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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."

"! ! 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 granddaughter 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

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