royal pavilion was closed, and Cinq-Mars was borne in by De Thou and his people, while the Duc de Richelieu, motionless and stupefied, still regarded the spot where this scene had passed. He appeared thunder-struck, and incapable of seeing or hearing those who observed him.

Laubardemont, still intimidated by his ill reception of the preceding day, dared not speak a word to him, and Joseph hardly recognized in him his former master. For an instant he regretted having given himself to him, and fancied that his star was waning; but, reflecting that he was hated by all men and had no resource save in Richelieu, he seized him by the arm, and, shaking him roughly, said to him in a low voice, but harshly:

"Come, come, Monseigneur, you are chickenhearted; come with us."

And, appearing to sustain him by the elbow, but in fact drawing him in spite of himself, with the aid of Laubardemont, he made him enter his tent, as a schoolmaster forces a schoolboy to rest, fearing the effects of the evening mist upon him.

The prematurely aged man slowly obeyed the wishes of his two parasites, and the purple of the pavilion dropped upon him.

CHAPTER XII

THE NIGHT-WATCH

O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight,
Cold, fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
What do I fear? Myself?
I love myself!

SHAKESPEARE.

Hardly was the Cardinal in his tent before he dropped, armed and cuirassed, into a great armchair; and there, holding his handkerchief to his mouth with a fixed gaze, he remained in this attitude, letting his two dark confidants wonder whether contemplation or annihilation maintained him in it. He was deadly pale, and a cold sweat streamed upon his brow. In wiping it with a sudden movement, he threw behind him his red cap, the only ecclesiastical sign which remained upon him, and again rested with his mouth upon his hands. The Capuchin on one side, and the sombre magistrate on the other, considered him in silence, and seemed, with their brown and black costumes like the priest and the notary of a dying man.

The friar, drawing from the depth of his chest a voice that seemed better suited to repeat the service of the dead than to administer consolation, spoke first:

"If Monseigneur will recall my counsels given at Narbonne, he will confess that I had a just presentiment of the troubles which this young man would one day cause him."

The magistrate continued:

"I have learned from the old deaf abbe who dined at the house of the Marechale d'Effiat, and who heard all, that this young Cinq-Mars exhibited more energy than one would have imagined, and that he attempted to rescue the Marechal de Bassompierre. I have still by me the detailed report of the deaf man, who played his part very well. His Eminence the Cardinal must be sufficiently convinced by it."

"I have told Monseigneur," resumed Joseph--for these two ferocious Seyds alternated their discourse like the shepherds of Virgil--"I have told him that it would be well to get rid of this young D'Effiat, and that I would charge myself with the business, if such were his good pleasure. It would be easy to destroy him in the opinion of the King."

"It would be safer to make him die of his wound," answered Laubardemont; "if his Eminence would have the goodness to command me, I know intimately the assistant-physician, who cured me of a blow on the forehead, and is now attending to him. He is a prudent man, entirely devoted to Monseigneur the Cardinal-Duke, and whose affairs have been somewhat embarrassed by gambling."

"I believe," replied Joseph, with an air of modesty, mingled with a touch of bitterness, "that if his Excellency proposed to employ any one in this useful project, it should be his accustomed negotiator, who has had some success in the past."

"I fancy that I could enumerate some signal instances," answered Laubardemont, "and very recent ones, of which the difficulty was great."

"Ah, no doubt," said the father, with a bow and an air of consideration and politeness, "your most bold and skilfully executed commission was the trial of Urbain Grandier, the magician. But, with Heaven's assistance, one may be enabled to do things quite as worthy and bold. It is not without merit, for instance," added he, dropping his eyes like a young girl, "to have extirpated vigorously a royal Bourbon branch."

"It was not very difficult," answered the magistrate, with bitterness, "to select a soldier from the guards to kill the Comte de Soissons; but to preside, to judge--"

"And to execute one's self," interrupted the heated Capuchin, "is certainly less difficult than to educate a man from infancy in the thought of accomplishing great things with discretion, and to bear all tortures, if necessary, for the love of heaven, rather than reveal the name of those who have armed him with their justice, or to die courageously upon the body of him that he has struck, as did one who was commissioned by me. He uttered no cry at the blow of the sword of Riquemont, the equerry of the Prince. He died like a saint; he was my pupil."

"To give orders is somewhat different from running risk one's self."

"And did I risk nothing at the siege of Rochelle?"

"Of being drowned in a sewer, no doubt," said Laubardemont.

"And you," said Joseph, "has your danger been that of catching your fingers in instruments of torture? And all this because the Abbess of the Ursulines is your niece."

"It was a good thing for your brothers of Saint Francis, who held the hammers; but I--I was struck in the forehead by this same Cinq-Mars, who was leading an enraged multitude."

"Are you quite sure of that?" cried Joseph, delighted. "Did he dare to act thus against the commands of the King?" The joy which this discovery gave him made him forget his anger.

"Fools!" exclaimed the Cardinal, suddenly breaking his long silence, and taking from his lips his handkerchief stained with blood. "I would punish your angry dispute had it not taught me many secrets of infamy on your part. You have exceeded my orders; I commanded no torture, Laubardemont. That is your second fault. You cause me to be hated for nothing; that was useless. But you, Joseph, do not neglect the details of this disturbance in which Cinq-Mars was engaged; it may be of use in the end."

"I have all the names and descriptions," said the secret judge, eagerly, bending his tall form and thin, olive-colored visage, wrinkled with a servile smile, down to the armchair.

"It is well! it is well!" said the minister, pushing him back; "but that is not the question yet. You, Joseph, be in Paris before this young upstart, who will become a favorite, I am certain. Become his friend; make him of my party or destroy him. Let him serve me or fall. But, above all, send me every day safe persons to give me verbal accounts. I will have no more writing for the future. I am much displeased with you, Joseph. What a miserable courier you chose to send from Cologne! He could not understand me. He saw the King too soon, and here we are still in disgrace in consequence. You have just missed ruining me entirely. Go and observe what is about to be done in Paris. A conspiracy will soon be hatched against me; but it will be the last. I remain here in order to let them all act more freely. Go, both of you, and send me my valet after the lapse of two hours; I wish now to be alone."

The steps of the two men were still to be heard as Richelieu, with eyes fixed upon the entrance to the tent, pursued them with his irritated glance.

"Wretches!" he exclaimed, when he was alone, "go and accomplish some more secret work, and afterward I will crush you, in pure instruments of my power. The King will soon succumb beneath the slow malady which consumes him. I shall then be regent; I shall be King of France myself; I shall no longer have to dread the caprices of his weakness. I will destroy the haughty races of this country. I will be alone above them all. Europe shall tremble."

Here the blood, which again filled his mouth, obliged him to apply his handkerchief to it once more.

"Ah, what do I say? Unhappy victim that I am! Here am I, death-stricken! My dissolution is near; my blood flows, and my spirit desires to labor still. Why? For whom? Is it for glory? That is an empty word. Is it for men? I despise them. For whom, then, since I shall die, perhaps, in two or three years? Is it for God? What a name! I have not walked with Him! He has seen all--"

Here he let his head fall upon his breast, and his eyes met the great cross of gold which was suspended from his neck. He could not help throwing himself back in his chair; but it followed him. He took it; and considering it with fixed arid devouring looks, he said in a low voice:

"Terrible sign! thou followest me! Shall I find thee elsewhere--divinity and suffering? What am I? What have I done?"

For the first time a singular and unknown terror penetrated him. He trembled, at once frozen and scorched by an invincible shudder. He dared not lift his eyes, fearing to meet some terrible vision. He dared not call, fearing to hear the sound of his own voice. He remained profoundly plunged in meditations on eternity, so terrible for him, and he murmured the following kind of prayer:

"Great God, if Thou hearest me, judge me then, but do not isolate me in judging me! Look upon me, surrounded by the men of my generation; consider the immense work I had undertaken!, Was not an enormous lever wanted to bestir those masses; and if this lever in falling crushes some

useless wretches, am I very culpable? I seem wicked to men; but Thou, Supreme judge, dost thou regard me thus?

"No; Thou knowest it is boundless power which makes creature culpable against creature. It is not Armand de Richelieu who destroys; it is the Prime-Minister. It is not for his personal injuries; it is to carry out a system. But a system--what is this word? Is it permitted me to play thus with men, to regard them as numbers for working out a thought, which perhaps is false? I overturn the framework of the throne. What if, without knowing it, I sap its foundations and hasten its fall! Yes, my borrowed power has seduced me. O labyrinth! O weakness of human thought! Simple faith, why did I quit thy path? Why am I not a simple priest? If I dared to break with man and give myself to God, the ladder of Jacob would again descend in my dreams."

At this moment his ear was struck by a great noise outside--laughter of soldiers, ferocious shouts and oaths, mingled with words which were a long time sustained by a weak yet clear voice; one would have said it was the voice of an angel interrupted by the laughter of demons. He rose and opened a sort of linen window, worked in the side of his square tent. A singular spectacle presented itself to his view; he remained some instants contemplating it, attentive to the conversation which was going on.

"Listen, listen, La Valeur!" said one soldier to another. "See, she begins again to speak and to sing!"

"Put her in the middle of the circle, between us and the fire."

"You do not know her! You do not know her!" said another. "But here is Grand-Ferre, who says that he knows her."

"Yes, I tell you I know her; and, by Saint Peter of Loudun, I will swear that I have seen her in my village, when I had leave of absence; and it was upon an occasion at which one shuddered, but concerning which one dares not talk, especially to a Cardinalist like you."

"Eh! and pray why dare not one speak of it, you great simpleton?" said an old soldier, twisting up his moustache.

"It is not spoken of because it burns the tongue. Do you understand that?"

"No, I don't understand it."

"Well, nor I neither; but certain citizens told it to me."

Here a general laugh interrupted him.

"Ha, ha, ha! is he a fool?" said one. "He listens to what the townsfolk tell him."

"Ah, well! if you listen to their gabble, you have time to lose," said another.

"You do not know, then, what my mother said, greenhorn?" said the eldest, gravely dropping his eyes with a solemn air, to compel attention.

"Eh! how can you think that I know it, La Pipe? Your mother must have died of old age before my grandfather came into the world."

"Well, greenhorn, I will tell you! You shall know, first of all, that my mother was a respectable Bohemian, as much attached to the regiment of carabineers of La Roque as my dog Canon there. She carried brandy round her neck in a barrel, and drank better than the best of us. She had fourteen husbands, all soldiers, who died upon the field of battle."

"Ha! that was a woman!" interrupted the soldiers, full of respect.

"And never once in her life did she speak to a townsman, unless it was to say to him on coming to her lodging, 'Light my candle and warm my soup.'"

"Well, and what was it that your mother said to you?"

"If you are in such a hurry, you shall not know, greenhorn. She said habitually in her talk, 'A soldier is better than a dog; but a dog is better than a bourgeois.'"

"Bravo! bravo! that was well said!" cried the soldier, filled with enthusiasm at these fine words.

"That," said Grand-Ferre, "does not prove that the citizens who made the remark to me that it burned the tongue were in the right; besides, they were not altogether citizens, for they had swords, and they were grieved at a cure being burned, and so was I."

"Eh! what was it to you that they burned your cure, great simpleton?" said a sergeant, leaning upon the fork of his arquebus; "after him another would come. You might have taken one of our generals in his stead, who are all cures at present; for me, I am a Royalist, and I say it frankly."

"Hold your tongue!" cried La Pipe; "let the girl speak. It is these dogs of Royalists who always disturb us in our amusements."

"What say you?" answered Grand-Ferre. "Do you even know what it is to be a Royalist?"

"Yes," said La Pipe; "I know you all very well. Go, you are for the old self-called princes of the peace, together with the wranglers against the Cardinal and the gabelle. Am I right or not?"

"No, old red-stocking. A Royalist is one who is for the King; that's what it is. And as my father was the King's valet, I am for the King, you see; and I have no liking for the red-stockings, I can tell you."

"Ah, you call me red-stocking, eh?" answered the old soldier. "You shall give me satisfaction to-morrow morning. If you had made war in the Valteline, you would not talk like that; and if you had seen his Eminence marching upon the dike at Rochelle, with the old Marquis de Spinola, while volleys of cannonshot were sent after him, you would have nothing to say about red-stockings."

"Come, let us amuse ourselves, instead of quarrelling," said the other soldiers.

The men who conversed thus were standing round a great fire, which illuminated them more than the moon, beautiful as it was; and in the centre of the group was the object of their gathering and their cries. The Cardinal perceived a young woman arrayed in black and covered with a long, white veil. Her feet were bare; a thick cord clasped her elegant figure; a long rosary fell from her neck almost to her feet, and her hands, delicate and white as ivory, turned its beads and made them pass rapidly beneath her fingers. The soldiers, with a barbarous joy, amused themselves with laying little brands in her way to burn her naked feet. The oldest took the smoking match of his arquebus, and, approaching it to the edge of her robe, said in a hoarse voice:

"Come, madcap, tell me your history, or I will fill you with powder and blow you up like a mine; take care, for I have already played that trick to others besides you, in the old wars of the Huguenots. Come, sing."

The young woman, looking at him gravely, made no reply, but lowered her veil.

"You don't manage her well," said Grand-Ferre, with a drunken laugh; "you will make her cry. You don't know the fine language of the court; let me

speak to her." And, touching her on the chin, "My little heart," he said, "if you will please, my sweet, to resume the little story you told just now to these gentlemen, I will pray you to travel with me upon the river Du Tendre, as the great ladies of Paris say, and to take a glass of brandy with your faithful chevalier, who met you formerly at Loudun, when you played a comedy in order to burn a poor devil."

The young woman crossed her arms, and, looking around her with an imperious air, cried:

"Withdraw, in the name of the God of armies; withdraw, impious men! There is nothing in common between us. I do not understand your tongue, nor you mine. Go, sell your blood to the princes of the earth at so many oboles a day, and leave me to accomplish my mission! Conduct me to the Cardinal."

A coarse laugh interrupted her.

"Do you think," said a carabineer of Maurevert, "that his Eminence the Generalissimo will receive you with your feet naked? Go and wash them."

"The Lord has said, 'Jerusalem, lift thy robe, and pass the rivers of water,'" she answered, her arms still crossed. "Let me be conducted to the Cardinal."

Richelieu cried in a loud voice, "Bring the woman to me, and let her alone!"

All were silent; they conducted her to the minister.

"Why," said she, beholding him--"why bring me before an armed man?"

They left her alone with him without answering.

The Cardinal looked at her with a suspicious air. "Madame," said he, "what are you doing in the camp at this hour? And if your mind is not disordered, why these naked feet?"

"It is a vow; it is a vow," answered the young woman, with an air of impatience, seating herself beside him abruptly. "I have also made a vow not to eat until I have found the man I seek."

"My sister," said the Cardinal, astonished and softened, looking closely at her, "God does not exact such rigors from a weak body, and particularly from one of your age, for you seem very young."

"Young! oh, yes, I was very young a few days ago; but I have since passed two existences at least, so much have I thought and suffered. Look on my countenance."

And she discovered a face of perfect beauty. Black and very regular eyes gave life to it; but in their absence one might have thought her features were those of a phantom, she was so pale. Her lips were blue and quivering; and a strong shudder made her teeth chatter.

"You are ill, my sister," said the minister, touched, taking her hand, which he felt to be burning hot. A sort of habit of inquiring concerning his own health, and that of others, made him touch the pulse of her emaciated arm; he felt that the arteries were swollen by the beatings of a terrible fever.

"Alas!" he continued, with more of interest, "you have killed yourself with rigors beyond human strength! I have always blamed them, and especially at a tender age. What, then, has induced you to do this? Is it to confide it to me that you are come? Speak calmly, and be sure of succor."

"Confide in men!" answered the young woman; "oh, no, never! All have deceived me. I will confide myself to no one, not even to Monsieur Cinq-

Mars, although he must soon die."

"What!" said Richelieu, contracting his brows, but with a bitter laugh, -- "what! do you know this young man? Has he been the cause of your misfortune?"

"Oh, no! He is very good, and hates wickedness; that is what will ruin him. Besides," said she, suddenly assuming a harsh and savage air, "men are weak, and there are things which women must accomplish. When there were no more valiant men in Israel, Deborah arose."

"Ah! how came you with all this fine learning?" continued the Cardinal, still holding her hand.

"Oh, I can't explain that!" answered she, with a touching air of naivete and a very gentle voice; "you would not understand me. It is the Devil who has taught me all, and who has destroyed me."

"Ah, my child! it is always he who destroys us; but he instructs us ill," said Richelieu, with an air of paternal protection and an increasing pity. "What have been your faults? Tell them to me; I am very powerful."

"Ah," said she, with a look of doubt, "you have much influence over warriors, brave men and generals! Beneath your cuirass must beat a noble heart; you are an old General who knows nothing of the tricks of crime."

Richelieu smiled; this mistake flattered him.

"I heard you ask for the Cardinal; do you desire to see him? Did you come here to seek him?"

The girl drew back and placed a finger upon her forehead.

"I had forgotten it," said she; "you have talked to me too much. I had overlooked this idea, and yet it is an important one; it is for that that I have condemned myself to the hunger which is killing me. I must accomplish it, or I shall die first. Ah," said she, putting her hand beneath her robe in her bosom, whence she appeared to take something, "behold it! this idea--"

She suddenly blushed, and her eyes widened extraordinarily. She continued, bending to the ear of the Cardinal:

"I will tell you; listen! Urbain Grandier, my lover Urbain, told me this night that it was Richelieu who had been the cause of his death. I took a knife from an inn, and I come here to kill him; tell me where he is."

The Cardinal, surprised and terrified, recoiled with horror. He dared not call his guards, fearing the cries of this woman and her accusations; nevertheless, a transport of this madness might be fatal to him.

"This frightful history will pursue me everywhere!" cried he, looking fixedly at her, and thinking within himself of the course he should take.

They remained in silence, face to face, in the same attitude, like two wrestlers who contemplate before attacking each other, or like the pointer and his victim petrified by the power of a look.

In the mean time, Laubardemont and Joseph had gone forth together; and ere separating they talked for a moment before the tent of the Cardinal, because they were eager mutually to deceive each other. Their hatred had acquired new force by their recent quarrel; and each had resolved to ruin his rival in the mind of his master. The judge then began the dialogue, which each of them had prepared, taking the arm of the other as by one and the same movement.

"Ah, reverend father! how you have afflicted me by seeming to take in ill part the trifling pleasantries which I said to you just now."

"Heavens, no! my dear Monsieur, I am far from that. Charity, where would be charity? I have sometimes a holy warmth in conversation, for the good of the State and of Monseigneur, to whom I am entirely devoted."

"Ah, who knows it better than I, reverend father? But render me justice; you also know how completely I am attached to his Eminence the Cardinal, to whom I owe all. Alas! I have employed too much zeal in serving him, since he reproaches me with it."

"Reassure yourself," said Joseph; "he bears no ill-will toward you. I know him well; he can appreciate one's actions in favor of one's family. He, too, is a very good relative."

"Yes, there it is," answered Laubardemont; "consider my condition. My niece would have been totally ruined at her convent had Urbain triumphed; you feel that as well as I do, particularly as she did not quite comprehend us, and acted the child when she was compelled to appear."

"Is it possible? In full audience! What you tell me indeed makes me feel for you. How painful it must have been!"

"More so than you can imagine. She forgot, in her madness, all that she had been told, committed a thousand blunders in Latin, which we patched up as well as we could; and she even caused an unpleasant scene on the day of the trial, very unpleasant for me and the judges--there were swoons and shrieks. Ah, I swear that I would have scolded her well had I not been forced to quit precipitately that, little town of Loudun. But, you see, it is natural enough that I am attached to her. She is my nearest relative; for my son has turned out ill, and no one knows what has become of him during the last four years. Poor little Jeanne de Belfiel! I made her a nun, and then abbess, in order to preserve all for that scamp. Had I foreseen his conduct, I should have retained her for the world."

"She is said to have great beauty," answered Joseph; "that is a precious gift for a family. She might have been presented at court, and the King --Ah! ah! Mademoiselle de la Fayette--eh! eh!--Mademoiselle d'Hautefort--you understand; it may be even possible to think of it yet."

"Ah, that is like you, Monseigneur! for we know that you have been nominated to the cardinalate; how good you are to remember the most devoted of your friends!"

Laubardemont was yet talking to Joseph when they found themselves at the end of the line of the camp, which led to the quarter of the volunteers.

"May God and his Holy Mother protect you during my absence!" said Joseph, stopping. "To-morrow I depart for Paris; and as I shall have frequent business with this young Cinq-Mars, I shall first go to see him, and learn news of his wound."

"Had I been listened to," said Laubardemont, "you would not now have had this trouble."

"Alas, you are right!" answered Joseph, with a profound sigh, and raising his eyes to heaven; "but the Cardinal is no longer the same man. He will not take advantage of good ideas; he will ruin us if he goes on thus."

And, making a low bow to the judge, the Capuchin took the road which he had indicated to him.

Laubardemont followed him for some time with his eyes, and, when he was quite sure of the route which he had taken, he returned, or, rather, ran back to the tent of the minister. "The Cardinal dismisses him, he tells me; that shows that he is tired of him. I know secrets which will ruin him. I will add that he is gone to pay court to the future favorite. I will replace this monk in the favor of the minister. The moment is

propitious. It is midnight; he will be alone for an hour and a half yet. Let me run."

He arrived at the tent of the guards, which was before the pavilion.

"Monseigneur gives audience to some one," said the captain, hesitating; "you can not enter."

"Never mind; you saw me leave an hour ago, and things are passing of which I must give an account."

"Come in, Laubardemont," cried the minister; "come in quickly, and alone."

He entered. The Cardinal, still seated, held the two hands of the nun in one of his, and with the other he imposed silence upon his stupefied agent, who remained motionless, not yet seeing the face of this woman. She spoke volubly, and the strange things she said contrasted horribly with the sweetness of her voice. Richelieu seemed moved.

"Yes, I will stab him with a knife. It is the knife which the demon Behirith gave me at the inn; but it is the nail of Sisera. It has a handle of ivory, you see; and I have wept much over it. Is it not singular, my good General? I will turn it in the throat of him who killed my friend, as he himself told me to do; and afterward I will burn the body. There is like for like, the punishment which God permitted to Adam. You have an astonished air, my brave general; but you would be much more so, were I to repeat to you his song--the song which he sang to me again last night, at the hour of the funeral-pyre--you understand?--the hour when it rains, the hour when my hand burns as now. He said to me: 'They are much deceived, the magistrates, the red judges. I have eleven demons at my command; and I shall come to see you when the clock strikes, under a canopy of purple velvet, with torches--torches of resin to give us light--' Ah, that is beautiful! Listen, listen to what he sings!"

And she sang to the air of De Profundis.

"Is it not singular, my good General?" said she, when she had finished; "and I--I answer him every evening."

"Then he speaks as spirits and prophets speak. He says: 'Woe, woe to him who has shed blood! Are the judges of the earth gods? No, they are men who grow old and suffer, and yet they dare to say aloud, Let that man die! The penalty of death, the pain of death--who has given to man the right of imposing it on man? Is the number two? One would be an assassin, look you! But count well, one, two, three. Behold, they are wise and just, these grave and salaried criminals! O crime, the horror of Heaven! If you looked upon them from above as I look upon them, you would be yet paler than I am. Flesh destroys flesh! That which lives by blood sheds blood coldly and without anger, like a God with power to create!'"

The cries which the unhappy girl uttered, as she rapidly spoke these words, terrified Richelieu and Laubardemont so much that they still remained motionless. The delirium and the fever continued to transport her.

"'Did the judges tremble?' said Urbain Grandier to me. 'Did they tremble at deceiving themselves?' They work the work of the just. The question! They bind his limbs with ropes to make him speak. His skin cracks, tears away, and rolls up like a parchment; his nerves are naked, red, and glittering; his bones crack; the marrow spurts out. But the judges sleep! they dream of flowers and spring. 'How hot the grand chamber is!' says one, awaking; 'this man has not chosen to speak! Is the torture finished?' And pitiful at last, he dooms him to death--death, the sole fear of the living! death, the unknown world! He sends before him a furious soul which will wait for him. Oh! has he never seen the vision of vengeance? Has he never seen before falling asleep the flayed

prevaricator?"

Already weakened by fever, fatigue, and grief, the Cardinal, seized with horror and pity, exclaimed:

"Ah, for the love of God, let this terrible scene have an end! Take away this woman; she is mad!"

The frantic creature turned, and suddenly uttering loud cries, "Ah, the judge! the judge! the judge!" she said, recognizing Laubardemont.

The latter, clasping his hands and trembling before the Cardinal, said with terror:

"Alas, Monseigneur, pardon me! she is my niece, who has lost her reason. I was not aware of this misfortune, or she would have been shut up long ago. Jeanne! Jeanne! come, Madame, to your knees! ask forgiveness of Monseigneur the Cardinal-duc."

"It is Richelieu!" she cried; and astonishment seemed wholly to paralyze this young and unhappy beauty. The flush which had animated her at first gave place to a deadly pallor, her cries to a motionless silence, her wandering looks to a frightful fixedness of her large eyes, which constantly followed the agitated minister.

"Take away this unfortunate child quickly," said he; "she is dying, and so am I. So many horrors pursue me since that sentence that I believe all hell is loosed upon me."

He rose as he spoke; Jeanne de Belfiel, still silent and stupefied, with haggard eyes, open mouth, and head bent forward, yet remained beneath the shock of her double surprise, which seemed to have extinguished the rest of her reason and her strength. At the movement of the Cardinal, she shuddered to find herself between him and Laubardemont, looked by turns at one and the other, let the knife which she held fall from her hand, and retired slowly toward the opening of the tent, covering herself completely with her veil, and looking wildly and with terror behind her upon her uncle who followed, like an affrighted lamb, which already feels at its back the burning breath of the wolf about to seize it.

Thus they both went forth; and hardly had they reached the open air, when the furious judge caught the hands of his victim, tied them with a handkerchief, and easily led her, for she uttered no cry, not even a sigh, but followed him with her head still drooping upon her bosom, and as if plunged in profound somnambulism.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SPANIARD

Meantime, a scene of different nature was passing in the tent of Cinq-Mars; the words of the King, the first balm to his wounds, had been followed by the anxious care of the surgeons of the court. A spent ball, easily extracted, had been the only cause of his accident. He was allowed to travel and all was ready. The invalid had received up to midnight friendly or interested visits; among the first were those of little Gondi and of Fontrailles, who were also preparing to quit Perpignan for Paris. The ex-page, Olivier d'Entraigues, joined with them in complimenting the fortunate volunteer, whom the King seemed to have distinguished. The habitual coldness of the Prince toward all who surrounded him having caused those who knew of them to regard the few words he had spoken as assured signs of high favor, all came to congratulate him.

At length, released from visitors, he lay upon his camp-bed. De Thou sat by his side, holding his hand, and Grandchamp at his feet, still

grumbling at the numerous interruptions that had fatigued his wounded master. Cinq-Mars himself tasted one of those moments of calm and hope, which so refresh the soul as well as the body. His free hand secretly pressed the gold cross that hung next to his heart, the beloved donor of which he was so soon to behold. Outwardly, he listened with kindly looks to the counsels of the young magistrate; but his inward thoughts were all turned toward the object of his journey--the object, also, of his life. The grave De Thou went on in a calm, gentle voice:

"I shall soon follow you to Paris. I am happier than you at seeing the King take you there with him. You are right in looking upon it as the beginning of a friendship which must be turned to profit. I have reflected deeply on the secret causes of your ambition, and I think I have divined your heart. Yes; that feeling of love for France, which made it beat in your earliest youth, must have gained greater strength. You would be near the King in order to serve your country, in order to put in action those golden dreams of your early years. The thought is a vast one, and worthy of you! I admire you; I bow before you. To approach the monarch with the chivalrous devotion of our fathers, with a heart full of candor, and prepared for any sacrifice; to receive the confidences of his soul; to pour into his those of his subjects; to soften the sorrows of the King by telling him the confidence his people have in him; to cure the wounds of the people by laying them open to its master, and by the intervention of your favor thus to reestablish that intercourse of love between the father and his children which for eighteen years has been interrupted by a man whose heart is marble; for this noble enterprise, to expose yourself to all the horrors of his vengeance and, what is even worse, to brave all the perfidious calumnies which pursue the favorite to the very steps of the throne--this dream was worthy of you.

"Pursue it, my friend," De Thou continued. "Never become discouraged. Speak loudly to the King of the merit and misfortunes of his most illustrious friends who are trampled on. Tell him fearlessly that his old nobility have never conspired against him; and that from the young Montmorency to the amiable Comte de Soissons, all have opposed the minister, and never the monarch. Tell him that the old families of France were born with his race; that in striking them he affects the whole nation; and that, should he destroy them, his own race will suffer, that it will stand alone exposed to the blast of time and events, as an old oak trembling and exposed to the wind of the plain, when the forest which surrounded and supported it has been destroyed. Yes!" cried De Thou, growing animated, "this aim is a fine and noble one. Go on in your course with a resolute step; expel even that secret shame, that shyness, which a noble soul experiences before it can resolve upon flattering--upon paying what the world calls its court. Alas, kings are accustomed to these continual expressions of false admiration for them! Look upon them as a new language which must be learned--a language hitherto foreign to your lips, but which, believe me, may be nobly spoken, and which may express high and generous thoughts."

During this warm discourse of his friend, Cinq-Mars could not refrain from a sudden blush; and he turned his head on his pillow toward the tent, so that his face might not be seen. De Thou stopped:

"What is the matter, Henri? You do not answer. Am I deceived?"

Cinq-Mars gave a deep sigh and remained silent.

"Is not your heart affected by these ideas which I thought would have transported it?"

The wounded man looked more calmly at his friend and said:

"I thought, my dear De Thou, that you would not interrogate me further, and that you were willing to repose a blind confidence in me. What evil genius has moved you thus to sound my soul? I am not a stranger to these ideas which possess you. Who told you that I had not conceived them? Who told you that I had not formed the firm resolution of prosecuting

them infinitely farther in action than you have put them in words? Love for France, virtuous hatred of the ambition which oppresses and shatters her ancient institutions with the axe of the executioner, the firm belief that virtue may be as skilful as crime,--these are my gods as much as yours. But when you see a man kneeling in a church, do you ask him what saint or what angel protects him and receives his prayer? What matters it to you, provided that he pray at the foot of the altars that you adore--provided that, if called upon, he fall a martyr at the foot of those 'altars? When our forefathers journeyed with naked feet toward the Holy Sepulchre, with pilgrims' staves in their hands, did men inquire the secret vow which led them to the Holy Land? They struck, they died; and men, perhaps God himself, asked no more. The pious captain who led them never stripped their bodies to see whether the red cross and haircloth concealed any other mysterious symbol; and in heaven, doubtless, they were not judged with any greater rigor for having aided the strength of their resolutions upon earth by some hope permitted to a Christian--some second and secret thought, more human, and nearer the mortal heart."

De Thou smiled and slightly blushed, lowering his eyes.

"My friend," he answered, gravely; "this excitement may be injurious to you. Let us not continue this subject; let us not mingle God and heaven in our discourse. It is not well; and draw the coverings over your shoulder, for the night is cold. I promise you," he added, covering his young invalid with a maternal care--"I promise not to offend you again with my counsels."

"And I," cried Cinq-Mars, despite the interdiction to speak, "swear to you by this gold cross you see, and by the Holy Mary, to die rather than renounce the plan that you first traced out! You may one day, perhaps, be forced to pray me to stop; but then it will be too late."

"Very well!" repeated the counsellor, "now sleep; if you do not stop, I will go on with you, wherever you lead me."

And, taking a prayer-book from his pocket, he began to read attentively; in a short time he looked at Cinq-Mars, who was still awake. He made a sign to Grandchamp to put the lamp out of sight of the invalid; but this new care succeeded no better. The latter, with his eyes still open, tossed restlessly on his narrow bed.

"Come, you are not calm," said De Thou, smiling; "I will read to you some pious passage which will put your mind in repose. Ah, my friend, it is here that true repose is to be found; it is in this consolatory book, for, open it where you will, you will always see, on the one hand, man in the only condition that suits his weakness--prayer, and the uncertainty as to his destiny--and, on the other, God himself speaking to him of his infirmities! What a glorious and heavenly spectacle! What a sublime bond between heaven and earth! Life, death, and eternity are there; open it at random."

"Yes!" said Cinq-Mars, rising with a vivacity which had something boyish in it; "you shall read to me, but let me open the book. You know the old superstition of our country--when the mass-book is opened with a sword, the first page on the left contains the destiny of him who reads, and the first person who enters after he has read is powerfully to influence the reader's future fate."

"What childishness! But be it as you will. Here is your sword; insert the point. Let us see."

"Let me read myself," said Cinq-Mars, taking one side of the book. Old Grandchamp gravely advanced his tawny face and his gray hair to the foot of the bed to listen. His master read, stopped at the first phrase, but with a smile, perhaps slightly forced, he went on to the end.

"I. Now it was in the city of Milan that they appeared.

"II. The high-priest said to them, 'Bow down and adore the gods.'

"III. And the people were silent, looking at their faces, which appeared as the faces of angels.

"IV. But Gervais, taking the hand of Protais, cried, looking to heaven, and filled with the Holy Ghost:

"V. Oh, my brother! I see the Son of man smiling upon us; let me die first.

"VI. For if I see thy blood, I fear I shall shed tears unworthy of the Lord our God.

"VII. Then Protais answered him in these words:

"VIII. My brother, it is just that I should perish after thee, for I am older, and have more strength to see thee suffer.

"IX. But the senators and people ground their teeth at them.

"X. And the soldiers having struck them, their heads fell together on the same stone.

"XI. Now it was in this same place that the blessed Saint Ambroise found the ashes of the two martyrs which gave sight to the blind."

"Well," said Cinq-Mars, looking at his friend when he had finished, "what do you say to that?"

"God's will be done! but we should not scrutinize it."

"Nor put off our designs for a child's play," said D'Effiat impatiently, and wrapping himself in a cloak which was thrown over him. "Remember the lines we formerly so frequently quoted, 'Justum et tenacem Propositi viruna'; these iron words are stamped upon my brain. Yes; let the universe crumble around me, its wreck shall carry me away still resolute."

"Let us not compare the thoughts of man with those of Heaven; and let us be submissive," said De Thou, gravely.

"Amen!" said old Grandchamp, whose eyes had filled with tears, which he hastily brushed away.

"What hast thou to do with it, old soldier? Thou weepest," said his master.

"Amen!" said a voice, in a nasal tone, at the entrance of the tent.

"Parbleu, Monsieur! rather put that question to his Gray Eminence, who comes to visit you," answered the faithful servant, pointing to Joseph, who advanced with his arms crossed, making a salutation with a frowning air.

"Ah, it will be he, then!" murmured Cinq-Mars.

"Perhaps I come inopportunately," said Joseph, soothingly.

"Perhaps very opportunely," said Henri d'Effiat, smiling, with a glance at De Thou. "What can bring you here, Father, at one o'clock in the morning? It should be some good work."

Joseph saw he was ill-received; and as he had always sundry reproaches to make himself with reference to all persons whom he addressed, and as many resources in his mind for getting out of the difficulty, he fancied that they had discovered the object of his visit, and felt that he should not select a moment of ill humor for preparing the way to friendship. Therefore, seating himself near the bed, he said, coldly:

"I come, Monsieur, to speak to you on the part of the Cardinal-Generalissimo, of the two Spanish prisoners you have made; he desires to have information concerning them as soon as possible. I am to see and question them. But I did not suppose you were still awake; I merely wished to receive them from your people."

After a forced interchange of politeness, they ordered into the tent the two prisoners, whom Cinq-Mars had almost forgotten.

They appeared--the one, young and displaying an animated and rather wild countenance, was the soldier; the other, concealing his form under a brown cloak, and his gloomy features, which had something ambiguous in their expression, under his broad-brimmed hat, which he did not remove, was the officer. He spoke first:

"Why do you make me leave my straw and my sleep? Is it to deliver me or hang me?"

"Neither," said Joseph.

"What have I to do with thee, man with the long beard? I did not see thee at the breach."

It took some time after this amiable exordium to make the stranger understand the right a Capuchin had to interrogate him.

"Well," he said, "what dost thou want?"

"I would know your name and your country."

"I shall not tell my name; and as for my country, I have the air of a Spaniard, but perhaps am not one, for a Spaniard never acknowledges his country."

Father Joseph, turning toward the two friends, said: "Unless I deceive myself, I have heard his voice somewhere. This man speaks French without an accent; but it seems he wishes to give us enigmas, as in the East."

"The East? that is it," said the prisoner. "A Spaniard is a man from the East; he is a Catholic Turk; his blood either flags or boils; he is lazy or indefatigable; indolence makes him a slave, ardor a tyrant; immovable in his ignorance, ingenious in his superstition, he needs only a religious book and a tyrannical master; he obeys the law of the pyre; he commands by that of the poniard. At night he falls asleep in his bloodthirsty misery, nurses fanaticism, and awakes to crime. Who is this gentleman? Is it the Spaniard or the Turk? Guess! Ah! you seem to think that I have wit, because I light upon analogy."

"Truly, gentlemen, you do me honor; and yet the idea may be carried much further, if desired. If I pass to the physical order, for example, may I not say to you, This man has long and serious features, a black and almond-shaped eye, rugged brows, a sad and mobile mouth, tawny, meagre, and wrinkled cheeks; his head is shaved, and he covers it with a black handkerchief in the form of a turban; he passes the whole day lying or standing under a burning sun, without motion, without utterance, smoking a pipe that intoxicates him. Is this a Turk or a Spaniard? Are you satisfied, gentlemen? Truly, it would seem so; you laugh, and at what do you laugh? I, who have presented this idea to you--I have not laughed; see, my countenance is sad. Ah! perhaps it is because the gloomy prisoner has suddenly become a gossip, and talks rapidly. That is nothing! I might tell you other things, and render you some service, my worthy friends."

"If I should relate anecdotes, for example; if I told you I knew a priest who ordered the death of some heretics before saying mass, and who, furious at being interrupted at the altar during the holy sacrifice, cried to those who asked for his orders, 'Kill them all! kill them all!!--should you all laugh, gentlemen? No, not all! This gentleman here, for instance, would bite his lips and his beard. Oh! it is true

he might answer that he did wisely, and that they were wrong to interrupt his unsullied prayer. But if I added that he concealed himself for an hour behind the curtain of your tent, Monsieur de Cinq-Mars, to listen while you talked, and that he came to betray you, and not to get me, what would he say? Now, gentlemen, are you satisfied? May I retire after this display?"

The prisoner had uttered this with the rapidity of a quack vending his wares, and in so loud a voice that Joseph was quite confounded. He arose indignantly at last, and, addressing himself to Cinq-Mars, said:

"How can you suffer a prisoner who should have been hanged to speak to you thus, Monsieur?"

The Spaniard, without deigning to notice him any further, leaned toward D'Effiat, and whispered in his ear:

"I can be of no further use to you; give me my liberty. I might ere this have taken it; but I would not do so without your consent. Give it me, or have me killed."

"Go, if you will!" said Cinq-Mars to him. "I assure you I shall be very glad;" and he told his people to retire with the soldier, whom he wished to keep in his service.

This was the affair of a moment. No one remained any longer in the tent with the two friends, except the abashed Joseph and the Spaniard. The latter, taking off his hat, showed a French but savage countenance. He laughed, and seemed to respire more air into his broad chest.

"Yes, I am a Frenchman," he said to Joseph. "But I hate France, because she gave birth to my father, who is a monster, and to me, who have become one, and who once struck him. I hate her inhabitants, because they have robbed me of my whole fortune at play, and because I have robbed them and killed them. I have been two years in Spain in order to kill more Frenchmen; but now I hate Spain still more. No one will know the reason why. Adieu! I must live henceforth without a nation; all men are my enemies. Go on, Joseph, and you will soon be as good as I. Yes, you have seen me once before," he continued, violently striking him in the breast and throwing him down. "I am Jacques de Laubardemont, the son of your worthy friend."

With these words, quickly leaving the tent, he disappeared like an apparition. De Thou and the servants, who ran to the entrance, saw him, with two bounds, spring over a surprised and disarmed soldier, and run toward the mountains with the swiftness of a deer, despite various musket-shots. Joseph took advantage of the disorder to slip away, stammering a few words of politeness, and left the two friends laughing at his adventure and his disappointment, as two schoolboys laugh at seeing the spectacles of their pedagogue fall off. At last they prepared to seek a rest of which they both stood in need, and which they soon found--the wounded man in his bed, and the young counsellor in his chair.

As for the Capuchin, he walked toward his tent, meditating how he should turn all this so as to take the greatest possible revenge, when he met Laubardemont dragging the young mad-woman by her two hands. They recounted to each other their mutual and horrible adventures.

Joseph had no small pleasure in turning the poniard in the wound of his friend's heart, by telling him of the fate of his son.

"You are not exactly happy in your domestic relations," he added. "I advise you to shut up your niece and hang your son, if you are fortunate enough to find him."

Laubardemont replied with a hideous laugh:

"As for this idiot here, I am going to give her to an ex-secret judge, at present a smuggler in the Pyrenees at Oleron. He can do what he pleases

with her--make her a servant in his posada, for instance. I care not, so that my lord never hears of her."

Jeanne de Belfiel, her head hanging down, gave no sign of sensibility. Every glimmer of reason was extinguished in her; one word alone remained upon her lips, and this she continually pronounced.

"The judge! the judge! the judge!" she murmured, and was silent.

Her uncle and Joseph threw her, almost like a sack of corn, on one of the horses which were led up by two servants. Laubardemont mounted another, and prepared to leave the camp, wishing to get into the mountains before day.

"A good journey to you!" he said to Joseph. "Execute your business well in Paris. I commend to you Orestes and Pylades."

"A good journey to you!" answered the other. "I commend to you Cassandra and OEdipus."

"Oh! he has neither killed his father nor married his mother."

"But he is on the high-road to those little pleasantries."

"Adieu, my reverend Father!"

"Adieu, my venerable friend!"

Then each added aloud, but in suppressed tones:

"Adieu, assassin of the gray robe! During thy absence I shall have the ear of the Cardinal."

"Adieu, villain in the red robe! Go thyself and destroy thy cursed family. Finish shedding that portion of thy blood that is in others' veins. That share which remains in thee, I will take charge of. Ha! a well-employed night!"

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Ambition is the saddest of all hopes
Assume with others the mien they wore toward him
Men are weak, and there are things which women must accomplish

CINQ MARS

By ALFRED DE VIGNY

BOOK 4.

CHAPTER XIV

THE RIOT

"Thus with imagin'd wing our swift scene flies,
In motion of no less celerity
Than that of thought,"

exclaims the immortal Shakespeare in the chorus of one of his tragedies.

"Suppose that you have seen
The well-appointed king
Embark his royalty; and his brave fleet
With silken streamers the young Phoebus fanning.
: : : behold,
And follow."

With this poetic movement he traverses time and space, and transports at will the attentive assembly to the theatre of his sublime scenes.

We shall avail ourselves of the same privilege, though without the same genius. No more than he shall we seat ourselves upon the tripod of the unities, but merely casting our eyes upon Paris and the old dark palace of the Louvre, we will at once pass over the space of two hundred leagues and the period of two years.

Two years! what changes may they not have upon men, upon their families, and, above all, in that great and so troublous family of nations, whose long alliances a single day suffices to destroy, whose wars are ended by a birth, whose peace is broken by a death! We ourselves have beheld kings returning to their dwelling on a spring day; that same day a vessel sailed for a voyage of two years. The navigator returned. The kings were seated upon their thrones; nothing seemed to have taken place in his absence, and yet God had deprived those kings of a hundred days of their reign.

But nothing was changed for France in 1642, the epoch to which we turn, except her fears and her hopes. The future alone had changed its aspect. Before again beholding our personages, we must contemplate at large the state of the kingdom.

The powerful unity of the monarchy was rendered still more imposing by the misfortunes of the neighboring States. The revolutions in England, and those in Spain and Portugal, rendered the peace which France enjoyed still more admired. Strafford and Olivares, overthrown or defeated, aggrandized the immovable Richelieu.

Six formidable armies, reposing upon their triumphant weapons, served as a rampart to the kingdom. Those of the north, in league with Sweden, had put the Imperialists to flight, still pursued by the spirit of Gustavus Adolphus, those on the frontiers of Italy had in Piedmont received the keys of the towns which had been defended by Prince Thomas; and those which strengthened the chain of the Pyrenees held in check revolted Catalonia, and chafed before Perpignan, which they were not allowed to take. The interior was not happy, but tranquil. An invisible genius seemed to have maintained this calm, for the King, mortally sick, languished at St. Germain with a young favorite; and the Cardinal was, they said, dying at Narbonne. Some deaths, however, betrayed that he yet lived; and at intervals, men falling as if struck by a poisonous blast recalled to mind the invisible power.

St.-Preuil, one of Richelieu's enemies, had just laid his "iron head" upon the scaffold without shame or fear, as he himself said on mounting it.

Meantime, France seemed to govern herself, for the prince and the minister had been separated a long time; and of these two sick men, who hated each other, one never had held the reins of State, the other no longer showed his power--he was no longer named in the public acts; he appeared no longer in the government, and seemed effaced everywhere; he slept, like the spider surrounded by his webs.

If some events and some revolutions had taken place during these two years, it must have been in hearts; it must have been some of those occult changes from which, in monarchies without firm foundation, terrible overthrows and long and bloody dissensions arise.

To enlighten ourselves, let us glance at the old black building of the unfinished Louvre, and listen to the conversation of those who inhabited it and those who surrounded it.

It was the month of December; a rigorous winter had afflicted Paris, where the misery and inquietude of the people were extreme. However, curiosity was still alive, and they were eager for the spectacles given by the court. Their poverty weighed less heavily upon them while they contemplated the agitations of the rich. Their tears were less bitter on beholding the struggles of power; and the blood of the nobles which reddened their streets, and seemed the only blood worthy of being shed, made them bless their own obscurity. Already had tumultuous scenes and conspicuous assassinations proved the monarch's weakness, the absence and approaching end of the minister, and, as a kind of prologue to the bloody comedy of the Fronde, sharpened the malice and even fired the passions of the Parisians. This confusion was not displeasing to them. Indifferent to the causes of the quarrels which were abstruse for them, they were not so with regard to individuals, and already began to regard the party chiefs with affection or hatred, not on account of the interest which they supposed them to take in the welfare of their class, but simply because as actors they pleased or displeased.

One night, especially, pistol and gun-shots had been heard frequently in the city; the numerous patrols of the Swiss and the body-guards had even been attacked, and had met with some barricades in the tortuous streets of the Ile Notre-Dame; carts chained to the posts, and laden with barrels, prevented the cavaliers from advancing, and some musket-shots had wounded several men and horses. However, the town still slept, except the quarter which surrounded the Louvre, which was at this time inhabited by the Queen and M. le Duc d'Orleans. There everything announced a nocturnal expedition of a very serious nature.

It was two o'clock in the morning. It was freezing, and the darkness was intense, when a numerous assemblage stopped upon the quay, which was then hardly paved, and slowly and by degrees occupied the sandy ground that sloped down to the Seine. This troop was composed of about two hundred men; they were wrapped in large cloaks, raised by the long Spanish swords which they wore. Walking to and fro without preserving any order, they seemed to wait for events rather than to seek them. Many seated themselves, with their arms folded, upon the loose stones of the newly begun parapet; they preserved perfect silence. However, after a few minutes passed in this manner, a man, who appeared to come out of one of the vaulted doors of the Louvre, approached slowly, holding a dark-lantern, the light from which he turned upon the features of each individual, and which he blew out after finding the man he sought among them. He spoke to him in a whisper, taking him by the hand:

"Well, Olivier, what did Monsieur le Grand say to you?

[The master of the horse, Cinq-Mars, was thus named by abbreviation. This name will often occur in the course of the recital.]

Does all go well?"

"Yes, I saw him yesterday at Saint-Germain. The old cat is very ill at Narbonne; he is going 'ad patres'. But we must manage our affairs shrewdly, for it is not the first time that he has played the torpid. Have you people enough for this evening, my dear Fontrailles?"

"Be easy; Montresor is coming with a hundred of Monsieur's gentlemen. You will recognize him; he will be disguised as a master-mason, with a rule in his hand. But, above all, do not forget the passwords. Do you know them all well, you and your friends?"

"Yes, all except the Abbe de Gondi, who has not yet arrived; but 'Dieu me pardonne', I think he is there himself! Who the devil would have known him?"

And here a little man without a cassock, dressed as a soldier of the French guards, and wearing a very black false moustache, slipped between them. He danced about with a joyous air, and rubbed his hands.

"Vive Dieu! all goes on well, my friend. Fiesco could not do better;" and rising upon his toes to tap Olivier upon the shoulder, he continued:

"Do you know that for a man who has just quitted the rank of pages, you don't manage badly, Sire Olivier d'Entraigues? and you will be among our illustrious men if we find a Plutarch. All is well organized; you arrive at the very moment, neither too soon nor too late, like a true party chief. Fontrailles, this young man will get on, I prophesy. But we must make haste; in two hours we shall have some of the archbishops of Paris, my, uncle's parishioners. I have instructed them well; and they will cry, 'Long live Monsieur! Long live the Regency! No more of the Cardinal!' like madmen. They are good devotees, thanks to me, who have stirred them up. The King is very ill. Oh, all goes well, very well! I come from Saint-Germain. I have seen our friend Cinq-Mars; he is good, very good, still firm as a rock. Ah, that is what I call a man! How he has played with them with his careless and melancholy air! He is master of the court at present. The King, they say, is going to make him duke and peer. It is much talked of; but he still hesitates. We must decide that by our movement this evening. The will of the people! He must do the will of the people; we will make him hear it. It will be the death of Richelieu, you'll see. It is, above all, hatred of him which is to predominate in the cries, for that is the essential thing. That will at last decide our Gaston, who is still uncertain, is he not?"

"And how can he be anything else?" said Fontrailles. "If he were to take a resolution to-day in our favor it would be unfortunate."

"Why so?"

"Because we should be sure that to-morrow morning he would be against us."

"Never mind," replied the Abbe; "the Queen is firm."

"And she has heart also," said Olivier; "that gives me some hope for Cinq-Mars, who, it seems to me, has sometimes dared to frown when he looked at her."

"Child that you are, how little do you yet know of the court! Nothing can sustain him but the hand of the King, who loves him as a son; and as for the Queen, if her heart beats, it is for the past and not for the future. But these trifles are not to the purpose. Tell me, dear friend, are you sure of your young Advocate whom I see roaming about there? Is he all right?"

"Perfectly; he is an excellent Royalist. He would throw the Cardinal into the river in an instant. Besides, it is Fournier of Loudun; that is saying everything."

"Well, well, this is the kind of men we like. But take care of yourselves, Messieurs; some one comes from the Rue Saint-Honore."

"Who goes there?" cried the foremost of the troop to some men who were advancing. "Royalists or Cardinalists?"

"Gaston and Le Grand," replied the newcomers, in low tones.

"It is Montresor and Monsieur's people," said Fontrailles. "We may soon begin."

"Yes, 'par la corbleu'!" said the newcomer, "for the Cardinalists will

pass at three o'clock. Some one told us so just now."

"Where are they going?" said Fontrailles.

"There are more than two hundred of them to escort Monsieur de Chavigny, who is going to see the old cat at Narbonne, they say. They thought it safer to pass by the Louvre."

"Well, we will give him a velvet paw!" said the Abbe.

As he finished saying this, a noise of carriages and horses was heard. Several men in cloaks rolled an enormous stone into the middle of the street. The foremost cavaliers passed rapidly through the crowd, pistols in hand, suspecting that something unusual was going on; but the postilion, who drove the horses of the first carriage, ran upon the stone and fell.

"Whose carriage is this which thus crushes foot-passengers?" cried the cloakmen, all at once. "It is tyrannical. It can be no other than a friend of the Cardinal de la Rochelle."

[During the long siege of La Rochelle, this name was given to Cardinal Richelieu, to ridicule his obstinacy in commanding as General-in-Chief, and claiming for himself the merit of taking that town.]

"It is one who fears not the friends of the little Le Grand," exclaimed a voice from the open door, from which a man threw himself upon a horse.

"Drive these Cardinalists into the river!" cried a shrill, piercing voice.

This was a signal for the pistol-shots which were furiously exchanged on every side, and which lighted up this tumultuous and sombre scene. The clashing of swords and trampling of horses did not prevent the cries from being heard on one side: "Down with the minister! Long live the King! Long live Monsieur and Monsieur le Grand! Down with the red-stockings!" On the other: "Long live his Eminence! Long live the great Cardinal! Death to the factious! Long live the King!" For the name of the King presided over every hatred, as over every affection, at this strange time.

The men on foot had succeeded, however, in placing the two carriages across the quay so as to make a rampart against Chavigny's horses, and from this, between the wheels, through the doors and springs, overwhelmed them with pistol-shots, and dismounted many. The tumult was frightful, but suddenly the gates of the Louvre were thrown open, and two squadrons of the body-guard came out at a trot. Most of them carried torches in their hands to light themselves and those they were about to attack. The scene changed. As the guards reached each of the men on foot, the latter was seen to stop, remove his hat, make himself known, and name himself; and the guards withdrew, sometimes saluting him, and sometimes shaking him by the hand. This succor to Chavigny's carriages was then almost useless, and only served to augment the confusion. The body-guards, as if to satisfy their consciences, rushed through the throng of duellists, saying:

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, be moderate!"

But when two gentlemen had decidedly crossed swords, and were in active conflict, the guard who beheld them stopped to judge the fight, and sometimes even to favor the one who he thought was of his opinion, for this body, like all France, had their Royalists and their Cardinalists.

The windows of the Louvre were lighted one after another, and many women's heads were seen behind the little lozenge-shaped panes, attentively watching the combat.

Numerous Swiss patrols came out with flambeaux.

These soldiers were easily distinguished by an odd uniform. The right sleeve was striped blue and red, and the silk stocking of the right leg was red; the left side was striped with blue, red, and white, and the stocking was white and red. It had, no doubt, been hoped in the royal chateau that this foreign troop would disperse the crowd, but they were mistaken. These impassible soldiers coldly and exactly executed, without going beyond, the orders they had received, circulating symmetrically among the armed groups, which they divided for a moment, returning before the gate with perfect precision, and resuming their ranks as on parade, without informing themselves whether the enemies among whom they had passed had rejoined or not.

But the noise, for a moment appeased, became general by reason of personal disputes. In every direction challenges, insults, and imprecations were heard. It seemed as if nothing but the destruction of one of the two parties could put an end to the combat, when loud cries, or rather frightful howls, raised the tumult to its highest pitch. The Abbe de Gondi, dragging a cavalier by his cloak to pull him down, exclaimed:

"Here are my people! Fontrailles, now you will see something worth

while!

Look! look already who they run! It is really charming."

And he abandoned his hold, and mounted upon a stone to contemplate the manoeuvres of his troops, crossing his arms with the importance of a General of an army. Day was beginning to break, and from the end of the Ile St.-Louis a crowd of men, women, and children of the lowest dregs of the people was seen rapidly advancing, casting toward heaven and the Louvre strange vociferations. Girls carried long swords; children dragged great halberds and pikes of the time of the League; old women in rags pulled by cords old carts full of rusty and broken arms; workmen of every trade, the greater number drunk, followed, armed with clubs, forks, lances, shovels, torches, stakes, crooks, levers, sabres, and spits. They sang and howled alternately, counterfeiting with atrocious yells the cries of a cat, and carrying as a flag one of these animals suspended from a pole and wrapped in a red rag, thus representing the Cardinal, whose taste for cats was generally known. Public criers rushed about, red and breathless, throwing on the pavement and sticking up on the parapets, the posts, the walls of the houses, and even on the palace, long satires in short stanzas upon the personages of the time. Butcher-boys and scullions, carrying large cutlasses, beat the charge upon saucepans, and dragged in the mud a newly slaughtered pig, with the red cap of a chorister on its head. Young and vigorous men, dressed as women, and painted with a coarse vermilion, were yelling, "We are mothers of families ruined by Richelieu! Death to the Cardinal!" They carried in their arms figures of straw that looked like children, which they threw into the river.

When this disgusting mob overran the quays with its thousands of imps, it produced a strange effect upon the combatants, and entirely contrary to that expected by their patron. The enemies on both sides lowered their arms and separated. Those of Monsieur and Cinq-Mars were revolted at seeing themselves succored by such auxiliaries, and, themselves aiding the Cardinal's gentlemen to remount their horses and to gain their carriages, and their valets to convey the wounded to them, gave their adversaries personal rendezvous to terminate their quarrel upon a ground more secret and more worthy of them. Ashamed of the superiority of numbers and the ignoble troops which they seemed to command, foreseeing, perhaps, for the first time the fearful consequences of their political machinations, and what was the scum they were stirring up, they withdrew, drawing their large hats over their eyes, throwing their cloaks over their shoulders, and avoiding the daylight.

"You have spoiled all, my dear Abbe, with this mob," said Fontrailles, stamping his foot, to Gondi, who was already sufficiently nonplussed; "your good uncle has fine parishioners!"

"It is not my fault," replied Gondi, in a sullen tone; "these idiots came an hour too late. Had they arrived in the night, they would not have been seen, which spoils the effect somewhat, to speak the truth (for I grant that daylight is detrimental to them), and we would only have heard the voice of the people 'Vox populi, vox Dei'. Nevertheless, no great harm has been done. They will by their numbers give us the means of escaping without being known, and, after all, our task is ended; we did not wish the death of the sinner. Chavigny and his men are worthy fellows, whom I love; if he is only slightly wounded, so much the better. Adieu; I am going to see Monsieur de Bouillon, who has arrived from Italy."

"Olivier," said Fontrailles, "go at once to Saint-Germain with Fournier and Ambrosio; I will go and give an account to Monsieur, with Montresor."

All separated, and disgust accomplished, with these highborn men, what force could not bring about.

Thus ended this fray, likely to bring forth great misfortunes. No one was killed in it. The cavaliers, having gained a few scratches and lost a few purses, resumed their route by the side of the carriages along the by-streets; the others escaped, one by one, through the populace they had attracted. The miserable wretches who composed it, deprived of the chief of the troops, still remained two hours, yelling and screaming until the effect of their wine was gone, and the cold had extinguished at once the fire of their blood and that of their enthusiasm. At the windows of the houses, on the quay of the city, and along the walls, the thoughtful and genuine people of Paris watched with a sorrowful air and in mournful silence these preludes of disorder; while the various bodies of merchants, dressed in black and preceded by their provosts, walked slowly and courageously through the populace toward the Palais de justice, where the parliament was to assemble, to make complaint of these terrible nocturnal scenes.

The apartments of Gaston d'Orleans were in great confusion. This Prince occupied the wing of the Louvre parallel with the Tuileries; and his windows looked into the court on one side, and on the other over a mass of little houses and narrow streets which almost entirely covered the place. He had risen precipitately, awakened suddenly by the report of the firearms, had thrust his feet into large square-toed slippers with high heels, and, wrapped in a large silk dressing-gown, covered with golden ornaments embroidered in relief, walked to and fro in his bedroom, sending every minute a fresh lackey to see what was going on, and ordering them immediately to go for the Abbe de la Riviere, his general counsellor; but he was unfortunately out of Paris. At every pistol-shot this timid Prince rushed to the windows, without seeing anything but some flambeaux, which were carried quickly along. It was in vain he was told that the cries he heard were in his favor; he did not cease to walk up and down the apartments, in the greatest disorder-his long black hair dishevelled, and his blue eyes open and enlarged by disquiet and terror. He was still thus when Montresor and Fontrailles at length arrived and found him beating his breast, and repeating a thousand times, "Mea culpa, mea culpa!"

"You have come at last!" he exclaimed from a distance, running to meet them. "Come! quick! What is going on? What are they doing there? Who are these assassins? What are these cries?"

"They cry, 'Long live Monsieur!'"

Gaston, without appearing to hear, and holding the door of his chamber open for an instant, that his voice might reach the galleries in which were the people of his household, continued to cry with all his strength, gesticulating violently:

"I know nothing of all this, and I have authorized nothing. I will not hear anything! I will not know anything! I will never enter into any project! These are rioters who make all this noise; do not speak to me

of them, if you wish to be well received here. I am the enemy of no man; I detest such scenes!"

Fontrailles, who knew the man with whom he had to deal, said nothing, but entered with his friend, that Monsieur might have time to discharge his first fury; and when all was said, and the door carefully shut, he began to speak:

"Monseigneur," said he, "we come to ask you a thousand pardons for the impertinence of these people, who will persist in crying out that they desire the death of your enemy, and that they would even wish to make you regent should we have the misfortune to lose his Majesty. Yes, the people are always frank in their discourse; but they are so numerous that all our efforts could not restrain them. It was truly a cry from the heart--an explosion of love, which reason could not restrain, and which escaped all bounds."

"But what has happened, then?" interrupted Gaston, somewhat calmed. "What have they been doing these four hours that I have heard them?"

"That love," said Montresor, coldly, "as Monsieur de Fontrailles had the honor of telling you, so escaped all rule and bounds that we ourselves were carried away by it, and felt seized with that enthusiasm which always transports us at the mere name of Monsieur, and which leads us on to things which we had not premeditated."

"But what, then, have you done?" said the Prince.

"Those things," replied Fontrailles, "of which Monsieur de Montresor had the honor to speak to Monsieur are precisely those which I foresaw here yesterday evening, when I had the honor of conversing with you."

"That is not the question," interrupted Gaston. "You cannot say that I have ordered or authorized anything. I meddle with nothing; I know nothing of government."

"I admit," continued Fontrailles, "that your Highness ordered nothing, but you permitted me to tell you that I foresaw that this night would be a troubled one about two o'clock, and I hoped that your astonishment would not have been too great."

The Prince, recovering himself little by little, and seeing that he did not alarm the two champions, having also upon his conscience and reading in their eyes the recollection of the consent which he had given them the evening before, sat down upon the side of his bed, crossed his arms, and, looking at them with the air of a judge, again said in a commanding tone:

"But what, then, have you done?"

"Why, hardly anything, Monseigneur," said Fontrailles. "Chance led us to meet in the crowd some of our friends who had a quarrel with Monsieur de Chavigny's coachman, who was driving over them. A few hot words ensued and rough gestures, and a few scratches, which kept Monsieur de Chavigny waiting, and that is all."

"Absolutely all," repeated Montresor.

"What, all?" exclaimed Gaston, much moved, and tramping about the chamber. "And is it, then, nothing to stop the carriage of a friend of the Cardinal-Duke? I do not like such scenes. I have already told you so. I do not hate the Cardinal; he is certainly a great politician, a very great politician. You have compromised me horribly; it is known that Montresor is with me. If he has been recognized, they will say that I sent him."

"Chance," said Montresor, "threw in my way this peasant's dress, which Monsieur may see under my cloak, and which, for that reason, I preferred to any other."

Gaston breathed again.

"You are sure, then, that you have not been recognized. You understand, my dear friend, how painful it would be to me. You must admit yourself--"

"Sure of it!" exclaimed the Prince's gentleman. "I would stake my head and my share in Paradise that no one has seen my features or called my by my name."

"Well," continued Gaston, again seating himself on his bed, and assuming a calmer air, in which even a slight satisfaction was visible, "tell me, then, what has happened."

Fontrailles took upon himself the recital, in which, as we may suppose, the populace played a great part and Monsieur's people none, and in his peroration he said:

"From our windows even, Monseigneur, respectable mothers of families might have been seen, driven by despair, throwing their children into the Seine, cursing Richelieu."

"Ah, it is dreadful!" exclaimed the Prince, indignant, or feigning to be so, and to believe in these excesses. "Is it, then, true that he is so generally detested? But we must allow that he deserves it. What! his ambition and avarice have, then, reduced to this extremity the good inhabitants of Paris, whom I love so much."

"Yes, Monseigneur," replied the orator. "And it is not Paris alone, it is all France, which, with us, entreats you to decide upon delivering her from this tyrant. All is ready; nothing is wanting but a sign from your august head to annihilate this pygmy, who has attempted to assault the royal house itself."

"Alas! Heaven is my witness that I myself forgive him!" answered Gaston, raising up his eyes. "But I can no longer bear the cries of the people. Yes, I will help them; that is to say," continued the Prince, "so that my dignity is not compromised, and that my name does not appear in the matter."

"Well, but it is precisely that which we want," exclaimed Fontrailles, a little more at his ease.

"See, Monseigneur, there are already some names to put after yours, who will not fear to sign. I will tell you them immediately, if you wish it."

"But--but," said the Duc d'Orleans, timidly, "do you know that it is a conspiracy which you propose to me so coolly?"

"Fie, Monseigneur, men of honor like us! a conspiracy! Oh! not at all; a league at the utmost, a slight combination to give a direction to the unanimous wish of the nation and the court--that is all."

"But that is not so clear, for, after all, this affair will be neither general nor public; therefore, it is a conspiracy. You will not avow that you are concerned in it."

"I, Monseigneur! Excuse me to all the world, since the kingdom is already in it, and I am of the kingdom. And who would not sign his name after that of Messieurs de Bouillon and Cinq-Mars?"

"After, perhaps, not before," said Gaston, fixing his eyes upon Fontrailles more keenly than he had expected.

The latter hesitated a moment.

"Well, then, what would Monseigneur do should I tell him the names after which he could sign his?"

"Ha! ha! this is amusing," answered the Prince, laughing; "know you not that above mine there are not many? I see but one."

"And if there be one, will Monseigneur promise to sign that of Gaston beneath it?"

"Ah, parbleu! with all my heart. I risk nothing there, for I see none but that of the King, who surely is not of the party."

"Well, from this moment permit us," said Montresor, "to take you at your word, and deign at present to consent to two things only: to see Monsieur de Bouillon in the Queen's apartments, and Monsieur the master of the horse at the King's palace."

"Agreed!" said Monsieur, gayly, tapping Montresor on the shoulder. "I will to-day wait on my sister-in-law at her toilette, and I will invite my brother to hunt the stag with me at Chambord."

The two friends asked nothing further, and were themselves surprised at their work. They never had seen so much resolution in their chief. Accordingly, fearing to lead him to a topic which might divert him from the path he had adopted, they hastened to turn the conversation upon other subjects, and retired in delight, leaving as their last words in his ear that they relied upon his keeping his promise.

CHAPTER XV

THE ALCOVE

While a prince was thus reassured with difficulty by those who surrounded him, and allowed them to see a terror which might have proved contagious, a princess more exposed to accidents, more isolated by the indifference of her husband, weaker by nature and by the timidity which is the result of the absence of happiness, on her side set the example of the calmest courage and the most pious resignation, and tranquillized her terrified suite; this was the Queen. Having slept hardly an hour, she heard shrill cries behind the doors and the thick tapestries of her chamber. She ordered her women to open the door, and the Duchesse de Chevreuse, in her night attire, and wrapped in a great cloak, fell, nearly fainting, at the foot of her bed, followed by four of her ladies-in-waiting and three of the women of the bed-chamber. Her delicate feet were bare, and bleeding from a wound she had received in running.

She cried, weeping like a child, that a pistol-shot had broken her shutters and her window-panes, and had wounded her; she entreated the Queen to send her into exile, where she would be more tranquil than in a country where they wished to assassinate her because she was the friend of her Majesty.

Her hair was in great disorder, and fell to her feet. It was her chief beauty; and the young Queen thought that this toilette was less the result of chance than might have been imagined.

"Well, my dear, what has happened?" she said to her with sang-froid. "You look like a Magdalen, but in her youth, and before she repented. It is probable that if they wish to harm any one here it is I; calm yourself."

"No, Madame! save me, protect me! it is Richelieu who pursues me, I am sure!"

The sound of pistols, which was then heard more distinctly, convinced the Queen that the terrors of Madame de Chevreuse were not vain.

"Come and dress me, Madame de Motteville!" cried she. But that lady had

completely lost her self-possession, and, opening one of those immense ebony coffers which then answered the purpose of wardrobes, took from it a casket of the Princess's diamonds to save it, and did not listen to her. The other women had seen on a window the reflection of torches, and, imagining that the palace was on fire, threw jewels, laces, golden vases, and even the china, into sheets which they intended to lower into the street. At this moment Madame de Guemenee arrived, a little more dressed than the Duchesse de Chevreuse, but taking events still more tragically. Her terror inspired the Queen with a slight degree of fear, because of the ceremonious and placid character she was known to possess. She entered without curtseying, pale as a spectre, and said with volubility:

"Madame, it is time to make our confession. The Louvre is attacked, and all the populace are arriving from the city, I have been told."

Terror silenced and rendered motionless all the persons present.

"We shall die!" exclaimed the Duchesse de Chevreuse, still on her knees. "Ah, my God! why did I leave England? Yes, let us confess. I confess aloud. I have loved--I have been loved by--"

"Well," said the Queen, "I do not undertake to hear your confession to the end. That would not perhaps be the least of my dangers, of which, however, you think little."

The coolness of Anne of Austria, and this last severe observation, however, restored a little calm to this beautiful personage, who rose in confusion, and perceiving the disordered state of her toilet, went to repair it as she best could in a closet near by.

"Dona Stefania," said the Queen to one of her women, the only Spaniard whom she had retained, "go seek the captain of the guards. It is time that I should see men at last, and hear something reasonable."

She said this in Spanish, and the mystery of this order, spoken in a tongue which the ladies did not understand, restored those in the chamber to their senses.

The waiting-woman was telling her beads, but she rose from the corner of the alcove in which she had sought refuge, and hastened to obey her mistress.

The signs of revolt and the evidences of terror became meantime more distinct. In the great court of the Louvre was heard the trampling of the horses of the guards, the orders of the chiefs, the rolling of the Queen's carriages, which were being prepared, should it be necessary to fly. The rattling of the iron chains dragged along the pavement to form barricades in case of an attack, hurried steps in the corridor, the clash of arms, the confused cries of the people, which rose and fell, went and came again, like the noise of the waves and the winds. The door once more opened, and this time it was to admit a very charming person.

"I expected you, dear Marie," said the Queen, extending her arms to the Duchesse de Mantua. "You have been more courageous than any of us; you are attired fit to be seen by all the court."

"I was not in bed, fortunately," replied the young Princesse de Gonzaga, casting down her eyes. "I saw all these people from the windows. O Madame, Madame, fly! I implore you to escape by the secret stairway, and let us remain in your place. They might take one of us for the Queen." And she added, with tears, "I have heard cries of death. Fly, Madame! I have no throne to lose. You are the daughter, the wife, and the mother of kings. Save yourself, and leave us here!"

"You have more to lose than I, 'm'amaie', in beauty, youth, and, I hope, in happiness," said the Queen, with a gracious smile, giving the Duchess her beautiful hands to kiss. "Remain in my alcove and welcome; but we will both remain there. The only service I accept from you, my sweet

child, is to bring to my bed that little golden casket which my poor Motteville has left on the ground, and which contains all that I hold most precious."

Then, as she took it, she whispered in Marie's ear:

"Should any misfortune happen to me, swear that you will throw it into the Seine."

"I will obey you, Madame, as my benefactress and my second mother," Marie answered, weeping.

The sound of the conflict redoubled on the quays, and the windows reflected the flash of the firearms, of which they heard the explosion. The captain of the guards and the captain of the Swiss sent for orders from the Queen through Dona Stefania.

"I permit them to enter," said the Queen. "Stand aside, ladies. I am a man in a moment like this; and I ought to be so." Then, raising the bed-curtains, she continued, addressing the two officers:

"Gentlemen, first remember that you answer with your heads for the life of the princes, my children. You know that, Monsieur de Guitaut?"

"I sleep across their doorway, Madame; but this disturbance does not threaten either them or your Majesty."

"Very well; do not think of me until after them," interrupted the Queen, "and protect indiscriminately all who are threatened. You also hear me, Monsieur de Bassompierre; you are a gentleman. Forget that your uncle is yet in the Bastille, and do your duty by the grandsons of the dead King, his friend."

He was a young man, with a frank, open countenance.

"Your Majesty," said he, with a slight German accent, "may see that I have forgotten my family, and not yours." And he displayed his left hand despoiled of two fingers, which had just been cut off. "I have still another hand," said he, bowing and withdrawing with Guitaut.

The Queen, much moved, rose immediately, and, despite the prayers of the Princesse de Guemenee, the tears of Marie de Gonzaga, and the cries of Madame de Chevreuse, insisted upon placing herself at the window, and half opened it, leaning upon the shoulder of the Duchesse de Mantua.

"What do I hear?" she said. "They are crying, 'Long live the King! Long live the Queen!'"

The people, imagining they recognized her, redoubled their cries at this moment, and shouted louder than ever, "Down with the Cardinal! Long live Monsieur le Grand!"

Marie shuddered.

"What is the matter with you?" said the Queen, observing her. But as she did not answer, and trembled in every limb, this good and gentle Princess appeared not to perceive it; and, paying the greatest attention to the cries and movements of the populace, she even exaggerated an inquietude which she had not felt since the first name had reached her ear. An hour later, when they came to tell her that the crowd only awaited a sign from her hand to withdraw, she waved it graciously, and with an air of satisfaction. But this joy was far from being complete, for her heart was still troubled by many things, and, above all, by the presentiment of the regency. The more she leaned forward to show herself, the more she beheld the revolting scenes which the increasing light revealed. Terror took possession of her soul as it became necessary to appear calm and confiding; and her heart was saddened at the very gayety of her words and countenance. Exposed to all eyes, she felt herself a mere woman, and shuddered in looking at that people whom she

would soon perhaps be called upon to govern, and who already took upon themselves to demand the death of ministers, and to call upon their Queen to appear before them.

She saluted them.

A hundred and fifty years later that salute was repeated by another princess, like herself of Austrian blood, and Queen of France. The monarchy without foundation, such as Richelieu made it, was born and died between these two salutes.

The Princess at last closed her windows, and hastened to dismiss her timid suite. The thick curtains fell again over the barred windows; and the room was no longer lighted by a day which was odious to her. Large white wax flambeaux burned in candelabra, in the form of golden arms, which stand out from the framed and flowered tapestries with which the walls were hung. She remained alone with Marie de Mantua; and reentering with her the enclosure which was formed by the royal balustrade, she fell upon her bed, fatigued by her courage and her smiles, and burst into tears, leaning her head upon her pillow. Marie, on her knees upon a velvet footstool, held one of her hands in both hers, and without daring to speak first, leaned her head tremblingly upon it; for until that moment, tears never had been seen in the Queen's eyes.

They remained thus for some minutes. The Princess, then raising herself up by a painful effort, spoke:

"Do not afflict yourself, my child; let me weep. It is such a relief to one who reigns! If you pray to God for me, ask Him to grant me sufficient strength not to hate the enemy who pursues me everywhere, and who will destroy the royal family of France and the monarchy by his boundless ambition. I recognize him in all that has taken place; I see him in this tumultuous revolt."

"What, Madame! is he not at Narbonne?--for it is the Cardinal of whom you speak, no doubt; and have you not heard that these cries were for you, and against him?"

"Yes, 'm'amie', he is three hundred leagues away from us, but his fatal genius keeps guard at the door. If these cries have been heard, it is because he has allowed them; if these men were assembled, it is because they have not yet reached the hour which he has destined for their destruction. Believe me, I know him; and I have dearly paid for the knowledge of that dark soul. It has cost me all the power of my rank, the pleasures of my age, the affection of my family and even the heart of my husband. He has isolated me from the whole world. He now confines me within a barrier of honors and respect; and formerly he dared, to the scandal of all France, to bring an accusation against myself. They examined my papers, they interrogated me, they made me sign myself guilty, and ask the King's pardon for a fault of which I was ignorant; and I owed to the devotion, and the perhaps eternal imprisonment of a faithful servant,

[His name was Laporte. Neither the fear of torture nor the hope of the Cardinal's reward could draw from him one word of the Queen's secrets.]

the preservation of this casket which you have saved for me. I read in your looks that you think me too fearful; but do not deceive yourself, as all the court now does. Be sure, my dear child, that this man is everywhere, and that he knows even our thoughts."

"What, Madame! does he know all that these men have cried under your windows, and the names of those who sent them?"

"Yes; no doubt he knows it, or has foreseen it. He permits it; he authorizes it, to compromise me in the King's eyes, and keep him forever separated from me. He would complete my humiliation."

"But the King has not loved him for two years; he loves another."

The Queen smiled; she gazed some time in silence upon the pure and open features of the beautiful Marie, and her look, full of candor, which was languidly raised toward her. She smoothed back the black curls which shaded her noble forehead, and seemed to rest her eyes and her soul in looking at the charming innocence displayed upon so lovely a face. She kissed her cheek, and resumed:

"You do not suspect, my poor child, a sad truth. It is that the King loves no one, and that those who appear the most in favor will be the soonest abandoned by him, and thrown to him who engulfs and devours all."

"Ah, mon Dieu! what is this you tell me?"

"Do you know how many he has destroyed?" continued the Queen, in a low voice, and looking into her eyes as if to read in them all her thoughts, and to make her own penetrate there. "Do you know the end of his favorites? Have you been told of the exile of Baradas; of that of Saint-Simon; of the convent of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, the shame of Madame d'Hautfort, the death of Chalais? All have fallen before an order from Richelieu to his master. Without this favor, which you mistake for friendship, their lives would have been peaceful. But this favor is mortal; it is a poison. Look at this tapestry, which represents Semele. The favorites of Louis XIII resemble that woman; his attachment devours like this fire, which dazzles and consumes her."

But the young Duchess was no longer in a condition to listen to the Queen. She continued to fix her large, dark eyes upon her, dimmed by a veil of tears; her hands trembled in those of Anne of Austria, and her lips quivered with convulsive agitation.

"I am very cruel, am I not, Marie?" continued the Queen, in an extremely sweet voice, and caressing her like a child from whom one would draw an avowal. "Oh, yes; no doubt I am very wicked! Your heart is full; you can not bear it, my child. Come, tell me; how do matters stand with you and Monsieur de Cinq-Mars?"

At this word grief found a vent, and, still on her knees at the Queen's feet, Marie in her turn shed upon the bosom of the good Princess a deluge of tears, with childish sobs and so violent an agitation of her head and her beautiful shoulders that it seemed as if her heart would break. The Queen waited a long time for the end of this first emotion, rocking her in her arms as if to appease her grief, frequently repeating, "My child, my child, do not afflict yourself thus!"

"Ah, Madame!" she exclaimed, "I have been guilty toward you; but I did not reckon upon that heart. I have done wrong, and I shall perhaps be punished severely for it. But, alas! how shall I venture to confess to you, Madame? It was not so much to open my heart to you that was difficult; it was to avow to you that I had need to read there myself."

The Queen reflected a moment, laying her finger upon her lips. "You are right," she then replied; "you are quite right. Marie, it is always the first word which is the most difficult to say; and that difficulty often destroys us. But it must be so; and without this rule one would be often wanting in dignity. Ah, how difficult it is to reign! To-day I would descend into your heart, but I come too late to do you good."

Marie de Mantua hung her head without making any reply.

"Must I encourage you to speak?" said the Queen. "Must I remind you that I have almost adopted you for my eldest daughter? that after seeking to unite you with the King's brother, I prepared for you the throne of Poland? Must I do more, Marie? Yes, I must, I will. If afterward you do not open your whole heart to me, I have misjudged you. Open this golden casket; here is the key. Open it fearlessly; do not tremble as I do."

The Duchesse de Mantua obeyed with hesitation, and beheld in this little chased coffer a knife of rude form, the handle of which was of iron, and the blade very rusty. It lay upon some letters carefully folded, upon which was the name of Buckingham. She would have lifted them; Anne of Austria stopped her.

"Seek nothing further," she said; "that is all the treasure of the Queen. And it is a treasure; for it is the blood of a man who lives no longer, but who lived for me. He was the most beautiful, the bravest, the most illustrious of the nobles of Europe. He covered himself with the diamonds of the English crown to please me. He raised up a fierce war and armed fleets, which he himself commanded, that he might have the happiness of once fighting him who was my husband. He traversed the seas to gather a flower upon which I had trodden, and ran the risk of death to kiss and bathe with his tears the foot of this bed in the presence of two of my ladies-in-waiting. Shall I say more? Yes, I will say it to you-- I loved him! I love him still in the past more than I could love him in the present. He never knew it, never divined it. This face, these eyes, were marble toward him, while my heart burned and was breaking with grief; but I was the Queen of France!" Here Anne of Austria forcibly grasped Marie's arm. "Dare now to complain," she continued, "if you have not yet ventured to speak to me of your love, and dare now to be silent when I have told you these things!"

"Ah, yes, Madame, I shall dare to confide my grief to you, since you are to me--"

"A friend, a woman!" interrupted the Queen. "I was a woman in my terror, which put you in possession of a secret unknown to the whole world. I am a woman by a love which survives the man I loved. Speak; tell me! It is now time."

"It is too late, on the contrary," replied Marie, with a forced smile. "Monsieur de Cinq-Mars and I are united forever."

"Forever!" exclaimed the Queen. "Can you mean it? And your rank, your name, your future--is all lost? Do you reserve this despair for your brother, the Duc de Bethel, and all the Gonzagas?"

"For more than four years I have thought of it. I am resolved; and for ten days we have been affianced."

"Affianced!" exclaimed the Queen, clasping her hands. "You have been deceived, Marie. Who would have dared this without the King's order? It is an intrigue which I will know. I am sure that you have been misled and deceived."

Marie hesitated a moment, and then said:

"Nothing is more simple, Madame, than our attachment. I inhabited, you know, the old chateau of Chaumont, with the Marechale d'Effiat, the mother of Monsieur de Cinq-Mars. I had retired there to mourn the death of my father; and it soon happened that Monsieur de Cinq-Mars had to deplore the loss of his. In this numerous afflicted family, I saw his grief only, which was as profound as mine. All that he said, I had already thought, and when we spoke of our afflictions we found them wholly alike. As I had been the first to suffer, I was better acquainted with sorrow than he; and I endeavored to console him by telling him all that I had suffered, so that in pitying me he forgot himself. This was the beginning of our love, which, as you see, had its birth, as it were, between two tombs."

"God grant, my sweet, that it may have a happy termination!" said the Queen.

"I hope so, Madame, since you pray for me," continued Marie. "Besides, everything now smiles upon me; but at that time I was very miserable. The news arrived one day at the chateau that the Cardinal had called Monsieur de Cinq-Mars to the army. It seemed to me that I was again

deprived of one of my relatives; and yet we were strangers. But Monsieur de Bassompierre spoke without ceasing of battles and death. I retired every evening in grief, and I wept during the night. I thought at first that my tears flowed for the past, but I soon perceived that it was for the future; and I felt that they could not be the same tears, since I wished to conceal them. Some time passed in the expectation of his departure. I saw him every day; and I pitied him for having to depart, because he repeated to me every instant that he would have wished to live eternally as he then did, in his own country and with us. He was thus without ambition until the day of his departure, because he knew not whether he was--whether he was--I dare not say it to your Majesty--"

Marie blushed, cast down her humid eyes, and smiled.

"Well!" said the Queen, "whether he was beloved,--is it not so?"

"And in the evening, Madame, he left, ambitious."

"That is evident, certainly. He left," said Anne of Austria, somewhat relieved; "but he has been back two years, and you have seen him?"

"Seldom, Madame," said the young Duchess, proudly; "and always in the presence of the priest, before whom I have promised to be the wife of no other than Cinq-Mars."

"Is it really, then, a marriage? Have you dared to do it? I shall inquire. But, Heaven, what faults! how many faults in the few words I have heard! Let me reflect upon them."

And, speaking aloud to herself, the Queen continued, her eyes and head bent in the attitude of reflection:

"Reproaches are useless and cruel if the evil is done. The past is no longer ours; let us think of the future. Cinq-Mars is brave, able, and even profound in his ideas. I have observed that he has done much in two years, and I now see that it was for Marie. He comports himself well; he is worthy of her in my eyes, but not so in the eyes of Europe. He must rise yet higher. The Princesse de Mantua can not, may not, marry less than a prince. He must become one. By myself I can do nothing; I am not the Queen, I am the neglected wife of the King. There is only the Cardinal, the eternal Cardinal, and he is his enemy; and perhaps this disturbance--"

"Alas! it is the beginning of war between them. I saw it at once."

"He is lost then!" exclaimed the Queen, embracing Marie. "Pardon me, my child, for thus afflicting you; but in times like these we must see all and say all. Yes, he is lost if he does not himself overthrow this wicked man--for the King will not renounce him; force alone--"

"He will overthrow him, Madame. He will do it, if you will assist him. You are the divinity of France. Oh, I conjure you, protect the angel against the demon! It is your cause, that of your royal family, that of all your nation."

The Queen smiled.

"It is, above all, your cause, my child; and it is as such that I will embrace it to the utmost extent of my power. That is not great, as I have told you; but such as it is, I lend it to you entirely, provided, however, that this angel does not stoop to commit mortal sins," added she, with a meaning look. "I heard his name pronounced this night by voices most unworthy of him."

"Oh, Madame, I would swear that he knows nothing of it!"

"Ah, my child, do not speak of State affairs. You are not yet learned enough in them. Let me sleep, if I can, before the hour of my toilette. My eyes are burning, and yours also, perhaps."

Saying these words, the amiable Queen laid her head upon the pillow which covered the casket, and soon Marie saw her fall asleep through sheer fatigue. She then rose, and, seating herself in a great, tapestried, square armchair, clasped her hands upon her knees, and began to reflect upon her painful situation. Consoled by the aspect of her gentle protectress, she often raised her eyes to watch her slumber, and sent her in secret all the blessings which love showers upon those who protect it, sometimes kissing the curls of her blond hair, as if by this kiss she could convey to her soul all the ideas favorable to the thought ever present to her mind.

The Queen's slumber was prolonged, while Marie thought and wept. However, she remembered that at ten o'clock she must appear at the royal toilette before all the court. She resolved to cast aside reflection, to dry her tears, and she took a thick folio volume placed upon a table inlaid with enamel and medallions; it was the 'Astree' of M. d'Urfe--a work 'de belle galanterie' adored by the fair prudes of the court. The unsophisticated and straightforward mind of Marie could not enter into these pastoral loves. She was too simple to understand the 'bergeres du Lignon', too clever to be pleased at their discourse, and too impassioned to feel their tenderness. However, the great popularity of the romance so far influenced her that she sought to compel herself to take an interest in it; and, accusing herself internally every time that she felt the ennui which exhaled from the pages of the book, she ran through it with impatience to find something to please and transport her. An engraving arrested her attention. It represented the shepherdess Astree with high-heeled shoes, a corset, and an immense farthingale, standing on tiptoe to watch floating down the river the tender Celadon, drowning himself in despair at having, been somewhat coldly received in the morning. Without explaining to herself the reason of the taste and accumulated fallacies of this picture, she sought, in turning over the pages, something which could fix her attention; she saw the word "Druid."

"Ah! here is a great character," said she. "I shall no doubt read of one of those mysterious sacrificers of whom Britain, I am told, still preserves the monuments; but I shall see him sacrificing men. That would be a spectacle of horror; however, let us read it."

Saying this, Marie read with repugnance, knitting her brows, and nearly trembling, the following:

"The Druid Adamas delicately called the shepherds Pimandre, Ligdamont, and Clidamant, newly arrived from Calais. 'This adventure can not terminate,' said he, 'but by the extremity of love. The soul, when it loves, transforms itself into the object beloved; it is to represent this that my agreeable enchantments will show you in this fountain the nymph Sylvia, whom you all three love. The high-priest Amasis is about to come from Montbrison, and will explain to you the delicacy of this idea. Go, then, gentle shepherds! If your desires are well regulated, they will not cause you any torments; and if they are not so, you will be punished by swoonings similar to those of Celadon, and the shepherdess Galatea, whom the inconstant Hercules abandoned in the mountains of Auvergne, and who gave her name to the tender country of the Gauls; or you will be stoned by the shepherdesses of Lignon, as was the ferocious Amidor. The great nymph of this cave has made an enchantment.'"

The enchantment of the great nymph was complete on the Princess, who had hardly sufficient strength to find out with a trembling hand, toward the end of the book, that the Druid Adamas was an ingenious allegory, representing the Lieutenant-General of Montbrison, of the family of the Papons. Her weary eyes closed, and the great book slipped from her lap to the cushion of velvet upon which her feet were placed, and where the beautiful Astree and the gallant Celadon reposed luxuriously, less immovable than Marie de Mantua, vanquished by them and by profound slumber.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CONFUSION

This same morning, the various events of which we have seen in the apartments of Gaston d'Orleans and of the Queen, the calm and silence of study reigned in a modest cabinet of a large house near the Palais de justice. A bronze lamp, of a gothic shape, struggling with the coming day, threw its red light upon a mass of papers and books which covered a large table; it lighted the bust of L'Hopital, that of Montaigne the essayist, the President de Thou, and of King Louis XIII.

A fireplace sufficiently large for a man to enter and sit there was occupied by a large fire burning upon enormous andirons. Upon one of these was placed the foot of the studious De Thou, who, already risen, examined with attention the new works of Descartes and Grotius. He was writing upon his knee his notes upon these books of philosophy and politics, which were then the general subjects of conversation; but at this moment the 'Meditations Metaphysiques' absorbed all his attention. The philosopher of Touraine enchanted the young counsellor. Often, in his enthusiasm, he struck the book, uttering exclamations of admiration; sometimes he took a sphere placed near him, and, turning it with his fingers, abandoned himself to the most profound reveries of science; then, led by them to a still greater elevation of mind, he would suddenly throw himself upon his knees before a crucifix, placed upon the chimney-piece, because at the limits of the human mind he had found God. At other times he buried himself in his great armchair, so as to be nearly sitting upon his shoulders, and, placing his two hands upon his eyes, followed in his head the trace of the reasoning of Rene Descartes, from this idea of the first meditation:

"Suppose that we are asleep, and that all these particularities--that is, that we open our eyes, move our heads, spread our arms--are nothing but false illusions."

to this sublime conclusion of the third:

"Only one thing remains to be said; it is that like the idea of myself, that of God is born and produced with me from the time I was created. And certainly it should not be thought strange that God, in creating me, should have implanted in me this idea, to be, as it were, the mark of the workman impressed upon his work."

These thoughts entirely occupied the mind of the young counsellor, when a loud noise was heard under the windows. He thought that some house on fire excited these prolonged cries, and hastened to look toward the wing of the building occupied by his mother and sisters; but all appeared to sleep there, and the chimneys did not even send forth any smoke, to attest that its inhabitants were even awake. He blessed Heaven for it; and, running to another window, he saw the people, whose exploits we have witnessed, hastening toward the narrow streets which led to the quay.

After examining this rabble of women and children, the ridiculous flag which led them, and the rude disguises of the men: "It is some popular fete or some carnival comedy," said he; and again returning to the corner of the fire, he placed a large almanac upon the table, and carefully sought in it what saint was honored that day. He looked in the column of the month of December; and, finding at the fourth day of this month the name of Ste.-Barbe, he remembered that he had seen several small cannons and barrels pass, and, perfectly satisfied with the explanation which he had given himself, he hastened to drive away the interruption which had called off his attention, and resumed his quiet studies, rising only to take a book from the shelves of his library, and, after reading in it a phrase, a line, or only a word, he threw it from him upon his table or on the floor, covered in this way with books or papers which he would not trouble himself to return to their places, lest he should break the thread of his reveries.

Suddenly the door was hastily opened, and a name was announced which he had distinguished among those at the bar--a man whom his connections with the magistracy had made personally known to him.

"And by what chance, at five o'clock in the morning, do I see Monsieur Fournier?" he cried. "Are there some unfortunates to defend, some families to be supported by the fruits of his talent, some error to dissipate in us, some virtue to awaken in our hearts? for these are of his accustomed works. You come, perhaps, to inform me of some fresh humiliation of our parliament. Alas! the secret chambers of the Arsenal are more powerful than the ancient magistracy of Clovis. The parliament is on its knees; all is lost, unless it is soon filled with men like yourself."

"Monsieur, I do not merit your praise," said the Advocate, entering, accompanied by a grave and aged man, enveloped like himself in a large cloak. "I deserve, on the contrary, your censure; and I am almost a penitent, as is Monsieur le Comte du Lude, whom you see here. We come to ask an asylum for the day."

"An asylum! and against whom?" said De Thou, making them sit down.

"Against the lowest people in Paris, who wish to have us for chiefs, and from whom we fly. It is odious; the sight, the smell, the ear, and the touch, above all, are too severely wounded by it," said M. du Lude, with a comical gravity. "It is too much!"

"Ah! too much, you say?" said De Thou, very much astonished, but not willing to show it.

"Yes," answered the Advocate; "really, between ourselves, Monsieur le Grand goes too far."

"Yes, he pushes things too fast. He will render all our projects abortive," added his companion.

"Ah! and you say he goes too far?" replied M. de Thou, rubbing his chin, more and more surprised.

Three months had passed since his friend Cinq-Mars had been to see him; and he, without feeling much disquieted about it--knowing that he was at St.-Germain in high favor, and never quitting the King--was far removed from the news of the court. Absorbed in his grave studies, he never heard of public events till they were forced upon his attention. He knew nothing of current life until the last moment, and often amused his intimate friends by his naive astonishment--the more so that from a little worldly vanity he desired to have it appear as if he were fully acquainted with the course of events, and tried to conceal the surprise he experienced at every fresh intelligence. He was now in this situation, and to this vanity was added the feeling of friendship; he would not have it supposed that Cinq-Mars had been negligent toward him, and, for his friend's honor even, would appear to be aware of his projects.

"You know very well how we stand now," continued the Advocate.

"Yes, of course. Well?"

"Intimate as you are with him, you can not be ignorant that all has been organizing for a year past."

"Certainly, all has been organizing; but proceed."

"You will admit with us that Monsieur le Grand is wrong?"

"Ah, that is as it may be; but explain yourself. I shall see."

"Well, you know upon what we had agreed at the last conference of which

he informed you?"

"Ah! that is to say--pardon me, I perceive it almost; but set me a little upon the track."

"It is useless; you no doubt remember what he himself recommended us to do at Marion de Lorme's?"

"To add no one to our list," said M. du Lude.

"Ah, yes, yes! I understand," said De Thou; "that appears reasonable, very reasonable, truly."

"Well," continued Fournier, "he himself has infringed this agreement; for this morning, besides the ragamuffins whom that ferret the Abbe de Gondi brought to us, there was some vagabond captain, who during the night struck with sword and poniard gentlemen of both parties, crying out at the top of his voice, 'A moi, D'Aubijoux! You gained three thousand ducats from me; here are three sword-thrusts for you. 'A moi', La Chapelle! I will have ten drops of your blood in exchange for my ten pistoles!' and I myself saw him attack these gentlemen and many more of both sides, loyally enough, it is true--for he struck them only in front and on their guard--but with great success, and with a most revolting impartiality."

"Yes, Monsieur, and I was about to tell him my opinion," interposed De Lude, "when I saw him escape through the crowd like a squirrel, laughing greatly with some suspicious looking men with dark, swarthy faces; I do not doubt, however, that Monsieur de Cinq-Mars sent him, for he gave orders to that Ambrosio whom you must know--that Spanish prisoner, that rascal whom he has taken for a servant. In faith, I am disgusted with all this; and I was not born to mingle with this canaille."

"This, Monsieur," replied Fournier, "is very different from the affair at Loudun. There the people only rose, without actually revolting; it was the sensible and estimable part of the populace, indignant at an assassination, and not heated by wine and money. It was a cry raised against an executioner--a cry of which one could honorably be the organ --and not these howlings of factious hypocrisy, of a mass of unknown people, the dregs of the mud and sewers of Paris. I confess that I am very tired of what I see; and I have come to entreat you to speak about it to Monsieur le Grand."

De Thou was very much embarrassed during this conversation, and sought in vain to understand what Cinq-Mars could have to do with the people, who appeared to him merely merrymaking; on the other hand, he persisted in not owning his ignorance. It was, however, complete; for the last time he had seen his friend, he had spoken only of the King's horses and stables, of hawking, and of the importance of the King's huntsmen in the affairs of the State, which did not seem to announce vast projects in which the people could take a part. He at last timidly ventured to say:

"Messieurs, I promise to do your commission; meanwhile, I offer you my table and beds as long as you please. But to give my advice in this matter is very difficult. By the way, it was not the fete of Sainte-Barbe I saw this morning?"

"The Sainte-Barbe!" said Fournier.

"The Sainte-Barbe!" echoed Du Lude. "They burned powder."

"Oh, yes, yes! that is what Monsieur de Thou means," said Fournier, laughing; "very good, very good indeed! Yes, I think to-day is Sainte-Barbe."

De Thou was now altogether confused and reduced to silence; as for the others, seeing that they did not understand him, nor he them, they had recourse to silence.

They were sitting thus mute, when the door opened to admit the old tutor of Cinq-Mars, the Abbe Quillet, who entered, limping slightly. He looked very gloomy, retaining none of his former gayety in his air or language; but his look was still animated, and his speech energetic.

"Pardon me, my dear De Thou, that I so early disturb you in your occupations; it is strange, is it not, in a gouty invalid? Ah, time advances; two years ago I did not limp. I was, on the contrary, nimble enough at the time of my journey to Italy; but then fear gives legs as well as wings."

Then, retiring into the recess of a window, he signed De Thou to come to him.

"I need hardly remind you, my friend, who are in their secrets, that I affianced them a fortnight ago, as they have told you."

"Ah, indeed! Whom?" exclaimed poor De Thou, fallen from the Charybdis into the Scylla of astonishment.

"Come, come, don't affect surprise; you know very well whom," continued the Abbe. "But, faith, I fear I have been too complaisant with them, though these two children are really interesting in their love. I fear for him more than for her; I doubt not he is acting very foolishly, judging from the disturbance this morning. We must consult together about it."

"But," said De Thou, very gravely, "upon my honor, I do not know what you mean. Who is acting foolishly?"

"Now, my dear Monsieur, will you still play the mysterious with me? It is really insulting," said the worthy man, beginning to be angry.

"No, indeed, I mean it not; whom have you affianced?"

"Again! fie, Monsieur!"

"And what was the disturbance this morning?"

"You are laughing at me! I take my leave," said the Abbe, rising.

"I vow that I understand not a word of all that has been told me to-day. Do you mean Monsieur de Cinq-Mars?"

"Very well, Monsieur, very well! you treat me as a Cardinalist; very well, we part," said the Abbe Quillet, now altogether furious. And he snatched up his crutch and quitted the room hastily, without listening to De Thou, who followed him to his carriage, seeking to pacify him, but without effect, because he did not wish to name his friend upon the stairs in the hearing of his servants, and could not explain the matter otherwise. He had the annoyance of seeing the old Abbe depart, still in a passion; he called out to him amicably, "Tomorrow," as the coachman drove off, but got no answer.

It was, however, not uselessly that he had descended to the foot of the stairs, for he saw thence hideous groups of the mob returning from the Louvre, and was thus better able to judge of the importance of their movements in the morning; he heard rude voices exclaiming, as in triumph:

"She showed herself, however, the little Queen!" "Long live the good Duc de Bouillon, who is coming to us! He has a hundred thousand men with him, all on rafts on the Seine. The old Cardinal de la Rochelle is dead! Long live the King! Long live Monsieur le Grand!"

The cries redoubled at the arrival of a carriage and four, with the royal livery, which stopped at the counsellor's door, and in which De Thou recognized the equipage of Cinq-Mars; Ambrosio alighted to open the ample curtains, which the carriages of that period had for doors. The people threw themselves between the carriage-steps and the door of the house, so

that Cinq-Mars had an absolute struggle ere he could get out and disengage himself from the market-women, who sought to embrace him, crying:

"Here you are, then, my sweet, my dear! Here you are, my pet! Ah, how handsome he is, the love, with his big collar! Isn't he worth more than the other fellow with the white moustache? Come, my son, bring us out some good wine this morning."

Henri d'Effiat pressed, blushing deeply the while, his friend's hand,-- who hastened to have his doors closed.

"This popular favor is a cup one must drink," said he, as they ascended the stairs.

"It appears to me," replied De Thou, gravely, "that you drink it even to the very dregs."

"I will explain all this clamorous affair to you," answered Cinq-Mars, somewhat embarrassed. "At present, if you love me, dress yourself to accompany me to the Queen's toilette."

"I promised you blind adherence," said the counsellor; "but truly I can not keep my eyes shut much longer if--"

"Once again, I will give you a full explanation as we return from the Queen. But make haste; it is nearly ten o'clock."

"Well, I will go with you," replied De Thou, conducting him into his cabinet, where were the Comte du Lude and Fournier, while he himself passed into his dressing-room.

CHAPTER XVII

TOILETTE

The carriage of the Grand Equerry was rolling rapidly toward the Louvre, when, closing the curtain, he took his friend's hand, and said to him with emotion:

"Dear De Thou, I have kept great secrets in my heart, and, believe me, they have weighed heavily there; but two fears impelled me to silence-- that of your danger, and--shall I say it?--that of your counsels."

"Yet well you know," replied De Thou, "that I despise the first; and I deemed that you did not despise the second."

"No, but I feared, and still fear them. I would not be stopped. Do not speak, my friend; not a word, I conjure you, before you have heard and seen all that is about to take place. I will return with you to your house on quitting the Louvre; there I will listen to you, and thence I shall depart to continue my work, for nothing will shake my resolve, I warn you. I have just said so to the gentlemen at your house."

In his accent Cinq-Mars had nothing of the brusqueness which clothed his words. His voice was conciliatory, his look gentle, amiable, affectionate, his air as tranquil as it was determined. There was no indication of the slightest effort at control. De Thou remarked it, and sighed.

Alighting from the carriage with him, De Thou followed him up the great staircase of the Louvre. When they entered the Queen's apartment, announced by two ushers dressed in black and bearing ebony rods, she was seated at her toilette. This was a table of black wood, inlaid with tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl, and brass, in an infinity of designs of

very bad taste, but which give to all furniture an air of grandeur which we still admire in it. A mirror, rounded at the top, which the ladies of our time would consider small and insignificant, stood in the middle of the table, whereon were scattered jewels and necklaces.

Anne of Austria, seated before it in a large armchair of crimson velvet, with long gold fringe, was as motionless and grave as on her throne, while Dona Stefania and Madame de Motteville, on either side, lightly touched her beautiful blond hair with a comb, as if finishing the Queen's coiffure, which, however, was already perfectly arranged and decorated with pearls. Her long tresses, though light, were exquisitely glossy, manifesting that to the touch they must be fine and soft as silk. The daylight fell without a shade upon her forehead, which had no reason to dread the test, itself reflecting an almost equal light from its surpassing fairness, which the Queen was pleased thus to display. Her blue eyes, blended with green, were large and regular, and her vermilion mouth had that underlip of the princesses of Austria, somewhat prominent and slightly cleft, in the form of a cherry, which may still be marked in all the female portraits of this time, whose painters seemed to have aimed at imitating the Queen's mouth, in order to please the women of her suite, whose desire was, no doubt, to resemble her.

The black dress then adopted by the court, and of which the form was even fixed by an edict, set off the ivory of her arms, bare to the elbow, and ornamented with a profusion of lace, which flowed from her loose sleeves. Large pearls hung in her ears and from her girdle. Such was the appearance of the Queen at this moment. At her feet, upon two velvet cushions, a boy of four years old was playing with a little cannon, which he was assiduously breaking in pieces. This was the Dauphin, afterward Louis XIV. The Duchesse Marie de Mantua was seated on her right hand upon a stool. The Princesse de Guemenee, the Duchesse de Chevreuse, and Mademoiselle de Montbazou, Mesdemoiselles de Guise, de Rohan, and de Vendome, all beautiful and brilliant with youth, were behind her, standing. In the recess of a window, Monsieur, his hat under his arm, was talking in a low voice with a man, stout, with a red face and a steady and daring eye. This was the Duc de Bouillon. An officer about twenty-five years of age, well-formed, and of agreeable presence, had just given several papers to the Prince, which the Duc de Bouillon appeared to be explaining to him.

De Thou, after having saluted the Queen, who said a few words to him, approached the Princesse de Guemenee, and conversed with her in an undertone, with an air of affectionate intimacy, but all the while intent upon his friend's interest. Secretly trembling lest he should have confided his destiny to a being less worthy of him than he wished, he examined the Princess Marie with the scrupulous attention, the scrutinizing eye of a mother examining the woman whom her son has selected for his bride--for he thought that Marie could not be altogether a stranger to the enterprise of Cinq-Mars. He saw with dissatisfaction that her dress, which was extremely elegant, appeared to inspire her with more vanity than became her on such an occasion. She was incessantly rearranging upon her forehead and her hair the rubies which ornamented her head, and which scarcely equalled the brilliancy and animated color of her complexion. She looked frequently at Cinq-Mars; but it was rather the look of coquetry than that of love, and her eyes often glanced toward the mirror on the toilette, in which she watched the symmetry of her beauty. These observations of the counsellor began to persuade him that he was mistaken in suspecting her to be the aim of Cinq-Mars, especially when he saw that she seemed to have a pleasure in sitting at the Queen's side, while the duchesses stood behind her, and that she often looked haughtily at them.

"In that heart of nineteen," said he, "love, were there love, would reign alone and above all to-day. It is not she!"

The Queen made an almost imperceptible movement of the head to Madame de Guemenee. After the two friends had spoken a moment with each person present, and at this sign, all the ladies, except Marie de Mantua, making profound courtesies, quitted the apartment without speaking, as if by

previous arrangement. The Queen, then herself turning her chair, said to Monsieur:

"My brother, I beg you will come and sit down by me. We will consult upon what I have already told you. The Princesse Marie will not be in the way. I begged her to remain. We have no interruption to fear."

The Queen seemed more at ease in her manner and language; and no longer preserving her severe and ceremonious immobility, she signed to the other persons present to approach her.

Gaston d'Orleans, somewhat alarmed at this solemn opening, came carelessly, sat down on her right hand, and said with a half-smile and a negligent air, playing with his ruff and the chain of the Saint Esprit which hung from his neck:

"I think, Madame, that we shall fatigue the ears of so young a personage by a long conference. She would rather hear us speak of dances, and of marriage, of an elector, or of the King of Poland, for example."

Marie assumed a disdainful air; Cinq-Mars frowned.

"Pardon me," replied the Queen, looking at her; "I assure you the politics of the present time interest her much. Do not seek to escape us, my brother," added she, smiling. "I have you to-day! It is the least we can do to listen to Monsieur de Bouillon."

The latter approached, holding by the hand the young officer of whom we have spoken.

"I must first," said he, "present to your Majesty the Baron de Beauvau, who has just arrived from Spain."

"From Spain?" said the Queen, with emotion. "There is courage in that; you have seen my family?"

"He will speak to you of them, and of the Count-Duke of Olivares. As to courage, it is not the first time he has shown it. He commanded the cuirassiers of the Comte de Soissons."

"How? so young, sir! You must be fond of political wars."

"On the contrary, your Majesty will pardon me," replied he, "for I served with the princes of the peace."

Anne of Austria smiled at this jeu-de-mot. The Duc de Bouillon, seizing the moment to bring forward the grand question he had in view, quitted Cinq-Mars, to whom he had just given his hand with an air of the most zealous friendship, and approaching the Queen with him, "It is miraculous, Madame," said he, "that this period still contains in its bosom some noble characters, such as these;" and he pointed to the master of the horse, to young Beauvau, and to De Thou. "It is only in them that we can place our hope for the future. Such men are indeed very rare now, for the great leveller has swung a long scythe over France."

"Is it of Time you speak," said the Queen, "or of a real personage?"

"Too real, too living, too long living, Madame!" replied the Duke, becoming more animated; "but his measureless ambition, his colossal selfishness can no longer be endured. All those who have noble hearts are indignant at this yoke; and at this moment, more than ever, we see misfortunes threatening us in the future. It must be said, Madame--yes, it is no longer time to blind ourselves to the truth, or to conceal it--the King's illness is serious. The moment for thinking and resolving has arrived, for the time to act is not far distant."

The severe and abrupt tone of M. de Bouillon did not surprise Anne of Austria; but she had always seen him more calm, and was, therefore, somewhat alarmed by the disquietude he betrayed. Quitting accordingly

the tone of pleasantry which she had at first adopted, she said:

"How! what fear you, and what would you do?"

"I fear nothing for myself, Madame, for the army of Italy or Sedan will always secure my safety; but I fear for you, and perhaps for the princes, your sons."

"For my children, Monsieur le Duc, for the sons of France? Do you hear him, my brother, and do you not appear astonished?"

The Queen was deeply agitated.

"No, Madame," said Gaston d'Orleans, calmly; "you know that I am accustomed to persecution. I am prepared to expect anything from that man. He is master; we must be resigned."

"He master!" exclaimed the Queen. "And from whom does he derive his powers, if not from the King? And after the King, what hand will sustain him? Can you tell me? Who will prevent him from again returning to nothing? Will it be you or I?"

"It will be himself," interrupted M. de Bouillon, "for he seeks to be named regent; and I know that at this moment he contemplates taking your children from you, and requiring the King to confide them to his care."

"Take them from me!" cried the mother, involuntarily seizing the Dauphin, and taking him in her arms.

The child, standing between the Queen's knees, looked at the men who surrounded him with a gravity very singular for his age, and, seeing his mother in tears, placed his hand upon the little sword he wore.

"Ah, Monseigneur," said the Duc de Bouillon, bending half down to address to him what he intended for the Princess, "it is not against us that you must draw your sword, but against him who is undermining your throne. He prepares an empire for you, no doubt. You will have an absolute sceptre; but he has scattered the fasces which indicated it. Those fasces were your ancient nobility, whom he has decimated. When you are king, you will be a great king. I foresee it; but you will have subjects only, and no friends, for friendship exists only in independence and a kind of equality which takes its rise in force. Your ancestors had their peers; you will not have yours. May God aid you then, Monseigneur, for man may not do it without institutions! Be great; but above all, around you, a great man, let there be others as strong, so that if the one stumbles, the whole monarchy may not fall."

The Duc de Bouillon had a warmth of expression and a confidence of manner which captivated those who heard him. His valor, his keen perception in the field, the profundity of his political views, his knowledge of the affairs of Europe, his reflective and decided character, all rendered him one of the most capable and imposing men of his time-the only one, indeed, whom the Cardinal-Duc really feared. The Queen always listened to him with confidence, and allowed him to acquire a sort of empire over her. She was now more deeply moved than ever.

"Ah, would to God," she exclaimed, "that my son's mind was ripe for your counsels, and his arm strong enough to profit by them! Until that time, however, I will listen, I will act for him. It is I who should be, and it is I who shall be, regent. I will not resign this right save with life. If we must make war, we will make it; for I will do everything but submit to the shame and terror of yielding up the future Louis XIV to this crowned subject. Yes," she went on, coloring and closely pressing the young Dauphin's arm, "yes, my brother, and you gentlemen, counsel me! Speak! how do we stand? Must I depart? Speak openly. As a woman, as a wife, I could have wept over so mournful a position; but now see, as a mother, I do not weep. I am ready to give you orders if it is necessary."

Never had Anne of Austria looked so beautiful as at this moment; and the enthusiasm she manifested electrified all those present, who needed but a word from her mouth to speak. The Duc de Bouillon cast a glance at Monsieur, which decided him.

"Ma foi!" said he, with deliberation, "if you give orders, my sister, I will be the captain of your guards, on my honor, for I too am weary of the vexations occasioned me by this knave. He continues to persecute me, seeks to break off my marriage, and still keeps my friends in the Bastille, or has them assassinated from time to time; and besides, I am indignant," said he, recollecting himself and assuming a more solemn air, "I am indignant at the misery of the people."

"My brother," returned the Princess, energetically, "I take you at your word, for with you, one must do so; and I hope that together we shall be strong enough for the purpose. Do only as Monsieur le Comte de Soissons did, but survive your victory. Side with me, as you did with Monsieur de Montmorency, but leap the ditch."

Gaston felt the point of this. He called to mind the well-known incident when the unfortunate rebel of Castelnaudary leaped almost alone a large ditch, and found on the other side seventeen wounds, a prison, and death in the sight of Monsieur, who remained motionless with his army. In the rapidity of the Queen's enunciation he had not time to examine whether she had employed this expression proverbially or with a direct reference; but at all events, he decided not to notice it, and was indeed prevented from doing so by the Queen, who continued, looking at Cinq-Mars:

"But, above all, no panic-terror! Let us know exactly where we are, Monsieur le Grand. You have just left the King. Is there fear with you?"

D'Effiat had not ceased to observe Marie de Mantua, whose expressive countenance exhibited to him all her ideas far more rapidly and more surely than words. He read there the desire that he should speak--the desire that he should confirm the Prince and the Queen. An impatient movement of her foot conveyed to him her will that the thing should be accomplished, the conspiracy arranged. His face became pale and more pensive; he pondered for a moment, realizing that his destiny was contained in that hour. De Thou looked at him and trembled, for he knew him well. He would fain have said one word to him, only one word; but Cinq-Mars had already raised his head. He spoke:

"I do not think, Madame, that the King is so ill as you suppose. God will long preserve to us this Prince. I hope so; I am even sure of it. He suffers, it is true, suffers much; but it is his soul more peculiarly that is sick, and of an evil which nothing can cure--of an evil which one would not wish to one's greatest enemy, and which would gain him the pity of the whole world if it were known. The end of his misery--that is to say, of his life--will not be granted him for a long time. His languor is entirely moral. There is in his heart a great revolution going on; he would accomplish it, and can not.

"The King has felt for many long years growing within him the seeds of a just hatred against a man to whom he thinks he owes gratitude, and it is this internal combat between his natural goodness and his anger that devours him. Every year that has passed has deposited at his feet, on one side, the great works of this man, and on the other, his crimes. It is the last which now weigh down the balance. The King sees them and is indignant; he would punish, but all at once he stops and weeps. If you could witness him thus, Madame, you would pity him. I have seen him seize the pen which was to sign his exile, dip it into the ink with a bold hand, and use it--for what? --to congratulate him on some recent success. He at once applauds himself for his goodness as a Christian, curses himself for his weakness as a sovereign judge, despises himself as a king. He seeks refuge in prayer, and plunges into meditation upon the future; then he rises terrified because he has seen in thought the tortures which this man merits, and how deeply no one knows better than he. You should hear him in these moments accuse himself of criminal

weakness, and exclaim that he himself should be punished for not having known how to punish. One would say that there are spirits which order him to strike, for his arms are raised as he sleeps. In a word, Madame, the storm murmurs in his heart, but burns none but himself. The thunderbolts are chained."

"Well, then, let us loose them!" exclaimed the Duc de Bouillon.

"He who touches them may die of the contact," said Monsieur.

"But what a noble devotion!" cried the Queen.

"How I should admire the hero!" said Marie, in a half-whisper.

"I will do it," answered Cinq-Mars.

"We will do it," said M. de Thou, in his ear.

Young Beauvau had approached the Duc de Bouillon.

"Monsieur," said he, "do you forget what follows?"

"No, 'pardieu'! I do not forget it," replied the latter, in a low voice; then, addressing the Queen, "Madame," said he, "accept the offer of Monsieur le Grand. He is more in a position to sway the King than either you or I; but hold yourself prepared, for the Cardinal is too wary to be caught sleeping. I do not believe in his illness. I have no faith in the silence and immobility of which he has sought to persuade us these two years past. I would not believe in his death even, unless I had myself thrown his head into the sea, like that of the giant in Ariosto. Hold yourself ready to meet all contingencies, and let us, meanwhile, hasten our operations. I have shown my plans to Monsieur just now; I will give you a summary of them. I offer you Sedan, Madame, for yourself, and for Messeigneurs, your sons. The army of Italy is mine; I will recall it if necessary. Monsieur le Grand is master of half the camp of Perpignan. All the old Huguenots of La Rochelle and the South are ready to come to him at the first nod. All has been organized for a year past, by my care, to meet events."

"I should not hesitate," said the Queen, "to place myself in your hands, to save my children, if any misfortune should happen to the King. But in this general plan you forget Paris."

"It is ours on every side; the people by the archbishop, without his suspecting it, and by Monsieur de Beaufort, who is its king; the troops by your guards and those of Monsieur, who shall be chief in command, if he please."

"I! I! oh, that positively can not be! I have not enough people, and I must have a retreat stronger than Sedan," said Gaston.

"It suffices for the Queen," replied M. de Bouillon.

"Ah, that may be! but my sister does not risk so much as a man who draws the sword. Do you know that these are bold measures you propose?"

"What, even if we have the King on our side?" asked Anne of Austria.

"Yes, Madame, yes; we do not know how long that may last. We must make ourselves sure; and I do nothing without the treaty with Spain."

"Do nothing, then," said the Queen, coloring deeply; "for certainly I will never hear that spoken of."

"And yet, Madame, it were more prudent, and Monsieur is right," said the Duc de Bouillon; "for the Count-Duke of San Lucra offers us seventeen thousand men, tried troops, and five hundred thousand crowns in ready money."

"What!" exclaimed the Queen, with astonishment, "have you dared to proceed so far without my consent? already treaties with foreigners!"

"Foreigners, my sister! could we imagine that a princess of Spain would use that word?" said Gaston.

Anne of Austria rose, taking the Dauphin by the hand; and, leaning upon Marie: "Yes, sir," she said, "I am a Spaniard; but I am the grand-daughter of Charles V, and I know that a queen's country is where her throne is. I leave you, gentlemen; proceed without me. I know nothing of the matter for the future."

She advanced some steps, but seeing Marie pale and bathed in tears, she returned.

"I will, however, solemnly promise you inviolable secrecy; but nothing more."

All were mentally disconcerted, except the Duc de Bouillon, who, not willing to lose the advantages he had gained, said to the Queen, bowing respectfully:

"We are grateful for this promise, Madame, and we ask no more, persuaded that after the first success you will be entirely with us."

Not wishing to engage in a war of words, the Queen courtesied somewhat less coldly, and quitted the apartment with Marie, who cast upon Cinq-Mars one of those looks which comprehend at once all the emotions of the soul. He seemed to read in her beautiful eyes the eternal and mournful devotion of a woman who has given herself up forever; and he felt that if he had once thought of withdrawing from his enterprise, he should now have considered himself the basest of men.

As soon as the two princesses had disappeared, "There, there! I told you so, Bouillon, you offended the Queen," said Monsieur; "you went too far. You can not certainly accuse me of having been hesitating this morning. I have, on the contrary, shown more resolution than I ought to have done."

"I am full of joy and gratitude toward her Majesty," said M. de Bouillon, with a triumphant air; "we are sure of the future. What will you do now, Monsieur de Cinq-Mars?"

"I have told you, Monsieur; I draw not back, whatever the consequences. I will see the King; I will run every risk to obtain his assent."

"And the treaty with Spain?"

"Yes, I--"

De Thou seized Cinq-Mars by the arm, and, advancing suddenly, said, with a solemn air:

"We have decided that it shall be only signed after the interview with the King; for should his Majesty's just severity toward the Cardinal dispense with it, we have thought it better not to expose ourselves to the discovery of so dangerous a treaty."

M. de Bouillon frowned.

"If I did not know Monsieur de Thou," said he, "I should have regarded this as a defection; but from him--"

"Monsieur," replied the counsellor, "I think I may engage myself, on my honor, to do all that Monsieur le Grand does; we are inseparable."

Cinq-Mars looked at his friend, and was astonished to see upon his mild countenance the expression of sombre despair; he was so struck with it that he had not the courage to gainsay him.

"He is right, gentlemen," he said with a cold but kindly smile; "the King will perhaps spare us much trouble. We may do good things with him. For the rest, Monseigneur, and you, Monsieur le Duc," he added with immovable firmness, "fear not that I shall ever draw back. I have burned all the bridges behind me. I must advance; the Cardinal's power shall fall, or my head."

"It is strange, very strange!" said Monsieur; "I see that every one here is farther advanced in the conspiracy than I imagined."

"Not so, Monsieur," said the Duc de Bouillon; "we prepared only that which you might please to accept. Observe that there is nothing in writing. You have but to speak, and nothing exists or ever has existed; according to your order, the whole thing shall be a dream or a volcano."

"Well, well, I am content, if it must be so," said Gaston; "let us occupy ourselves with more agreeable topics. Thank God, we have a little time before us! I confess I wish that it were all over. I am not fitted for violent emotions; they affect my health," he added, taking M. de Beauvau's arm. "Tell us if the Spanish women are still pretty, young man. It is said you are a great gallant among them. 'Tudieu! I'm sure you've got yourself talked of there. They tell me the women wear enormous petticoats. Well, I am not at all against that; they make the foot look smaller and prettier. I'm sure the wife of Don Louis de Haro is not handsomer than Madame de Guemenee, is she? Come, be frank; I'm told she looks like a nun. Ah! you do not answer; you are embarrassed. She has then taken your fancy; or you fear to offend our friend Monsieur de Thou in comparing her with the beautiful Guemenee. Well, let's talk of the customs; the King has a charming dwarf I'm told, and they put him in a pie. He is a fortunate man, that King of Spain! I don't know another equally so. And the Queen, she is still served on bended knee, is she not? Ah! that is a good custom; we have lost it. It is very unfortunate--more unfortunate than may be supposed."

And Gaston d'Orleans had the confidence to speak in this tone nearly half an hour, with a young man whose serious character was not at all adapted to such conversation, and who, still occupied with the importance of the scene he had just witnessed and the great interests which had been discussed, made no answer to this torrent of idle words. He looked at the Duc de Bouillon with an astonished air, as if to ask him whether this was really the man whom they were going to place at the head of the most audacious enterprise that had ever been launched; while the Prince, without appearing to perceive that he remained unanswered, replied to himself, speaking with volubility, as he drew him gradually out of the room. He feared that one of the gentlemen present might recommence the terrible conversation about the treaty; but none desired to do so, unless it were the Duc de Bouillon, who, however, preserved an angry silence. As for Cinq-Mars, he had been led away by De Thou, under cover of the chattering of Monsieur, who took care not to appear to notice their departure.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

A queen's country is where her throne is
All that he said, I had already thought
Always the first word which is the most difficult to say
Dare now to be silent when I have told you these things
Daylight is detrimental to them
Friendship exists only in independence and a kind of equality
I have burned all the bridges behind me
In pitying me he forgot himself
In times like these we must see all and say all
Reproaches are useless and cruel if the evil is done
Should be punished for not having known how to punish
Tears for the future

The great leveller has swung a long scythe over France
The most in favor will be the soonest abandoned by him
This popular favor is a cup one must drink
This was the Dauphin, afterward Louis XIV

CINQ MARS

By ALFRED DE VIGNY

BOOK 5.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SECRET

De Thou had reached home with his friend; his doors were carefully shut, and orders given to admit no one, and to excuse him to the refugees for allowing them to depart without seeing them again; and as yet the two friends had not spoken to each other.

The counsellor had thrown himself into his armchair in deep meditation. Cinq-Mars, leaning against the lofty chimneypiece, awaited with a serious and sorrowful air the termination of this silence. At length De Thou, looking fixedly at him and crossing his arms, said in a hollow and melancholy voice:

"This, then, is the goal you have reached! These, the consequences of your ambition! You are about to banish, perhaps slay, a man, and to bring then, a foreign army into France; I am, then, to see you an assassin and a traitor to your country! By what tortuous paths have you arrived thus far? By what stages have you descended so low?"

"Any other than yourself would not speak thus to me twice," said Cinq-Mars, coldly; "but I know you, and I like this explanation. I desired it, and sought it. You shall see my entire soul. I had at first another thought, a better one perhaps, more worthy of our friendship, more worthy of friendship--friendship, the second thing upon earth."

He raised his eyes to heaven as he spoke, as if he there sought the divinity.

"Yes, it would have been better. I intended to have said nothing to you on the subject. It was a painful task to keep silence; but hitherto I have succeeded. I wished to have conducted the whole enterprise without you; to show you only the finished work. I wished to keep you beyond the circle of my danger; but shall I confess my weakness? I feared to die, if I have to die, misjudged by you. I can well sustain the idea of the world's malediction, but not of yours; but this has decided me upon avowing all to you."

"What! and but for this thought, you would have had the courage to conceal yourself forever from me? Ah, dear Henri, what have I done that you should take this care of my life? By what fault have I deserved to survive you, if you die? You have had the strength of mind to hoodwink me for two whole years; you have never shown me aught of your life but its flowers; you have never entered my solitude but with a joyous

countenance, and each time with a fresh favor. Ah, you must be very guilty or very virtuous!"

"Do not seek in my soul more than therein lies. Yes, I have deceived you; and that fact was the only peace and joy I had in the world. Forgive me for having stolen these moments from my destiny, so brilliant, alas! I was happy in the happiness you supposed me to enjoy; I made you happy in that dream, and I am only guilty in that I am now about to destroy it, and to show myself as I was and am. Listen: I shall not detain you long; the story of an impassioned heart is ever simple. Once before, I remember, in my tent when I was wounded, my secret nearly escaped me; it would have been happy, perhaps, had it done so. Yet what would counsel have availed me? I should not have followed it. In a word, 'tis Marie de Mantua whom I love."

"How! she who is to be Queen of Poland?"

"If she is ever queen, it can only be after my death. But listen: for her I became a courtier; for her I have almost reigned in France; for her I am about to fall--perhaps to die."

"Die! fall! when I have been reproaching your triumph! when I have wept over the sadness of your victory!"

"Ah! you know me but ill, if you suppose that I shall be the dupe of Fortune, when she smiles upon me; if you suppose that I have not pierced to the bottom of my destiny! I struggle against it, but 'tis the stronger I feel it. I have undertaken a task beyond human power; and I shall fail in it."

"Why, then, not stop? What is the use of intellect in the business of the world?"

"None; unless, indeed, it be to tell us the cause of our fall, and to enable us to foresee the day on which we shall fall. I can not now recede. When a man is confronted with such an enemy as Richelieu, he must overcome him or be crushed by him. Tomorrow I shall strike the last blow; did I not just now, in your presence, engage to do so?"

"And it is that very engagement that I would oppose. What confidence have you in those to whom you thus abandon your life? Have you not read their secret thoughts?"

"I know them all; I have read their hopes through their feigned rage; I know that they tremble while they threaten. I know that even now they are ready to make their peace by giving me up; but it is my part to sustain them and to decide the King. I must do it, for Marie is my betrothed, and my death is written at Narbonne. It is voluntarily, it is with full knowledge of my fate, that I have thus placed myself between the block and supreme happiness. That happiness I must tear from the hands of Fortune, or die on that scaffold. At this instant I experience the joy of having broken down all doubt. What! blush you not at having thought me ambitious from a base egoism, like this Cardinal--ambitious from a puerile desire for a power which is never satisfied? I am ambitious, but it is because I love. Yes, I love; in that word all is comprised. But I accuse you unjustly. You have embellished my secret intentions; you have imparted to me noble designs (I remember them), high political conceptions. They are brilliant, they are grand, doubtless; but--shall I say it to you?--such vague projects for the perfecting of corrupt societies seem to me to crawl far below the devotion of love. When the whole soul vibrates with that one thought, it has no room for the nice calculation of general interests; the topmost heights of earth are far beneath heaven."

De Thou shook his head.

"What can I answer?" he said. "I do not understand you; your reasoning unreasons you. You hunt a shadow."

"Nay," continued Cinq-Mars; "far from destroying my strength, this inward fire has developed it. I have calculated everything. Slow steps have led me to the end which I am about to attain. Marie drew me by the hand; could I retreat? I would not have done it though a world faced me. Hitherto, all has gone well; but an invisible barrier arrests me. This barrier must be broken; it is Richelieu. But now in your presence I undertook to do this; but perhaps I was too hasty. I now think I was so. Let him rejoice; he expected me. Doubtless he foresaw that it would be the youngest whose patience would first fail. If he played on this calculation, he played well. Yet but for the love that has urged me on, I should have been stronger than he, and by just means."

Then a sudden change came over the face of Cinq-Mars. He turned pale and red twice; and the veins of his forehead rose like blue lines drawn by an invisible hand.

"Yes," he added, rising, and clasping together his hands with a force which indicated the violent despair concentrated in his heart, "all the torments with which love can tear its victims I have felt in my breast. This timid girl, for whom I would shake empires, for whom I have suffered all, even the favor of a prince, who perhaps has not felt all I have done for her, can not yet be mine. She is mine before God, yet I am estranged from her; nay, I must hear daily discussed before me which of the thrones of Europe will best suit her, in conversations wherein I may not even raise my voice to give an opinion, and in which they scorn as mate for her princes of the blood royal, who yet have precedence far before me. I must conceal myself like a culprit to hear through a grating the voice of her who is my wife; in public I must bow before her--her husband, yet her servant! 'Tis too much; I can not live thus. I must take the last step, whether it elevate me or hurl me down."

"And for your personal happiness you would overthrow a State?"

"The happiness of the State is one with mine. I secure that undoubtedly in destroying the tyrant of the King. The horror with which this man inspires me has passed into my very blood. When I was first on my way to him, I encountered in my journey his greatest crime. He is the genius of evil for the unhappy King! I will exorcise him. I might have become the genius of good for Louis XIII. It was one of the thoughts of Marie, her most cherished thought. But I do not think I shall triumph in the uneasy soul of the Prince."

"Upon what do you rely, then?" said De Thou.

"Upon the cast of a die. If his will can but once last for a few hours, I have gained. 'Tis a last calculation on which my destiny hangs."

"And that of your Marie!"

"Could you suppose it?" said Cinq-Mars, impetuously. "No, no! If he abandons me, I sign the treaty with Spain, and then-war!"

"Ah, horror!" exclaimed the counsellor. "What, a war! a civil war, and a foreign alliance!"

"Ay, 'tis a crime," said Cinq-Mars, coldly; "but have I asked you to participate in it?"

"Cruel, ungrateful man!" replied his friend; "can you speak to me thus? Know you not, have I not proved to you, that friendship holds the place of every passion in my heart? Can I survive the least of your misfortunes, far less your death. Still, let me influence you not to strike France. Oh, my friend! my only friend! I implore you on my knees, let us not thus be parricides; let us not assassinate our country! I say us, because I will never separate myself from your actions. Preserve to me my self-esteem, for which I have labored so long; sully not my life and my death, which are both yours."

De Thou had fallen at the feet of his friend, who, unable to preserve his

affected coldness, threw himself into his arms, as he raised him, and, pressing him to his heart, said in a stifled voice:

"Why love me thus? What have you done, friend? Why love me? You who are wise, pure, and virtuous; you who are not led away by an insensate passion and the desire for vengeance; you whose soul is nourished only by religion and science--why love me? What has my friendship given you but anxiety and pain? Must it now heap dangers on you? Separate yourself from me; we are no longer of the same nature. You see courts have corrupted me. I have no longer openness, no longer goodness. I meditate the ruin of a man; I can deceive a friend. Forget me, scorn me. I am not worthy of one of your thoughts; how should I be worthy of your perils?"

"By swearing to me not to betray the King and France," answered De Thou. "Know you that the preservation of your country is at stake; that if you yield to Spain our fortifications, she will never return them to us; that your name will be a byword with posterity; that French mothers will curse it when they shall be forced to teach their children a foreign language--know you all this? Come."

And he drew him toward the bust of Louis XIII.

"Swear before him (he is your friend also), swear never to sign this infamous treaty."

Cinq-Mars lowered his eyes, but with dogged tenacity answered, although blushing as he did so:

"I have said it; if they force me to it, I will sign."

De Thou turned pale, and let fall his hand. He took two turns in his room, his arms crossed, in inexpressible anguish. At last he advanced solemnly toward the bust of his father, and opened a large book standing at its foot; he turned to a page already marked, and read aloud:

"I think, therefore, that M. de Ligneboeuf was justly condemned to death by the Parliament of Rouen, for not having revealed the conspiracy of Catteville against the State."

Then keeping the book respectfully opened in his hand, and contemplating the image of the President de Thou, whose Memoirs he held, he continued:

"Yes, my father, you thought well.... I shall be a criminal, I shall merit death; but can I do otherwise? I will not denounce this traitor, because that also would be treason; and he is my friend, and he is unhappy."

Then, advancing toward Cinq-Mars, and again taking his hand, he said:

"I do much for you in acting thus; but expect nothing further from me, Monsieur, if you sign this treaty."

Cinq-Mars was moved to the heart's core by this scene, for he felt all that his friend must suffer in casting him off. Checking, however, the tears which were rising to his smarting lids, and embracing De Thou tenderly, he exclaimed:

"Ah, De Thou, I find you still perfect. Yes, you do me a service in alienating yourself from me, for if your lot had been linked to mine, I should not have dared to dispose of my life. I should have hesitated to sacrifice it in case of need; but now I shall assuredly do so. And I repeat to you, if they force me, I shall sign the treaty with Spain."

THE HUNTING PARTY

Meanwhile the illness of Louis XIII threw France into the apprehension which unsettled States ever feel on the approach of the death of princes. Although Richelieu was the hub of the monarchy, he reigned only in the name of Louis, though enveloped with the splendor of the name which he had assumed. Absolute as he was over his master, Richelieu still feared him; and this fear reassured the nation against his ambitious desires, to which the King himself was the fixed barrier. But this prince dead, what would the imperious minister do? Where would a man stop who had already dared so much? Accustomed to wield the sceptre, who would prevent him from still holding it, and from subscribing his name alone to laws which he alone would dictate? These fears agitated all minds. The people in vain looked throughout the kingdom for those pillars of the nobility, at the feet of whom they had been wont to find shelter in political storms. They now only saw their recent tombs. Parliament was dumb; and men felt that nothing could be opposed to the monstrous growth of the Cardinal's usurping power. No one was entirely deceived by the affected sufferings of the minister. None was touched with that feigned agony which had too often deceived the public hope; and distance nowhere prevented the weight of the dreaded 'parvenu' from being felt.

The love of the people soon revived toward the son of Henri IV. They hastened to the churches; they prayed, and even wept. Unfortunate princes are always loved. The melancholy of Louis, and his mysterious sorrow interested all France; still living, they already regretted him, as if each man desired to be the depository of his troubles ere he carried away with him the grand mystery of what is suffered by men placed so high that they can see nothing before them but their tomb.

The King, wishing to reassure the whole nation, announced the temporary reestablishment of his health, and ordered the court to prepare for a grand hunting party to be given at Chambord--a royal domain, whither his brother, the Duc d'Orleans, prayed him to return.

This beautiful abode was the favorite retreat of Louis, doubtless because, in harmony with his feelings, it combined grandeur with sadness. He often passed whole months there, without seeing any one whatsoever, incessantly reading and re-reading mysterious papers, writing unknown documents, which he locked up in an iron coffer, of which he alone had the key. He sometimes delighted in being served by a single domestic, and thus so to forget himself by the absence of his suite as to live for many days together like a poor man or an exiled citizen, loving to figure to himself misery or persecution, in order the better to enjoy royalty afterward. Another time he would be in a more entire solitude; and having forbidden any human creature to approach him, clothed in the habit of a monk, he would shut himself up in the vaulted chapel. There, reading the life of Charles V, he would imagine himself at St. Just, and chant over himself that mass for the dead which brought death upon the head of the Spanish monarch.

But in the midst of these very chants and meditations his feeble mind was pursued and distracted by contrary images. Never did life and the world appear to him more fair than in such times of solitude among the tombs. Between his eyes and the page which he endeavored to read passed brilliant processions, victorious armies, or nations transported with love. He saw himself powerful, combating, triumphant, adored; and if a ray of the sun through the large windows fell upon him, suddenly rising from the foot of the altar, he felt himself carried away by a thirst for daylight and the open air, which led him from his gloomy retreat. But returned to real life, he found there once more disgust and ennui, for the first men he met recalled his power to his recollection by their homage.

It was then that he believed in friendship, and summoned it to his side; but scarcely was he certain of its possession than unconquerable scruples suddenly seized upon his soul--scruples concerning a too powerful attachment to the creature, turning him from the Creator, and frequently inward reproaches for removing himself too much from the affairs of the

State. The object of his momentary affection then seemed to him a despotic being, whose power drew him from his duties; but, unfortunately for his favorites, he had not the strength of mind outwardly to manifest toward them the resentment he felt, and thus to warn them of their danger, but, continuing to caress them, he added by this constraint fuel to the secret fire of his heart, and was impelled to an absolute hatred of them. There were moments when he was capable of taking any measures against them.

Cinq-Mars knew perfectly the weakness of that mind, which could not keep firmly in any path, and the weakness of a heart which could neither wholly love nor wholly hate. Thus, the position of favorite, the envy of all France, the object of jealousy even on the part of the great minister, was so precarious and so painful that, but for his love, he would have burst his golden chains with greater joy than a galley-slave feels when he sees the last ring that for two long years he has been filing with a steel spring concealed in his mouth, fall to the earth. This impatience to meet the fate he saw so near hastened the explosion of that patiently prepared mine, as he had declared to his friend; but his situation was that of a man who, placed by the side of the book of life, should see hovering over it the hand which is to indite his damnation or his salvation. He set out with Louis to Chambord, resolved to take the first opportunity favorable to his design. It soon presented itself.

The very morning of the day appointed for the chase, the King sent word to him that he was waiting for him on the Escalier du Lys. It may not, perhaps, be out of place to speak of this astonishing construction.

Four leagues from Blois, and one league from the Loire, in a small and deep valley, between marshy swamps and a forest of large holm-oaks, far from any highroad, the traveller suddenly comes upon a royal, nay, a magic castle. It might be said that, compelled by some wonderful lamp, a genie of the East had carried it off during one of the "thousand and one nights," and had brought it from the country of the sun to hide it in the land of fogs and mist, for the dwelling of the mistress of a handsome prince.

Hidden like a treasure; with its blue domes, its elegant minarets rising from thick walls or shooting into the air, its long terraces overlooking the wood, its light spires bending with the wind, its terraces everywhere rising over its colonnades, one might there imagine one's self in the kingdom of Bagdad or of Cashmir, did not the blackened walls, with their covering of moss and ivy, and the pallid and melancholy hue of the sky, denote a rainy climate. It was indeed a genius who raised this building; but he came from Italy, and his name was Primaticcio. It was indeed a handsome prince whose amours were concealed in it; but he was a king, and he bore the name of Francois I. His salamander still spouts fire everywhere about it. It sparkles in a thousand places on the arched roofs, and multiplies the flames there like the stars of heaven; it supports the capitals with burning crowns; it colors the windows with its fires; it meanders up and down the secret staircases, and everywhere seems to devour with its flaming glances the triple crescent of a mysterious Diane--that Diane de Poitiers, twice a goddess and twice adored in these voluptuous woods.

The base of this strange monument is like the monument itself, full of elegance and mystery; there is a double staircase, which rises in two interwoven spirals from the most remote foundations of the edifice up to the highest points, and ends in a lantern or small lattice-work cabinet, surmounted by a colossal fleur-de-lys, visible from a great distance. Two men may ascend it at the same moment, without seeing each other.

This staircase alone seems like a little isolated temple. Like our churches, it is sustained and protected by the arcades of its thin, light, transparent, openwork wings. One would think the docile stone had given itself to the finger of the architect; it seems, so to speak, kneaded according to the slightest caprice of his imagination. One can hardly conceive how the plans were traced, in what terms the orders were explained to the workmen. The whole thing appears a transient thought,

a brilliant revery that at once assumed a durable form---the realization of a dream.

Cinq-Mars was slowly ascending the broad stairs which led him to the King's presence, and stopping longer at each step, in proportion as he approached him, either from disgust at the idea of seeing the Prince whose daily complaints he had to hear, or thinking of what he was about to do, when the sound of a guitar struck his ear. He recognized the beloved instrument of Louis and his sad, feeble, and trembling voice faintly reechoing from the vaulted ceiling. Louis seemed trying one of those romances which he was wont to compose, and several times repeated an incomplete strain with a trembling hand. The words could scarcely be distinguished; all that Cinq-Mars heard were a few such as 'Abandon, ennui de monde, et belle flamme.

The young favorite shrugged his shoulders as he listened.

"What new chagrin moves thee?" he said. "Come, let me again attempt to read that chilled heart which thinks it needs something."

He entered the narrow cabinet.

Clothed in black, half reclining on a couch, his elbows resting upon pillows, the Prince was languidly touching the chords of his guitar; he ceased this when he saw the grand ecuyer enter, and, raising his large eyes to him with an air of reproach, swayed his head to and fro for a long time without speaking. Then in a plaintive but emphatic tone, he said:

"What do I hear, Cinq-Mars? What do I hear of your conduct? How much you do pain me by forgetting all my counsels! You have formed a guilty intrigue; was it from you I was to expect such things--you whom I so loved for your piety and virtue?"

Full of his political projects, Cinq-Mars thought himself discovered, and could not help a momentary anxiety; but, perfectly master of himself, he answered without hesitation:

"Yes, Sire; and I was about to declare it to you, for I am accustomed to open my soul to you."

"Declare it to me!" exclaimed the King, turning red and white, as under the shivering of a fever; "and you dare to contaminate my ears with these horrible avowals, Monsieur, and to speak so calmly of your disorder! Go! you deserve to be condemned to the galley, like Rondin; it is a crime of high treason you have committed in your want of faith toward me. I had rather you were a coiner, like the Marquis de Coucy, or at the head of the Croquants, than do as you have done; you dishonor your family, and the memory of the marechal your father."

Cinq-Mars, deeming himself wholly lost, put the best face he could upon the matter, and said with an air of resignation:

"Well, then, Sire, send me to be judged and put to death; but spare me your reproaches."

"Do you insult me, you petty country-squire?" answered Louis. "I know very well that you have not incurred the penalty of death in the eyes of men; but it is at the tribunal of God, Monsieur, that you will be judged."

"Heavens, Sire!" replied the impetuous young man, whom the insulting phrase of the King had offended, "why do you not allow me to return to the province you so much despise, as I have sought to do a hundred times? I will go there. I can not support the life I lead with you; an angel could not bear it. Once more, let me be judged if I am guilty, or allow me to return to Touraine. It is you who have ruined me in attaching me to your person. If you have caused me to conceive lofty hopes, which you afterward overthrew, is that my fault? Wherefore have you made me grand

ecuyer, if I was not to rise higher? In a word, am I your friend or not? and, if I am, why may I not be duke, peer, or even constable, as well as Monsieur de Luynes, whom you loved so much because he trained falcons for you? Why am I not admitted to the council? I could speak as well as any of the old ruffs there; I have new ideas, and a better arm to serve you. It is your Cardinal who has prevented you from summoning me there. And it is because he keeps you from me that I detest him," continued Cinq-Mars, clinching his fist, as if Richelieu stood before him; "yes, I would kill him with my own hand, if need were."

D'Effiat's eyes were inflamed with anger; he stamped his foot as he spoke, and turned his back to the King, like a sulky child, leaning against one of the columns of the cupola.

Louis, who recoiled before all resolution, and who was always terrified by the irreparable, took his hand.

O weakness of power! O caprices of the human heart! it was by this childish impetuosity, these very defects of his age, that this young man governed the King of France as effectually as did the first politician of the time. This Prince believed, and with some show of reason, that a character so hasty must be sincere; and even his fiery rage did not anger him. It did not apply to the real subject of his reproaches, and he could well pardon him for hating the Cardinal. The very idea of his favorite's jealousy of the minister pleased him, because it indicated attachment; and all he dreaded was his indifference. Cinq-Mars knew this, and had desired to make it a means of escape, preparing the King to regard all that he had done as child's play, as the consequence of his friendship for him; but the danger was not so great, and he breathed freely when the Prince said to him:

"The Cardinal is not in question here. I love him no more than you do; but it is with your scandalous conduct I reproach you, and which I shall have much difficulty to pardon in you. What, Monsieur! I learn that instead of devoting yourself to the pious exercises to which I have accustomed you, when I fancy you are at your Salut or your Angelus--you are off from Saint Germain, and go to pass a portion of the night--with whom? Dare I speak of it without sin? With a woman lost in reputation, who can have no relations with you but such as are pernicious to the safety of your soul, and who receives free-thinkers at her house--in a word, Marion de Lorme. What have you to say? Speak."

Leaving his hand in that of the King, but still leaning against the column, Cinq-Mars answered:

"Is it then so culpable to leave grave occupations for others more serious still? If I go to the house of Marion de Lorme, it is to hear the conversation of the learned men who assemble there. Nothing is more harmless than these meetings. Readings are given there which, it is true, sometimes extend far into the night, but which commonly tend to exalt the soul, so far from corrupting it. Besides, you have never commanded me to account to you for all that I do; I should have informed you of this long ago if you had desired it."

"Ah, Cinq-Mars, Cinq-Mars! where is your confidence? Do you feel no need of it? It is the first condition of a perfect friendship, such as ours ought to be, such as my heart requires."

The voice of Louis became more affectionate, and the favorite, looking at him over his shoulder, assumed an air less angry, but still simply ennuye, and resigned to listening to him.

"How often have you deceived me!" continued the King; "can I trust myself to you? Are they not fops and gallants whom you meet at the house of this woman? Do not courtesans go there?"

"Heavens! no, Sire; I often go there with one of my friends--a gentleman of Touraine, named Rene Descartes."

"Descartes! I know that name! Yes, he is an officer who distinguished himself at the siege of Rochelle, and who dabbles in writing; he has a good reputation for piety, but he is connected with Desbarreaux, who is a free-thinker. I am sure that you must mix with many persons who are not fit company for you, many young men without family, without birth. Come, tell me whom saw you last there?"

"Truly, I can scarcely remember their names," said Cinq-Mars, looking at the ceiling; "sometimes I do not even ask them. There was, in the first place, a certain Monsieur--Monsieur Groot, or Grotius, a Hollander."

"I know him, a friend of Barnevelt; I pay him a pension. I liked him well enough; but the Card--but I was told that he was a high Calvinist."

"I also saw an Englishman, named John Milton; he is a young man just come from Italy, and is returning to London. He scarcely speaks at all."

"I don't know him--not at all; but I'm sure he's some other Calvinist. And the Frenchmen, who were they?"

"The young man who wrote Cinna, and who has been thrice rejected at the Academie Francaise; he was angry that Du Royer occupied his place there. He is called Corneille."

"Well," said the King, folding his arms, and looking at him with an air of triumph and reproach, "I ask you who are these people? Is it in such a circle that you ought to be seen?"

Cinq-Mars was confounded at this observation, which hurt his self-pride, and, approaching the King, he said:

"You are right, Sire; but there can be no harm in passing an hour or two in listening to good conversation. Besides, many courtiers go there, such as the Duc de Bouillon, Monsieur d'Aubijoux, the Comte de Brion, the Cardinal de la Vallette, Messieurs de Montresor, Fontrailles; men illustrious in the sciences, as Mairet, Colletet, Desmarets, author of Araine; Faret, Doujat, Charpentier, who wrote the Cyropedie; Giry, Besons, and Baro, the continuer of Astree--all academicians."

"Ah! now, indeed, here are men of real merit," said Louis; "there is nothing to be said against them. One can not but gain from their society. Theirs are settled reputations; they're men of weight. Come, let us make up; shake hands, child. I permit you to go there sometimes, but do not deceive me any more; you see I know all. Look at this."

So saying, the King took from a great iron chest set against the wall enormous packets of paper scribbled over with very fine writing. Upon one was written, Baradas, upon another, D'Hautefort, upon a third, La Fayette, and finally, Cinq-Mars. He stopped at the latter, and continued:

"See how many times you have deceived me! These are the continual faults of which I have myself kept a register during the two years I have known you; I have written out our conversations day by day. Sit down."

Cinq-Mars obeyed with a sigh, and had the patience for two long hours to listen to a summary of what his master had had the patience to write during the course of two years. He yawned many times during the reading, as no doubt we should all do, were it needful to report this dialogue, which was found in perfect order, with his will, at the death of the King. We shall only say that he finished thus:

"In fine, hear what you did on the seventh of December, three days ago. I was speaking to you of the flight of the hawk, and of the knowledge of hunting, in which you are deficient. I said to you, on the authority of La Chasse Royale, a work of King Charles IX, that after the hunter has accustomed his dog to follow a beast, he must consider him as of himself desirous of returning to the wood, and the dog must not be rebuked or struck in order to make him follow the track well; and that in order to

teach a dog to set well, creatures that are not game must not be allowed to pass or run, nor must any scents be missed, without putting his nose to them.

"Hear what you replied to me (and in a tone of ill-humor--mind that!) 'Ma foi! Sire, give me rather regiments to conduct than birds and dogs. I am sure that people would laugh at you and me if they knew how we occupy ourselves.' And on the eighth--wait, yes, on the eighth--while we were singing vespers together in my chambers, you threw your book angrily into the fire, which was an impiety; and afterward you told me that you had let it drop--a sin, a mortal sin. See, I have written below, lie, underlined. People never deceive me, I assure you."

"But, Sire--"

"Wait a moment! wait a moment! In the evening you told me the Cardinal had burned a man unjustly, and out of personal hatred."

"And I repeat it, and maintain it, and will prove it, Sire. It is the greatest crime of all of that man whom you hesitate to disgrace, and who renders you unhappy. I myself saw all, heard, all, at Loudun. Urbain Grandier was assassinated, rather than tried. Hold, Sire, since you have there all those memoranda in your own hand, merely reperuse the proofs which I then gave you of it."

Louis, seeking the page indicated, and going back to the journey from Perpignan to Paris, read the whole narrative with attention, exclaiming:

"What horrors! How is it that I have forgotten all this? This man fascinates me; that's certain. You are my true friend, Cinq-Mars. What horrors! My reign will be stained by them. What! he prevented the letters of all the nobility and notables of the district from reaching me! Burn, burn alive! without proofs! for revenge! A man, a people have invoked my name in vain; a family curses me! Oh, how unhappy are kings!"

And the Prince, as he concluded, threw aside his papers and wept.

"Ah, Sire, those are blessed tears that you weep!" exclaimed Cinq-Mars, with sincere admiration. "Would that all France were here with me! She would be astonished at this spectacle, and would scarcely believe it."

"Astonished! France, then, does not know me?"

"No, Sire," said D'Effiat, frankly; "no one knows you. And I myself, with the rest of the world, at times accuse you of coldness and indifference."

"Of coldness, when I am dying with sorrow! Of coldness, when I have immolated myself to their interests! Ungrateful nation! I have sacrificed all to it, even pride, even the happiness of guiding it myself, because I feared on its account for my fluctuating life. I have given my sceptre to be borne by a man I hate, because I believed his hand to be stronger than my own. I have endured the ill he has done to myself, thinking that he did good to my people. I have hidden my own tears to dry theirs; and I see that my sacrifice has been even greater than I thought it, for they have not perceived it. They have believed me incapable because I was kind, and without power because I mistrusted my own. But, no matter! God sees and knows me!"

"Ah, Sire, show yourself to France such as you are; reassume your usurped power. France will do for your love what she would never do from fear. Return to life, and reascend the throne."

"No, no; my life is well-nigh finished, my dear friend. I am no longer capable of the labor of supreme command."

"Ah, Sire, this persuasion alone destroys your vigor. It is time that men should cease to confound power with crime, and call this union

genius.

Let your voice be heard proclaiming to the world that the reign of virtue is about to begin with your own; and hence forth those enemies whom vice has so much difficulty in suppressing will fall before a word uttered

from

your heart. No one has as yet calculated all that the good faith of a

king

of France may do for his people--that people who are drawn so instantaneously to ward all that is good and beautiful, by their imagination and warmth of soul, and who are always ready with every kind of devotion. The King, your father, led us with a smile. What would not one of your tears do?"

During this address the King, very much surprised, frequently reddened, hemmed, and gave signs of great embarrassment, as always happened when any attempt was made to bring him to a decision. He also felt the approach of a conversation of too high an order, which the timidity of his soul forbade him to venture upon; and repeatedly putting his hand to his chest, knitting his brows as if suffering violent pain, he endeavored to relieve himself by the apparent attack of illness from the embarrassment of answering. But, either from passion, or from a resolution to strike the crowning blow, Cinq-Mars went on calmly and with a solemnity that awed Louis, who, forced into his last intrenchments, at length said:

"But, Cinq-Mars, how can I rid myself of a minister who for eighteen years past has surrounded me with his creatures?"

"He is not so very powerful," replied the grand ecuyer; "and his friends will be his most sure enemies if you but make a sign of your head. The ancient league of the princes of peace still exists, Sire, and it is only the respect due to the choice of your Majesty that prevents it from manifesting itself."

"Ah, mon Dieu! thou mayst tell them not to stop on my account. I would not restrain them; they surely do not accuse me of being a Cardinalist. If my brother will give me the means of replacing Richelieu, I will adopt them with all my heart."

"I believe, Sire, that he will to-day speak to you of Monsieur le Duc de Bouillon. All the Royalists demand him."

"I don't dislike him," said the King, arranging his pillows; "I don't dislike him at all, although he is somewhat factious. We are relatives. Knowest thou, *chez ami*"--and he placed on this favorite expression more emphasis than usual--"knowest thou that he is descended in direct line from Saint Louis, by Charlotte de Bourbon, daughter of the Duc de Montpensier? Knowest thou that seven princes of the blood royal have been united to his house; and eight daughters of his family, one of whom was a queen, have been married to princes of the blood royal? Oh, I don't at all dislike him! I have never said so, never!"

"Well, Sire," said Cinq-Mars, with confidence, "Monsieur and he will explain to you during the hunt how all is prepared, who are the men that may be put in the place of his creatures, who the field-m Marshals and the colonels who may be depended upon against Fabert and the Cardinalists of Perpignan. You will see that the minister has very few for him."

"The Queen, Monsieur, the nobility, and the parliaments are on our side; and the thing is done from the moment that your Majesty is not opposed to it. It has been proposed to get rid of the Cardinal as the Marechal d'Ancre was got rid of, who deserved it less than he."

"As Concini?" said the King. "Oh, no, it must not be. I positively can not consent to it. He is a priest and a cardinal. We shall be excommunicated. But if there be any other means, I am very willing."

Thou mayest speak of it to thy friends; and I on my side will think of the matter."

The word once spoken, the King gave himself up to his resentment, as if he had satisfied it, as if the blow were already struck. Cinq-Mars was vexed to see this, for he feared that his anger thus vented might not be of long duration. However, he put faith in his last words, especially when, after numberless complaints, Louis added:

"And would you believe that though now for two years I have mourned my mother, ever since that day when he so cruelly mocked me before my whole court by asking for her recall when he knew she was dead--ever since that day I have been trying in vain to get them to bury her in France with my fathers? He has exiled even her ashes."

At this moment Cinq-Mars thought he heard a sound on the staircase; the King reddened.

"Go," he said; "go! Make haste and prepare for the hunt! Thou wilt ride next to my carriage. Go quickly! I desire it; go!"

And he himself pushed Cinq-Mars toward the entrance by which he had come.

The favorite went out; but his master's anxiety had not escaped him.

He slowly descended, and tried to divine the cause of it in his mind, when he thought he heard the sound of feet ascending the other staircase. He stopped; they stopped. He re-ascended; they seemed to him to descend. He knew that nothing could be seen between the interstices of the architecture; and he quitted the place, impatient and very uneasy, and determined to remain at the door of the entrance to see who should come out. But he had scarcely raised the tapestry which veiled the entrance to the guardroom than he was surrounded by a crowd of courtiers who had been awaiting him, and was fain to proceed to the work of issuing the orders connected with his post, or to receive respects, communications, solicitations, presentations, recommendations, embraces--to observe that infinitude of relations which surround a favorite, and which require constant and sustained attention, for any absence of mind might cause great misfortunes. He thus almost forgot the trifling circumstance which had made him uneasy, and which he thought might after all have only been a freak of the imagination. Giving himself up to the sweets of a kind of continual apotheosis, he mounted his horse in the great courtyard, attended by noble pages, and surrounded by brilliant gentlemen.

Monsieur soon arrived, followed by his people; and in an hour the King appeared, pale, languishing, and supported by four men. Cinq-Mars, dismounting, assisted him into a kind of small and very low carriage, called a brouette, and the horses of which, very docile and quiet ones, the King himself drove. The pricklers on foot at the doors held the dogs in leash; and at the sound of the horn scores of young nobles mounted, and all set out to the place of meeting.

It was a farm called L'Ormage that the King had fixed upon; and the court, accustomed to his ways, followed the many roads of the park, while the King slowly followed an isolated path, having at his side the grand ecuyer and four persons whom he had signed to approach him.

The aspect of this pleasure party was sinister. The approach of winter had stripped well-nigh all the leaves from the great oaks in the park, whose dark branches now stood up against a gray sky, like branches of funereal candelabra. A light fog seemed to indicate rain; through the melancholy boughs of the thinned wood the heavy carriages of the court were seen slowly passing on, filled with women, uniformly dressed in black, and obliged to await the result of a chase which they did not witness. The distant hounds gave tongue, and the horn was sometimes faintly heard like a sigh. A cold, cutting wind compelled every man to don cloaks, and some of the women, putting over their faces a veil or mask of black velvet to keep themselves from the air which the curtains

of their carriages did not intercept (for there were no glasses at that time), seemed to wear what is called a domino. All was languishing and sad. The only relief was that ever and anon groups of young men in the excitement of the chase flew down the avenue like the wind, cheering on the dogs or sounding their horns. Then all again became silent, as after the discharge of fireworks the sky appears darker than before.

In a path, parallel with that followed by the King, were several courtiers enveloped in their cloaks. Appearing little intent upon the stag, they rode step for step with the King's brouette, and never lost sight of him. They conversed in low tones.

"Excellent! Fontrailles, excellent! victory! The King takes his arm every moment. See how he smiles upon him! See! Monsieur le Grand dismounts and gets into the brouette by his side. Come, come, the old fox is done at last!"

"Ah, that's nothing! Did you not see how the King shook hands with Monsieur? He's made a sign to you, Montresor. Look, Gondii!"

"Look, indeed! That's very easy to say; but I don't see with my own eyes. I have only those of faith, and yours. Well, what are they doing now? I wish to Heaven I were not so near-sighted! Tell me, what are they doing?"

Montresor answered, "The King bends his ear toward the Duc de Bouillon, who is speaking to him; he speaks again! he gesticulates! he does not cease! Oh, he'll be minister!"

"He will be minister!" said Fontrailles.

"He will be minister!" echoed the Comte du Lude.

"Oh, no doubt of it!" said Montresor.

"I hope he'll give me a regiment, and I'll marry my cousin," cried Olivier d'Entraigues, with boyish vivacity.

The Abbe de Gondii sneered, and, looking up at the sky, began to sing to a hunting tune.

"Les etourneaux ont le vent bon,
Ton ton, ton ton, ton taine, ton ton--"

"I think, gentlemen, you are more short-sighted than I, or else miracles will come to pass in the year of grace 1642; for Monsieur de Bouillon is no nearer being Prime-Minister, though the King do embrace him, than I. He has good qualities, but he will not do; his qualities are not various enough. However, I have much respect for his great and singularly foolish town of Sedan, which is a fine shelter in case of need."

Montresor and the rest were too attentive to every gesture of the Prince to answer him; and they continued:

"See, Monsieur le Grand takes the reins, and is driving."

The Abbe replied with the same air:

"Si vous conduisez ma brouette,
Ne versez pas, beau postillon,
Ton ton, ton ton, ton taine, ton ton."

"Ah, Abbe, your songs will drive me mad!" said Fontrailles. "You've got airs ready for every event in life."

"I will also find you events which shall go to all the airs," answered Gondii.

"Faith, the air of these pleases me!" said Fontrailles, in an under

voice. "I shall not be obliged by Monsieur to carry his confounded treaty to Madrid, and I am not sorry for it; it is a somewhat touchy commission. The Pyrenees are not so easily passed as may be supposed; the Cardinal is on the road."

"Ha! Ha!" cried Montresor.

"Ha! Ha!" said Olivier.

"Well, what is the matter with you? ah, ah!" asked Gondi. "What have you discovered that is so great?"

"Why, the King has again shaken hands with Monsieur. Thank Heaven, gentlemen, we're rid of the Cardinal! The old boar is hunted down. Who will stick the knife into him? He must be thrown into the sea."

"That's too good for him," said Olivier; "he must be tried."

"Certainly," said the Abbe; "and we sha'n't want for charges against an insolent fellow who has dared to discharge a page, shall we?" Then, curbing his horse, and letting Olivier and Montresor pass on, he leaned toward M. du Lude, who was talking with two other serious personages, and said:

"In truth, I am tempted to let my valet-de-chambre into the secret; never was a conspiracy treated so lightly. Great enterprises require mystery. This would be an admirable one if some trouble were taken with it. 'Tis in itself a finer one than I have ever read of in history. There is stuff enough in it to upset three kingdoms, if necessary, and the blockheads will spoil all. It is really a pity. I should be very sorry. I've a taste for affairs of this kind; and in this one in particular I feel a special interest. There is grandeur about it, as can not be denied. Do you not think so, D'Aubijoux, Montmort?"

While he was speaking, several large and heavy carriages, with six and four horses, followed the same path at two hundred paces behind these gentlemen; the curtains were open on the left side through which to see the King. In the first was the Queen; she was alone at the back, clothed in black and veiled. On the box was the Marechale d'Effiat; and at the feet of the Queen was the Princesse Marie. Seated on one side on a stool, her robe and her feet hung out of the carriage, and were supported by a gilt step--for, as we have already observed, there were then no doors to the coaches. She also tried to see through the trees the movements of the King, and often leaned back, annoyed by the passing of the Prince-Palatine and his suite.

This northern Prince was sent by the King of Poland, apparently on a political negotiation, but in reality, to induce the Duchesse de Mantua to espouse the old King Uladislas VI; and he displayed at the court of France all the luxury of his own, then called at Paris "barbarian and Scythian," and so far justified these names by strange eastern costumes. The Palatine of Posnanian was very handsome, and wore, in common with the people of his suite, a long, thick beard. His head, shaved like that of a Turk, was covered with a furred cap. He had a short vest, enriched with diamonds and rubies; his horse was painted red, and amply plumed. He was attended by a company of Polish guards in red and yellow uniforms, wearing large cloaks with long sleeves, which hung negligently from the shoulder. The Polish lords who escorted him were dressed in gold and silver brocade; and behind their shaved heads floated a single lock of hair, which gave them an Asiatic and Tartar aspect, as unknown at the court of Louis XIII as that of the Moscovites. The women thought all this rather savage and alarming.

Marie de Mantua was importuned with the profound salutations and Oriental elegancies of this foreigner and his suite. Whenever he passed before her, he thought himself called upon to address a compliment to her in broken French, awkwardly made up of a few words about hope and royalty. She found no other means to rid herself of him than by repeatedly putting her handkerchief to her nose, and saying aloud to the Queen:

"In truth, Madame, these gentlemen have an odor about them that makes one quite ill."

"It will be desirable to strengthen your nerves and accustom yourself to it," answered Anne of Austria, somewhat dryly.

Then, fearing she had hurt her feelings, she continued gayly:

"You will become used to them, as we have done; and you know that in respect to odors I am rather fastidious. Monsieur Mazarin told me, the other day, that my punishment in purgatory will consist in breathing ill scents and sleeping in Russian cloth."

Yet the Queen was very grave, and soon subsided into silence. Burying herself in her carriage, enveloped in her mantle, and apparently taking no interest in what was passing around her, she yielded to the motion of the carriage. Marie, still occupied with the King, talked in a low voice with the Marechale d'Effiat; each sought to give the other hopes which neither felt, and sought to deceive each other out of love.

"Madame, I congratulate you; Monsieur le Grand is seated with the King. Never has he been so highly distinguished," said Marie.

Then she was silent for a long time, and the carriage rolled mournfully over the dead, dry leaves.

"Yes, I see it with joy; the King is so good!" answered the Marechale.

And she sighed deeply.

A long and sad silence again followed; each looked at the other and mutually found their eyes full of tears. They dared not speak again; and Marie, drooping her head, saw nothing but the brown, damp earth scattered by the wheels. A melancholy revery occupied her mind; and although she had before her the spectacle of the first court of Europe at the feet of him she loved, everything inspired her with fear, and dark presentiments involuntarily agitated her.

Suddenly a horse passed by her like the wind; she raised her eyes, and had just time to see the features of Cinq-Mars. He did not look at her; he was pale as a corpse, and his eyes were hidden under his knitted brows and the shadows of his lowered hat. She followed him with trembling eyes; she saw him stop in the midst of the group of cavaliers who preceded the carriages, and who received him with their hats off.

A moment after he went into the wood with one of them, looking at her from the distance, and following her with his eyes until the carriage had passed; then he seemed to give the man a roll of papers, and disappeared. The mist which was falling prevented her from seeing him any more. It was, indeed, one of those fogs so frequent on the banks of the Loire.

The sun looked at first like a small blood-red moon, enveloped in a tattered shroud, and within half an hour was concealed under so thick a cloud that Marie could scarcely distinguish the foremost horses of the carriage, while the men who passed at the distance of a few paces looked like grizzly shadows. This icy vapor turned to a penetrating rain and at the same time a cloud of fetid odor. The Queen made the beautiful Princess sit beside her; and they turned toward Chambord quickly and in silence. They soon heard the horns recalling the scattered hounds; the huntsmen passed rapidly by the carriage, seeking their way through the fog, and calling to each other. Marie saw only now and then the head of a horse, or a dark body half issuing from the gloomy vapor of the woods, and tried in vain to distinguish any words. At length her heart beat; there was a call for M. de Cinq-Mars.

"The King asks for Monsieur le Grand," was repeated about; "where can Monsieur le Grand Ecuyer be gone to?"

A voice, passing near, said, "He has just lost himself."

These simple words made her shudder, for her afflicted spirit gave them the most sinister meaning. The terrible thought pursued her to the chateau and into her apartments, wherein she hastened to shut herself. She soon heard the noise of the entry of the King and of Monsieur, then, in the forest, some shots whose flash was unseen. She in vain looked at the narrow windows; they seemed covered on the outside with a white cloth that shut out the light.

Meanwhile, at the extremity of the forest, toward Montfauult, there had lost themselves two cavaliers, wearied with seeking the way to the chateau in the monotonous similarity of the trees and paths; they were about to stop near a pond, when eight or nine men, springing from the thickets, rushed upon them, and before they had time to draw, hung to their legs and arms and to the bridles of their horses in such a manner as to hold them fixed. At the same time a hoarse voice cried in the fog:

"Are you Royalists or Cardinalists? Cry, 'Vive le Grand!' or you are dead men!"

"Scoundrels," answered the first cavalier, trying to open the holsters of his pistols, "I will have you hanged for abusing my name."

"Dios es el Senor!" cried the same voice.

All the men immediately released their hold, and ran into the wood; a burst of savage laughter was heard, and a man approached Cinq-Mars.

"Amigo, do you not recognize me? 'Tis but a joke of Jacques, the Spanish captain."

Fontraillles approached, and said in a low voice to the grand ecuyer:

"Monsieur, this is an enterprising fellow; I would advise you to employ him. We must neglect no chance."

"Listen to me," said Jacques de Laubardemont, "and answer at once. I am not a phrase-maker, like my father. I bear in mind that you have done me some good offices; and lately again, you have been useful to me, as you always are, without knowing it, for I have somewhat repaired my fortune in your little insurrections. If you will, I can render you an important service; I command a few brave men."

"What service?" asked Cinq-Mars. "We will see."

"I commence by a piece of information. This morning while you descended the King's staircase on one side, Father Joseph ascended the other."

"Ha! this, then, is the secret of his sudden and inexplicable change! Can it be? A king of France! and to allow us to confide all our secrets to him."

"Well! is that all? Do you say nothing? You know I have an old account to settle with the Capuchin."

"What's that to me?" and he hung down his head, absorbed in a profound revery.

"It matters a great deal to you, since you have only to speak the word, and I will rid you of him before thirty-six hours from this time, though he is now very near Paris. We might even add the Cardinal, if you wish."

"Leave me; I will use no poniards," said Cinq-Mars.

"Ah! I understand you," replied Jacques. "You are right; you would prefer our despatching him with the sword. This is just. He is worth it; 'tis a distinction due to him. It were undoubtedly more suitable for great lords to take charge of the Cardinal; and that he who despatches

his Eminence should be in a fair way to be a marechal. For myself, I am not proud; one must not be proud, whatever one's merit in one's profession. I must not touch the Cardinal; he's a morsel for a king!"

"Nor any others," said the grand ecuyer.

"Oh, let us have the Capuchin!" said Captain Jacques, urgently.

"You are wrong if you refuse this office," said Fontrailles; "such things occur every day. Vitry began with Concini; and he was made a marechal. You see men extremely well at court who have killed their enemies with their own hands in the streets of Paris, and you hesitate to rid yourself of a villain! Richelieu has his agents; you must have yours. I can not understand your scruples."

"Do not torment him," said Jacques, abruptly; "I understand it. I thought as he does when I was a boy, before reason came. I would not have killed even a monk; but let me speak to him." Then, turning toward Cinq-Mars, "Listen: when men conspire, they seek the death or at least the downfall of some one, eh?"

And he paused.

"Now in that case, we are out with God, and in with the Devil, eh?"

"Secundo, as they say at the Sorbonne; it's no worse when one is damned, to be so for much than for little, eh?"

"Ergo, it is indifferent whether a thousand or one be killed. I defy you to answer that."

"Nothing could be better argued, Doctor-dagger," said Fontrailles, half-laughing, "I see you will be a good travelling-companion. You shall go with me to Spain if you like."

"I know you are going to take the treaty there," answered Jacques; "and I will guide you through the Pyrenees by roads unknown to man. But I shall be horribly vexed to go away without having wrung the neck of that old he-goat, whom we leave behind, like a knight in the midst of a game of chess. Once more Monsieur," he continued with an air of pious earnestness, "if you have any religion in you, refuse no longer; recollect the words of our theological fathers, Hurtado de Mendoza and Sanchez, who have proved that a man may secretly kill his enemies, since by this means he avoids two sins--that of exposing his life, and that of fighting a duel. It is in accordance with this grand consolatory principle that I have always acted."

"Go, go!" said Cinq-Mars, in a voice thick with rage; "I have other things to think of."

"Of what more important?" said Fontrailles; "this might be a great weight in the balance of our destinies."

"I am thinking how much the heart of a king weighs in it," said Cinq-Mars.

"You terrify me," replied the gentleman; "we can not go so far as that!"

"Nor do I think what you suppose, Monsieur," continued D'Effiat, in a severe tone. "I was merely reflecting how kings complain when a subject betrays them. Well, war! war! civil war, foreign war, let your fires be kindled! since I hold the match, I will apply it to the mine. Perish the State! perish twenty kingdoms, if necessary! No ordinary calamities suffice when the King betrays the subject. Listen to me."

And he took Fontrailles a few steps aside.

"I only charged you to prepare our retreat and succors, in case of abandonment on the part of the King. Just now I foresaw this abandonment

in his forced manifestation of friendship; and I decided upon your setting out when he finished his conversation by announcing his departure for Perpignan. I feared Narbonne; I now see that he is going there to deliver himself up a prisoner to the Cardinal. Go at once. I add to the letters I have given you the treaty here; it is in fictitious names, but here is the counterpart, signed by Monsieur, by the Duc de Bouillon, and by me. The Count-Duke of Olivares desires nothing further. There are blanks for the Duc d'Orleans, which you will fill up as you please. Go; in a month I shall expect you at Perpignan. I will have Sedan opened to the seventeen thousand Spaniards from Flanders."

Then, advancing toward the adventurer, who awaited him, he said:

"For you, brave fellow, since you desire to aid me, I charge you with escorting this gentleman to Madrid; you will be largely recompensed."

Jacques, twisting his moustache, replied:

"Ah, you do not then scorn to employ me! you exhibit your judgment and taste. Do you know that the great Queen Christina of Sweden has asked for me, and wished to have me with her as her confidential man. She was brought up to the sound of the cannon by the 'Lion of the North,' Gustavus Adolphus, her father. She loves the smell of powder and brave men; but I would not serve her, because she is a Huguenot, and I have fixed principles, from which I never swerve. 'Par exemple', I swear to you by Saint Jacques to guide Monsieur through the passes of the Pyrenees to Oleron as surely as through these woods, and to defend him against the Devil, if need be, as well as your papers, which we will bring you back without blot or tear. As for recompense, I want none. I always find it in the action itself. Besides, I do not receive money, for I am a gentleman. The Laubardemonts are a very ancient and very good family."

"Adieu, then, noble Monsieur," said Cinq-Mars; go!"

After having pressed the hand of Fontrailles, he sighed and disappeared in the wood, on his return to the chateau of Chambord.

CHAPTER XX

THE READING

Shortly after the events just narrated, at the corner of the Palais-Royal, at a small and pretty house, numerous carriages were seen to draw up, and a door, reached by three steps, frequently to open. The neighbors often came to their windows to complain of the noise made at so late an hour of the night, despite the fear of robbers; and the patrol often stopped in surprise, and passed on only when they saw at each carriage ten or twelve footmen, armed with staves and carrying torches. A young gentleman, followed by three lackeys, entered and asked for Mademoiselle de Lorme. He wore a long rapier, ornamented with pink ribbon. Enormous bows of the same color on his high-heeled shoes almost entirely concealed his feet, which after the fashion of the day he turned very much out. He frequently twisted a small curling moustache, and before entering combed his small pointed beard. There was but one exclamation when he was announced.

"Here he is at last!" cried a young and rich voice. "He has made us wait long enough for him, the dear Desbarreaux. Come, take a seat! place yourself at this table and read."

The speaker was a woman of about four-and-twenty, tall and handsome, notwithstanding her somewhat woolly black hair and her dark olive complexion. There was something masculine in her manner, which she seemed to derive from her circle, composed entirely of men. She took their arm unceremoniously, as she spoke to them, with a freedom which she communicated to them. Her conversation was animated rather than joyous.

It often excited laughter around her; but it was by dint of intellect that she created gayety (if we may so express it), for her countenance, impassioned as it was, seemed incapable of bending into a smile, and her large blue eyes, under her jet-black hair, gave her at first rather a strange appearance.

Desbarreaux kissed her hand with a gallant and chivalrous air. He then, talking to her all the time, walked round the large room, where were assembled nearly thirty persons--some seated in the large arm chairs, others standing in the vast chimney-place, others conversing in the embrasures of the windows under the heavy curtains. Some of them were obscure men, now illustrious; others illustrious men, now obscure for posterity. Thus, among the latter, he profoundly saluted MM. d'Aubijoux, de Brion, de Montmort, and other very brilliant gentlemen, who were there as judges; tenderly, and with an air of esteem, pressed the hands of MM. Monteruel, de Sirmond, de Malleville, Baro, Gombauld, and other learned men, almost all called great men in the annals of the Academy of which they were the founders--itself called sometimes the Academic des Beaux Esprits, but really the Academic Francaise. But M. Desbarreaux gave but a mere patronizing nod to young Corneille, who was talking in a corner with a foreigner, and with a young man whom he presented to the mistress of the house by the name of M. Poquelin, son of the 'valet-de-chambre tapissier du roi'. The foreigner was Milton; the young man was Moliere.

Before the reading expected from the young Sybarite, a great contest arose between him and other poets and prose writers of the time. They spoke to each other with great volubility and animation a language incomprehensible to any one who should suddenly have come among them without being initiated, eagerly pressing each other's hands with affectionate compliments and infinite allusions to their works.

"Ah, here you are, illustrious Baro!" cried the newcomer. "I have read your last sixain. Ah, what a sixain! how full of the gallant and the tendre?"

"What is that you say of the tendre?" interrupted Marion de Lorme; "have you ever seen that country? You stopped at the village of Grand-Esprit, and at that of Jolis-Vers, but you have been no farther. If Monsieur le Gouverneur de Notre Dame de la Garde will please to show us his new chart, I will tell you where you are."

Scudery arose with a vainglorious and pedantic air; and, unrolling upon the table a sort of geographical chart tied with blue ribbons, he himself showed the lines of red ink which he had traced upon it.

"This is the finest piece of Clelie," he said. "This chart is generally found very gallant; but 'tis merely a slight ebullition of playful wit, to please our little literary cabale. However, as there are strange people in the world, it is possible that all who see it may not have minds sufficiently well turned to understand it. This is the road which must be followed to go from Nouvelle-Amitie to Tendre; and observe, gentlemen, that as we say Cumae-on-the-Ionian-Sea, Cuma;-on-the-Tyrrhean-Sea, we shall say Tendre-sur-Inclination, Tendre-sur-Estime, and Tendre-sur-Reconnaissance. We must begin by inhabiting the village of Grand-Coeur, Generosity, Exactitude, and Petits-Soins."

"Ah! how very pretty!" interposed Desbarreaux. "See the villages marked out; here is Petits-Soins, Billet-Galant, then Billet-Doux!"

"Oh! 'tis ingenious in the highest degree!" cried Vaugelas, Colletet, and the rest.

"And observe," continued the author, inflated with this success, "that it is necessary to pass through Complaisance and Sensibility; and that if we do not take this road, we run the risk of losing our way to Tiedeur, Oubli, and of falling into the Lake of Indifference."

"Delicious! delicious! 'gallant au supreme!'" cried the auditors; "never was greater genius!"

"Well, Madame," resumed Scudery, "I now declare it in your house: this work, printed under my name, is by my sister--she who translated 'Sappho' so agreeably." And without being asked, he recited in a declamatory tone verses ending thus:

L'Amour est un mal agreable
Don't mon coeur ne saurait guerir;
Mais quand il serait guerissable,
Il est bien plus doux d'en mourir.

"How! had that Greek so much wit? I can not believe it," exclaimed Marion de Lorme; "how superior Mademoiselle de Scudery is to her! That idea is wholly hers; she must unquestionably put these charming verses into 'Clelie'. They will figure well in that Roman history."

"Admirable, perfect!" cried all the savans; "Horatius, Aruns, and the amiable Porsenna are such gallant lovers."

They were all bending over the "carte de Tendre," and their fingers crossed in following the windings of the amorous rivers. The young Poquelin ventured to raise a timid voice and his melancholy but acute glance, and said:

"What purpose does this serve? Is it to give happiness or pleasure? Monsieur seems to me not singularly happy, and I do not feel very gay."

The only reply he got was a general look of contempt; he consoled himself by meditating, 'Les Precieuses Ridicules'.

Desbarreaux prepared to read a pious sonnet, which he was penitent for having composed in an illness; he seemed to be ashamed of having thought for a moment upon God at the sight of his lightning, and blushed at the weakness. The mistress of the house stopped him.

"It is not yet time to read your beautiful verses; you would be interrupted. We expect Monsieur le Grand Ecuyer and other gentlemen; it would be actual murder to allow a great mind to speak during this noise and confusion. But here is a young Englishman who has just come from Italy, and is on his return to London. They tell me he has composed a poem--I don't know what; but he'll repeat some verses of it. Many of you gentlemen of the Academy know English; and for the rest he has had the passages he is going to read translated by an ex-secretary of the Duke of Buckingham, and here are copies in French on this table."

So saying, she took them and distributed them among her erudite visitors. The company seated themselves, and were silent. It took some time to persuade the young foreigner to speak or to quit the recess of the window, where he seemed to have come to a very good understanding with Corneille. He at last advanced to an armchair placed near the table; he seemed of feeble health, and fell into, rather than seated himself in, the chair. He rested his elbow on the table, and with his hand covered his large and beautiful eyes, which were half closed, and reddened with nightwatches or tears. He repeated his fragments from memory. His doubting auditors looked at him haughtily, or at least patronizingly; others carelessly glanced over the translation of his verses.

His voice, at first suppressed, grew clearer by the very flow of his harmonious recital; the breath of poetic inspiration soon elevated him to himself; and his look, raised to heaven, became sublime as that of the young evangelist, conceived by Raffaello, for the light still shone on it. He narrated in his verses the first disobedience of man, and invoked the Holy Spirit, who prefers before all other temples a pure and simple heart, who knows all, and who was present at the birth of time.

This opening was received with a profound silence; and a slight murmur arose after the enunciation of the last idea. He heard not; he saw only through a cloud; he was in the world of his own creation. He continued.

He spoke of the infernal spirit, bound in avenging fire by adamant chains, lying vanquished nine times the space that measures night and day to mortal men; of the darkness visible of the eternal prisons and the burning ocean where the fallen angels float. Then, his voice, now powerful, began the address of the fallen angel. "Art thou," he said, "he who in the happy realms of light, clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine myriads? From what height fallen? What though the field be lost, all is not lost! Unconquerable will and study of revenge, immortal hate and courage never to submit nor yield-what is else not to be overcome."

Here a lackey in a loud voice announced MM. de Montresor and d'Entraigues. They saluted, exchanged a few words, deranged the chairs, and then settled down. The auditors availed themselves of the interruption to institute a dozen private conversations; scarcely anything was heard but expressions of censure, and imputations of bad taste. Even some men of merit, dulled by a particular habit of thinking, cried out that they did not understand it; that it was above their comprehension (not thinking how truly they spoke); and from this feigned humility gained themselves a compliment, and for the poet an impertinent remark--a double advantage. Some voices even pronounced the word "profanation."

The poet, interrupted, put his head between his hands and his elbows on the table, that he might not hear the noise either of praise or censure. Three men only approached him, an officer, Poquelin, and Corneille; the latter whispered to Milton:

"I would advise you to change the picture; your hearers are not on a level with this."

The officer pressed the hand of the English poet and said to him:

"I admire you with all my soul."

The astonished Englishman looked at him, and saw an intellectual, impassioned, and sickly countenance.

He bowed, and collected himself, in order to proceed. His voice took a gentle tone and a soft accent; he spoke of the chaste happiness of the two first of human beings. He described their majestic nakedness, the ingenuous command of their looks, their walk among lions and tigers, which gambolled at their feet; he spoke of the purity of their morning prayer, of their enchanting smile, the playful tenderness of their youth, and their enamored conversation, so painful to the Prince of Darkness.

Gentle tears quite involuntarily made humid the eyes of the beautiful Marion de Lorme. Nature had taken possession of her heart, despite her head; poetry filled it with grave and religious thoughts, from which the intoxication of pleasure had ever diverted her. The idea of virtuous love appeared to her for the first time in all its beauty; and she seemed as if struck with a magic wand, and changed into a pale and beautiful statue.

Corneille, his young friend, and the officer, were full of a silent admiration which they dared not express, for raised voices drowned that of the surprised poet.

"I can't stand this!" cried Desbarreaux. "It is of an insipidity to make one sick."

"And what absence of grace, gallantry, and the belle flamme!" said Scudery, coldly.

"Ah, how different from our immortal D'Urfe!" said Baro, the continuator.

"Where is the 'Ariane,' where the 'Astrea?'" cried, with a groan, Godeau, the annotator.

The whole assembly well-nigh made these obliging remarks, though uttered so as only to be heard by the poet as a murmur of uncertain import. He understood, however, that he produced no enthusiasm, and collected himself to touch another chord of his lyre.

At this moment the Counsellor de Thou was announced, who, modestly saluting the company, glided silently behind the author near Corneille, Poquelin, and the young officer. Milton resumed his strain.

He recounted the arrival of a celestial guest in the garden of Eden, like a second Aurora in mid-day, shaking the plumes of his divine wings, that filled the air with heavenly fragrance, who recounted to man the history of heaven, the revolt of Lucifer, clothed in an armor of diamonds, raised on a car brilliant as the sun, guarded by glittering cherubim, and marching against the Eternal. But Emmanuel appears on the living chariot of the Lord; and his two thousand thunderbolts hurled down to hell, with awful noise, the accursed army confounded.

At this the company arose; and all was interrupted, for religious scruples became leagued with false taste. Nothing was heard but exclamations which obliged the mistress of the house to rise also, and endeavor to conceal them from the author. This was not difficult, for he was entirely absorbed in the elevation of his thoughts. His genius at this moment had nothing in common with the earth; and when he once more opened his eyes on those who surrounded him, he saw near him four admirers, whose voices were better heard than those of the assembly.

Corneille said to him:

"Listen. If you aim at present glory, do not expect it from so fine a work. Pure poetry is appreciated by but few souls. For the common run of men, it must be closely allied with the almost physical interest of the drama. I had been tempted to make a poem of 'Polyeuctes'; but I shall cut down this subject, abridge it of the heavens, and it shall be only a tragedy."

"What matters to me the glory of the moment?" answered Milton. "I think not of success. I sing because I feel myself a poet. I go whither inspiration leads me. Its path is ever the right one. If these verses were not to be read till a century after my death, I should write them just the same."

"I admire them before they are written," said the young officer. "I see in them the God whose innate image I have found in my heart."

"Who is it speaks thus kindly to me?" asked the poet.

"I am Rene Descartes," replied the soldier, gently.

"How, sir!" cried De Thou. "Are you so happy as to be related to the author of the *Principes*?"

"I am the author of that work," replied Rene.

"You, sir!--but--still--pardon me--but--are you not a military man?" stammered out the counsellor, in amazement.

"Well, what has the habit of the body to do with the thought? Yes, I wear the sword. I was at the siege of Rochelle. I love the profession of arms because it keeps the soul in a region of noble ideas by the continual feeling of the sacrifice of life; yet it does not occupy the whole man. He can not always apply his thoughts to it. Peace lulls them. Moreover, one has also to fear seeing them suddenly interrupted by an obscure blow or an absurd and untimely accident. And if a man be killed in the execution of his plan, posterity preserves an idea of the plan which he himself had not, and which may be wholly preposterous; and this is the evil side of the profession for a man of letters."

De Thou smiled with pleasure at the simple language of this superior man --this man whom he so admired, and in his admiration loved. He pressed the hand of the young sage of Touraine, and drew him into an adjoining cabinet with Corneille, Milton, and Moliere, and with them enjoyed one of those conversations which make us regard as lost the time which precedes them and the time which is to follow them.

For two hours they had enchanted one another with their discourse, when the sound of music, of guitars and flutes playing minuets, sarabands, allemandes, and the Spanish dances which the young Queen had brought into fashion, the continual passing of groups of young ladies and their joyous laughter, all announced that the ball had commenced. A very young and beautiful person, holding a large fan as it were a sceptre, and surrounded by ten young men, entered their retired chamber with her brilliant court, which she ruled like a queen, and entirely put to the rout the studious conversers.

"Adieu, gentlemen!" said De Thou. "I make way for Mademoiselle de l'Enclos and her musketeers."

"Really, gentlemen," said the youthful Ninon, "we seem to frighten you. Have I disturbed you? You have all the air of conspirators."

"We are perhaps more so than these gentlemen, although we dance," said Olivier d'Entraigues, who led her.

"Ah! your conspiracy is against me, Monsieur le Page!" said Ninon, looking the while at another light-horseman, and abandoning her remaining arm to a third, the other gallants seeking to place themselves in the way of her flying ceillades, for she distributed her glances brilliant as the rays of the sun dancing over the moving waters.

De Thou stole away without any one thinking of stopping him, and was descending the great staircase, when he met the little Abbe de Gondi, red, hot, and out of breath, who stopped him with an animated and joyous air.

"How now! whither go you? Let the foreigners and savans go. You are one of us. I am somewhat late; but our beautiful Aspasia will pardon me. Why are you going? Is it all over?"

"Why, it seems so. When the dancing begins, the reading is done."

"The reading, yes; but the oaths?" said the Abbe, in a low voice.

"What oaths?" asked De Thou.

"Is not Monsieur le Grand come?"

"I expected to see him; but I suppose he has not come, or else he has gone."

"No, no! come with me," said the bare-brained Abbe. "You are one of us. Parbleu! it is impossible to do without you; come!"

De Thou, unwilling to refuse, and thus appear to disown his friends, even for parties of pleasure which annoyed him, followed De Gondi, who passed through two cabinets, and descended a small private staircase. At each step he took, he heard more distinctly the voices of an assemblage of men. Gondi opened the door. An unexpected spectacle met his view.

The chamber he was entering, lighted by a mysterious glimmer, seemed the asylum of the most voluptuous rendezvous. On one side was a gilt bed, with a canopy of tapestry ornamented with feathers, and covered with lace and ornaments. The furniture, shining with gold, was of grayish silk, richly embroidered. Velvet cushions were at the foot of each armchair, upon a thick carpet. Small mirrors, connected with one another by ornaments of silver, seemed an entire glass, itself a perfection then unknown, and everywhere multiplied their glittering faces. No sound from

without could penetrate this throne of delight; but the persons assembled there seemed far remote from the thoughts which it was calculated to give rise to. A number of men, whom he recognized as courtiers, or soldiers of rank, crowded the entrance of this chamber and an adjoining apartment of larger dimensions. All were intent upon that which was passing in the centre of the first room. Here, ten young men, standing, and holding in their hands their drawn swords, the points of which were lowered toward the ground, were ranged round a table. Their faces, turned to Cinq-Mars, announced that they had just taken an oath to him. The grand ecuyer stood by himself before the fireplace, his arms folded with an air of all-absorbing reflection. Standing near him, Marion de Lorme, grave and collected, seemed to have presented these gentlemen to him.

When Cinq-Mars perceived his friend, he rushed toward the door, casting a terrible glance at Gondi, and seizing De Thou by both arms, stopped him on the last step.

"What do you here?" he said, in a stifled voice.

"Who brought you here? What would you with me? You are lost if you enter."

"What do you yourself here? What do I see in this house?"

"The consequences of that you wot of. Go; this air is poisoned for all who are here."

"It is too late; they have seen me. What would they say if I were to withdraw? I should discourage them; you would be lost."

This dialogue had passed in low and hurried tones; at the last word, De Thou, pushing aside his friend, entered, and with a firm step crossed the apartment to the fireplace.

Cinq-Mars, trembling with rage, resumed his place, hung his head, collected himself, and soon raising a more calm countenance, continued a discourse which the entrance of his friend had interrupted:

"Be then with us, gentlemen; there is no longer any need for so much mystery. Remember that when a strong mind embraces an idea, it must follow it to all its consequences. Your courage will have a wider field than that of a court intrigue. Thank me; instead of a conspiracy, I give you a war. Monsieur de Bouillon has departed to place himself at the head of his army of Italy; in two days, and before the king, I quit Paris for Perpignan. Come all of you thither; the Royalists of the army await us."

Here he threw around him calm and confident looks; he saw gleams of joy and enthusiasm in the eyes of all who surrounded him. Before allowing his own heart to be possessed by the contagious emotion which precedes great enterprises, he desired still more firmly to assure himself of them, and said with a grave air:

"Yes, war, gentlemen; think of it, open war. Rochelle and Navarre are arousing their Protestants; the army of Italy will enter on one side; the king's brother will join us on the other. The man we combat will be surrounded, vanquished, crushed. The parliaments will march in our rear, bearing their petitions to the King, a weapon as powerful as our swords; and after the victory we will throw ourselves at the feet of Louis XIII, our master, that he may pardon us for having delivered him from a cruel and ambitious man, and hastened his own resolution."

Here, again glancing around him, he saw increasing confidence in the looks and attitudes of his accomplices.

"How!" he continued, crossing his arms, and yet restraining with an effort his own emotion; "you do not recoil before this resolution, which would appear a revolt to any other men! Do you not think that I have abused the powers you have vested in me? I have carried matters very

far; but there are times when kings would be served, as it were in spite of themselves. All is arranged, as you know. Sedan will open its gates to us; and we are sure of Spain. Twelve thousand veteran troops will enter Paris with us. No place, however, will be given up to the foreigner; they will all have a French garrison, and be taken in the name of the King."

"Long live the King! long live the Union! the new Union, the Holy League!" cried the assembly.

"It has come, then!" cried Cinq-Mars, with enthusiasm; "it has come--the most glorious day of my life. Oh, youth, youth, from century to century called frivolous and improvident! of what will men now accuse thee, when they behold conceived, ripened, and ready for execution, under a chief of twenty-two, the most vast, the most just, the most beneficial of enterprises? My friends, what is a great life but a thought of youth executed by mature age? Youth looks fixedly into the future with its eagle glance, traces there a broad plan, lays the foundation stone; and all that our entire existence afterward can do is to approximate to that first design. Oh, when can great projects arise, if not when the heart beats vigorously in the breast? The mind is not sufficient; it is but an instrument."

A fresh outburst of joy had followed these words, when an old man with a white beard stood forward from the throng.

"Bah!" said Gondi, in a low voice, "here's the old Chevalier de Guise going to dote, and damp us."

And truly enough, the old man, pressing the hand of Cinq-Mars, said slowly and with difficulty, having placed himself near him:

"Yes, my son, and you, my children, I see with joy that my old friend Bassompierre is about to be delivered by you, and that you are about to avenge the Comte de Soissons and the young Montmorency. But it is expedient for youth, all ardent as it is, to listen to those who have seen much. I have witnessed the League, my children, and I tell you that you can not now, as then, take the title of the Holy League, the Holy Union, the Protectors of Saint Peter, or Pillars of the Church, because I see that you reckon on the support of the Huguenots; nor can you put upon your great seal of green wax an empty throne, since it is occupied by a king."

"You may say by two," interrupted Gondi, laughing.

"It is, however, of great importance," continued old Guise, amid the tumultuous young men, "to take a name to which the people may attach themselves; that of War for the Public Welfare has been made use of; Princes of Peace only lately. It is necessary to find one."

"Well, the War of the King," said Cinq-Mars.

"Ay, the War of the King!" cried Gondi and all the young men.

"Moreover," continued the old seigneur, "it is essential to gain the approval of the theological faculty of the Sorbonne, which heretofore sanctioned even the 'hautgourdiers' and the 'sorgueurs',--[Names of the leaguers.]--and to put in force its second proposition--that it is permitted to the people to disobey the magistrates, and to hang them."

"Eh, Chevalier!" exclaimed Gondi; "this is not the question. Let Monsieur le Grand speak; we are thinking no more of the Sorbonne at present than of your Saint Jacques Clement."

There was a laugh, and Cinq-Mars went on:

"I wished, gentlemen, to conceal nothing from you as to the projects of Monsieur, those of the Duke de Bouillon, or my own, for it is just that a man who stakes his life should know at what game; but I have placed

before you the least fortunate chances, and I have not detailed our strength, for there is not one of you but knows the secret of it. Is it to you, Messieurs de Montresor and de Saint-Thibal, I need tell the treasures that Monsieur places at our disposal? Is it to you, Monsieur d'Aignou, Monsieur de Mouy, that I need tell how many gentlemen are eager to join your companies of men-at-arms and light-horse, to fight the Cardinalists; how many in Touraine and in Auvergne, where lay the lands of the House of D'Effiat, and whence will march two thousand seigneurs, with their vassals?

"Baron de Beauvau, shall I recall the zeal and valor of the cuirassiers whom you brought to the unhappy Comte de Soissons, whose cause was ours, and whom you saw assassinated in the midst of his triumph by him whom with you he had defeated? Shall I tell these gentlemen of the joy of the Count-Duke of Olivares at the news of our intentions, and the letters of the Cardinal-Infanta to the Duke de Bouillon? Shall I speak of Paris to the Abbe de Gondy, to D'Entraigues, and to you, gentlemen, who are daily witnesses of her misery, of her indignation, and her desire to break forth? While all foreign nations demand peace, which the Cardinal de Richelieu still destroys by his want of faith (as he has done in violating the treaty of Ratisbon), all orders of the State groan under his violence, and dread that colossal ambition which aspires to no less than the temporal and even spiritual throne of France."

A murmur of approbation interrupted Cinq-Mars. There was then silence for a moment; and they heard the sound of wind instruments, and the measured tread of the dancers.

This noise caused a momentary diversion and a smile in the younger portion of the assembly.

Cinq-Mars profited by this; and raising his eyes, "Pleasures of youth," he cried--"love, music, joyous dances--why do you not alone occupy our leisure hours? Why are not you our sole ambition? What resentment may we not justly feel that we have to make our cries of indignation heard above our bursts of joy, our formidable secrets in the asylum of love, and our oaths of war and death amid the intoxication of and of life!"

"Curses on him who saddens the youth of a people! When wrinkles furrow the brow of the young men, we may confidently say that the finger of a tyrant has hollowed them out. The other troubles of youth give it despair and not consternation. Watch those sad and mournful students pass day after day with pale foreheads, slow steps, and half-suppressed voices. One would think they fear to live or to advance a step toward the future. What is there then in France? A man too many."

"Yes," he continued; "for two years I have watched the insidious and profound progress of his ambition. His strange practices, his secret commissions, his judicial assassinations are known to you. Princes, peers, marshals--all have been crushed by him. There is not a family in France but can show some sad trace of his passage. If he regards us all as enemies to his authority, it is because he would have in France none but his own house, which twenty years ago held only one of the smallest fiefs of Poitou.

"The humiliated parliament has no longer any voice. The presidents of Nismes, Novion, and Bellievre have revealed to you their courageous but fruitless resistance to the condemnation to death of the Duke de la Vallette.

"The presidents and councils of sovereign courts have been imprisoned, banished, suspended--a thing before unheard of--because they have raised their voices for the king or for the public.

"The highest offices of justice, who fill them? Infamous and corrupt men, who suck the blood and gold of the country. Paris and the maritime towns taxed; the rural districts ruined and laid waste by the soldiers and other agents of the Cardinal; the peasants reduced to feed on animals killed by the plague or famine, or saving themselves by self-banishment--

such is the work of this new justice. His worthy agents have even coined money with the effigy of the Cardinal-Duke. Here are some of his royal pieces."

The grand ecuyey threw upon the table a score of gold doubloons whereon Richelieu was represented. A fresh murmur of hatred toward the Cardinal arose in the apartment.

"And think you the clergy are less trampled on and less discontented? No. Bishops have been tried against the laws of the State and in contempt of the respect due to their sacred persons. We have seen, in consequence, Algerine corsairs commanded by an archbishop. Men of the lowest condition have been elevated to the cardinalate. The minister himself, devouring the most sacred things, has had himself elected general of the orders of Citeaux, Cluny, and Premontre, throwing into prison the monks who refused him their votes. Jesuits, Carmelites, Cordeliers, Augustins, Dominicans, have been forced to elect general vicars in France, in order no longer to communicate at Rome with their true superiors, because he would be patriarch in France, and head of the Gallican Church."

"He's a schismatic! a monster!" cried several voices.

"His progress, then, is apparent, gentlemen. He is ready to seize both temporal and spiritual power. He has little by little fortified himself against the King in the strongest towns of France--seized the mouths of the principal rivers, the best ports of the ocean, the salt-pits, and all the securities of the kingdom. It is the King, then, whom we must deliver from this oppression. 'Le roi et la paix!' shall be our cry. The rest must be left to Providence."

Cinq-Mars greatly astonished the assembly, and De Thou himself, by this address. No one had ever before heard him speak so long together, not even in fireside conversation; and he had never by a single word shown the least aptitude for understanding public affairs. He had, on the contrary, affected the greatest indifference on the subject, even in the eyes of those whom he was molding to his projects, merely manifesting a virtuous indignation at the violence of the minister, but affecting not to put forward any of his own ideas, in order not to suggest personal ambition as the aim of his labors. The confidence given to him rested on his favor with the king and his personal bravery. The surprise of all present was therefore such as to cause a momentary silence. It was soon broken by all the transports of Frenchmen, young or old, when fighting of whatever kind is held out to them.

Among those who came forward to press the hand of the young party leader, the Abbe de Gondy jumped about like a kid.

"I have already enrolled my regiment!" he cried. "I have some superb fellows!" Then, addressing Marion de Lorme, "Parbleu! Mademoiselle, I will wear your colors--your gray ribbon, and your order of the Allumette. The device is charming--

'Nous ne brulons que pour bruller les autres.'

And I wish you could see all the fine things we shall do if we are fortunate enough to come to blows."

The fair Marion, who did not like him, began to talk over his head to M. de Thou--a mortification which always exasperated the little Abbe, who abruptly left her, walking as tall as he could, and scornfully twisting his moustache.

All at once a sudden silence took possession of the assembly. A rolled paper had struck the ceiling and fallen at the feet of Cinq-Mars. He picked it up and unrolled it, after having looked eagerly around him. He sought in vain to divine whence it came; all those who advanced had only astonishment and intense curiosity depicted in their faces.

"Here is my name wrongly written," he said coldly.

"A CINQ MARCS,
CENTURIE DE NOSTRADAMUS.

Quand bonnet rouge passera par la fenetre,
A quarante onces on coupera tete,
Et tout finira."

[This punning prediction was made public three months before the, conspiracy.]

"There is a traitor among us, gentlemen," he said, throwing away the paper. "But no matter. We are not men to be frightened by his sanguinary jests."

"We must find the traitor out, and throw him through the window," said the young men.

Still, a disagreeable sensation had come over the assembly. They now only spoke in whispers, and each regarded his neighbor with distrust. Some withdrew; the meeting grew thinner. Marion de Lorme repeated to every one that she would dismiss her servants, who alone could be suspected. Despite her efforts a coldness reigned throughout the apartment. The first sentences of Cinq-Mars' address, too, had left some uncertainty as to the intentions of the King; and this untimely candor had somewhat shaken a few of the less determined conspirators.

Gondi pointed this out to Cinq-Mars.

"Hark ye!" he said in a low voice. "Believe me, I have carefully studied conspiracies and assemblages; there are certain purely mechanical means which it is necessary to adopt. Follow my advice here; I know a good deal of this sort of thing. They want something more. Give them a little contradiction; that always succeeds in France. You will quite make them alive again. Seem not to wish to retain them against their will, and they will remain."

The grand ecuyer approved of the suggestion, and advancing toward those whom he knew to be most deeply compromised, said:

"For the rest, gentlemen, I do not wish to force any one to follow me. Plenty of brave men await us at Perpignan, and all France is with us. If any one desires to secure himself a retreat, let him speak. We will give him the means of placing himself in safety at once."

Not one would hear of this proposition; and the movement it occasioned produced a renewal of the oaths of hatred against the minister.

Cinq-Mars, however, proceeded to put the question individually to some of the persons present, in the election of whom he showed much judgment; for he ended with Montresor, who cried that he would pass his sword through his body if he had for a moment entertained such an idea, and with Gondi, who, rising fiercely on his heels, exclaimed:

"Monsieur le Grand Ecuyer, my retreat is the archbishopric of Paris and L'Ile Notre-Dame. I'll make it a place strong enough to keep me from being taken."

"And yours?" he said to De Thou.

"At your side," murmured De Thou, lowering his eyes, unwilling to give importance to his resolution by the directness of his look.

"You will have it so? Well, I accept," said Cinq-Mars; "and my sacrifice herein, dear friend, is greater than yours." Then turning toward the assembly:

"Gentlemen, I see in you the last men of France, for after the Montmorencys and the Soissons, you alone dare lift a head free and worthy of our old liberty. If Richelieu triumph, the ancient bases of the monarchy will crumble with us. The court will reign alone, in the place of the parliaments, the old barriers, and at the same time the powerful supports of the royal authority. Let us be conquerors, and France will owe to us the preservation of her ancient manners and her time-honored guarantees. And now, gentlemen, it were a pity to spoil the ball on this account. You hear the music. The ladies await you. Let us go and dance."

"The Cardinal shall pay the fiddlers," added Gondi.

The young men applauded with a laugh; and all reascended to the ballroom as lightly as they would have gone to the battlefield.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CONFESSIONAL

It was on the day following the assembly that had taken place in the house of Marion de Lorme. A thick snow covered the roofs of Paris and settled in its large gutters and streets, where it arose in gray heaps, furrowed by the wheels of carriages.

It was eight o'clock, and the night was dark. The tumult of the city was silent on account of the thick carpet the winter had spread for it, and which deadened the sound of the wheels over the stones, and of the feet of men and horses. In a narrow street that winds round the old church of St. Eustache, a man, enveloped in his cloak, slowly walked up and down, constantly watching for the appearance of some one. He often seated himself upon one of the posts of the church, sheltering himself from the falling snow under one of the statues of saints which jutted out from the roof of the building, stretching over the narrow path like birds of prey, which, about to make a stoop, have folded their wings. Often, too, the old man, opening his cloak, beat his arms against his breast to warm himself, or blew upon his fingers, ill protected from the cold by a pair of buff gloves reaching nearly to the elbow. At last he saw a slight shadow gliding along the wall.

"Ah, Santa Maria! what villainous countries are these of the North!" said a woman's voice, trembling. "Ah, the duchy of Mantua! would I were back there again, Grandchamp!"

"Pshaw! don't speak so loud," said the old domestic, abruptly. "The walls of Paris have Cardinalist ears, and more especially the walls of the churches. Has your mistress entered? My master awaits her at the door."

"Yes, yes; she has gone in."

"Be silent," said Grandchamp. "The sound of the clock is cracked. That's a bad sign."

"That clock has sounded the hour of a rendezvous."

"For me, it sounds like a passing-bell. But be silent, Laure; here are three cloaks passing."

They allowed three men to pass. Grandchamp followed them, made sure of the road they took, and returned to his seat, sighing deeply.

"The snow is cold, Laure, and I am old. Monsieur le Grand might have chosen another of his men to keep watch for him while he's making love. It's all very well for you to carry love-letters and ribbons and portraits and such trash, but for me, I ought to be treated with more

consideration. Monsieur le Marechal would not have done so. Old domestics give respectability to a house, and should be themselves respected."

"Has your master arrived long, 'caro amico'?"

"Eh, cara, cayo! leave me in peace. We had both been freezing for an hour when you came. I should have had time to smoke three Turkish pipes. Attend to your business, and go and look to the other doors of the church, and see that no suspicious person is prowling about. Since there are but two vedettes, they must beat about well."

"Ah, what a thing it is to have no one to whom to say a friendly word when it is so cold! and my poor mistress! to come on foot all the way from the Hotel de Nevers. Ah, amore! qui regna amore!"

"Come, Italian, wheel about, I tell thee. Let me hear no more of thy musical tongue."

"Ah, Santa Maria! What a harsh voice, dear Grandchamp! You were much more amiable at Chaumont, in Turena, when you talked to me of 'miei occhi neri.'"

"Hold thy tongue, prattler! Once more, thy Italian is only good for buffoons and rope-dancers, or to accompany the learned dogs."

"Ah, Italia mia! Grandchamp, listen to me, and you shall hear the language of the gods. If you were a gallant man, like him who wrote this for a Laure like me!"

And she began to hum:

Lieti fiori a felici, e ben nate erbe
Che Madonna pensando premer sole;
Piaggia ch'ascolti su dolci parole
E del bel piede alcun vestigio serbe.

The old soldier was but little used to the voice of a young girl; and in general when a woman spoke to him, the tone he assumed in answering always fluctuated between an awkward compliment and an ebullition of temper. But on this occasion he appeared moved by the Italian song, and twisted his moustache, which was always with him a sign of embarrassment and distress. He even omitted a rough sound something like a laugh, and said:

"Pretty enough, 'mordieu!' that recalls to my mind the siege of Casal; but be silent, little one. I have not yet heard the Abbe Quillet come. This troubles me. He ought to have been here before our two young people; and for some time past--"

Laure, who was afraid of being sent alone to the Place St. Eustache, answered that she was quite sure he had gone in, and continued:

"Ombrose selve, ove'percote il sole
Che vi fa co'suoi raggi alte a superbe."

"Hum!" said the worthy old soldier, grumbling. "I have my feet in the snow, and a gutter runs down on my head, and there's death at my heart; and you sing to me of violets, of the sun, and of grass, and of love. Be silent!"

And, retiring farther in the recess of the church, he leaned his gray head upon his hands, pensive and motionless. Laure dared not again speak to him.

While her waiting-woman had gone to find Grandchamp, the young and trembling Marie with a timid hand had pushed open the folding-door of the church.

She there found Cinq-Mars standing, disguised, and anxiously awaiting her. As soon as she recognized him, she advanced with rapid steps into the church, holding her velvet mask over her face, and hastened to take refuge in a confessional, while Henri carefully closed the door of the church by which she had entered. He made sure that it could not be opened on the outside, and then followed his betrothed to kneel within the place of penitence. Arrived an hour before her, with his old valet, he had found this open--a certain and understood sign that the Abbe Quillet, his tutor, awaited him at the accustomed place. His care to prevent any surprise had made him remain himself to guard the entrance until the arrival of Marie. Delighted as he was at the punctuality of the good Abbe, he would still scarcely leave his post to thank him. He was a second father to him in all but authority; and he acted toward the good priest without much ceremony.

The old parish church of St. Eustache was dark. Besides the perpetual lamp, there were only four flambeaux of yellow wax, which, attached above the fonts against the principal pillars, cast a red glimmer upon the blue and black marble of the empty church. The light scarcely penetrated the deep niches of the aisles of the sacred building. In one of the chapels --the darkest of them--was the confessional, of which we have before spoken, whose high iron grating and thick double planks left visible only the small dome and the wooden cross. Here, on either side, knelt Cinq-Mars and Marie de Mantua. They could scarcely see each other, but found that the Abbe Quillet, seated between them, was there awaiting them. They could see through the little grating the shadow of his hood. Henri d'Effiat approached slowly; he was regulating, as it were, the remainder of his destiny. It was not before his king that he was about to appear, but before a more powerful sovereign, before her for whom he had undertaken his immense work. He was about to test her faith; and he trembled.

He trembled still more when his young betrothed knelt opposite to him; he trembled, because at the sight of this angel he could not help feeling all the happiness he might lose. He dared not speak first, and remained for an instant contemplating her head in the shade, that young head upon which rested all his hopes. Despite his love, whenever he looked upon her he could not refrain from a kind of dread at having undertaken so much for a girl, whose passion was but a feeble reflection of his own, and who perhaps would not appreciate all the sacrifices he had made for her--bending the firm character of his mind to the compliances of a courtier, condemning it to the intrigues and sufferings of ambition, abandoning it to profound combinations, to criminal meditations, to the gloomy labors of a conspirator.

Hitherto, in their secret interviews, she had always received each fresh intelligence of his progress with the transports of pleasure of a child, but without appreciating the labors of each of these so arduous steps that lead to honors, and always asking him with naivete when he would be Constable, and when they should marry, as if she were asking him when he would come to the Caroussel, or whether the weather was fine. Hitherto, he had smiled at these questions and this ignorance, pardonable at eighteen, in a girl born to a throne and accustomed to a grandeur natural to her, which she found around her on her entrance into life; but now he made more serious reflections upon this character. And when, but just quitting the imposing assembly of conspirators, representatives of all the orders of the kingdom, his ear, wherein still resounded the masculine voices that had sworn to undertake a vast war, was struck with the first words of her for whom that war was commenced, he feared for the first time lest this naivete should be in reality simple levity, not coming from the heart. He resolved to sound it.

"Oh, heavens! how I tremble, Henri!" she said as she entered the confessional; "you make me come without guards, without a coach. I always tremble lest I should be seen by my people coming out of the Hotel de Nevers. How much longer must I yet conceal myself like a criminal? The Queen was very angry when I avowed the matter to her; and whenever she speaks to me of it, 'tis with her severe air that you know, and which always makes me weep. Oh, I am terribly afraid!"

She was silent; Cinq-Mars replied only with a deep sigh.

"How! you do not speak to me!" she said.

"Are these, then, all your terrors?" asked Cinq-Mars, bitterly.

"Can I have greater? Oh, 'mon ami', in what a tone, with what a voice, do you address me! Are you angry because I came too late?"

"Too soon, Madame, much too soon, for the things you are to hear--for I see you are far from prepared for them."

Marie, affected at the gloomy and bitter tone of his voice, began to weep.

"Alas, what have I done," she said, "that you should call me Madame, and treat me thus harshly?"

"Be tranquil," replied Cinq-Mars, but with irony in his tone. "'Tis not, indeed, you who are guilty; but I--I alone; not toward you, but for you."

"Have you done wrong, then? Have you ordered the death of any one? Oh, no, I am sure you have not, you are so good!"

"What!" said Cinq-Mars, "are you as nothing in my designs? Did I misconstrue your thoughts when you looked at me in the Queen's boudoir? Can I no longer read in your eyes? Was the fire which animated them that of a love for Richelieu? That admiration which you promised to him who should dare to say all to the King, where is it? Is it all a falsehood?"

Marie burst into tears.

"You still speak to me with bitterness," she said; "I have not deserved it. Do you suppose, because I speak not of this fearful conspiracy, that I have forgotten it? Do you not see me miserable at the thought? Must you see my tears? Behold them; I shed enough in secret. Henri, believe that if I have avoided this terrible subject in our last interviews, it is from the fear of learning too much. Have I any other thought that that of your dangers? Do I not know that it is for me you incur them? Alas! if you fight for me, have I not also to sustain attacks no less cruel? Happier than I, you have only to combat hatred, while I struggle against friendship. The Cardinal will oppose to you men and weapons; but the Queen, the gentle Anne of Austria, employs only tender advice, caresses, sometimes tears."

"Touching and invincible constraint to make you accept a throne," said Cinq-Mars, bitterly. "I well conceive you must need some efforts to resist such seductions; but first, Madame, I must release you from your vows."

"Alas, great Heaven! what is there, then, against us?"

"There is God above us, and against us," replied Henri, in a severe tone; "the King has deceived me."

There was an agitated movement on the part of the Abbe.

Marie exclaimed, "I foresaw it; this is the misfortune I dreamed and dreamed of! It is I who caused it?"

"He deceived me, as he pressed my hand," continued Cinq-Mars; "he betrayed me by the villain Joseph, whom an offer has been made to me to poniard."

The Abbe gave a start of horror which half opened the door of the confessional.

"O father, fear nothing," said Henri d'Effiat; "your pupil will never

strike such blows. Those I prepare will be heard from afar, and the broad day will light them up; but there remains a duty--a sacred duty--for me to fulfil. Behold your son sacrifice himself before you! Alas! I have not lived long in the sight of happiness, and I am about, perhaps, to destroy it by your hand, that consecrated it."

As he spoke, he opened the light grating which separated him from his old tutor; the latter, still observing an extraordinary silence, passed his hood over his forehead.

"Restore this nuptial ring to the Duchesse de Mantua," said Cinq-Mars, in a tone less firm; "I can not keep it unless she give it me a second time, for I am not the same whom she promised to espouse."

The priest hastily seized the ring, and passed it through the opposite grating; this mark of indifference astonished Cinq-Mars.

"What! Father," he said, "are you also changed?"

Marie wept no longer; but, raising her angelic voice, which awakened a faint echo along the aisles of the church, as the softest sigh of the organ, she said, returning the ring to Cinq-Mars:

"O dearest, be not angry! I comprehend you not. Can we break asunder what God has just united, and can I leave you, when I know you are unhappy? If the King no longer loves you, at least you may be assured he will not harm you, since he has not harmed the Cardinal, whom he never loved. Do you think yourself undone, because he is perhaps unwilling to separate from his old servant? Well, let us await the return of his friendship; forget these conspirators, who affright me. If they give up hope, I shall thank Heaven, for then I shall no longer tremble for you. Why needlessly afflict ourselves? The Queen loves us, and we are both very young; let us wait. The future is beautiful, since we are united and sure of ourselves. Tell me what the King said to you at Chambord. I followed you long with my eyes. Heavens! how sad to me was that hunting party!"

"He has betrayed me, I tell you," answered Cinq-Mars. "Yet who could have believed it, that saw him press our hands, turning from his brother to me, and to the Duc de Bouillon, making himself acquainted with the minutest details of the conspiracy, of the very day on which Richelieu was to be arrested at Lyons, fixing himself the place of his exile (our party desired his death, but the recollection of my father made me ask his life). The King said that he himself would direct the whole affair at Perpignan; yet just before, Joseph, that foul spy, had issued from out of the cabinet du Lys. O Marie! shall I own it? at the moment I heard this, my very soul was tossed. I doubted everything; it seemed to me that the centre of the world was unhinged when I found truth quit the heart of the King. I saw our whole edifice crumble to the ground; another hour, and the conspiracy would vanish away, and I should lose you forever. One means remained; I employed it."

"What means?" said Marie.

"The treaty with Spain was in my hand; I signed it."

"Ah, heavens! destroy it."

"It is gone."

"Who bears it?"

"Fontrailles."

"Recall him."

"He will, ere this, have passed the defiles of Oleron," said Cinq-Mars, rising up. "All is ready at Madrid, all at Sedan. Armies await me, Marie--armies! Richelieu is in the midst of them. He totters; it needs

but one blow to overthrow him, and you are mine forever--forever the wife of the triumphant Cinq-Mars."

"Of Cinq-Mars the rebel," she said, sighing.

"Well, have it so, the rebel; but no longer the favorite. Rebel, criminal, worthy of the scaffold, I know it," cried the impassioned youth, falling on his knees; "but a rebel for love, a rebel for you, whom my sword will at last achieve for me."

"Alas, a sword imbrued in the blood of your country! Is it not a poniard?"

"Pause! for pity, pause, Marie! Let kings abandon me, let warriors forsake me, I shall only be the more firm; but a word from you will vanquish me, and once again the time for reflection will be passed from me. Yes, I am a criminal; and that is why I still hesitate to think myself worthy of you. Abandon me, Marie; take back the ring."

"I can not," she said; "for I am your wife, whatever you be."

"You hear her, father!" exclaimed Cinq-Mars, transported with happiness; "bless this second union, the work of devotion, even more beautiful than that of love. Let her be mine while I live."

Without answering, the Abbe opened the door of the confessional and had quitted the church ere Cinq-Mars had time to rise and follow him.

"Where are you going? What is the matter?" he cried.

But no one answered.

"Do not call out, in the name of Heaven!" said Marie, "or I am lost; he has doubtless heard some one in the church."

But D'Effiat, agitated, and without answering her, rushed forth, and sought his late tutor through the church, but in vain. Drawing his sword, he proceeded to the entrance which Grandchamp had to guard; he called him and listened.

"Now let him go," said a voice at the corner of the street; and at the same moment was heard the galloping of horses.

"Grandchamp, wilt thou answer?" cried Cinq-Mars.

"Help, Henri, my dear boy!" exclaimed the voice of the Abbe Quillet.

"Whence come you? You endanger me," said the grand ecuyer, approaching him.

But he saw that his poor tutor, without a hat in the falling snow, was in a most deplorable condition.

"They stopped me, and they robbed me," he cried. "The villains, the assassins! they prevented me from calling out; they stopped my mouth with a handkerchief."

At this noise, Grandchamp at length came, rubbing his eyes, like one just awakened. Laure, terrified, ran into the church to her mistress; all hastily followed her to reassure Marie, and then surrounded the old Abbe.

"The villains! they bound my hands, as you see. There were more than twenty of them; they took from me the key of the side door of the church."

"How! just now?" said Cinq-Mars; "and why did you quit us?"

"Quit you! why, they have kept me there two hours."

"Two hours!" cried Henri, terrified.

"Ah, miserable old man that I am!" said Grandchamp; "I have slept while my master was in danger. It is the first time."

"You were not with us, then, in the confessional?" continued Cinq-Mars, anxiously, while Marie tremblingly pressed against his arm.

"What!" said the Abbe, "did you not see the rascal to whom they gave my key?"

"No! whom?" cried all at once.

"Father Joseph," answered the good priest.

"Fly! you are lost!" cried Marie.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

They have believed me incapable because I was kind
They tremble while they threaten

CINQ MARS

By ALFRED DE VIGNY

BOOK 6

CHAPTER XXII

THE STORM

'Blow, blow, thou winter wind;
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude.
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly.
Most friendship is feigning; most loving mere folly.'

SHAKESPEARE.

Amid that long and superb chain of the Pyrenees which forms the embattled isthmus of the peninsula, in the centre of those blue pyramids, covered in gradation with snow, forests, and downs, there opens a narrow defile, a path cut in the dried-up bed of a perpendicular torrent; it circulates among rocks, glides under bridges of frozen snow, twines along the edges of inundated precipices to scale the adjacent mountains of Urdoz and Oleron, and at last rising over their unequal ridges, turns their nebulous peak into a new country which has also its mountains and its depths, and, quitting France, descends into Spain. Never has the hoof of the mule left its trace in these windings; man himself can with difficulty stand upright there, even with the hempen boots which can not

slip, and the hook of the pikestaff to force into the crevices of the rocks.

In the fine summer months the 'pastour', in his brown cape, and his black long-bearded ram lead hither flocks, whose flowing wool sweeps the turf. Nothing is heard in these rugged places but the sound of the large bells which the sheep carry, and whose irregular tinklings produce unexpected harmonies, casual gamuts, which astonish the traveller and delight the savage and silent shepherd. But when the long month of September comes, a shroud of snow spreads itself from the peak of the mountains down to their base, respecting only this deeply excavated path, a few gorges open by torrents, and some rocks of granite, which stretch out their fantastical forms, like the bones of a buried world.

It is then that light troops of chamois make their appearance, with their twisted horns extending over their backs, spring from rock to rock as if driven before the wind, and take possession of their aerial desert. Flights of ravens and crows incessantly wheel round and round in the gulfs and natural wells which they transform into dark dovecots, while the brown bear, followed by her shaggy family, who sport and tumble around her in the snow, slowly descends from their retreat invaded by the frost. But these are neither the most savage nor the most cruel inhabitants that winter brings into these mountains; the daring smuggler raises for himself a dwelling of wood on the very boundary of nature and of politics. There unknown treaties, secret exchanges, are made between the two Navarres, amid fogs and winds.

It was in this narrow path on the frontiers of France that, about two months after the scenes we have witnessed in Paris, two travellers, coming from Spain, stopped at midnight, fatigued and dismayed. They heard musket-shots in the mountain.

"The scoundrels! how they have pursued us!" said one of them. "I can go no farther; but for you I should have been taken."

"And you will be taken still, as well as that infernal paper, if you lose your time in words; there is another volley on the rock of Saint Pierre-de-L'Aigle. Up there, they suppose we have gone in the direction of the Limacon; but, below, they will see the contrary. Descend; it is doubtless a patrol hunting smugglers. Descend."

"But how? I can not see."

"Never mind, descend. Take my arm."

"Hold me; my boots slip," said the first traveller, stamping on the edge of the rock to make sure of the solidity of the ground before trusting himself upon it.

"Go on; go on!" said the other, pushing him. "There's one of the rascals passing over our heads."

And, in fact, the shadow of a man, armed with a long gun, was reflected on the snow. The two adventurers stood motionless. The man passed on. They continued their descent.

"They will take us," said the one who was supporting the other. "They have turned us. Give me your confounded parchment. I wear the dress of a smuggler, and I can pass for one seeking an asylum among them; but you would have no resource with your laced dress."

"You are right," said his companion; and, resting his foot against the edge of the rock, and reclining on the slope, he gave him a roll of hollow wood.

A gun was fired, and a ball buried itself, hissing, in the snow at their feet.

"Marked!" said the first. "Roll down. If you are not dead when you get

to the bottom, take the road you see before you. On the left of the hollow is Santa Maria. But turn to the right; cross Oleron; and you are on the road to Pau and are saved. Go; roll down."

As he spoke, he pushed his comrade, and without condescending to look after him, and himself neither ascending nor descending, followed the flank of the mountain horizontally, hanging on by rocks, branches, and even by plants, with the strength and energy of a wild-cat, and soon found himself on firm ground before a small wooden hut, through which a light was visible. The adventurer went all around it, like a hungry wolf round a sheepfold, and, applying his eye to one of the openings, apparently saw what determined him, for without further hesitation he pushed the tottering door, which was not even fastened by a latch. The whole but shook with the blow he had given it. He then saw that it was divided into two cabins by a partition. A large flambeau of yellow wax lighted the first. There, a young girl, pale and fearfully thin, was crouched in a corner on the damp floor, just where the melted snow ran under the planks of the cottage. Very long black hair, entangled and covered with dust, fell in disorder over her coarse brown dress; the red hood of the Pyrenees covered her head and shoulders. Her eyes were cast down; and she was spinning with a small distaff attached to her waist. The entry of a man did not appear to move her in the least.

"Ha! La moza,--[girl]-- get up and give me something to drink. I am tired and thirsty."

The young girl did not answer, and, without raising her eyes, continued to spin assiduously.

"Dost hear?" said the stranger, thrusting her with his foot. "Go and tell thy master that a friend wishes to see him; but first give me some drink. I shall sleep here."

She answered, in a hoarse voice, still spinning:

"I drink the snow that melts on the rock, or the green scum that floats on the water of the swamp. But when I have spun well, they give me water from the iron spring. When I sleep, the cold lizards crawl over my face; but when I have well cleaned a mule, they throw me hay. The hay is warm; the hay is good and warm. I put it under my marble feet."

"What tale art thou telling me?" said Jacques. "I spoke not of thee."

She continued:

"They make me hold a man while they kill him. Oh, what blood I have had on my hands! God forgive them!--if that be possible. They make me hold his head, and the bucket filled with crimson water. O Heaven!--I, who was the bride of God! They throw their bodies into the abyss of snow; but the vulture finds them; he lines his nest with their hair. I now see thee full of life; I shall see thee bloody, pale, and dead."

The adventurer, shrugging his shoulders, began to whistle as he passed the second door. Within he found the man he had seen through the chinks of the cabin. He wore the blue berret cap of the Basques on one side, and, enveloped in an ample cloak, seated on the pack-saddle of a mule, and bending over a large brazier, smoked a cigar, and from time to time drank from a leather bottle at his side. The light of the brazier showed his full yellow face, as well as the chamber, in which mule-saddles were ranged round the byasero as seats. He raised his head without altering his position.

"Oh, oh! is it thou, Jacques?" he said. "Is it thou? Although 'tis four years since I saw thee, I recognize thee. Thou art not changed, brigand! There 'tis still, thy great knave's face. Sit down there, and take a drink."

"Yes, here I am. But how the devil camest thou here? I thought thou wert a judge, Houmain!"

"And I thought thou wert a Spanish captain, Jacques!"

"Ah! I was so for a time, and then a prisoner. But I got out of the thing very snugly, and have taken again to the old trade, the free life, the good smuggling work."

"Viva! viva! Jaleo!"--[A common Spanish oath.]-- cried Houmain. "We brave fellows can turn our hands to everything. Thou camest by the other passes, I suppose, for I have not seen thee since I returned to the trade."

"Yes, yes; I have passed where thou wilt never pass," said Jacques.

"And what hast got?"

"A new merchandise. My mules will come tomorrow."

"Silk sashes, cigars, or linen?"

"Thou wilt know in time, amigo," said the ruffian. "Give me the skin. I'm thirsty."

"Here, drink. It's true Valdepenas! We're so jolly here, we bandoleros! Ay! jaleo! jaleo! come, drink; our friends are coming."

"What friends?" said Jacques, dropping the horn.

"Don't be uneasy, but drink. I'll tell thee all about it presently, and then we'll sing the Andalusian Tirana."--[A kind of ballad.]

The adventurer took the horn, and assumed an appearance of ease.

"And who's that great she-devil I saw out there?" he said. "She seems half dead."

"Oh, no! she's only mad. Drink; I'll tell thee all about her."

And taking from his red sash a long poniard denticulated on each side like a saw, Houmain used it to stir up the fire, and said with vast gravity:

"Thou must know first, if thou dost not know it already, that down below there [he pointed toward France] the old wolf Richelieu carries all before him."

"Ah, ah!" said Jacques.

"Yes; they call him the king of the King. Thou knowest? There is, however, a young man almost as strong as he, and whom they call Monsieur le Grand. This young fellow commands almost the whole army of Perpignan at this moment. He arrived there a month ago; but the old fox is still at Narbonne--a very cunning fox, indeed. As to the King, he is sometimes this, sometimes that [as he spoke, Houmain turned his hand outward and inward], between zist and zest; but while he is determining, I am for zist--that is to say, I'm a Cardinalist. I've been regularly doing business for my lord since the first job he gave me, three years ago. I'll tell thee about it. He wanted some men of firmness and spirit for a little expedition, and sent for me to be judge-Advocate."

"Ah! a very pretty post, I've heard."

"Yes, 'tis a trade like ours, where they sell cord instead of thread; but it is less honest, for they kill men oftener. But 'tis also more profitable; everything has its price."

"Very properly so," said Jacques.

"Behold me, then, in a red robe. I helped to give a yellow one and

brimstone to a fine fellow, who was cure at Loudun, and who had got into a convent of nuns, like a wolf in a fold; and a fine thing he made of it."

"Ha, ha, ha! That's very droll!" laughed Jacques. "Drink," said Houmain. "Yes, Jago, I saw him after the affair, reduced to a little black heap like this charcoal. See, this charcoal at the end of my poniard. What things we are! That's just what we shall all come to when we go to the Devil."

"Oh, none of these pleasantries!" said the other, very gravely. "You know that I am religious."

"Well, I don't say no; it may be so," said Houmain, in the same tone. "There's Richelieu, a Cardinal! But, no matter. Thou must know, then, as I was Advocate-General, I advocated--"

"Ah, thou art quite a wit!"

"Yes, a little. But, as I was saying, I advocated into my own pocket five hundred piastres, for Armand Duplessis pays his people well, and there's nothing to be said against that, except that the money's not his own; but that's the way with us all. I determined to invest this money in our old trade; and I returned here. Business goes on well. There is sentence of death out against us; and our goods, of course, sell for half as much again as before."

"What's that?" exclaimed Jacques; "lightning at this time of year?"

"Yes, the storms are beginning; we've had two already. We are in the clouds. Dost hear the roll of the thunder? But this is nothing; come, drink. 'Tis almost one in the morning; we'll finish the skin and the night together. As I was telling thee, I made acquaintance with our president--a great scoundrel called Laubardemont. Dost know him?"

"Yes, a little," said Jacques; "he's a regular miser. But never mind that; go on."

"Well, as we had nothing to conceal from one another, I told him of my little commercial plans, and asked him, when any good jobs presented themselves, to think of his judicial comrade; and I've had no cause to complain of him."

"Ah!" said Jacques, "and what has he done?"

"Why, first, two years ago, he himself brought, me, on horseback behind him, his niece that thou'st seen out there."

"His niece!" cried Jacques, rising; "and thou treat'st her like a slave! Demonio!"

"Drink," said Houmain, quietly stirring the brazier with his poniard; "he himself desired it should be so. Sit down."

Jacques did so.

"I don't think," continued the smuggler, "that he'd even be sorry to know that she was--dost understand?--to hear she was under the snow rather than above it; but he would not put her there himself, because he's a good relative, as he himself said."

"And as I know," said Jacques; "but go on."

"Thou mayst suppose that a man like him, who lives at court, does not like to have a mad niece in his house. The thing is self-evident; if I'd continued to play my part of the man of the robe, I should have done the same in a similar case. But here, as you perceive, we don't care much for appearances; and I've taken her for a servant. She has shown more good sense than I expected, although she has rarely ever spoken more than

a single word, and at first came the delicate over us. Now she rubs down a mule like a groom. She has had a slight fever for the last few days; but 'twill pass off one way or the other. But, I say, don't tell Laubardemont that she still lives; he'd think 'twas for the sake of economy I've kept her for a servant."

"How! is he here?" cried Jacques.

"Drink!" replied the phlegmatic Houmain, who himself set the example most assiduously, and began to half shut his eyes with a languishing air. "'Tis the second transaction I've had with this Laubardemont--or demon, or whatever the name is; but 'tis a good devil of a demon, at all events. I love him as I do my eyes; and I will drink his health out of this bottle of Jurangon here. 'Tis the wine of a jolly fellow, the late King Henry. How happy we are here!--Spain on the right hand, France on the left; the wine-skin on one side, the bottle on the other! The bottle! I've left all for the bottle!"

As he spoke, he knocked off the neck of a bottle of white wine. After taking a long draught, he continued, while the stranger closely watched him:

"Yes, he's here; and his feet must be rather cold, for he's been waiting about the mountains ever since sunset, with his guards and our comrades. Thou knowest our bandoleros, the true contrabandistas?"

"Ah! and what do they hunt?" said Jacques.

"Ah, that's the joke!" answered the drunkard. "'Tis to arrest two rascals, who want to bring here sixty thousand Spanish soldiers in paper in their pocket. You don't, perhaps, quite understand me, 'croquant'. Well, 'tis as I tell thee--in their own pockets."

"Ay, ay! I understand," said Jacques, loosening his poniard in his sash, and looking at the door.

"Very well, devil's-skin, let's sing the Tirana. Take the bottle, throw away the cigar, and sing."

With these words the drunken host began to sing in Spanish, interrupting his song with bumpers, which he threw down his throat, leaning back for the greater ease, while Jacques, still seated, looked at him gloomily by the light of the brazier, and meditated what he should do.

A flash of lightning entered the small window, and filled the room with a sulphurous odor. A fearful clap immediately followed; the cabin shook; and a beam fell outside.

"Hallo, the house!" cried the drunken man; "the Devil's among us; and our friends are not come!"

"Sing!" said Jacques, drawing the pack upon which he was close to that of Houmain.

The latter drank to encourage himself, and then continued to sing.

As he ended, he felt his seat totter, and fell backward; Jacques, thus freed from him, sprang toward the door, when it opened, and his head struck against the cold, pale face of the mad-woman. He recoiled.

"The judge!" she said, as she entered; and she fell prostrate on the cold ground.

Jacques had already passed one foot over her; but another face appeared, livid and surprised--that of a very tall man, enveloped in a cloak covered with snow. He again recoiled, and laughed a laugh of terror and rage. It was Laubardemont, followed by armed men; they looked at one another.

"Ah, com-r-a-d-e, yo-a ra-a-scal!" hiccuped Houmain, rising with

difficulty; "thou'rt a Royalist."

But when he saw these two men, who seemed petrified by each other, he became silent, as conscious of his intoxication; and he reeled forward to raise up the madwoman, who was still lying between the judge and the Captain. The former spoke first.

"Are you not he we have been pursuing?"

"It is he!" said the armed men, with one voice; "the other has escaped."

Jacques receded to the split planks that formed the tottering wall of the hut; enveloping himself in his cloak, like a bear forced against a tree by the hounds, and, wishing to gain a moment's respite for reflection, he said, firmly:

"The first who passes that brazier and the body of that girl is a dead man."

And he drew a long poniard from his cloak. At this moment Houmain, kneeling, turned the head of the girl. Her eyes were closed; he drew her toward the brazier, which lighted up her face.

"Ah, heavens!" cried Laubardemont, forgetting himself in his fright; "Jeanne again!"

"Be calm, my lo-lord," said Houmain, trying to open the eyelids, which closed again, and to raise her head, which fell back again like wet linen; "be, be--calm! Do-n't ex-cite yourself; she's dead, decidedly."

Jacques put his foot on the body as on a barrier, and, looking with a ferocious laugh in the face of Laubardemont, said to him in a low voice:

"Let me pass, and I will not compromise thee, courtier; I will not tell that she was thy niece, and that I am thy son."

Laubardemont collected himself, looked at his men, who pressed around him with advanced carabines; and, signing them to retire a few steps, he answered in a very low voice:

"Give me the treaty, and thou shalt pass."

"Here it is, in my girdle; touch it, and I will call you my father aloud. What will thy master say?"

"Give it me, and I will spare thy life."

"Let me pass, and I will pardon thy having given me that life."

"Still the same, brigand?"

"Ay, assassin."

"What matters to thee that boy conspirator?" asked the judge.

"What matters to thee that old man who reigns?" answered the other.

"Give me that paper; I've sworn to have it."

"Leave it with me; I've sworn to carry it back."

"What can be thy oath and thy God?" demanded Laubardemont.

"And thine?" replied Jacques. "Is't the crucifix of red-hot iron?"

Here Houmain, rising between them, laughing and staggering, said to the judge, slapping him on the shoulder.

"You are a long time coming to an understanding, friend; do-on't you know

him of old? He's a very good fellow."

"I? no!" cried Laubardemont, aloud; "I never saw him before."

At this moment, Jacques, who was protected by the drunkard and the smallness of the crowded chamber, sprang violently against the weak planks that formed the wall, and by a blow of his heel knocked two of them out, and passed through the space thus created. The whole side of the cabin was broken; it tottered, and the wind rushed in.

"Hallo! Demonio! Santo Demonio! where art going?" cried the smuggler; "thou art breaking my house down, and on the side of the ravine, too."

All cautiously approached, tore away the planks that remained, and leaned over the abyss. They contemplated a strange spectacle. The storm raged in all its fury; and it was a storm of the Pyrenees. Enormous flashes of lightning came all at once from all parts of the horizon, and their fires succeeded so quickly that there seemed no interval; they appeared to be a continuous flash. It was but rarely the flaming vault would suddenly become obscure; and it then instantly resumed its glare. It was not the light that seemed strange on this night, but the darkness.

The tall thin peaks and whitened rocks stood out from the red background like blocks of marble on a cupola of burning brass, and resembled, amid the snows, the wonders of a volcano; the waters gushed from them like flames; the snow poured down like dazzling lava.

In this moving mass a man was seen struggling, whose efforts only involved him deeper and deeper in the whirling and liquid gulf; his knees were already buried. In vain he clasped his arms round an enormous pyramidal and transparent icicle, which reflected the lightning like a rock of crystal; the icicle itself was melting at its base, and slowly bending over the declivity of the rock. Under the covering of snow, masses of granite were heard striking against each other, as they descended into the vast depths below. Yet they could still save him; a space of scarcely four feet separated him from Laubardemont.

"I sink!" he cried; "hold out to me something, and thou shalt have the treaty."

"Give it me, and I will reach thee this musket," said the judge.

"There it is," replied the ruffian, "since the Devil is for Richelieu!" and taking one hand from the hold of his slippery support, he threw a roll of wood into the cabin. Laubardemont rushed back upon the treaty like a wolf on his prey. Jacques in vain held out his arm; he slowly glided away with the enormous thawing block turned upon him, and was silently buried in the snow.

"Ah, villain," were his last words, "thou hast deceived me! but thou didst not take the treaty from me. I gave it thee, Father!" and he disappeared wholly under the thick white bed of snow. Nothing was seen in his place but the glittering flakes which the lightning had ploughed up, as it became extinguished in them; nothing was--heard but the rolling of the thunder and the dash of the water against the rocks, for the men in the half-ruined cabin, grouped round a corpse and a villain, were silent, tongue-tied with horror, and fearing lest God himself should send a thunderbolt upon them.

CHAPTER XXIII

ABSENCE

L'absence est le plus grand des maux,
Non pas pour vous, cruelle !

Who has not found a charm in watching the clouds of heaven as they float along? Who has not envied them the freedom of their journeyings through the air, whether rolled in great masses by the wind, and colored by the sun, they advance peacefully, like fleets of dark ships with gilt prows, or sprinkled in light groups, they glide quickly on, airy and elongated, like birds of passage, transparent as vast opals detached from the treasury of the heavens, or glittering with whiteness, like snows from the mountains carried on the wings of the winds? Man is a slow traveller who envies those rapid journeyers; less rapid than his imagination, they have yet seen in a single day all the places he loves, in remembrance or in hope,--those that have witnessed his happiness or his misery, and those so beautiful countries unknown to us, where we expect to find everything at once. Doubtless there is not a spot on the whole earth, a wild rock, an arid plain, over which we pass with indifference, that has not been consecrated in the life of some man, and is not painted in his remembrance; for, like battered vessels, before meeting inevitable wreck, we leave some fragment of ourselves on every rock.

Whither go the dark-blue clouds of that storm of the Pyrenees? It is the wind of Africa which drives them before it with a fiery breath. They fly; they roll over one another, growlingly throwing out lightning before them, as their torches, and leaving suspended behind them a long train of rain, like a vaporous robe. Freed by an effort from the rocky defiles that for a moment had arrested their course, they irrigate, in Bearn, the picturesque patrimony of Henri IV; in Guienne, the conquests of Charles VII; in Saintogne, Poitou, and Touraine, those of Charles V and of Philip Augustus; and at last, slackening their pace above the old domain of Hugh Capet, halt murmuring on the towers of St. Germain.

"O Madame!" exclaimed Marie de Mantua to the Queen, "do you see this storm coming up from the south?"

"You often look in that direction, 'ma chere'," answered Anne of Austria, leaning on the balcony.

"It is the direction of the sun, Madame."

"And of tempests, you see," said the Queen. "Trust in my friendship, my child; these clouds can bring no happiness to you. I would rather see you turn your eyes toward Poland. See the fine people you might command."

At this moment, to avoid the rain, which began to fall, the Prince-Palatine passed rapidly under the windows of the Queen, with a numerous suite of young Poles on horseback. Their Turkish vests, with buttons of diamonds, emeralds, and rubies; their green and gray cloaks; the lofty plumes of their horses, and their adventurous air-gave them a singular éclat to which the court had easily become accustomed. They paused for a moment, and the Prince made two salutes, while the light animal he rode passed gracefully sideways, keeping his front toward the princesses; prancing and snorting, he shook his mane, and seemed to salute by putting his head between his legs. The whole suite repeated the evolution as they passed. The Princesse Marie had at first shrunk back, lest they should see her tears; but the brilliant and flattering spectacle made her return to the balcony, and she could not help exclaiming:

"How gracefully the Palatine rides that beautiful horse! he seems scarce conscious of it."

The Queen smiled, and said:

"He is conscious about her who might be his queen tomorrow, if she would but make a sign of the head, and let but one glance from her great black almond-shaped eyes be turned on that throne, instead of always receiving these poor foreigners with poutings, as now."

And Anne of Austria kissed the cheek of Marie, who could not refrain from

smiling also; but she instantly sunk her head, reproaching herself, and resumed her sadness, which seemed gliding from her. She even needed once more to contemplate the great clouds that hung over the chateau.

"Poor child," continued the Queen, "thou dost all thou canst to be very faithful, and to keep thyself in the melancholy of thy romance. Thou art making thyself ill with weeping when thou shouldst be asleep, and with not eating. Thou passest the night in revery and in writing; but I warn thee, thou wilt get nothing by it, except making thyself thin and less beautiful, and the not being a queen. Thy Cinq-Mars is an ambitious youth, who has lost himself."

Seeing Marie conceal her head in her handkerchief to weep, Anne of Austria for a moment reentered her chamber, leaving Marie in the balcony, and feigned to be looking for some jewels at her toilet-table; she soon returned, slowly and gravely, to the window. Marie was more calm, and was gazing sorrowfully at the landscape before her, the hills in the distance, and the storm gradually spreading itself.

The Queen resumed in a more serious tone:

"God has been more merciful to you than your imprudence perhaps deserved, Marie. He has saved you from great danger. You were willing to make great sacrifices, but fortunately they have not been accomplished as you expected. Innocence has saved you from love. You are as one who, thinking she has swallowed a deadly poison, has in reality drunk only pure and harmless water."

"Ah, Madame, what mean you? Am I not unhappy enough already?"

"Do not interrupt me," said the Queen; "you will, ere long, see your present position with different eyes. I will not accuse you of ingratitude toward the Cardinal; I have too many reasons for not liking him. I myself witnessed the rise of the conspiracy. Still, you should remember, 'ma chere', that he was the only person in France who, against the opinion of the Queen-mother and of the court, insisted upon war with the duchy of Mantua, which he recovered from the empire and from Spain, and returned to the Duc de Nevers, your father. Here, in this very chateau of Saint-Germain, was signed the treaty which deposed the Duke of Guastalla.--[The 19th of May, 1632.]-- You were then very young; they must, however, have told you of it. Yet here, through love alone (I am willing to believe, with yourself, that it is so), a young man of two-and-twenty is ready to get him assassinated."

"O Madame, he is incapable of such a deed. I swear to you that he has refused to adopt it."

"I have begged you, Marie, to let me speak. I know that he is generous and loyal. I am willing to believe that, contrary to the custom of our times, he would not go so far as to kill an old man, as did the Chevalier de Guise. But can he prevent his assassination, if his troops make him prisoner? This we can not say, any more than he. God alone knows the future. It is, at all events, certain that it is for you he attacks him, and, to overthrow him, is preparing civil war, which perhaps is bursting forth at the very moment that we speak--a war without success. Whichever way it turns, it can only effect evil, for Monsieur is going to abandon the conspiracy."

"How, Madame?"

"Listen to me. I tell you I am certain of it; I need not explain myself further. What will the grand ecuyer do? The King, as he rightly anticipated, has gone to consult the Cardinal. To consult him is to yield to him; but the treaty of Spain is signed. If it be discovered, what can Monsieur de Cinq-Mars do? Do not tremble thus. We will save him; we will save his life, I promise you. There is yet time, I hope."

"Ah, Madame, you hope! I am lost!" cried Marie, half fainting.

"Let us sit down," said the Queen; and, placing herself near Marie, at the entrance to the chamber, she continued:

"Doubtless Monsieur will treat for all the conspirators in treating for himself; but exile will be the least punishment, perpetual exile. Behold, then, the Duchesse de Nevers and Mantua, the Princesse Marie de Gonzaga, the wife of Monsieur Henri d'Effiat, Marquis de Cinq-Mars, exiled!"

"Well, Madame, I will follow him into exile. It is my duty; I am his wife!" exclaimed Marie, sobbing. "I would I knew he were already banished and in safety."

"Dreams of eighteen!" said the Queen, supporting Marie. "Awake, child, awake! you must. I deny not the good qualities of Monsieur de Cinq-Mars. He has a lofty character, a vast mind, and great courage; but he may no longer be aught for you, and, fortunately, you are not his wife, or even his betrothed."

"I am his, Madame-his alone."

"But without the benediction," replied Anne of Austria; "in a word, without marriage. No priest would have dared--not even your own; he told me so. Be silent!" she added, putting her two beautiful hands on Marie's lips. "Be silent! You would say that God heard your vow; that you can not live without him; that your destinies are inseparable from his; that death alone can break your union? The phrases of your age, delicious chimeras of a moment, at which one day you will smile, happy at not having to lament them all your life. Of the many and brilliant women you see around me at court, there is not one but at your age had some beautiful dream of love, like this of yours, who did not form those ties, which they believed indissoluble, and who did not in secret take eternal oaths. Well, these dreams are vanished, these knots broken, these oaths forgotten; and yet you see them happy women and mothers. Surrounded by the honors of their rank, they laugh and dance every night. I again divine what you would say--they loved not as you love, eh? You deceive yourself, my dear child; they loved as much, and wept no less."

"And here I must make you acquainted with that great mystery which constitutes your despair, since you are ignorant of the malady that devours you. We have a twofold existence, 'm'amie': our internal life, that of our feelings powerfully works within us, while the external life dominates despite ourselves. We are never independent of men, more especially in an elevated condition. Alone, we think ourselves mistresses of our destiny; but the entrance of two or three people fastens on all our chains, by recalling our rank and our retinue. Nay; shut yourself up and abandon yourself to all the daring and extraordinary resolutions that the passions may raise up in you, to the marvellous sacrifices they may suggest to you. A lackey coming and asking your orders will at once break the charm and bring you back to your real life. It is this contest between your projects and your position which destroys you. You are invariably angry with yourself; you bitterly reproach yourself."

Marie turned away her head.

"Yes, you believe yourself criminal. Pardon yourself, Marie; all men are beings so relative and so dependent one upon another that I know not whether the great retreats of the world that we sometimes see are not made for the world itself. Despair has its pursuits, and solitude its coquetry. It is said that the gloomiest hermits can not refrain from inquiring what men say of them. This need of public opinion is beneficial, in that it combats, almost always victoriously, that which is irregular in our imagination, and comes to the aid of duties which we too easily forget. One experiences (you will feel it, I hope) in returning to one's proper lot, after the sacrifice of that which had diverted the reason, the satisfaction of an exile returning to his family, of a sick person at sight of the sun after a night afflicted with frightful dreams."

"It is this feeling of a being returned, as it were, to its natural state that creates the calm which you see in many eyes that have also had their tears-for there are few women who have not known tears such as yours. You would think yourself perjured if you renounced Cinq-Mars! But nothing binds you; you have more than acquitted yourself toward him by refusing for more than two years past the royal hands offered you. And, after all, what has he done, this impassioned lover? He has elevated himself to reach you; but may not the ambition which here seems to you to have aided love have made use of that love? This young man seems to me too profound, too calm in his political stratagems, too independent in his vast resolutions, in his colossal enterprises, for me to believe him solely occupied by his tenderness. If you have been but a means instead of an end, what would you say?"

"I would still love him," answered Marie. "While he lives, I am his."

"And while I live," said the Queen, with firmness, "I will oppose the alliance."

At these last words the rain and hail fell violently on the balcony. The Queen took advantage of the circumstance abruptly to leave the room and pass into that where the Duchesse de Chevreuse, Mazarin, Madame de Guemenee, and the Prince-Palatine had been awaiting her for a short time. The Queen walked up to them. Marie placed herself in the shade of a curtain in order to conceal the redness of her eyes. She was at first unwilling to take part in the sprightly conversation; but some words of it attracted her attention. The Queen was showing to the Princesse de Guemenee diamonds she had just received from Paris.

"As for this crown, it does not belong to me. The King had it prepared for the future Queen of Poland. Who that is to be, we know not." Then turning toward the Prince-Palatine, "We saw you pass, Prince. Whom were you going to visit?"

"Mademoiselle la Duchesse de Rohan," answered the Pole.

The insinuating Mazarin, who availed himself of every opportunity to worm out secrets, and to make himself necessary by forced confidences, said, approaching the Queen:

"That comes very apropos, just as we were speaking of the crown of Poland."

Marie, who was listening, could not hear this, and said to Madame de Guemenee, who was at her side:

"Is Monsieur de Chabot, then, King of Poland?"

The Queen heard that, and was delighted at this touch of pride. In order to develop its germ, she affected an approving attention to the conversation that ensued.

The Princesse de Guemenee exclaimed:

"Can you conceive such a marriage? We really can't get it out of our heads. This same Mademoiselle de Rohan, whom we have seen so haughty, after having refused the Comte de Soissons, the Duc de Weimar, and the Duc de Nemours, to marry Monsieur de Chabot, a simple gentleman! 'Tis really a sad pity! What are we coming to? 'Tis impossible to say what it will all end in."

"What! can it be true? Love at court! a real love affair! Can it be believed?"

All this time the Queen continued opening and shutting and playing with the new crown.

"Diamonds suit only black hair," she said. "Let us see. Let me put it on you, Marie. Why, it suits her to admiration!"

"One would suppose it had been made for Madame la Princesse," said the Cardinal.

"I would give the last drop of my blood for it to remain on that brow," said the Prince-Palatine.

Marie, through the tears that were still on her cheek, gave an infantine and involuntary smile, like a ray of sunshine through rain. Then, suddenly blushing deeply, she hastily took refuge in her apartments.

All present laughed. The Queen followed her with her eyes, smiled, presented her hand for the Polish ambassador to kiss, and retired to write a letter.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE WORK

One night, before Perpignan, a very unusual event took place. It was ten o'clock; and all were asleep. The slow and almost suspended operations of the siege had rendered the camp and the town inactive. The Spaniards troubled themselves little about the French, all communication toward Catalonia being open as in time of peace; and in the French army men's minds were agitated with that secret anxiety which precedes great events.

Yet all was calm; no sound was heard but that of the measured tread of the sentries. Nothing was seen in the dark night but the red light of the matches of their guns, always smoking, when suddenly the trumpets of the musketeers, of the light-horse, and of the men-at-arms sounded almost simultaneously, "boot and saddle," and "to horse." All the sentinels cried to arms; and the sergeants, with flambeaux, went from tent to tent, along pike in their hands, to waken the soldiers, range them in lines, and count them. Some files marched in gloomy silence along the streets of the camp, and took their position in battle array. The sound of the mounted squadrons announced that the heavy cavalry were making the same dispositions. After half an hour of movement the noise ceased, the torches were extinguished, and all again became calm, but the army was on foot.

One of the last tents of the camp shone within as a star with flambeaux. On approaching this little white and transparent pyramid, we might have distinguished the shadows of two men reflected on the canvas as they walked to and fro within. Outside several men on horseback were in attendance; inside were De Thou and Cinq-Mars.

To see the pious and wise De Thou thus up and armed at this hour, you might have taken him for one of the chiefs of the revolt. But a closer examination of his serious countenance and mournful expression immediately showed that he blamed it, and allowed himself to be led into it and endangered by it from an extraordinary resolution which aided him to surmount the horror he had of the enterprise itself. From the day when Henri d'Effiat had opened his heart and confided to him its whole secret, he had seen clearly that all remonstrance was vain with a young man so powerfully resolved.

De Thou had even understood what M. de Cinq-Mars had not told him, and had seen in the secret union of his friend with the Princesse Marie, one of those ties of love whose mysterious and frequent faults, voluptuous and involuntary derelictions, could not be too soon purified by public benediction. He had comprehended that punishment, impossible to be supported long by a lover, the adored master of that young girl, and who was condemned daily to appear before her as a stranger, to receive political disclosures of marriages they were preparing for her. The day when he received his entire confession, he had done all in his power to prevent Cinq-Mars going so far in his projects as the foreign

alliance. He had evoked the gravest recollections and the best feelings, without any other result than rendering the invincible resolution of his friend more rude toward him. Cinq-Mars, it will be recollected, had said to him harshly, "Well, did I ask you to take part in this conspiracy?" And he had desired only to promise not to denounce it; and he had collected all his power against friendship to say, "Expect nothing further from me if you sign this treaty." Yet Cinq-Mars had signed the treaty; and De Thou was still there with him.

The habit of familiarly discussing the projects of his friend had perhaps rendered them less odious to him. His contempt for the vices of the Prime-Minister; his indignation at the servitude of the parliaments to which his family belonged, and at the corruption of justice; the powerful names, and more especially the noble characters of the men who directed the enterprise--all had contributed to soften down his first painful impression. Having once promised secrecy to M. de Cinq-Mars, he considered himself as in a position to accept in detail all the secondary disclosures; and since the fortuitous event which had compromised him with the conspirators at the house of Marion de Lorme, he considered himself united to them by honor, and engaged to an inviolable secrecy. Since that time he had seen Monsieur, the Duc de Bouillon, and Fontrailles; they had become accustomed to speak before him without constraint, and he to hear them.

The dangers which threatened his friend now drew him into their vortex like an invincible magnet. His conscience accused him; but he followed Cinq-Mars wherever he went without even, from excess of delicacy, hazarding a single expression which might resemble a personal fear. He had tacitly given up his life, and would have deemed it unworthy of both to manifest a desire to regain it.

The master of the horse was in his cuirass; he was armed, and wore large boots. An enormous pistol, with a lighted match, was placed upon his table between two flambeaux. A heavy watch in a brass case lay near the pistol. De Thou, wrapped in a black cloak, sat motionless with folded arms. Cinq-Mars paced backward and forward, his arms crossed behind his back, from time to time looking at the hand of the watch, too sluggish in his eyes. He opened the tent, looked up to the heavens, and returned.

"I do not see my star there," said he; "but no matter. She is here in my heart."

"The night is dark," said De Thou.

"Say rather that the time draws nigh. It advances, my friend; it advances. Twenty minutes more, and all will be accomplished. The army only waits the report of this pistol to begin."

De Thou held in his hand an ivory crucifix, and looking first at the cross, and then toward heaven, "Now," said he, "is the hour to complete the sacrifice. I repent not; but oh, how bitter is the cup of sin to my lips! I had vowed my days to innocence and to the works of the soul, and here I am about to commit a crime, and to draw the sword."

But forcibly seizing the hand of Cinq-Mars, "It is for you, for you!" he added with the enthusiasm of a blindly devoted heart. "I rejoice in my errors if they turn to your glory. I see but your happiness in my fault. Forgive me if I have returned for a moment to the habitual thought of my whole life."

Cinq-Mars looked steadfastly at him; and a tear stole slowly down his cheek.

"Virtuous friend," said he, "may your fault fall only on my head! But let us hope that God, who pardons those who love, will be for us; for we are criminal--I through love, you through friendship."

Then suddenly looking at the watch, he took the long pistol in his hand, and gazed at the smoking match with a fierce air. His long hair fell

over his face like the mane of a young lion.

"Do not consume," said he; "burn slowly. Thou art about to light a flame which the waves of ocean can not extinguish. The flame will soon light half Europe; it may perhaps reach the wood of thrones. Burn slowly, precious flame! The winds which fan thee are violent and fearful; they are love and hatred. Reserve thyself! Thy explosion will be heard afar, and will find echoes in the peasant's hut and the king's palace.

Burn, burn, poor flame! Thou art to me a sceptre and a thunderbolt!"

De Thou, still holding his ivory crucifix in his hand, said in a low voice:

"Lord, pardon us the blood that will be shed! We combat the wicked and the impious." Then, raising his voice, "My friend, the cause of virtue will triumph," he said; "it alone will triumph. God has ordained that the guilty treaty should not reach us; that which constituted the crime is no doubt destroyed. We shall fight without the foreigners, and perhaps we shall not fight at all. God will change the heart of the king."

"'Tis the hour! 'tis the hour!" exclaimed Cinq-Mars, his eyes fixed upon the watch with a kind of savage joy; "four minutes more, and the Cardinalists in the camp will be crushed! We shall march upon Narbonne! He is there! Give me the pistol!"

At these words he hastily opened the tent, and took up the match.

"A courier from Paris! an express from court!" cried a voice outside, as a man, heated with hard riding and overcome with fatigue, threw himself from his horse, entered, and presented a letter to Cinq-Mars.

"From the Queen, Monseigneur," he said. Cinq-Mars turned pale, and read as follows:

M. DE CINQ-MARS: I write this letter to entreat and conjure you to restore to her duties our well-beloved adopted daughter and friend, the Princesse Marie de Gonzaga, whom your affection alone turns from the throne of Poland, which has been offered to her. I have sounded her heart. She is very young, and I have good reason to believe that she would accept the crown with less effort and less grief than you may perhaps imagine.

It is for her you have undertaken a war which will put to fire and sword my beautiful and beloved France. I supplicate and implore you to act as a gentleman, and nobly to release the Duchesse de Mantua from the promises she may have made you. Thus restore repose to her soul, and peace to our beloved country.

The Queen, who will throw herself at your feet if need be,

ANNE.

Cinq-Mars calmly replaced the pistol upon the table; his first impulse had been to turn its muzzle upon himself. However, he laid it down, and snatching a pencil, wrote on the back of the letter;

MADAME: Marie de Gonzaga, being my wife, can not be Queen of Poland until after my death. I die.

CINQ-MARS.

Then, as if he would not allow himself time for a moment's reflection, he forced the letter into the hands of the courier.

"To horse! to horse!" cried he, in a furious tone. "If you remain another instant, you are a dead man!"

He saw him gallop off, and reentered the tent. Alone with his friend, he remained an instant standing, but pale, his eyes fixed, and looking on the ground like a madman. He felt himself totter.

"De Thou!" he cried.

"What would you, my friend, my dear friend? I am with you. You have acted grandly, most grandly, sublimely!"

"De Thou!" he cried again, in a hollow voice, and fell with his face to the ground, like an uprooted tree.

Violent tempests assume different aspects, according to the climates in which they take place. Those which have spread over a terrible space in northern countries assemble into one single cloud under the torrid zone--the more formidable, that they leave the horizon in all its purity, and that the furious waves still reflect the azure of heaven while tinged with the blood of man. It is the same with great passions. They assume strange aspects according to our characters; but how terrible are they in vigorous hearts, which have preserved their force under the veil of social forms? When youth and despair embrace, we know not to what fury they may rise, or what may be their sudden resignation; we know not whether the volcano will burst the mountain or become suddenly extinguished within its entrails.

De Thou, in alarm, raised his friend. The blood gushed from his nostrils and ears; he would have thought him dead, but for the torrents of tears which flowed from his eyes. They were the only sign of life. Suddenly he opened his lids, looked around him, and by an extraordinary energy resumed his senses and the power of his will.

"I am in the presence of men," said he; "I must finish with them. My friend, it is half-past eleven; the hour for the signal has passed. Give, in my name, the order to return to quarters. It was a false alarm, which I will myself explain this evening."

De Thou had already perceived the importance of this order; he went out and returned immediately.

He found Cinq-Mars seated, calm, and endeavoring to cleanse the blood from his face.

"De Thou," said he, looking fixedly at him, "retire; you disturb me."

"I leave you not," answered the latter.

"Fly, I tell you! the Pyrenees are not far distant. I can not speak much longer, even to you; but if you remain with me, you will die. I give you warning."

"I remain," repeated De Thou.

"May God preserve you, then!" answered Cinq-Mars, "for I can do nothing more; the moment has passed. I leave you here. Call Fontrailles and all the confederates: distribute these passports among them. Let them fly immediately; tell them all has failed, but that I thank them. For you, once again I say, fly with them, I entreat you; but whatever you do, follow me not--follow me not, for your life! I swear to you not to do violence to myself!"

With these words, shaking his friend's hand without looking at him, he rushed from the tent.

Meantime, some leagues thence another conversation was taking place. At Narbonne, in the same cabinet in which we formerly beheld Richelieu regulating with Joseph the interests of the State, were still seated the same men, nearly as we have described them. The minister, however, had grown much older in three years of suffering; and the Capuchin was as much terrified with the result of his expedition as his master appeared

tranquil.

The Cardinal, seated in his armchair, his legs bound and encased with furs and warm clothing, had upon his knees three kittens, which gambolled upon his scarlet robe. Every now and then he took one of them and placed it upon the others, to continue their sport. He smiled as he watched them. On his feet lay their mother, looking like an enormous animated muff.

Joseph, seated near him, was going over the account of all he had heard in the confessional. Pale even now, at the danger he had run of being discovered, or of being murdered by Jacques, he concluded thus:

"In short, your Eminence, I can not help feeling agitated to my heart's core when I reflect upon the dangers which have, and still do, threaten you. Assassins offer themselves to poniard you. I beheld in France the whole court against you, one half of the army, and two provinces. Abroad, Spain and Portugal are ready to furnish troops. Everywhere there are snares or battles, poniards or cannon."

The Cardinal yawned three times, without discontinuing his amusement, and then said:

"A cat is a very fine animal. It is a drawing-room tiger. What suppleness, what extraordinary finesse! Here is this little yellow one pretending to sleep, in order that the tortoise-shell one may not notice it, but fall upon its brother; and this one, how it tears the other! See how it sticks its claws into its side! It would kill and eat it, I fully believe, if it were the stronger. It is very amusing. What pretty animals!"

He coughed and sneezed for some time; then he continued:

"Messire Joseph, I sent word to you not to speak to me of business until after my supper. . . I have an appetite now, and it is not yet my hour.

Chicot, my doctor, recommends regularity, and I feel my usual pain in my side. This is how I shall spend the evening," he added, looking at the clock. "At nine, we will settle the affairs of Monsieur le Grand. At ten, I shall be carried round the garden to take the air by moonlight. Then I shall sleep for an hour or two. At midnight the King will be here; and at four o'clock you may return to receive the various orders for arrests, condemnations, or any others I may have to give you, for the provinces, Paris, or the armies of his Majesty."

Richelieu said all this in the same tone of voice, with a uniform enunciation, affected only by the weakness of his chest and the loss of several teeth.

It was seven in the evening. The Capuchin withdrew. The Cardinal supped with the greatest tranquillity; and when the clock struck half-past eight, he sent for Joseph, and said to him, when he was seated:

"This, then, is all they have been able to do against me during more than two years. They are poor creatures, truly! The Duc de Bouillon, whom I thought possessed some ability, has forfeited all claim to my opinion. I have watched him closely; and I ask you, has he taken one step worthy of a true statesman? The King, Monsieur, and the rest, have only shown their teeth against me, and without depriving me of one single man. The young Cinq-Mars is the only man among them who has any consecutiveness of ideas. All that he has done has been done surprisingly well. I must do him justice; he had good qualities. I should have made him my pupil, had it not been for his obstinate character. But he has here charged me 'a l'outrance, and must take the consequences. I am sorry for him. I have left them to float about in open water for the last two years. I shall now draw the net."

"It is time, Monseigneur," said Joseph, who often trembled involuntarily

as he spoke. "Do you bear in mind that from Perpignan to Narbonne the way is short? Do you know that if your army here is powerful, your own troops are weak and uncertain; that the young nobles are furious; and that the King is not sure?"

The Cardinal looked at the clock.

"It is only half-past eight, Joseph. I have already told you that I will not talk about this affair until nine. Meantime, as justice must be done, you will write what I shall dictate, for my memory serves me well. There are still some objectionable persons left, I see by my notes--four of the judges of Urbain Grandier. He was a rare genius, that Urbain Grandier," he added, with a malicious expression. Joseph bit his lips. "All the other judges have died miserably. As to Houmain, he shall be hanged as a smuggler by and by. We may leave him alone for the present. But there is that horrible Lactantius, who lives peacefully, Barre, and Mignon. Take a pen, and write to the Bishop of Poitiers,

"MONSEIGNEUR: It is his Majesty's pleasure that Fathers Mignon and Barre be superseded in their cures, and sent with the shortest possible delay to the town of Lyons, with Father Lactantius, Capuchin, to be tried before a special tribunal, charged with criminal intentions against the State."

Joseph wrote as coolly as a Turk strikes off a head at a sign from his master. The Cardinal said to him, while signing the letter:

"I will let you know how I wish them to disappear, for it is important to efface all traces of that affair. Providence has served me well. In removing these men, I complete its work. That is all that posterity shall know of the affair."

And he read to the Capuchin that page of his memoirs in which he recounts the possession and sorceries of the magician.--[Collect. des Memoires xxviii. 189.]--During this slow process, Joseph could not help looking at the clock.

"You are anxious to come to Monsieur le Grand," said the Cardinal at last. "Well, then, to please you, let us begin."

"Do you think I have not my reasons for being tranquil? You think that I have allowed these poor conspirators to go too far. No, no! Here are some little papers that would reassure you, did you know their contents. First, in this hollow stick is the treaty with Spain, seized at Oleron. I am well satisfied with Laubardemont; he is an able man."

The fire of ferocious jealousy sparkled under the thick eyebrows of the monk.

"Ah, Monseigneur," said he, "you know not from whom he seized it. He certainly suffered him to die, and in that respect we can not complain, for he was the agent of the conspiracy; but it was his son."

"Say you the truth?" cried the Cardinal, in a severe tone. "Yes, for you dare not lie to me. How knew you this?"

"From his attendants, Monsieigneur. Here are their reports. They will testify to them."

The Cardinal having examined these papers, said:

"We will employ him once more to try our conspirators, and then you shall do as you like with him. I give him to you."

Joseph joyfully pocketed his precious denunciations, and continued:

"Your Eminence speaks of trying men who are still armed and on horseback."

"They are not all so. Read this letter from Monsieur to Chavigny. He asks for pardon. He dared not address me the first day, and his prayers rose no higher than the knees of one of my servants.

To M. de Chavigny:

M. DE CHAVIGNY: Although I believe that you are little satisfied with me (and in truth you have reason to be dissatisfied), I do not the less entreat you to endeavor my reconciliation with his Eminence, and rely for this upon the true love you bear me, and which, I believe, is greater than your anger. You know how much I require to be relieved from the danger I am in. You have already twice stood my friend with his Eminence. I swear to you this shall be the last time I give you such an employment.

GASTON D'ORLEANS.

"But the next day he took courage, and sent this to myself,

To his Excellency the Cardinal-Duc:

MY COUSIN: This ungrateful M. le Grand is the most guilty man in the world to have displeased you. The favors he received from his Majesty have always made me doubtful of him and his artifices. For you, my cousin, I retain my whole esteem. I am truly repentant at having again been wanting in the fidelity I owe to my Lord the King, and I call God to witness the sincerity with which I shall be for the rest of my life your most faithful friend, with the same devotion that I am, my cousin, your affectionate cousin,

GASTON.

and the third to the King. His project choked him; he could not keep it down. But I am not so easily satisfied. I must have a free and full confession, or I will expel him from the kingdom. I have written to him this morning.

[MONSIEUR: Since God wills that men should have recourse to a frank and entire confession to be absolved of their faults in this world, I indicate to you the steps you must take to be delivered from this danger. Your Highness has commenced well; you must continue. This is all I can say to you.]

"As to the magnificent and powerful Due de Bouillon, sovereign lord of Sedan and general-in-chief of the armies in Italy, he has just been arrested by his officers in the midst of his soldiers, concealed in a truss of straw. There remain, therefore, only our two young neighbors. They imagine they have the camp wholly at their orders, while they really have only the red troops. All the rest, being Monsieur's men, will not act, and my troops will arrest them. However, I have permitted them to appear to obey. If they give the signal at half-past eleven, they will be arrested at the first step. If not, the King will give them up to me this evening. Do not open your eyes so wide. He will give them up to me, I repeat, this night, between midnight and one o'clock. You see that all has been done without you, Joseph. We can dispense with you very well; and truly, all this time, I do not see that we have received any great service from you. You grow negligent."

"Ah, Monseigneur! did you but know the trouble I have had to discover the route of the bearers of the treaty! I only learned it by risking my life between these young people."

The Cardinal laughed contemptuously, leaning back in his chair.

"Thou must have been very ridiculous and very fearful in that box, Joseph; I dare say it was the first time in thy life thou ever heardst love spoken of. Dost thou like the language, Father Joseph? Tell me, dost thou clearly understand it? I doubt whether thou hast formed a very refined idea of it."

Richelieu, his arms crossed, looked at his discomfited Capuchin with infinite delight, and continued in the scornfully familiar tone of a grand seigneur, which he sometimes assumed, pleasing himself with putting forth the noblest expressions through the most impure lips:

"Come, now, Joseph, give me a definition of love according to thy idea. What can it be--for thou seest it exists out of romances. This worthy youngster undertook these little conspiracies through love. Thou heardst it thyself with throe unworthy ears. Come, what is love? For my part, I know nothing about it."

The monk was astounded, and looked upon the ground with the stupid eye of some base animal. After long consideration, he replied in a drawling and nasal voice:

"It must be a kind of malignant fever which leads the brain astray; but in truth, Monseigneur, I have never reflected on it until this moment. I have always been embarrassed in speaking to a woman. I wish women could be omitted from society altogether; for I do not see what use they are, unless it be to disclose secrets, like the little Duchess or Marion de Lorme, whom I can not too strongly recommend to your Eminence. She thought of everything, and herself threw our little prophecy among the conspirators with great address. We have not been without the marvellous this time. As in the siege of Hesdin, all we have to do is to find a window through which you may pass on the day of the execution."

[In 1638, Prince Thomas having raised the siege of Hesdin, the Cardinal was much vexed at it. A nun of the convent of Mount Calvary had said that the victory would be to the King and Father Joseph, thus wishing it to be believed that Heaven protected the minister. --Memoires pour l'histoire du Cardinal de Richelieu.]

"This is another of your absurdities, sir," said the Cardinal; "you will make me as ridiculous as yourself, if you go on so; I am too powerful to need the assistance of Heaven. Do not let that happen again. Occupy yourself only with the people I consign to you. I traced your part before. When the master of the horse is taken, you will see him tried and executed at Lyons. I will not be known in this. This affair is beneath me; it is a stone under my feet, upon which I ought not to have bestowed so much attention."

Joseph was silent; he could not understand this man, who, surrounded on every side by armed enemies, spoke of the future as of a present over which he had the entire control, and of the present as a past which he no longer feared. He knew not whether to look upon him as a madman or a prophet, above or below the standard of human nature.

His astonishment was redoubled when Chavigny hastily entered, and nearly falling, in his heavy boots, over the Cardinal's footstool, exclaimed in great agitation:

"Sir, one of your servants has just arrived from Perpignan; and he has beheld the camp in an uproar, and your enemies in the saddle."

"They will soon dismount, sir," replied Richelieu, replacing his footstool. "You appear to have lost your equanimity."

"But--but, Monseigneur, must we not warn Monsieur de Fabert?"

"Let him sleep, and go to bed yourself; and you also, Joseph."

"Monseigneur, another strange event has occurred--the King has arrived."

"Indeed, that is extraordinary," said the minister, looking at his watch. "I did not expect him these two hours. Retire, both of you."

A heavy trampling and the clattering of arms announced the arrival of the Prince; the folding-doors were thrown open; the guards in the Cardinal's service struck the ground thrice with their pikes; and the King appeared.

He entered, supporting himself with a cane on one side, and on the other leaning upon the shoulder of his confessor, Father Sirmond, who withdrew, and left him with the Cardinal; the latter rose with difficulty, but could not advance a step to meet the King, because his legs were bandaged and enveloped. He made a sign that they should assist the King to a seat near the fire, facing himself. Louis XIII fell into an armchair furnished with pillows, asked for and drank a glass of cordial, prepared to strengthen him against the frequent fainting-fits caused by his malady of languor, signed to all to leave the room, and, alone with Richelieu, he said in a languid voice:

"I am departing, my dear Cardinal; I feel that I shall soon return to God. I become weaker from day to day; neither the summer nor the southern air has restored my strength."

"I shall precede your Majesty," replied the minister. "You see that death has already conquered my limbs; but while I have a head to think and a hand to write, I shall be at the service of your Majesty."

"And I am sure it was your intention to add, 'a heart to love me.'"

"Can your Majesty doubt it?" answered the Cardinal, frowning, and biting his lips impatiently at this speech.

"Sometimes I doubt it," replied the King. "Listen: I wish to speak openly to you, and to complain of you to yourself. There are two things which have been upon my conscience these three years. I have never mentioned them to you; but I reproached you secretly; and could anything have induced me to consent to any proposals contrary to your interest, it would be this recollection."

There was in this speech that frankness natural to weak minds, who seek by thus making their ruler uneasy, to compensate for the harm they dare not do him, and revenge their subjection by a childish controversy.

Richelieu perceived by these words that he had run a great risk; but he saw at the same time the necessity of venting all his spleen, and, to facilitate the explosion of these important avowals, he accumulated all the professions he thought most calculated to provoke the King.

"No, no!" his Majesty at length exclaimed, "I shall believe nothing until you have explained those two things, which are always in my thoughts, which were lately mentioned to me, and which I can justify by no reasoning. I mean the trial of Urbain Grandier, of which I was never well informed, and the reason for the hatred you bore to my unfortunate mother, even to her very ashes."

"Is this all, Sire?" said Richelieu. "Are these my only faults? They are easily explained. The first it was necessary to conceal from your Majesty because of its horrible and disgusting details of scandal. There was certainly an art employed, which can not be looked upon as guilty, in concealing, under the title of 'magic,' crimes the very names of which are revolting to modesty, the recital of which would have revealed dangerous mysteries to the innocent; this was a holy deceit practised to hide these impurities from the eyes of the people."

"Enough, enough, Cardinal," said Louis XIII, turning away his head, and looking downward, while a blush covered his face; "I can not hear more. I understand you; these explanations would disgust me. I approve your motives; 'tis well. I had not been told that; they had concealed these dreadful vices from me. Are you assured of the proofs of these crimes?"

"I have them all in my possession, Sire; and as to the glorious Queen, Marie de Medicis, I am surprised that your Majesty can forget how much I was attached to her. Yes, I do not fear to acknowledge it; it is to her I owe my elevation. She was the first who deigned to notice the Bishop of Luton, then only twenty-two years of age, to place me near her. What have I not suffered when she compelled me to oppose her in your Majesty's

interest! But this sacrifice was made for you. I never had, and never shall have, to regret it."

"'Tis well for you, but for me!" said the King, bitterly.

"Ah, Sire," exclaimed the Cardinal, "did not the Son of God himself set you an example? It is by the model of every perfection that we regulate our counsels; and if the monument due to the precious remains of your mother is not yet raised, Heaven is my witness that the works were retarded through the fear of afflicting your heart by bringing back the recollection of her death. But blessed be the day in which I have been permitted to speak to you on the subject! I myself shall say the first mass at Saint-Denis, when we shall see her deposited there, if Providence allows me the strength."

The countenance of the King assumed a more affable yet still cold expression; and the Cardinal, thinking that he could go no farther that evening in persuasion, suddenly resolved to make a more powerful move, and to attack the enemy in front. Still keeping his eyes firmly fixed upon the King, he said, coldly:

"And was it for this you consented to my death?"

"Me!" said the King. "You have been deceived; I have indeed heard of a conspiracy, and I wished to speak to you about it; but I have commanded nothing against you."

"The conspirators do not say so, Sire; but I am bound to believe your Majesty, and I am glad for your sake that men were deceived. But what advice were you about to condescend to give me?"

"I--I wished to tell you frankly, and between ourselves, that you will do well to beware of Monsieur--"

"Ah, Sire, I can not now heed it; for here is a letter which he has just sent to me for you. He seems to have been guilty even toward your Majesty."

The King read in astonishment:

MONSEIGNEUR: I am much grieved at having once more failed in the fidelity which I owe to your Majesty. I humbly entreat you to allow me to ask a thousand pardons, with the assurances of my submission and repentance.

Your very humble servant,
GASTON.

"What does this mean?" cried Louis; "dare they arm against me also?"

"Also!" muttered the Cardinal, biting his lips; "yes, Sire, also; and this makes me believe, to a certain degree, this little packet of papers."

While speaking, he drew a roll of parchment from a piece of hollowed elder, and opened it before the eyes of the King.

"This is simply a treaty with Spain, which I think does not bear the signature of your Majesty. You may see the twenty articles all in due form. Everything is here arranged--the place of safety, the number of troops, the supplies of men and money."

"The traitors!" cried the King, in great agitation; "they must be seized. My brother renounces them and repents; but do not fail to arrest the Duc de Bouillon."

"It shall be done, Sire."

"That will be difficult, in the middle of the army in Italy."

"I will answer with my head for his arrest, Sire; but is there not another name to be added?"

"Who--what--Cinq-Mars?" inquired the King, hesitating.

"Exactly so, Sire," answered the Cardinal.

"I see--but--I think--we might--"

"Hear me!" exclaimed Richelieu, in a voice of thunder; "all must be settled to-day. Your favorite is mounted at the head of his party; choose between him and me. Yield up the boy to the man, or the man to the boy; there is no alternative."

"And what will you do if I consent?" said the King.

"I will have his head and that of his friend."

"Never! it is impossible!" replied the King, with horror, as he relapsed into the same state of irresolution he evinced when with Cinq-Mars against Richelieu. "He is my friend as well as you; my heart bleeds at the idea of his death. Why can you not both agree? Why this division? It is that which has led him to this. You have between you brought me to the brink of despair; you have made me the most miserable of men."

Louis hid his head in his hands while speaking, and perhaps he shed tears; but the inflexible minister kept his eyes upon him as if watching his prey, and without remorse, without giving the King time for reflection--on the contrary, profiting by this emotion to speak yet longer.

"And is it thus," he continued, in a harsh and cold voice, "that you remember the commandments of God communicated to you by the mouth of your confessor? You told me one day that the Church expressly commanded you to reveal to your prime minister all that you might hear against him; yet I have never heard from you of my intended death! It was necessary that more faithful friends should apprise me of this conspiracy; that the guilty themselves through the mercy of Providence should themselves make the avowal of their fault. One only, the most guilty, yet the least of all, still resists, and it is he who has conducted the whole; it is he who would deliver France into the power of the foreigner, who would overthrow in one single day my labors of twenty years. He would call up the Huguenots of the south, invite to arms all orders of the State, revive crushed pretensions, and, in fact, renew the League which was put down by your father. It is that--do not deceive yourself--it is that which raises so many heads against you. Are you prepared for the combat? If so, where are your arms?"

The King, quite overwhelmed, made no reply; he still covered his face with his hands. The stony-hearted Cardinal crossed his arms and continued:

"I fear that you imagine it is for myself I speak. Do you really think that I do not know my own powers, and that I fear such an adversary? Really, I know not what prevents me from letting you act for yourself--from transferring the immense burden of State affairs to the shoulders of this youth. You may imagine that during the twenty years I have been acquainted with your court, I have not forgotten to assure myself a retreat where, in spite of you, I could now go to live the six months which perhaps remain to me of life. It would be a curious employment for me to watch the progress of such a reign. What answer would you return, for instance, when all the inferior potentates, regaining their station, no longer kept in subjection by me, shall come in your brother's name to say to you, as they dared to say to Henri IV on his throne: 'Divide with us all the hereditary governments and sovereignties, and we shall be content.'--[Memoires de Sully, 1595.]-- You will doubtless accede to their request; and it is the least you can do for those who will have delivered you from Richelieu. It will, perhaps, be fortunate, for to

govern the Ile-de-France, which they will no doubt allow you as the original domain, your new minister will not require many secretaries."

While speaking thus, he furiously pushed the huge table, which nearly filled the room, and was laden with papers and numerous portfolios.

Louis was aroused from his apathetic meditation by the excessive audacity of this discourse. He raised his head, and seemed to have instantly formed one resolution for fear he should adopt another.

"Well, sir," said he, "my answer is that I will reign alone."

"Be it so!" replied Richelieu. "But I ought to give you notice that affairs are at present somewhat complicated. This is the hour when I generally commence my ordinary avocations."

"I will act in your place," said Louis. "I will open the portfolios and issue my commands."

"Try, then," said Richelieu. "I shall retire; and if anything causes you to hesitate, you can send for me."

He rang a bell. In the same instant, and as if they had awaited the signal, four vigorous footmen entered, and carried him and his chair into another apartment, for we have before remarked that he was unable to walk. While passing through the chambers where the secretaries were at work, he called out in a loud voice:

"You will receive his Majesty's commands."

The King remained alone, strong in his new resolution, and, proud in having once resisted, he became anxious immediately to plunge into political business. He walked around the immense table, and beheld as many portfolios as they then counted empires, kingdoms, and States in Europe. He opened one and found it divided into sections equalling in number the subdivisions of the country to which it related. All was in order, but in alarming order for him, because each note only referred to the very essence of the business it alluded to, and related only to the exact point of its then relations with France. These laconic notes proved as enigmatic to Louis, as did the letters in cipher which covered the table. Here all was confusion. An edict of banishment and expropriation of the Huguenots of La Rochelle was mingled with treaties with Gustavus Adolphus and the Huguenots of the north against the empire. Notes on General Bannier and Wallenstein, the Duc de Weimar, and Jean de Witt were mingled with extracts from letters taken from the casket of the Queen, the list of the necklaces and jewels they contained, and the double interpretation which might be put upon every phrase of her notes. Upon the margin of one of these letters was written: "For four lines in a man's handwriting he might be criminally tried." Farther on were scattered denunciations against the Huguenots; the republican plans they had drawn up; the division of France into departments under the annual dictatorship of a chief. The seal of this projected State was affixed to it, representing an angel leaning upon a cross, and holding in his hand a Bible, which he raised to his forehead. By the side was a document which contained a list of those cardinals the pope had selected the same day as the Bishop of Luron (Richelieu). Among them was to be found the Marquis de Bedemar, ambassador and conspirator at Venice.

Louis XIII exhausted his powers in vain over the details of another period, seeking unsuccessfully for any documents which might allude to the present conspiracy, to enable him to perceive its true meaning, and all that had been attempted against him, when a diminutive man, of an olive complexion, who stooped much, entered the cabinet with a measured step. This was a Secretary of State named Desnoyers. He advanced, bowing.

"May I be permitted to address your Majesty on the affairs of Portugal?" said he.

"And consequently of Spain?" said Louis. "Portugal is a province of Spain."

"Of Portugal," reiterated Desnoyers. "Here is the manifesto we have this moment received." And he read, "Don John, by the grace of God, King of Portugal and of Algarves, kingdoms on this side of Africa, lord over Guinea, by conquest, navigation, and trade with Arabia, Persia, and the Indies--"

"What is all that?" said the King. "Who talks in this manner?"

"The Duke of Braganza, King of Portugal, crowned already some time by a man whom they call Pinto. Scarcely has he ascended the throne than he offers assistance to the revolted Catalonians."

"Has Catalonia also revolted? The King, Philip IV, no longer has the Count-Duke for his Prime-Minister?"

"Just the contrary, Sire. It is on this very account. Here is the declaration of the States-General of Catalonia to his Catholic Majesty, signifying that the whole country will take up arms against his sacrilegious and excommunicated troops. The King of Portugal--"

"Say the Duke of Braganza!" replied Louis. "I recognize no rebels."

"The Duke of Braganza, then," coldly repeated the Secretary of State, "sends his nephew, Don Ignacio de Mascarenas, to the principality of Catalonia, to seize the protection (and it may be the sovereignty) of that country, which he would add to that he has just reconquered. Your Majesty's troops are before Perpignan--"

"Well, and what of that?" said Louis.

"The Catalonians are more disposed toward France than toward Portugal, and there is still time to deprive the King of the Duke of Portugal, I should say--of this protectorship."

"What! I assist rebels! You dare--"

"Such was the intention of his Eminence," continued the Secretary of State. "Spain and France are nearly at open war, and Monsieur d'Olivares has not hesitated to offer the assistance of his Catholic Majesty to the Huguenots."

"Very good. I will consider it," said the King. "Leave me."

"Sire, the States-General of Catalonia are in a dilemma. The troops from Aragon march against them."

"We shall see. I will come to a decision in a quarter of an hour," answered Louis XIII.

The little Secretary of State left the apartment discontented and discouraged. In his place Chavigny immediately appeared, holding a portfolio, on which were emblazoned the arms of England. "Sire," said he, "I have to request your Majesty's commands upon the affairs of England. The Parliamentarians, commanded by the Earl of Essex, have raised the siege of Gloucester. Prince Rupert has at Newbury fought a disastrous battle, and of little profit to his Britannic Majesty. The Parliament is prolonged. All the principal cities take part with it, together with all the seaports and the Presbyterian population. King Charles I implores assistance, which the Queen can no longer obtain from Holland."

"Troops must be sent to my brother of England," said Louis; but he wanted to look over the preceding papers, and casting his eyes over the notes of the Cardinal, he found that under a former request of the King of England he had written with his own hand:

"We must consider some time and wait. The Commons are strong. King Charles reckons upon the Scots; they will sell him.

"We must be cautious. A warlike man has been over to see Vincennes, and he has said that 'princes ought never to be struck, except on the head.'"

The Cardinal had added "remarkable," but he had erased this word and substituted "formidable." Again, beneath:

"This man rules Fairfax. He plays an inspired part. He will be a great man--assistance refused--money lost."

The King then said, "No, no! do nothing hastily. I shall wait."

"But, Sire," said Chavigny, "events pass rapidly. If the courier be delayed, the King's destruction may happen a year sooner."

"Have they advanced so far?" asked Louis.

"In the camp of the Independents they preach up the republic with the Bible in their hands. In that of the Royalists, they dispute for precedence, and amuse themselves."

"But one turn of good fortune may save everything?"

"The Stuarts are not fortunate, Sire," answered Chavigny, respectfully, but in a tone which left ample room for consideration.

"Leave me," said the King, with some displeasure.

The State-Secretary slowly retired.

It was then that Louis XIII beheld himself as he really was, and was terrified at the nothingness he found in himself. He at first stared at the mass of papers which surrounded him, passing from one to the other, finding dangers on every side, and finding them still greater with the remedies he invented. He rose; and changing his place, he bent over, or rather threw himself upon, a geographical map of Europe. There he found all his fears concentrated. In the north, the south, the very centre of the kingdom, revolutions appeared to him like so many Eumenides. In every country he thought he saw a volcano ready to burst forth. He imagined he heard cries of distress from kings, who appealed to him for help, and the furious shouts of the populace. He fancied he felt the territory of France trembling and crumbling beneath his feet. His feeble and fatigued sight failed him. His weak head was attacked by vertigo, which threw all his blood back upon his heart.

"Richelieu!" he cried, in a stifled voice, while he rang a bell; "summon the Cardinal immediately."

And he swooned in an armchair.

When the King opened his eyes, revived by salts and potent essences which had been applied to his lips and temples, he for one instant beheld himself surrounded by pages, who withdrew as soon as he opened his eyes, and he was once more left alone with the Cardinal. The impassible minister had had his chair placed by that of the King, as a physician would seat himself by the bedside of his patient, and fixed his sparkling and scrutinizing eyes upon the pale countenance of Louis. As soon as his victim could hear him, he renewed his fearful discourse in a hollow voice:

"You have recalled me. What would you with me?"

Louis, who was reclining on the pillow, half opened his eyes, fixed them upon Richelieu, and hastily closed them again. That bony head, armed with two flaming eyes, and terminating in a pointed and grizzly beard, the cap and vestments of the color of blood and flames,--all appeared to him like an infernal spirit.

"You must reign," he said, in a languid voice.

"But will you give me up Cinq-Mars and De Thou?" again urged the implacable minister, bending forward to read in the dull eyes of the Prince, as an avaricious heir follows up, even to the tomb, the last glimpses of the will of a dying relative.

"You must reign," repeated the King, turning away his head.

"Sign then," said Richelieu; "the contents of this are, 'This is my command--to take them, dead or alive.'"

Louis, whose head still reclined on the raised back of the chair, suffered his hand to fall upon the fatal paper, and signed it. "For pity's sake, leave me; I am dying!" he said.

"That is not yet all," continued he whom men call the great politician. "I place no reliance on you; I must first have some guarantee and assurance. Sign this paper, and I will leave you:

"When the King shall go to visit the Cardinal, the guards of the latter shall remain under arms; and when the Cardinal shall visit the King, the guards of the Cardinal shall share the same post with those of his Majesty.

"Again:

"His Majesty undertakes to place the two princes, his sons, in the Cardinal's hands, as hostages of the good faith of his attachment."

"My children!" exclaimed Louis, raising his head, "dare you?"

"Would you rather that I should retire?" said Richelieu.

The King again signed.

"Is all finished now?" he inquired, with a deep sigh.

All was not finished; one other grief was still in reserve for him. The door was suddenly opened, and Cinq-Mars entered. It was the Cardinal who trembled now.

"What would you here, sir?" said he, seizing the bell to ring for assistance.

The master of the horse was as pale as the King, and without condescending to answer Richelieu, he advanced steadily toward Louis XIII, who looked at him with the air of a man who has just received a sentence of death.

"You would, Sire, find it difficult to have me arrested, for I have twenty thousand men under my command," said Henri d'Effiat, in a sweet and subdued voice.

"Alas, Cinq-Mars!" replied the King, sadly; "is it thou who hast been guilty of these crimes?"

"Yes, Sire; and I also bring you my sword, for no doubt you came here to surrender me," said he, unbuckling his sword, and laying it at the feet of the King, who fixed his eyes upon the floor without making any reply.

Cinq-Mars smiled sadly, but not bitterly, for he no longer belonged to this earth. Then, looking contemptuously at Richelieu, "I surrender because I wish to die, but I am not conquered."

The Cardinal clenched his fist with passion; but he restrained his fury. "Who are your accomplices?" he demanded. Cinq-Mars looked steadfastly at Louis, and half opened his lips to speak. The King bent down his

head, and felt at that moment a torture unknown to all other men.

"I have none," said Cinq-Mars, pitying the King; and he slowly left the apartment. He stopped in the first gallery. Fabert and all the gentlemen rose on seeing him. He walked up to the commander, and said:

"Sir, order these gentlemen to arrest me!"

They looked at each other, without daring to approach him.

"Yes, sir, I am your prisoner; yes, gentlemen, I am without my sword, and I repeat to you that I am the King's prisoner."

"I do not understand what I see," said the General; "there are two of you who surrender, and I have no instruction to arrest any one."

"Two!" said Cinq-Mars; "the other is doubtless De Thou. Alas! I recognize him by this devotion."

"And had I not also guessed your intention?" exclaimed the latter, coming forward, and throwing himself into his arms.

CHAPTER XXV

THE PRISONERS

Among those old chateaux of which France is every year deprived regretfully, as of flowers from her crown, there was one of a grim and savage appearance upon the left bank of the Saline. It looked like a formidable sentinel placed at one of the gates of Lyons, and derived its name from an enormous rock, known as Pierre-Encise, which terminates in a peak--a sort of natural pyramid, the summit of which overhanging the river in former times, they say, joined the rocks which may still be seen on the opposite bank, forming the natural arch of a bridge; but time, the waters, and the hand of man have left nothing standing but the ancient mass of granite which formed the pedestal of the now destroyed fortress.

The archbishops of Lyons, as the temporal lords of the city, had built and formerly resided in this castle. It afterward became a fortress, and during the reign of Louis XIII a State prison. One colossal tower, where the daylight could only penetrate through three long loopholes, commanded the edifice, and some irregular buildings surrounded it with their massive walls, whose lines and angles followed the form of the immense and perpendicular rock.

It was here that the Cardinal, jealous of his prey, determined to imprison his young enemies, and to conduct them himself.

Allowing Louis to precede him to Paris, he removed his captives from Narbonne, dragging them in his train to ornament his last triumph, and embarking on the Rhone at Tarascon, nearly, at the mouth of the river, as if to prolong the pleasure of revenge which men have dared to call that of the gods, displayed to the eyes of the spectators on both sides of the river the luxury of his hatred; he slowly proceeded on his course up the river in barges with gilded oars and emblazoned with his armorial bearings, reclining in the first and followed by his two victims in the second, which was fastened to his own by a long chain.

Often in the evening, when the heat of the day was passed, the awnings of the two boats were removed, and in the one Richelieu might be seen, pale, and seated in the stern; in that which followed, the two young prisoners, calm and collected, supported each other, watching the passage of the rapid stream. Formerly the soldiers of Caesar, who encamped on the same shores, would have thought they beheld the inflexible boatman of the infernal regions conducting the friendly shades of Castor and Pollux. Christians dared not even reflect, or see a priest leading his two

enemies to the scaffold; it was the first minister who passed.

Thus he went on his way until he left his victims under guard at the identical city in which the late conspirators had doomed him to perish. Thus he loved to defy Fate herself, and to plant a trophy on the very spot which had been selected for his tomb.

"He was borne," says an ancient manuscript journal of this year, "along the river Rhone in a boat in which a wooden chamber had been constructed, lined with crimson fluted velvet, the flooring of which was of gold. The same boat contained an antechamber decorated in the same manner. The prow and stern of the boat were occupied by soldiers and guards, wearing scarlet coats embroidered with gold, silver, and silk; and many lords of note. His Eminence occupied a bed hung with purple taffetas. Monseigneur the Cardinal Bigni, and Messeigneurs the Bishops of Nantes and Chartres, were there, with many abbés and gentlemen in other boats. Preceding his vessel, a boat sounded the passages, and another boat followed, filled with arquebusiers and officers to command them. When they approached any isle, they sent soldiers to inspect it, to discover whether it was occupied by any suspicious persons; and, not meeting any, they guarded the shore until two boats which followed had passed. They were filled with the nobility and well-armed soldiers.

"Afterward came the boat of his Eminence, to the stern of which was attached a little boat, which conveyed MM. de Thou and Cinq-Mars, guarded by an officer of the King's guard and twelve guards from the regiment of his Eminence. Three vessels, containing the clothes and plate of his Eminence, with several gentlemen and soldiers, followed the boats.

"Two companies of light-horsemen followed the banks of the Rhone in Dauphin, and as many on the Languedoc and Vivarais side, and a noble regiment of foot, who preceded his Eminence in the towns which he was to enter, or in which he was to sleep. It was pleasant to listen to the trumpets, which, played in Dauphine, were answered by those in Vivarais, and repeated by the echoes of our rocks. It seemed as if all were trying which could play best."--[See Notes.]

In the middle of a night of the month of September, while everything appeared to slumber in the impregnable tower which contained the prisoners, the door of their outer chamber turned noiselessly on its hinges, and a man appeared on the threshold, clad in a brown robe confined round his waist by a cord. His feet were encased in sandals, and his hand grasped a large bunch of keys; it was Joseph. He looked cautiously round without advancing, and contemplated in silence the apartment occupied by the master of the horse. Thick carpets covered the floor, and large and splendid hangings concealed the walls of the prison; a bed hung with red damask was prepared, but it was unoccupied. Seated near a high chimney in a large armchair, attired in a long gray robe, similar in form to that of a priest, his head bent down, and his eyes fixed upon a little cross of gold by the flickering light of a lamp, he was absorbed in so deep a meditation that the Capuchin had leisure to approach him closely, and confront the prisoner before he perceived him. Suddenly, however, Cinq-Mars raised his head and exclaimed, "Wretch, what do you here?"

"Young man, you are violent," answered the mysterious intruder, in a low voice. "Two months' imprisonment ought to have been enough to calm you. I come to tell you things of great importance. Listen to me! I have thought much of you; and I do not hate you so much as you imagine. The moments are precious. I will tell you all in a few words: in two hours you will be interrogated, tried, and condemned to death with your friend. It can not be otherwise, for all will be finished the same day."

"I know it," answered Cinq-Mars; "and I am prepared."

"Well, then, I can still release you from this affair. I have reflected deeply, as I told you; and I am here to make a proposal which can but

give you satisfaction. The Cardinal has but six months to live. Let us not be mysterious; we must speak openly. You see where I have brought you to serve him; and you can judge by that the point to which I would conduct him to serve you. If you wish it, we can cut short the six months of his life which still remain. The King loves you, and will recall you with joy when he finds you still live. You may long live, and be powerful and happy, if you will protect me, and make me cardinal."

Astonishment deprived the young prisoner of speech. He could not understand such language, and seemed to be unable to descend to it from his higher meditations. All that he could say was:

"Your benefactor, Richelieu?"

The Capuchin smiled, and, drawing nearer, continued in an undertone:

"Policy admits of no benefits; it contains nothing but interest. A man employed by a minister is no more bound to be grateful than a horse whose rider prefers him to others. My pace has been convenient to him; so much the better. Now it is my interest to throw him from the saddle. Yes, this man loves none but himself. I now see that he has deceived me by continually retarding my elevation; but once again, I possess the sure means for your escape in silence. I am the master here. I will remove the men in whom he trusts, and replace them by others whom he has condemned to die, and who are near at hand confined in the northern tower--the Tour des Oubliettes, which overhangs the river. His creatures will occupy their places. I will recommend a physician--an empiric who is devoted to me--to the illustrious Cardinal, who has been given over by the most scientific in Paris. If you will unite with me, he shall convey to him a universal and eternal remedy."

"Away!" exclaimed Cinq-Mars. "Leave me, thou infernal monk! No, thou art like no other man! Thou glidest with a noiseless and furtive step through the darkness; thou traverses the walls to preside at secret crimes; thou placest thyself between the hearts of lovers to separate them eternally. Who art thou? Thou resemblest a tormented spirit of the damned!"

"Romantic boy!" answered Joseph; "you would have possessed high attainments had it not been for your false notions. There is perhaps neither damnation nor soul. If the dead returned to complain of their fate, I should have a thousand around me; and I have never seen any, even in my dreams."

"Monster!" muttered Cinq-Mars.

"Words again!" said Joseph; "there is neither monster nor virtuous man. You and De Thou, who pride yourselves on what you call virtue--you have failed in causing the death of perhaps a hundred thousand men--at once and in the broad daylight--for no end, while Richelieu and I have caused the death of far fewer, one by one, and by night, to found a great power. Would you remain pure and virtuous, you must not interfere with other men; or, rather, it is more reasonable to see that which is, and to say with me, it is possible that there is no such thing as a soul. We are the sons of chance; but relative to other men, we have passions which we must satisfy."

"I breathe again!" exclaimed Cinq-Mars; "he believes not in God!"

Joseph continued:

"Richelieu, you, and I were born ambitious; it followed, then, that everything must be sacrificed to this idea."

"Wretched man, do not compare me to thyself!"

"It is the plain truth, nevertheless," replied the Capuchin; "only you now see that our system was better than yours."

"Miserable wretch, it was for love--"

"No, no! it was not that; here are mere words again. You have perhaps imagined it was so; but it was for your own advancement. I have heard you speak to the young girl. You thought but of yourselves; you do not love each other. She thought but of her rank, and you of your ambition. One loves in order to hear one's self called perfect, and to be adored; it is still the same egoism."

"Cruel serpent!" cried Cinq-Mars; "is it not enough that thou hast caused our deaths? Why dost thou come here to cast thy venom upon the life thou hast taken from us? What demon has suggested to thee thy horrible analysis of hearts?"

"Hatred of everything which is superior to myself," replied Joseph, with a low and hollow laugh, "and the desire to crush those I hate under my feet, have made me ambitious and ingenious in finding the weakness of your dreams."

"Just Heaven, dost thou hear him?" exclaimed Cinq-Mars, rising and extending his arms upward.

The solitude of his prison; the pious conversations of his friend; and, above all, the presence of death, which, like the light of an unknown star, paints in other colors the objects we are accustomed to see; meditations on eternity; and (shall we say it?) the great efforts he had made to change his heartrending regrets into immortal hopes, and to direct to God all that power of love which had led him astray upon earth--all this combined had worked a strange revolution in him; and like those ears of corn which ripen suddenly on receiving one ray from the sun, his soul had acquired light, exalted by the mysterious influence of death.

"Just Heaven!" he repeated, "if this wretch and his master are human, can I also be a man? Behold, O God, behold two distinct ambitions--the one egoistical and bloody, the other devoted and unstained; theirs roused by hatred, and ours inspired by love. Look down, O Lord, judge, and pardon! Pardon, for we have greatly erred in walking but for a single day in the same paths which, on earth, possess but one name to whatever end it may tend!"

Joseph interrupted him harshly, stamping his foot on the ground:

"When you have finished your prayer," said he, "you will perhaps inform me whether you will assist me; and I will instantly--"

"Never, impure wretch, never!" said Henri d'Effiat. "I will never unite with you in an assassination. I refused to do so when powerful, and upon yourself."

"You were wrong; you would have been master now."

"And what happiness should I find in my power when shared as it must be by a woman who does not understand me; who loved me feebly, and prefers a crown?"

"Inconceivable folly!" said the Capuchin, laughing.

"All with her; nothing without her--that was my desire."

"It is from obstinacy and vanity that you persist; it is impossible," replied Joseph. "It is not in nature."

"Thou who wouldst deny the spirit of self-sacrifice," answered Cinq-Mars; "dost thou understand that of my friend?"

"It does not exist; he follows you because--"

Here the Capuchin, slightly embarrassed, reflected an instant.

"Because--because--he has formed you; you are his work; he is attached to you by the self-love of an author. He was accustomed to lecture you; and he felt that he should not find another pupil so docile to listen to and applaud him. Constant habit has persuaded him that his life was bound to yours; it is something of that kind. He will accompany you mechanically. Besides, all is not yet finished; we shall see the end and the examination. He will certainly deny all knowledge of the conspiracy."

"He will not deny it!" exclaimed Cinq-Mars, impetuously.

"He knew it, then? You confess it," said Joseph, triumphantly; "you have not said as much before."

"O Heaven, what have I done!" gasped Cinq-Mars, hiding his face.

"Calm yourself; he is saved, notwithstanding this avowal, if you accept my offer."

D'Effiat remained silent for a short time.

The Capuchin continued:

"Save your friend. The King's favor awaits you, and perhaps the love which has erred for a moment."

"Man, or whatever else thou art, if thou hast in thee anything resembling a heart," answered the prisoner, "save him! He is the purest of created beings; but convey him far away while yet he sleeps, for should he awake, thy endeavors would be vain."

"What good will that do me?" said the Capuchin, laughing. "It is you and your favor that I want."

The impetuous Cinq-Mars rose, and, seizing Joseph by the arm, eying him with a terrible look, said:

"I degraded him in interceding with thee for him." He continued, raising the tapestry which separated his apartment from that of his friend, "Come, and doubt, if thou canst, devotion and the immortality of the soul. Compare the uneasiness and misery of thy triumph with the calmness of our defeat, the meanness of thy reign with the grandeur of our captivity, thy sanguinary vigils to the slumbers of the just."

A solitary lamp threw its light on De Thou. The young man was kneeling on a cushion, surmounted by a large ebony crucifix. He seemed to have fallen asleep while praying. His head, inclining backward, was still raised toward the cross. His pale lips wore a calm and divine smile.

"Holy Father, how he sleeps!" exclaimed the astonished Capuchin, thoughtlessly uniting to his frightful discourse the sacred name he every day pronounced. He suddenly retired some paces, as if dazzled by a heavenly vision.

"Nonsense, nonsense!" he said, shaking his head, and passing his hand rapidly over his face. "All this is childishness. It would overcome me if I reflected on it. These ideas may serve as opium to produce a calm. But that is not the question; say yes or no."

"No," said Cinq-Mars, pushing him to the door by the shoulder. "I will not accept life; and I do not regret having compromised De Thou, for he would not have bought his life at the price of an assassination. And when he yielded at Narbonne, it was not that he might escape at Lyons."

"Then wake him, for here come the judges," said the furious Capuchin, in a sharp, piercing voice.

Lighted by flambeaux, and preceded by a detachment of the Scotch guards, fourteen judges entered, wrapped in long robes, and whose features were

not easily distinguished. They seated themselves in silence on the right and left of the huge chamber. They were the judges delegated by the Cardinal to judge this sad and solemn affair--all true men to the Cardinal Richelieu, and in his confidence, who from Tarascon had chosen and instructed them. He had the Chancellor Seguier brought to Lyons, to avoid, as he stated in the instructions he sent by Chavigny to the King Louis XIII--"to avoid all the delays which would take place if he were not present. M. de Mayillac," he adds, "was at Nantes for the trial of Chulais, M. de Chateau-Neuf at Toulouse, superintending the death of M. de Montmorency, and M. de Bellievre at Paris, conducting the trial of M. de Biron. The authority and intelligence of these gentlemen in forms of justice are indispensable."

The Chancellor arrived with all speed. But at this moment he was informed that he was not to appear, for fear that he might be influenced by the memory of his ancient friendship for the prisoner, whom he only saw *tete-a-tete*. The commissioners and himself had previously and rapidly received the cowardly depositions of the Duc d'Orleans, at Villefranche, in Beaujolais, and then at Vivey,--[House which belonged to an Abbe d'Esnay, brother of M. de Villeroy, called Montresor.] two miles from Lyons, where this wretched prince had received orders to go, begging forgiveness, and trembling, although surrounded by his followers, whom from very pity he had been allowed to retain, carefully watched, however, by the French and Swiss guards. The Cardinal had dictated to him his part and answers word for word; and in consideration of this docility, they had exempted him in form from the painful task of confronting MM. de Cinq-Mars and De Thou. The chancellor and commissioners had also prepared M. de Bouillon, and, strong with their preliminary work, they visited in all their strength the two young criminals whom they had determined not to save.

History has only handed down to us the names of the State counsellors who accompanied Pierre Seguier, but not those of the other commissioners, of whom it is only mentioned that there were six from the parliament of Grenoble, and two presidents. The counsellor, or reporter of the State, Laubardemont, who had directed them in all, was at their head. Joseph often whispered to them with the most studied politeness, glancing at Laubardemont with a ferocious sneer.

It was arranged that an armchair should serve as a bar; and all were silent in expectation of the prisoner's answer.

He spoke in a soft and clear voice:

"Say to Monsieur le Chancelier that I have the right of appeal to the parliament of Paris, and to object to my judges, because two of them are my declared enemies, and at their head one of my friends, Monsieur de Seguier himself, whom I maintained in his charge.

"But I will spare you much trouble, gentlemen, by pleading guilty to the whole charge of conspiracy, arranged and conducted by myself alone. It is my wish to die. I have nothing to add for myself; but if you would be just, you will not harm the life of him whom the King has pronounced to be the most honest man in France, and who dies for my sake alone."

"Summon him," said Laubardemont.

Two guards entered the apartment of De Thou, and led him forth. He advanced, and bowed gravely, while an angelical smile played upon his lips. Embracing Cinq-Mars, "Here at last is our day of glory," said he. "We are about to gain heaven and eternal happiness."

"We understand," said Laubardemont, "we have been given to understand by Monsieur de Cinq-Mars himself, that you were acquainted with this conspiracy?"

De Thou answered instantly, and without hesitation. A half-smile was still on his lips, and his eyes cast down.

"Gentlemen, I have passed my life in studying human laws, and I know that the testimony of one accused person can not condemn another. I can also repeat what I said before, that I should not have been believed had I denounced the King's brother without proof. You perceive, then, that my life and death entirely rest with myself. I have, however, well weighed the one and the other. I have clearly foreseen that whatever life I may hereafter lead, it could not but be most unhappy after the loss of Monsieur de Cinq-Mars. I therefore acknowledge and confess that I was aware of his conspiracy. I did my utmost to prevent it, to deter him from it. He believed me to be his only and faithful friend, and I would not betray him. Therefore, I condemn myself by the very laws which were set forth by my father, who, I hope, forgives me."

At these words, the two friends precipitated themselves into each other's arms.

Cinq-Mars exclaimed:

"My friend, my friend, how bitterly I regret that I have caused your death! Twice I have betrayed you; but you shall know in what manner."

But De Thou, embracing and consoling his friend, answered, raising his eyes from the ground:

"Ah, happy are we to end our days in this manner! Humanly speaking, I might complain of you; but God knows how much I love you. What have we done to merit the grace of martyrdom, and the happiness of dying together?"

The judges were not prepared for this mildness, and looked at each other with surprise.

"If they would only give me a good partisan," muttered a hoarse voice (it was Grandchamp, who had crept into the room, and whose eyes were red with fury), "I would soon rid Monseigneur of all these black-looking fellows." Two men with halberds immediately placed themselves silently at his side. He said no more, and to compose himself retired to a window which overlooked the river, whose tranquil waters the sun had not yet lighted with its beams, and appeared to pay no attention to what was passing in the room.

However, Laubardemont, fearing that the judges might be touched with compassion, said in a loud voice:

"In pursuance of the order of Monseigneur the Cardinal, these two men will be put to the rack; that is to say, to the ordinary and extraordinary question."

Indignation forced Cinq-Mars again to assume his natural character; crossing his arms, he made two steps toward Laubardemont and Joseph, which alarmed them. The former involuntarily placed his hand to his forehead.

"Are we at Loudun?" exclaimed the prisoner; but De Thou, advancing, took his hand and held it. Cinq-Mars was silent, then continued in a calm voice, looking steadfastly at the judges:

"Messieurs, this measure appears to me rather harsh; a man of my age and rank ought not to be subjected to these formalities. I have confessed all, and I will confess it all again. I willingly and gladly accept death; it is not from souls like ours that secrets can be wrung by bodily suffering. We are prisoners by our own free will, and at the time chosen by us. We have confessed enough for you to condemn us to death; you shall know nothing more. We have obtained what we wanted."

"What are you doing, my friend?" interrupted De Thou. "He is mistaken, gentlemen, we do not refuse this martyrdom which God offers us; we demand it."

"But," said Cinq-Mars, "do you need such infamous tortures to obtain salvation--you who are already a martyr, a voluntary martyr to friendship? Gentlemen, it is I alone who possess important secrets; it is the chief of a conspiracy who knows all. Put me alone to the torture if we must be treated like the worst of malefactors."

"For the sake of charity," added De Thou, "deprive me not of equal suffering with my friend; I have not followed him so far, to abandon him at this dreadful moment, and not to use every effort to accompany him to heaven."

During this debate, another was going forward between Laubardemont and Joseph. The latter, fearing that torments would induce him to disclose the secret of his recent proposition, advised that they should not be resorted to; the other, not thinking his triumph complete by death alone, absolutely insisted on their being applied. The judges surrounded and listened to these secret agents of the Prime-Minister; however, many circumstances having caused them to suspect that the influence of the Capuchin was more powerful than that of the judge, they took part with him, and decided for mercy, when he finished by these words uttered in a low voice:

"I know their secrets. There is no necessity to force them from their lips, because they are useless, and relate to too high circumstances. Monsieur le Grand has no one to denounce but the King, and the other the Queen. It is better that we should remain ignorant. Besides, they will not confess. I know them; they will be silent--the one from pride, the other through piety. Let them alone. The torture will wound them; they will be disfigured and unable to walk. That will spoil the whole ceremony; they must be kept to appear."

This last observation prevailed. The judges retired to deliberate with the chancellor. While departing, Joseph whispered to Laubardemont:

"I have provided you with enough pleasure here; you will still have that of deliberating, and then you shall go and examine three men who are confined in the northern tower."

These were the three judges who had condemned Urbain Grandier.

As he spoke, he laughed heartily, and was the last to leave the room, pushing the astonished master of requests before him.

The sombre tribunal had scarcely disappeared when Grandchamp, relieved from his two guards, hastened toward his master, and, seizing his hand, said:

"In the name of Heaven, come to the terrace, Monseigneur! I have something to show you; in the name of your mother, come!"

But at that moment the chamber door was opened, and the old Abbe Quillet appeared.

"My children! my dear children!" exclaimed the old man, weeping bitterly. "Alas! why was I only permitted to enter to-day? Dear Henri, your mother, your brother, your sister, are concealed here."

"Be quiet, Monsieur l'Abbe!" said Grandchamp; "do come to the terrace, Monseigneur."

But the old priest still detained and embraced his pupil.

"We hope," said he; "we hope for mercy."

"I shall refuse it," said Cinq-Mars.

"We hope for nothing but the mercy of God," added De Thou.

"Silence!" said Grandchamp, "the judges are returning."

And the door opened again to admit the dismal procession, from which Joseph and Laubardemont were missing.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed the good Abbe, addressing the commissioners, "I am happy to tell you that I have just arrived from Paris, and that no one doubts but that all the conspirators will be pardoned. I have had an interview at her Majesty's apartments with Monsieur himself; and as to the Duc de Bouillon, his examination is not unfav--"

"Silence!" cried M. de Seyton, the lieutenant of the Scotch guards; and the commissioners entered and again arranged themselves in the apartment.

M. de Thou, hearing them summon the criminal recorder of the presidial of Lyons to pronounce the sentence, involuntarily launched out in one of those transports of religious joy which are never displayed but by the martyrs and saints at the approach of death; and, advancing toward this man, he exclaimed:

"Quam speciosi pedes evangelizantium pacem, evangelizantium bona!"

Then, taking the hand of Cinq-Mars, he knelt down bareheaded to receive the sentence, as was the custom. D'Effiat remained standing; and they dared not compel him to kneel. The sentence was pronounced in these words:

"The Attorney-General, prosecutor on the part of the State, on a charge of high treason; and Messire Henri d'Effiat de Cinq-Mars, master of the horse, aged twenty-two, and Francois Auguste de Thou, aged thirty-five, of the King's privy council, prisoners in the chateau of Pierre-Encise, at Lyons, accused and defendants on the other part:

"Considered, the special trial commenced by the aforesaid attorney-general against the said D'Effiat and De Thou; informations, interrogations, confessions, denegations, and confrontations, and authenticated copies of the treaty with Spain, it is considered in the delegated chamber:

"That he who conspires against the person of the ministers of princes is considered by the ancient laws and constitutions of the emperors to be guilty of high treason; (2) that the third ordinance of the King Louis XI renders any one liable to the punishment of death who does not reveal a conspiracy against the State.

"The commissioners deputed by his Majesty have declared the said D'Effiat and De Thou guilty and convicted of the crime of high treason:

"The said D'Effiat, for the conspiracies and enterprises, league, and treaties, formed by him with the foreigner against the State;

"And the said De Thou, for having a thorough knowledge of this conspiracy.

"In reparation of which crimes they have deprived them of all honors and dignities, and condemned them to be deprived of their heads on a scaffold, which is for this purpose erected in the Place des Terreaux, in this city.

"It is further declared that all and each of their possessions, real and personal, be confiscated to the King, and that those which they hold from the crown do pass immediately to it again of the aforesaid goods, sixty thousand livres being devoted to pious uses."

After the sentence was pronounced, M. de Thou exclaimed in a loud voice:

"God be blessed! God be praised!"

"I have never feared death," said Cinq-Mars, coldly.

Then, according to the forms prescribed, M. Seyton, the lieutenant of the Scotch guards, an old man upward of sixty years of age, declared with emotion that he placed the prisoners in the hands of the Sieur Thome, provost of the merchants of Lyons; he then took leave of them, followed by the whole of the body-guard, silently, and in tears.

"Weep not," said Cinq-Mars; "tears are useless. Rather pray for us; and be assured that I do not fear death."

He shook them by the hand, and De Thou embraced them; after which they left the apartment, their eyes filled with tears, and hiding their faces in their cloaks.

"Barbarians!" exclaimed the Abbe Quillet; "to find arms against them, one must search the whole arsenal of tyrants. Why did they admit me at this moment?"

"As a confessor, Monsieur," whispered one of the commissioners; "for no stranger has entered this place these two months."

As soon as the huge gates of the prison were closed, and the outside gratings lowered, "To the terrace, in the name of Heaven!" again exclaimed Grandchamp. And he drew his master and De Thou thither.

The old preceptor followed them, weeping.

"What do you want with us in a moment like this?" said Cinq-Mars, with indulgent gravity.

"Look at the chains of the town," said the faithful servant.

The rising sun had hardly tinged the sky. In the horizon a line of vivid yellow was visible, upon which the mountain's rough blue outlines were boldly traced; the waves of the Saline, and the chains of the town hanging from one bank to the other, were still veiled by a light vapor, which also rose from Lyons and concealed the roofs of the houses from the eye of the spectator. The first tints of the morning light had as yet colored only the most elevated points of the magnificent landscape. In the city the steeples of the Hotel de Ville and St. Nizier, and on the surrounding hills the monasteries of the Carmelites and Ste.-Marie, and the entire fortress of Pierre-Encise were gilded with the fires of the coming day. The joyful peals from the churches were heard, the peaceful matins from the convent and village bells. The walls of the prison were alone silent.

"Well," said Cinq-Mars, "what are we to see the beauty of the plains, the richness of the city, or the calm peacefulness of these villages? Ah, my friend, in every place there are to be found passions and griefs, like those which have brought us here."

The old Abbe and Grandchamp leaned over the parapet, watching the bank of the river.

"The fog is so thick, we can see nothing yet," said the Abbe.

"How slowly our last sun appears!" said De Thou.

"Do you not see low down there, at the foot of the rocks, on the opposite bank, a small white house, between the Halincourt gate and the Boulevard Saint Jean?" asked the Abbe.

"I see nothing," answered Cinq-Mars, "but a mass of dreary wall."

"Hark!" said the Abbe; "some one speaks near us!"

In fact, a confused, low, and inexplicable murmur was heard in a little

turret, the back of which rested upon the platform of the terrace. As it was scarcely larger than a pigeon-house, the prisoners had not until now observed it.

"Are they already coming to fetch us?" said Cinq-Mars.

"Bah! bah!" answered Grandchamp, "do not make yourself uneasy; it is the Tour des Oubliettes. I have prowled round the fort for two months, and I have seen men fall from there into the water at least once a week. Let us think of our affair. I see a light down there."

An invincible curiosity, however, led the two prisoners to look at the turret, in spite of the horror of their own situation. It advanced to the extremity of the rock, over a gulf of foaming green water of great depth. A wheel of a mill long deserted was seen turning with great rapidity. Three distinct sounds were now heard, like those of a drawbridge suddenly lowered and raised to its former position by a recoil or spring striking against the stone walls; and three times a black substance was seen to fall into the water with a splash.

"Mercy! can these be men?" exclaimed the Abbe, crossing himself.

"I thought I saw brown robes turning in the air," said Grandchamp; "they are the Cardinal's friends."

A horrible cry was heard from the tower, accompanied by an impious oath. The heavy trap groaned for the fourth time. The green water received with a loud noise a burden which cracked the enormous wheel of the mill; one of its large spokes was torn away, and a man entangled in its beams appeared above the foam, which he colored with his blood. He rose twice, and sank beneath the waters, shrieking violently; it was Laubardemont.

Cinq-Mars drew back in horror.

"There is a Providence," said Grandchamp; "Urbain Grandier summoned him in three years. But come, come! the time is precious! Do not remain motionless. Be it he, I am not surprised, for those wretches devour each other. But let us endeavor to deprive them of their choicest morsel. Vive Dieu! I see the signal! We are saved! All is ready; run to this side, Monsieur l'Abbe! See the white handkerchief at the window! our friends are prepared."

The Abbe seized the hands of both his friends, and drew them to that side of the terrace toward which they had at first looked. "Listen to me, both of you," said he. "You must know that none of the conspirators has profited by the retreat you secured for them. They have all hastened to Lyons, disguised, and in great number; they have distributed sufficient gold in the city to secure them from being betrayed; they are resolved to make an attempt to deliver you. The time chosen is that when they are conducting you to the scaffold; the signal is your hat, which you will place on your head when they are to commence."

The worthy Abbe, half weeping, half smiling hopefully, related that upon the arrest of his pupil he had hastened to Paris; that such secrecy enveloped all the Cardinal's actions that none there knew the place in which the master of the horse was detained. Many said that he was banished; and when the reconciliation between Monsieur and the Duc de Bouillon and the King was known, men no longer doubted that the life of the other was assured, and ceased to speak of this affair, which, not having been executed, compromised few persons. They had even in some measure rejoiced in Paris to see the town of Sedan and its territory added to the kingdom in exchange for the letters of abolition granted to the Duke, acknowledged innocent in common with Monsieur; so that the result of all the arrangements had been to excite admiration of the Cardinal's ability, and of his clemency toward the conspirators, who, it was said, had contemplated his death. They even spread the report that he had facilitated the escape of Cinq-Mars and De Thou, occupying himself generously with their retreat to a foreign land, after having bravely caused them to be arrested in the midst of the camp of Perpignan.

At this part of the narrative, Cinq-Mars could not avoid forgetting his resignation, and clasping his friend's hand, "Arrested!" he exclaimed. "Must we renounce even the honor of having voluntarily surrendered ourselves? Must we sacrifice all, even the opinion of posterity?"

"There is vanity again," replied De Thou, placing his fingers on his lips. "But hush! let us hear the Abbe to the end."

The tutor, not doubting that the calmness which these two young men exhibited arose from the joy they felt in finding their escape assured, and seeing that the sun had hardly yet dispersed the morning mists, yielded himself without restraint to the involuntary pleasure which old men always feel in recounting new events, even though they afflict the hearers. He related all his fruitless endeavors to discover his pupil's retreat, unknown to the court and the town, where none, indeed, dared to pronounce the name of Cinq-Mars in the most secret asylums. He had only heard of the imprisonment at Pierre-Encise from the Queen herself, who had deigned to send for him, and charge him to inform the Marechale d'Effiat and all the conspirators that they might make a desperate effort to deliver their young chief. Anne of Austria had even ventured to send many of the gentlemen of Auvergne and Touraine to Lyons to assist in their last attempt.

"The good Queen!" said he; "she wept greatly when I saw her, and said that she would give all she possessed to save you. She reproached herself deeply for some letter, I know not what. She spoke of the welfare of France, but did not explain herself. She said that she admired you, and conjured you to save yourself, if it were only through pity for her, whom you would otherwise consign to everlasting remorse."

"Said she nothing else?" interrupted De Thou, supporting Cinq-Mars, who grew visibly paler.

"Nothing more," said the old man.

"And no one else spoke of me?" inquired the master of the horse.

"No one," said the Abbe.

"If she had but written to me!" murmured Henri.

"Remember, my father, that you were sent here as a confessor," said De Thou.

Here old Grandchamp, who had been kneeling before Cinq-Mars, and dragging him by his clothes to the other side of the terrace, exclaimed in a broken voice:

"Monseigneur--my master--my good master--do you see them? Look there-- 'tis they! 'tis they--all of them!"

"Who, my old friend?" asked his master.

"Who? Great Heaven! look at that window! Do you not recognize them? Your mother, your sisters, and your brother."

And the day, now fairly broken, showed him in the distance several women waving their handkerchiefs; and there, dressed all in black, stretching out her arms toward the prison, sustained by those about her, Cinq-Mars recognized his mother, with his family, and his strength failed him for a moment. He leaned his head upon his friend's breast and wept.

"How many times must I, then, die?" he murmured; then, with a gesture, returning from the top of the tower the salutations of his family, "Let us descend quickly, my father!" he said to the old Abbe. "You will tell me at the tribunal of penitence, and before God, whether the remainder of my life is worth my shedding more blood to preserve it."

It was there that Cinq-Mars confessed to God what he alone and Marie de Mantua knew of their secret and unfortunate love. "He gave to his confessor," says Father Daniel, "a portrait of a noble lady, set in diamonds, which were to be sold, and the money employed in pious works."

M. de Thou, after having confessed, wrote a letter;--[See the copy of this letter to Madame la Princesse de Guemenee, in the notes at the end of the volume.]--after which (according to the account given by his confessor) he said, "This is the last thought I will bestow upon this world; let us depart for heaven!" and walking up and down the room with long strides, he recited aloud the psalm, 'Miserere mei, Deus', with an incredible ardor of spirit, his whole frame trembling so violently it seemed as if he did not touch the earth, and that the soul was about to make its exit from his body. The guards were mute at this spectacle, which made them all shudder with respect and horror.

Meanwhile, all was calm in the city of Lyons, when to the great astonishment of its inhabitants, they beheld the entrance through all its gates of troops of infantry and cavalry, which they knew were encamped at a great distance. The French and the Swiss guards, the regiment of Pompadours, the men-at-arms of Maurevert, and the carabineers of La Roque, all defiled in silence. The cavalry, with their muskets on the pommel of the saddle, silently drew up round the chateau of Pierre-Encise; the infantry formed a line upon the banks of the Saone from the gate of the fortress to the Place des Terreaux. It was the usual spot for execution.

"Four companies of the bourgeois of Lyons, called 'pennonage', of which about eleven or twelve hundred men, were ranged [says the journal of Montresor] in the midst of the Place des Terreaux, so as to enclose a space of about eighty paces each way, into which they admitted no one but those who were absolutely necessary.

"In the centre of this space was raised a scaffold about seven feet high and nine feet square, in the midst of which, somewhat forward, was placed a stake three feet in height, in front of which was a block half a foot high, so that the principal face of the scaffold looked toward the shambles of the Terreaux, by the side of the Saone. Against the scaffold was placed a short ladder of eight rounds, in the direction of the Dames de St. Pierre."

Nothing had transpired in the town as to the name of the prisoners. The inaccessible walls of the fortress let none enter or leave but at night, and the deep dungeons had sometimes confined father and son for years together, four feet apart from each other, without their even being aware of the vicinity. The surprise was extreme at these striking preparations, and the crowd collected, not knowing whether for a fete or for an execution.

This same secrecy which the agents of the minister had strictly preserved was also carefully adhered to by the conspirators, for their heads depended on it.

Montresor, Fontrailles, the Baron de Beauvau, Olivier d'Entraigues, Gondi, the Comte du Lude, and the Advocate Fournier, disguised as soldiers, workmen, and morris-dancers, armed with poniards under their clothes, had dispersed amid the crowd more than five hundred gentlemen and domestics, disguised like themselves. Horses were ready on the road to Italy, and boats upon the Rhone had been previously engaged. The young Marquis d'Effiat, elder brother of Cinq-Mars, dressed as a Carthusian, traversed the crowd, without ceasing, between the Place des Terreaux and the little house in which his mother and sister were concealed with the Presidente de Pontac, the sister of the unfortunate De Thou. He reassured them, gave them from time to time a ray of hope, and returned to the conspirators to satisfy himself that each was prepared for action.

Each soldier forming the line had at his side a man ready to poniard him.

The vast crowd, heaped together behind the line of guards, pushed them forward, passed their lines, and made them lose ground. Ambrosio, the Spanish servant whom Cinq-Mars had saved, had taken charge of the captain of the pikemen, and, disguised as a Catalonian musician, had commenced a dispute with him, pretending to be determined not to cease playing the hurdy-gurdy.

Every one was at his post.

The Abbe de Gondi, Olivier d'Entraigues, and the Marquis d'Effiat were in the midst of a group of fish-women and oyster-wenches, who were disputing and bawling, abusing one of their number younger and more timid than her masculine companions. The brother of Cinq-Mars approached to listen to their quarrel.

"And why," said she to the others, "would you have Jean le Roux, who is an honest man, cut off the heads of two Christians, because he is a butcher by trade? So long as I am his wife, I'll not allow it. I'd rather--"

"Well, you are wrong!" replied her companions. "What is't to thee whether the meat he cuts is eaten or not eaten? Why, thou'lt have a hundred crowns to dress thy three children all in new clothes. Thou'rt lucky to be the wife of a butcher. Profit, then, 'ma mignonne', by what God sends thee by the favor of his Eminence."

"Let me alone!" answered the first speaker. "I'll not accept it. I've seen these fine young gentlemen at the windows. They look as mild as lambs."

"Well! and are not thy lambs and calves killed?" said Femme le Bon. "What fortune falls to this little woman! What a pity! especially when it is from the reverend Capuchin!"

"How horrible is the gayety of the people!" said Olivier d'Entraigues, unguardedly. All the women heard him, and began to murmur against him.

"Of the people!" said they; "and whence comes this little bricklayer with his plastered clothes?"

"Ah!" interrupted another, "dost not see that 'tis some gentleman in disguise? Look at his white hands! He never worked a square; 'tis some little dandy conspirator. I've a great mind to go and fetch the captain of the watch to arrest him."

The Abbe de Gondi felt all the danger of this situation, and throwing himself with an air of anger upon Olivier, and assuming the manners of a joiner, whose costume and apron he had adopted, he exclaimed, seizing him by the collar:

"You're just right. 'Tis a little rascal that never works! These two years that my father's apprenticed him, he has done nothing but comb his hair to please the girls. Come, get home with you!"

And, striking him with his rule, he drove him through the crowd, and returned to place himself on another part of the line. After having well reprimanded the thoughtless page, he asked him for the letter which he said he had to give to M. de Cinq-Mars when he should have escaped. Olivier had carried it in his pocket for two months. He gave it him. "It is from one prisoner to another," said he, "for the Chevalier de jars, on leaving the Bastille, sent it me from one of his companions in captivity."

"Ma foi!" said Gondi, "there may be some important secret in it for our friends. I'll open it. You ought to have thought of it before. Ah, bah! it is from old Bassompierre. Let us read it."

MY DEAR CHILD: I learn from the depths of the Bastille, where I still remain, that you are conspiring against the tyrant Richelieu,

who does not cease to humiliate our good old nobility and the parliaments, and to sap the foundations of the edifice upon which the State reposes. I hear that the nobles are taxed and condemned by petty judges, contrary to the privileges of their condition, forced to the arriere-ban, despite the ancient customs."

"Ah! the old dotard!" interrupted the page, laughing immoderately.

"Not so foolish as you imagine, only he is a little behindhand for our affair."

"I can not but approve this generous project, and I pray you give me to wot all your proceedings--"

"Ah! the old language of the last reign!" said Olivier. "He can't say 'Make me acquainted with your proceedings,' as we now say."

"Let me read, for Heaven's sake!" said the Abbe; "a hundred years hence they'll laugh at our phrases." He continued:

"I can counsel you, notwithstanding my great age, in relating to you what happened to me in 1560."

"Ah, faith! I've not time to waste in reading it all. Let us see the end."

"When I remember my dining at the house of Madame la Marechale d'Effiat, your mother, and ask myself what has become of all the guests, I am really afflicted. My poor Puy-Laurens has died at Vincennes, of grief at being forgotten by Monsieur in his prison; De Launay killed in a duel, and I am grieved at it, for although I was little satisfied with my arrest, he did it with courtesy, and I have always thought him a gentleman. As for me, I am under lock and key until the death of M. le Cardinal. Ah, my child! we were thirteen at table. We must not laugh at old superstitions. Thank God that you are the only one to whom evil has not arrived!"

"There again!" said Olivier, laughing heartily; and this time the Abbe de Gondi could not maintain his gravity, despite all his efforts.

They tore the useless letter to pieces, that it might not prolong the detention of the old marechal, should it be found, and drew near the Place des Terreaux and the line of guards, whom they were to attack when the signal of the hat should be given by the young prisoner.

They beheld with satisfaction all their friends at their posts, and ready "to play with their knives," to use their own expression. The people, pressing around them, favored them without being aware of it. There came near the Abbe a troop of young ladies dressed in white and veiled. They were going to church to communicate; and the nuns who conducted them, thinking, like most of the people, that the preparations were intended to do honor to some great personage, allowed them to mount upon some large hewn stones, collected behind the soldiers. There they grouped themselves with the grace natural to their age, like twenty beautiful statues upon a single pedestal. One would have taken them for those vestals whom antiquity invited to the sanguinary shows of the gladiators. They whispered to each other, looking around them, laughing and blushing together like children.

The Abbe de Gondi saw with impatience that Olivier was again forgetting his character of conspirator and his costume of a bricklayer in ogling these girls, and assuming a mien too elegant, an attitude too refined, for the position in life he was supposed to occupy. He already began to approach them, turning his hair with his fingers, when Fontrailles and Montresor fortunately arrived in the dress of Swiss soldiers. A group of gentlemen, disguised as sailors, followed them with iron-shod staves in their hands. There was a paleness on their faces which announced no good.

"Stop here!" said one of them to his suite; "this is the place."

The sombre air and the silence of these spectators contrasted with the gay and anxious looks of the girls, and their childish exclamations.

"Ah, the fine procession!" they cried; "there are at least five hundred men with cuirasses and red uniforms, upon fine horses. They've got yellow feathers in their large hats."

"They are strangers--Catalonians," said a French guard.

"Whom are they conducting here? Ah, here is a fine gilt coach! but there's no one in it."

"Ah! I see three men on foot; where are they going?"

"To death!" said Fontrailles, in a deep, stern voice which silenced all around. Nothing was heard but the slow tramp of the horses, which suddenly stopped, from one of those delays that happen in all processions. They then beheld a painful and singular spectacle. An old man with a tansured head walked with difficulty, sobbing violently, supported by two young men of interesting and engaging appearance, who held one of each other's hands behind his bent shoulders, while with the other each held one of his arms. The one on the left was dressed in black; he was grave, and his eyes were cast down. The other, much younger, was attired in a striking dress. A pourpoint of Holland cloth, adorned with broad gold lace, and with large embroidered sleeves, covered him from the neck to the waist, somewhat in the fashion of a woman's corset; the rest of his vestments were in black velvet, embroidered with silver palms. Gray boots with red heels, to which were attached golden spurs; a scarlet cloak with gold buttons--all set off to advantage his elegant and graceful figure. He bowed right and left with a melancholy smile.

An old servant, with white moustache, and beard, followed with his head bent down, leading two chargers, richly comparisoned. The young ladies were silent; but they could not restrain their sobs.

"It is, then, that poor old man whom they are leading to the scaffold," they exclaimed; "and his children are supporting him."

"Upon your knees, ladies," said a man, "and pray for him!"

"On your knees," cried Gondi, "and let us pray that God will deliver him!"

All the conspirators repeated, "On your knees! on your knees!" and set the example to the people, who imitated them in silence.

"We can see his movements better now," said Gondi, in a whisper to Montresor. "Stand up; what is he doing?"

"He has stopped, and is speaking on our side, saluting us; I think he has recognized us."

Every house, window, wall, roof, and raised platform that looked upon the place was filled with persons of every age and condition.

The most profound silence prevailed throughout the immense multitude. One might have heard the wings of a gnat, the breath of the slightest wind, the passage of the grains of dust which it raised; yet the air was calm, the sun brilliant, the sky blue. The people listened attentively. They were close to the Place des Terreaux; they heard the blows of the hammer upon the planks, then the voice of Cinq-Mars.

A young Carthusian thrust his pale face between two guards. All the conspirators rose above the kneeling people. Every one put his hand to his belt or in his bosom, approaching close to the soldier whom he was to poniard.

"What is he doing?" asked the Carthusian. "Has he his hat upon his head?"

"He throws his hat upon the ground far from him," calmly answered the arquebusier.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE FETE

"Mon Dieu! quest-ce que ce monde!"

Dernieres paroles de M. Cinq-Mars

The same day that the melancholy procession took place at Lyons, and during the scenes we have just witnessed, a magnificent fete was given at Paris with all the luxury and bad taste of the time. The powerful Cardinal had determined to fill the first two towns in France with his pomp. The Cardinal's return was the occasion on which this fete was announced, as given to the King and all his court.

Master of the French empire by force, the Cardinal desired to be master of French opinion by seduction; and, weary of dominating, hoped to please. The tragedy of "Mirame" was to be represented in a hall constructed expressly for this great day, which raised the expenses of this entertainment, says Pelisson, to three hundred thousand crowns.

The entire guard of the Prime-Minister were under arms; his four companies of musketeers and gens d'armes were ranged in a line upon the vast staircases and at the entrance of the long galleries of the Palais-Cardinal. This brilliant pandemonium, where the mortal sins have a temple on each floor, belonged that day to pride alone, which occupied it from top to bottom. Upon each step was placed one of the arquebusiers of the Cardinal's guard, holding a torch in one hand and a long carbine in the other. The crowd of his gentlemen circulated between these living candelabra, while in the large garden, surrounded by huge chestnut-trees, now replaced by a range of archers, two companies of mounted light-horse, their muskets in their hands, were ready to obey the first order or the first fear of their master.

The Cardinal, carried and followed by his thirty-eight pages, took his seat in his box hung with purple, facing that in which the King was half reclining behind the green curtains which preserved him from the glare of the flambeaux. The whole court filled the boxes, and rose when the King appeared. The orchestra commenced a brilliant overture, and the pit was thrown open to all the men of the town and the army who presented themselves. Three impetuous waves of spectators rushed in and filled it in an instant. They were standing, and so thickly pressed together that the movement of a single arm sufficed to cause in the crowd a movement similar to the waving of a field of corn. There was one man whose head thus described a large circle, as that of a compass, without his feet quitting the spot to which they were fixed; and some young men were carried out fainting.

The minister, contrary to custom, advanced his skeleton head out of his box, and saluted the assembly with an air which was meant to be gracious. This grimace obtained an acknowledgment only from the boxes; the pit was silent. Richelieu had wished to show that he did not fear the public judgment upon his work, and had given orders to admit without distinction all who should present themselves. He began to repent of this, but too late. The impartial assembly was as cold at the tragedie-pastorale itself. In vain did the theatrical bergeres, covered with jewels, raised upon red heels, with crooks ornamented with ribbons and garlands of flowers upon their robes, which were stuck out with farthingale's, die of love in tirades of two hundred verses; in vain did the 'amants parfaits'

starve themselves in solitary caves, deploring their death in emphatic tones, and fastening to their hair ribbons of the favorite color of their mistress; in vain did the ladies of the court exhibit signs of perfect ecstasy, leaning over the edges of their boxes, and even attempt a few fainting-fits--the silent pit gave no other sign of life than the perpetual shaking of black heads with long hair.

The Cardinal bit his lips and played the abstracted during the first and second acts; the silence in which the third and fourth passed off so wounded his paternal heart that he had himself raised half out of the balcony, and in this uncomfortable and ridiculous position signed to the court to remark the finest passages, and himself gave the signal for applause. It was acted upon from some of the boxes, but the impassible pit was more silent than ever; leaving the affair entirely between the stage and the upper regions, they obstinately remained neuter. The master of Europe and France then cast a furious look at this handful of men who dared not to admire his work, feeling in his heart the wish of Nero, and thought for a moment how happy he should be if all those men had but one head.

Suddenly this black and before silent mass became animated, and endless rounds of applause burst forth, to the great astonishment of the boxes, and above all, of the minister. He bent forward and bowed gratefully, but drew back on perceiving that the clapping of hands interrupted the actors every time they wished to proceed. The King had the curtains of his box, until then closed, opened, to see what excited so much enthusiasm. The whole court leaned forward from their boxes, and perceived among the spectators on the stage a young man, humbly dressed, who had just seated himself there with difficulty. Every look was fixed upon him. He appeared utterly embarrassed by this, and sought to cover himself with his little black cloak--far too short for the purpose. "Le Cid! le Cid!" cried the pit, incessantly applauding.

"Terrified, Corneille escaped behind the scenes, and all was again silent. The Cardinal, beside himself with fury, had his curtain closed, and was carried into his galleries, where was performed another scene, prepared long before by the care of Joseph, who had tutored the attendants upon the point before quitting Paris. Cardinal Mazarin exclaimed that it would be quicker to pass his Eminence through a long glazed window, which was only two feet from the ground, and led from his box to the apartments; and it opened and the page passed his armchair through it. Hereupon a hundred voices rose to proclaim the accomplishment of the grand prophecy of Nostradamus. They said:

"The bonnet rouge!--that's Monseigneur; 'quarante onces!--that's Cinq-Mars; 'tout finira!--that's De Thou. What a providential incident! His Eminence reigns over the future as over the present."

He advanced thus upon his ambulatory throne through the long and splendid galleries, listening to this delicious murmur of a new flattery; but insensible to the hum of voices which deified his genius, he would have given all their praises for one word, one single gesture of that immovable and inflexible public, even had that word been a cry of hatred; for clamor can be stifled, but how avenge one's self on silence? The people can be prevented from striking, but who can prevent their waiting? Pursued by the troublesome phantom of public opinion, the gloomy minister only thought himself in safety when he reached the interior of his palace amid his flattering courtiers, whose adorations soon made him forget that a miserable pit had dared not to admire him. He had himself placed like a king in the midst of his vast apartments, and, looking around him, attentively counted the powerful and submissive men who surrounded him.

Counting them, he admired himself. The chiefs of the great families, the princes of the Church, the presidents of all the parliaments, the governors of the provinces, the marshals and generals-in-chief of the armies, the nuncio, the ambassadors of all the kingdoms, the deputies and senators of the republics, were motionless, submissive, and ranged around him, as if awaiting his orders. There was no longer a look to brave his look, no longer a word to raise itself against his will, not a project

that men dared to form in the most secret recesses of the heart, not a thought which did not proceed from his. Mute Europe listened to him by its representatives. From time to time he raise an imperious voice, and threw a self-satisfied word to this pompous circle, as a man who throws a copper coin among a crowd of beggars. Then might be distinguished, by the pride which lit up his looks and the joy visible in his countenance, the prince who had received such a favor.

Transformed into another man, he seemed to have made a step in the hierarchy of power, so surrounded with unlooked-for adorations and sudden caresses was the fortunate courtier, whose obscure happiness the Cardinal did not even perceive. The King's brother and the Duc de Bouillon stood in the crowd, whence the minister did not deign to withdraw them. Only he ostentatiously said that it would be well to dismantle a few fortresses, spoke at length of the necessity of pavements and quays at Paris, and said in two words to Turenne that he might perhaps be sent to the army in Italy, to seek his baton as marechal from Prince Thomas.

While Richelieu thus played with the great and small things of Europe, amid his noisy fete, the Queen was informed at the Louvre that the time was come for her to proceed to the Cardinal's palace, where the King awaited her after the tragedy. The serious Anne of Austria did not witness any play; but she could not refuse her presence at the fete of the Prime-Minister. She was in her oratory, ready to depart, and covered with pearls, her favorite ornament; standing opposite a large glass with Marie de Mantua, she was arranging more to her satisfaction one or two details of the young Duchess's toilette, who, dressed in a long pink robe, was herself contemplating with attention, though with somewhat of ennui and a little sullenness, the ensemble of her appearance.

She saw her own work in Marie, and, more troubled, thought with deep apprehension of the moment when this transient calm would cease, despite the profound knowledge she had of the feeling but frivolous character of Marie. Since the conversation at St.-Germain (the fatal letter), she had not quitted the young Princess, and had bestowed all her care to lead her mind to the path which she had traced out for her, for the most decided feature in the character of Anne of Austria was an invincible obstinacy in her calculations, to which she would fain have subjected all events and all passions with a geometrical exactitude. There is no doubt that to this positive and immovable mind we must attribute all the misfortunes of her regency. The sombre reply of Cinq-Mars; his arrest; his trial--all had been concealed from the Princesse Marie, whose first fault, it is true, had been a movement of self-love and a momentary forgetfulness.

However, the Queen by nature was good-hearted, and had bitterly repented her precipitation in writing words so decisive, and whose consequences had been so serious; and all her endeavors had been applied to mitigate the results. In reflecting upon her conduct in reference to the happiness of France, she applauded herself for having thus, at one stroke, stifled the germ of a civil war which would have shaken the State to its very foundations. But when she approached her young friend and gazed on that charming being whose happiness she was thus destroying in its bloom, and reflected that an old man upon a throne, even, would not recompense her for the eternal loss she was about to sustain; when she thought of the entire devotion, the total abnegation of himself, she had witnessed in a young man of twenty-two, of so lofty a character, and almost master of the kingdom--she pitied Marie, and admired from her very soul the man whom she had judged so ill.

She would at least have desired to explain his worth to her whom he had loved so deeply, and who as yet knew him not; but she still hoped that the conspirators assembled at Lyons would be able to save him, and once knowing him to be in a foreign land she could tell all to her dear Marie.

As to the latter, she had at first feared war. But surrounded by the Queen's people, who had let nothing reach her ear but news dictated by this Princess, she knew, or thought she knew, that the conspiracy had not taken place; that the King and the Cardinal had returned to Paris nearly at the same time; that Monsieur, relapsed for a while, had reappeared at

court; that the Duc de Bouillon, on ceding Sedan, had also been restored to favor; and that if the 'grand ecuyer' had not yet appeared, the reason was the more decided animosity of the Cardinal toward him, and the greater part he had taken in the conspiracy. But common sense and natural justice clearly said that having acted under the order of the King's brother, his pardon ought to follow that of this Prince.

All then, had calmed the first uneasiness of her heart, while nothing had softened the kind of proud resentment she felt against Cinq-Mars, so indifferent as not to inform her of the place of his retreat, known to the Queen and the whole court, while, she said to herself, she had thought but of him. Besides, for two months the balls and fetes had so rapidly succeeded each other, and so many mysterious duties had commanded her presence, that she had for reflection and regret scarce more than the time of her toilette, at which she was generally almost alone. Every evening she regularly commenced the general reflection upon the ingratitude and inconstancy of men--a profound and novel thought, which never fails to occupy the head of a young person in the time of first love--but sleep never permitted her to finish the reflection; and the fatigue of dancing closed her large black eyes ere her ideas had found time to classify themselves in her memory, or to present her with any distinct images of the past.

In the morning she was always surrounded by the young princesses of the court, and ere she well had time to dress had to present herself in the Queen's apartment, where awaited her the eternal, but now less disagreeable homage of the Prince-Palatine. The Poles had had time to learn at the court of France that mysterious reserve, that eloquent silence which so pleases the women, because it enhances the importance of things always secret, and elevates those whom they respect, so as to preclude the idea of exhibiting suffering in their presence. Marie was regarded as promised to King Uladislas; and she herself--we must confess it--had so well accustomed herself to this idea that the throne of Poland occupied by another queen would have appeared to her a monstrous thing. She did not look forward with pleasure to the period of ascending it, but had, however, taken possession of the homage which was rendered her beforehand. Thus, without avowing it even to herself, she greatly exaggerated the supposed offences of Cinq-Mars, which the Queen had expounded to her at St. Germain.

"You are as fresh as the roses in this bouquet," said the Queen. "Come, 'ma chere', are you ready? What means this pouting air? Come, let me fasten this earring. Do you not like these toys, eh? Will you have another set of ornaments?"

"Oh, no, Madame. I think that I ought not to decorate myself at all, for no one knows better than yourself how unhappy I am. Men are very cruel toward us!

"I have reflected on what you said, and all is now clear to me. Yes, it is quite true that he did not love me, for had he loved me he would have renounced an enterprise that gave me so much uneasiness. I told him, I remember, indeed, which was very decided," she added, with an important and even solemn air, "that he would be a rebel--yes, Madame, a rebel. I told him so at Saint-Eustache. But I see that your Majesty was right. I am very unfortunate! He had more ambition than love." Here a tear of pique escaped from her eyes, and rolled quickly down her cheek, as a pearl upon a rose.

"Yes, it is certain," she continued, fastening her bracelets; "and the greatest proof is that in the two months he has renounced his enterprise --you told me that you had saved him--he has not let me know the place of his retreat, while I during that time have been weeping, have been imploring all your power in his favor; have sought but a word that might inform me of his proceedings. I have thought but of him; and even now I refuse every day the throne of Poland, because I wish to prove to the end that I am constant, that you yourself can not make me disloyal to my attachment, far more serious than his, and that we are of higher worth than the men. But, however, I think I may attend this fete, since it is

not a ball."

"Yes, yes, my dear child! come, come!" said the Queen, desirous of putting an end to this childish talk, which afflicted her all the more that it was herself who had encouraged it. "Come, you will see the union that prevails between the princes and the Cardinal, and we shall perhaps hear some good news." They departed.

When the two princesses entered the long galleries of the Palais-Cardinal, they were received and coldly saluted by the King and the minister, who, closely surrounded by silent courtiers, were playing at chess upon a small low table. All the ladies who entered with the Queen or followed her, spread through the apartments; and soon soft music sounded in one of the saloons--a gentle accompaniment to the thousand private conversations carried on round the play tables.

Near the Queen passed, saluting her, a young newly married couple--the happy Chabot and the beautiful Duchesse de Rohan. They seemed to shun the crowd, and to seek apart a moment to speak to each other of themselves. Every one received them with a smile and looked after them with envy. Their happiness was expressed as strongly in the countenances of others as in their own.

Marie followed them with her eyes. "Still they are happy," she whispered to the Queen, remembering the censure which in her hearing had been thrown upon the match.

But without answering, Anne of Austria, fearful that in the crowd some inconsiderate expression might inform her young friend of the mournful event so interesting to her, placed herself with Marie behind the King. Monsieur, the Prince-Palatine, and the Duc de Bouillon came to speak to her with a gay and lively air. The second, however, casting upon Marie a severe and scrutinizing glance, said to her:

"Madame la Princesse, you are most surprisingly beautiful and gay this evening."

She was confused at these words, and at seeing the speaker walk away with a sombre air. She addressed herself to the Duc d'Orleans, who did not answer, and seemed not to hear her. Marie looked at the Queen, and thought she remarked paleness and disquiet on her features. Meantime, no one ventured to approach the minister, who was deliberately meditating his moves. Mazarin alone, leaning over his chair, followed all the strokes with a servile attention, giving gestures of admiration every time that the Cardinal played. Application to the game seemed to have dissipated for a moment the cloud that usually shaded the minister's brow. He had just advanced a tower, which placed Louis's king in that false position which is called "stalemate,"--a situation in which the ebony king, without being personally attacked, can neither advance nor retire in any direction. The Cardinal, raising his eyes, looked at his adversary and smiled with one corner of his mouth, not being able to avoid a secret analogy. Then, observing the dim eyes and dying countenance of the Prince, he whispered to Mazarin:

"Faith, I think he'll go before me. He is greatly changed."

At the same time he himself was seized with a long and violent cough, accompanied internally with the sharp, deep pain he so often felt in the side. At the sinister warning he put a handkerchief to his mouth, which he withdrew covered with blood. To hide it, he threw it under the table, and looked around him with a stern smile, as if to forbid observation. Louis XIII, perfectly insensible, did not make the least movement, beyond arranging his men for another game with a skeleton and trembling hand. There two dying men seemed to be throwing lots which should depart first.

At this moment a clock struck the hour of midnight. The King raised his head.

"Ah, ah!" he said; "this morning at twelve Monsieur le Grand had a

disagreeable time of it."

A piercing shriek was uttered behind him. He shuddered, and threw himself forward, upsetting the table. Marie de Mantua lay senseless in the arms of the Queen, who, weeping bitterly, said in the King's ear:

"Ah, Sire, your axe has a double edge."

She then bestowed all her cares and maternal kisses upon the young Princess, who, surrounded by all the ladies of the court, only came to herself to burst into a torrent of tears. As soon as she opened her eyes, "Alas! yes, my child," said Anne of Austria. "My poor girl, you are Queen of Poland."

It has often happened that the same event which causes tears to flow in the palace of kings has spread joy without, for the people ever suppose that happiness reigns at festivals. There were five days' rejoicings for the return of the minister, and every evening under the windows of the Palais-Cardinal and those of the Louvre pressed the people of Paris. The late disturbances had given them a taste for public movements. They rushed from one street to another with a curiosity at times insulting and hostile, sometimes walking in silent procession, sometimes sending forth loud peals of laughter or prolonged yells, of which no one understood the meaning. Bands of young men fought in the streets and danced in rounds in the squares, as if manifesting some secret hope of pleasure and some insensate joy, grievous to the upright heart.

It was remarkable that profound silence prevailed exactly in those places where the minister had ordered rejoicings, and that the people passed disdainfully before the illuminated facade of his palace. If some voices were raised, it was to read aloud in a sneering tone the legends and inscriptions with which the idiot flattery of some obscure writers had surrounded the portraits of the minister. One of these pictures was guarded by arquebusiers, who, however, could not preserve it from the stones which were thrown at it from a distance by unseen hands. It represented the Cardinal-Generalissimo wearing a casque surrounded by laurels. Above it was inscribed:

"Grand Duc: c'est justement que la France t'honore;
Ainsi que le dieu Mars dans Paris on t'adore."

These fine phrases did not persuade the people that they were happy. They no more adored the Cardinal than they did the god Mars, but they accepted his fetes because they served as a covering for disorder. All Paris was in an uproar. Men with long beards, carrying torches, measures of wine, and two drinking-cups, which they knocked together with a great noise, went along, arm in arm, shouting in chorus with rude voices an old round of the League:.

"Reprenons la danse;
Allons, c'est assez.
Le printemps commence;
Les rois sont passes.

"Prenons quelque treve;
Nous sommes lasses.
Les rois de la feve
Nous ont harasses.

"Allons, Jean du Mayne,
Les rois sont passes.

"Les rois de la feve
Nous ont harasses.
Allons, Jean du Mayne,
Les rois sont passes."

The frightful bands who howled forth these words traversed the Quais and

the Pont-Neuf, squeezing against the high houses, which then covered the latter, the peaceful citizens who were led there by simple curiosity. Two young men, wrapped in cloaks, thus thrown one against the other, recognized each other by the light of a torch placed at the foot of the statue of Henri IV, which had been lately raised.

"What! still at Paris?" said Corneille to Milton. "I thought you were in London."

"Hear you the people, Monsieur? Do you hear them? What is this ominous chorus,

'Les rois sont passes'?"

"That is nothing, Monsieur. Listen to their conversation."

"The parliament is dead," said one of the men; "the nobles are dead. Let us dance; we are the masters. The old Cardinal is dying. There is no longer any but the King and ourselves."

"Do you hear that drunken wretch, Monsieur?" asked Corneille. "All our epoch is in those words of his."

"What! is this the work of the minister who is called great among you, and even by other nations? I do not understand him."

"I will explain the matter to you presently," answered Corneille. "But first listen to the concluding part of this letter, which I received to-day. Draw near this light under the statue of the late King. We are alone. The crowd has passed. Listen!

"It was by one of those unforeseen circumstances which prevent the accomplishment of the noblest enterprises that we were not able to save MM. de Cinq-Mars and De Thou. We might have foreseen that, prepared for death by long meditation, they would themselves refuse our aid; but this idea did not occur to any of us. In the precipitation of our measures, we also committed the fault of dispersing ourselves too much in the crowd, so that we could not take a sudden resolution. I was unfortunately stationed near the scaffold; and I saw our unfortunate friends advance to the foot of it, supporting the poor Abbe Quillet, who was destined to behold the death of the pupil whose birth he had witnessed. He sobbed aloud, and had strength enough only to kiss the hands of the two friends. We all advanced, ready to throw ourselves upon the guards at the announced signal; but I saw with grief M. de Cinq-Mars cast his hat from him with an air of disdain. Our movement had been observed, and the Catalonian guard was doubled round the scaffold. I could see no more; but I heard much weeping around me. After the three usual blasts of the trumpet, the recorder of Lyons, on horseback at a little distance from the scaffold, read the sentence of death, to which neither of the prisoners listened. M. de Thou said to M. de Cinq-Mars:

"'Well, dear friend, which shall die first? Do you remember Saint-Gervais and Saint-Prottais?'

"'Which you think best,' answered Cinq-Mars.

"The second confessor, addressing M. de Thou, said, 'You are the elder.'

"'True,' said M. de Thou; and, turning to M. le Grand, 'You are the most generous; you will show me the way to the glory of heaven.'

"'Alas!' said Cinq-Mars; 'I have opened to you that of the precipice; but let us meet death nobly, and we shall revel in the glory and happiness of heaven!'

"Hereupon he embraced him, and ascended the scaffold with surprising

address and agility. He walked round the scaffold, and contemplated the whole of the great assembly with a calm countenance, which betrayed no sign of fear, and a serious and graceful manner. He then went round once more, saluting the people on every side, without appearing to recognize any of us, with a majestic and charming expression of face; he then knelt down, raising his eyes to heaven, adoring God, and recommending himself to Him. As he embraced the crucifix, the father confessor called to the people to pray for him; and M. le Grand, opening his arms, still holding his crucifix, made the same request to the people. Then he readily knelt before the block, holding the stake, placed his neck upon it, and asked the confessor, 'Father, is this right?' Then, while they were cutting off his hair, he raised his eyes to heaven, and said, sighing:

"My God, what is this world? My God, I offer thee my death as a satisfaction for my sins!"

"What are you waiting for? What are you doing there?" he said to the executioner, who had not yet taken his axe from an old bag he had brought with him. His confessor, approaching, gave him a medallion; and he, with an incredible tranquillity of mind, begged the father to hold the crucifix before his eyes, which he would not allow to be bound. I saw the two trembling hands of the Abbe Quillet, who raised the crucifix. At this moment a voice, as clear and pure as that of an angel, commenced the 'Ave, maris stella'. In the universal silence I recognized the voice of M. de Thou, who was at the foot of the scaffold; the people repeated the sacred strain. M. de Cinq-Mars clung more tightly to the stake; and I saw a raised axe, made like the English axes. A terrible cry of the people from the Place, the windows, and the towers told me that it had fallen, and that the head had rolled to the ground. I had happily strength enough left to think of his soul, and to commence a prayer for him.

"I mingled it with that which I heard pronounced aloud by our unfortunate and pious friend De Thou. I rose and saw him spring upon the scaffold with such promptitude that he might almost have been said to fly. The father and he recited a psalm; he uttered it with the ardor of a seraphim, as if his soul had borne his body to heaven. Then, kneeling down, he kissed the blood of Cinq-Mars as that of a martyr, and became himself a greater martyr. I do not know whether God was pleased to grant him this last favor; but I saw with horror that the executioner, terrified no doubt at the first blow he had given, struck him upon the top of his head, whither the unfortunate young man raised his hand; the people sent forth a long groan, and advanced against the executioner. The poor wretch, terrified still more, struck him another blow, which only cut the skin and threw him upon the scaffold, where the executioner rolled upon him to despatch him. A strange event terrified the people as much as the horrible spectacle. M. de Cinq-Mars' old servant held his horse as at a military funeral; he had stopped at the foot of the scaffold, and like a man paralyzed, watched his master to the end, then suddenly, as if struck by the same axe, fell dead under the blow which had taken off his master's head.

"I write these sad details in haste, on board a Genoese galley, into which Fontrailles, Gondi, Entraigues, Beauvau, Du Lude, myself, and others of the chief conspirators have retired. We are going to England to await until time shall deliver France from the tyrant whom we could not destroy. I abandon forever the service of the base Prince who betrayed us.

"MONTRESOR"

"Such," continued Corneille, "has been the fate of these two young men whom you lately saw so powerful. Their last sigh was that of the ancient monarchy. Nothing more than a court can reign here henceforth; the nobles and the senates are destroyed."

"And this is your pretended great man!" said Milton. "What has he sought to do? He would, then, create republics for future ages, since he destroys the basis of your monarchy?"

"Look not so far," answered Corneille; "he only seeks to reign until the end of his life. He has worked for the present and not for the future; he has continued the work of Louis XI; and neither one nor the other knew what they were doing."

The Englishman smiled.

"I thought," he said, "that true genius followed another path. This man has shaken all that he ought to have supported, and they admire him! I pity your nation."

"Pity it not!" exclaimed Corneille, warmly; "a man passes away, but a people is renewed. This people, Monsieur, is gifted with an immortal energy, which nothing can destroy; its imagination often leads it astray, but superior reason will ever ultimately master its disorders."

The two young and already great men walked, as they conversed, upon the space which separates the statue of Henri IV from the Place Dauphine; they stopped a moment in the centre of this Place.

"Yes, Monsieur," continued Corneille, "I see every evening with what rapidity a noble thought finds its echo in French hearts; and every evening I retire happy at the sight. Gratitude prostrates the poor people before this statue of a good king! Who knows what other monument another passion may raise near this? Who can say how far the love of glory will lead our people? Who knows that in the place where we now are, there may not be raised a pyramid taken from the East?"

"These are the secrets of the future," said Milton. "I, like yourself, admire your impassioned nation; but I fear them for themselves. I do not well understand them; and I do not recognize their wisdom when I see them lavishing their admiration upon men such as he who now rules you. The love of power is very puerile; and this man is devoured by it, without having force enough to seize it wholly. By an utter absurdity, he is a tyrant under a master. Thus has this colossus, never firmly balanced, been all but overthrown by the finger of a boy. Does that indicate genius? No, no! when genius condescends to quit the lofty regions of its true home for a human passion, at least, it should grasp that passion in its entirety. Since Richelieu only aimed at power, why did he not, if he was a genius, make himself absolute master of power? I am going to see a man who is not yet known, and whom I see swayed by this miserable ambition; but I think that he will go farther. His name is Cromwell!"

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

A cat is a very fine animal. It is a drawing-room tiger
But how avenge one's self on silence?
Deny the spirit of self-sacrifice
Hatred of everything which is superior to myself
Hermits can not refrain from inquiring what men say of them
Princes ought never to be struck, except on the head
These ideas may serve as opium to produce a calm
They loved not as you love, eh?

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS FOR THE ENTIRE CINQ MARS:

A cat is a very fine animal. It is a drawing-room tiger
A queen's country is where her throne is
Adopted fact is always better composed than the real one
Advantage that a calm temper gives one over men
All that he said, I had already thought
Always the first word which is the most difficult to say
Ambition is the saddest of all hopes
Art is the chosen truth
Artificialities of style of that period
Artistic Truth, more lofty than the True
As Homer says, "smiling under tears"
Assume with others the mien they wore toward him
But how avenge one's self on silence?
Dare now to be silent when I have told you these things
Daylight is detrimental to them
Deny the spirit of self-sacrifice
Difference which I find between Truth in art and the True in fac
Doubt, the greatest misery of love
Friendship exists only in independence and a kind of equality
Happy is he who does not outlive his youth
Hatred of everything which is superior to myself
He did not blush to be a man, and he spoke to men with force
Hermits can not refrain from inquiring what men say of them
History too was a work of art
I have burned all the bridges behind me
In pitying me he forgot himself
In every age we laugh at the costume of our fathers
In times like these we must see all and say all
It is not now what it used to be
It is too true that virtue also has its blush
Lofty ideal of woman and of love
Men are weak, and there are things which women must accomplish
Money is not a common thing between gentlemen like you and me
Monsieur, I know that I have lived too long
Neither idealist nor realist
Never interfered in what did not concern him
No writer had more dislike of mere pedantry
Offices will end by rendering great names vile
Princes ought never to be struck, except on the head
Princesses ceded like a town, and must not even weep
Principle that art implied selection
Recommended a scrupulous observance of nature
Remedy infallible against the plague and against reserve
Reproaches are useless and cruel if the evil is done
Should be punished for not having known how to punish
So strongly does force impose upon men
Tears for the future
The great leveller has swung a long scythe over France
The most in favor will be the soonest abandoned by him
The usual remarks prompted by imbecility on such occasions
These ideas may serve as opium to produce a calm
They tremble while they threaten
They have believed me incapable because I was kind
They loved not as you love, eh?
This popular favor is a cup one must drink
This was the Dauphin, afterward Louis XIV
True talent paints life rather than the living
Truth, I here venture to distinguish from that of the True
Urbain Grandier
What use is the memory of facts, if not to serve as an example
Woman is more bitter than death, and her arms are like chains
Yes, we are in the way here

