

# PALACES AND PRISONS.

BY

MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

AUTHOR OF "MARRIED IN HASTE," "MABEL'S MISTAKE," "HEIRESS,"  
"WIVES AND WIDOWS," "DOUBLY FALSE," "MARY DERWENT,"  
"THE SOLDIER'S ORPHANS," "RUBY GRAY'S STRATEGY,"  
"REJECTED WIFE," "GOLD BRICK," "WIFE'S SECRET,"  
"THE CURSE OF GOLD," "THE OLD HOMESTEAD,"  
"SILENT STRUGGLES," "FASHION AND FAMINE."

How little art thou known, oh Liberty!  
Goddess so blindly worshiped on the earth—  
Worshiped, in broad and simple majesty,  
Most in the land which gave thee perfect birth;  
Ay, birth and baptism, not of tears and blood,  
Such as have stained thy hand in other climes:  
Not with a mockery of brotherhood,  
"Linked with some virtues and a thousand crimes;"—

But, with a mighty homage of the mind,  
We give to thee a lovely woman's form;  
Because, in that should ever be enshrined  
All things opposed to treason, war and storm.  
Thy face is beautiful; we love thy name;  
If others dye those snowy garments red,  
And drag thee downward into utter shame,  
It is not through the path where we have led.

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## PALACES AND PRISONS.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE COUNTESS AND THE DOCTOR.

A BEAUTIFUL woman—if a coarse nature ever can give beauty to faultless features—sat in one of those charming little saloons which made the Grand Trianon the gayest and most popular palace in France. She was not alone—such women usually avoid solitude; but the person who stood before her that day was so unlike any of the venal courtiers that usually surrounded her, that his presence there, in itself, was remarkable. He was a tall, spare man, a little under thirty. His hair was flaxen, soft, and of that exceeding fineness, which is seldom found except upon the head of an infant. His eyes were of a keen, variable gray, sometimes pale in their color, sometimes almost black. The face was one of remarkable refinement—exquisitely cut and perfect in the contour as the best dreams of a sculptor; the complexion pure, changeable, delicate, and fair. The least emotion brought a faint color over the forehead, which was threaded about the temples with a network of azure veins.

Never was contrast more perfect than that which existed between this man and the woman, in whose presence he was



not allowed to sit. His air, his gestures, the very bend of his person, was a protest of refinement against the coarseness which, to his sensitive nature, made her wonderful beauty repulsive. This woman was questioning him imperiously. She wanted a favor, yet had not the grace to ask it gently.

"They tell me that you have this power—then why hesitate? When a subject has the ability to serve his king, it is treason to waver."

"But, madam, I may not have the power. Our Saviour himself carried healing to the poor—never to kings; besides, it is given to man once to die. That is a law which human art cannot reach, and divine power has limited. The King of France is an old man, and, like the most humble of us, his days are numbered."

The woman started up in sudden terror.

"Is this prophecy, or is it rank treason?" she said.

"Madame, it is the simple truth. No art that I ever heard of can make an old man young; the waters of eternal youth are fabulous. Great power lies in human knowledge, but not such as you would evoke. Were it otherwise——"

The man paused, and a faint color stained the pure whiteness of his forehead. The countess seated herself. A glow of angry impatience had succeeded to her sudden panic, and she seized upon his hesitation as a wild animal snatches at food.

"Well, were it otherwise, what then?"

"Then it would be a consideration for any wise man, whether, in continuing the king's life beyond that period ordained of God, wrong might not be done to the people of France."

"Wrong done to the people of France!" cried the woman, grasping the arm of her gilded chair with angry vehemence; "the people of France! What are they but hounds, born to do the bidding of the king."

"Forgive me, Madame la Countess; but it is said——"

"Well, what is said? Some miserable absurdity, no doubt; another scandal of the people you talk of. Do not hesitate and stammer as if you were afraid—I will help you out. It is said that not long since I, myself, was one of the people—among the lowest, too. Is that it?"

The man bowed very gravely, and looked upon that beautiful face, which had long since forgotten to blush, with a sentiment of profound pity.

The woman laughed scornfully, and clenched the arm of her chair in fierce wrath.

"*You* presume to pity *me*! I might have forgiven the rest; but this you shall have good cause to remember."

The man bowed, and made a movement toward the door. His face was perfectly calm, his step even. She evidently had not terrified him by her violence.

This wonderful composure astonished the woman, who had become so used to adulation and assumed homage, that an assertion of self-respect took her by surprise.

"I have not yet dismissed you, monsieur," she said, with an effort at self-control.

The man turned again, and waited while the countess took a golden tablet from her bosom, and read a memorandum from its ivory leaves.

"This power of healing is not the most marvellous of your gifts, this memorandum tells me."

"It is the one I am most grateful for," answered the man.

"But that of divination! Tell me if it is true that in Vienna the Empress Maria Theresa sent for you to read the horoscope of her daughter, the Dauphiness of France?"

"If her majesty had so honored my poor gifts, it would be a base return to speak of it."

"But it has got out already, do you think the Countess

Du Berry can be kept ignorant of what goes on in any court of Europe? there is no longer a mystery. It is said that the Dauphiness turns pale if your name is but mentioned in her presence."

The man remained silent, and stood looking sadly on the floor. Some painful thought seemed to carry him out of that woman's presence—this gave her new offence.

"You do not listen, monsieur. Must I be compelled to speak twice?"

The man started as if he had been dreaming.

"I crave your pardon, Madame la Countess. Other thoughts came across me, and I forgot your presence. As I cannot accomplish the thing you most desire, permit me to take my leave."

"Not till you have given me a proof of the wonderful power which was sufficient to gain you admittance to the cabinet of Maria Theresa. If your prophecies could drive the blood from that proud heart, they must be worth listening to. Tell me, monsieur, of my own future. How long——"

The countess checked herself, she had not the courage to ask, in so many words, how long her evil power might last; for she knew well enough that it was limited to the life of a wicked old man, and even she shrunk from a direct question. But the man divined her reason for hesitation, and answered quietly, as if she had spoken.

"Madame la Countess forgets that to divine the king's death is treason."

"But you can tell me this. Not his death—not his death! Heaven forbid that it should be near enough for your gift of divination, whatever that may be, to reach it! But tell me of his life. He is strong, he is healthy; and men do, sometimes, live to be a hundred. Ah! if your witchcraft could tell me that, it would make you the richest man, and me the happiest woman in all France."

"But, madame——"

"Do not dispute me. I have power—help me to perpetuate it. You have great skill as a physician, if nothing more. The king's physicians are negligent, they permit him to be worried with questions of state. They allow the courtiers to disturb him with their quarrels; De Chaiseul never gave him rest, and for this he lost his portfolio. I say again, a physician who will devote himself to the health and real good of the king, who will be the friend of his friends, watchful and trustworthy, might become anything his ambition pointed out. Do not shake your head, monsieur—I ask nothing that an honest man may not perform."

"You ask everything, madame, when you desire a student to give up his pursuit of knowledge, and confine his life to any one man, though that man be King of France."

"Then you refuse me—refuse a position that would crown the highest ambition of most men?"

"Madame, I have no ambition."

The countess threw herself back in her chair and laughed aloud.

"A man with no ambition? This is a novel creature. But you are looking through the window. What is it that you see there?"

The countess started up from her chair and ran across the room, forgetting all her previous efforts at dignity in vulgar haste to learn what had drawn this strange man's attention so completely from her.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE LADY IN THE PARK.

THE object that had arrested Doctor Gosner's attention was a group of ladies sauntering beneath the trees of the Park. One, who seemed the superior of the rest, walked a little in advance. She was young, very beautiful, and paused now and then to address some of the ladies with a playful turn of the head, and a smile light and careless as that of a school-girl enjoying her holiday. She was dressed in simple white muslin, gathered up like a cloud around her slender person, and a jaunty little straw hat gave piquancy to a dress which any pretty woman in France might have worn without comment. This young person had broken a straight branch from the shrubberies as she passed through them, and was tearing away the green leaves with one ungloved hand. Once she turned her eyes toward the palace, gave a quick look around, as if she had come upon it unawares, and addressing the lady nearest to her, shook her rustic whip in playful reproach.

The countess watched every motion of this lady through the window with nervous trepidation, as if she half expected that she would enter the palace. In her anxiety she leaned out of the window so far as to become visible. The man who stood just behind her saw that the Dauphiness was seriously annoyed. The quick crimson flashed over her face, and she turned to retrace her steps with a queenly lift of the head, haughty as it was graceful.

An exclamation, so fierce that it amounted to an oath, broke from the countess; a flame of angry crimson rushed over her face, and with a rude gesture, she flung herself away from the window.

"You this Austrian, how haughtily she turned away,

as if contamination lingered in the very walls of any place I live in. Yes, as you said just now, I am one of the people, that is why she dashes that whip against her dress, as if beating away the dust of my presence from her garments. Tell me, you who profess to know everything, is it strange that I hate her?"

Dr. Gosner took no heed of this question; he was gazing after the group of ladies, silent and absorbed, while the countess paced the room to and fro, panting with noisy rage. Not till a winding path hid the group from view did he leave the window, or become aware of the angry storm that lovely woman had provoked.

"You saw her—you saw that proud lift of the head when she discovered me, as if I were the dirt under her feet, and she treading me down with her heels. Oh! she shall pay for this!"

"Yes," said the doctor, gently. "I have seen her once before in Vienna. She was very young, then, and far less beautiful. It is the Dauphiness of France. Poor lady! Poor, unhappy lady!"

"Ha! You speak as if the things they tell me were true; as if your divination had found out some great misfortune in store for her. Is it so? Is it so? I would give this right hand to be sure of it."

"Madame, I cannot answer."

"But you shall!"

The doctor smiled very gravely, but in a way that exasperated the woman, who usually found slaves to her will on every side.

"You brave me! You will do nothing that I desire!"

"I will do anything honorable that appertains to yourself, madame."

"Then sit down here. I would test your power, let it come from what source it will. Tell me of my own fate?"

"If you insist, madame, I will."

The countess went to a table, and began to array writing materials upon it; but finding no pen, she rang a bell, all crusted with jewels, and the figure of a dwarf, in a fanciful costume, presented itself at the door.

"Bring me a pen, Zamara, and see that no one approaches nearer than the ante-room."

The dwarf went out, making a bow, as he walked backward, so deep, that it amounted almost to an Oriental salam.

"That little marmoset is the only true friend I have at court, the only creature I can really trust," said the countess; and a gleam of light softened the haughty boldness of her face. "I think he loves me! Yes, I think he loves me!"

These words were said more to herself than as if she wished to be answered. So the doctor took no heed of them in words, but seated himself in a chair, which she wheeled toward the table, forgetting all her assumed dignity in an eager desire to learn something of the future.

The doctor seated himself just as Zamara came in with a pen in his hand, one of those golden and jeweled extravagances which it was the delight of this low-born woman to have about her.

Dr. Gosner took the pen, and drawing a sheet of vellum toward him, prepared to make a calculation. The countess, in her anxiety, placed herself behind him, and folding her arms on the back of his chair, watched his movements while a sensation of awe crept over her. The dwarf, Zamara, knelt down upon a cushion, which still had an imprint of the countess' foot pressed in the velvet, and regarded first one and then the other with the vigilance of a favorite dog.

Then a profound stillness fell upon the room. Gosner was making calculations on the vellum, the other two were watching him. Neither of them seemed to breathe.

At last the doctor turned his face to the woman, who was partly leaning over his shoulder.

"You will have me go on, madame?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Remember, it is only at your imperative command. From the very first I shrunk from this task."

"I will remember anything you wish, only go on."

Still he paused. She saw that his face was pale, and a quiver of light on the jeweled pen, warned her that his hand was trembling.

"Reflect," he said, very earnestly.

The countess was bold and brave to recklessness; the visible agitation of this man only made her the more determined.

"Go on! go on!" she repeated, impatiently; but her face grew white, and her eyes shone.

The dwarf sprang from his knees and caught hold of her dress.

"No, mistress, do not let him go on. It frightens you. It makes him tremble. He sees something wicked coming out from the parchment—something that will hurt you."

The countess stooped down and patted Zamara's head exactly as she would have pacified a pet spaniel.

"Go back to your cushion, marmoset," she said; "this will not hurt me. It is only writing."

"Strange writing," muttered the dwarf, with a glance at the parchment. "It is like the tracks of a spider, and spiders are venomous. I do not like it—I do not like it."

No one seemed to heed these muttered words. The doctor was absorbed by the hieroglyphics he worked out, and the countess watched him in breathless suspense. All at once he lifted his head and laid the pen down.

"We are not alone; send that child out."

"Child!" exclaimed the dwarf, laying his hand on a

little poniard that glittered in his belt. "Monsieur calls me a child, when I am twenty years of age, and stay only to protect my mistress."

The countess laughed. A few minutes before she had been white as a ghost; but rapid transitions were a part of her reckless character; the pompous bravery of this little creature was enough to change her mood.

"Go, go," she said, waving her hand; "this gentleman does not wish to hurt me. Keep watch at the door—I will call you presently."

"But should some one call?"

"Send some one away."

"What if it should be the king?"

"Oh! let the king wait!"

The low-born audacity of this answer did not astonish the dwarf, who backed out of the room, saying, between his bows, that madame should be obeyed.

"Now!" exclaimed the impatient woman, "now, monsieur, we are alone. Tell me what it is that makes your face so pale."

"Madame, you but now demanded that I should tell you what the future has in store for Marie Antoinette, who will be Queen of France."

"Will be Queen of France? When—where?"

"Have I not said it is treason to divine, or prophesy the death of the king?"

"But I absolve you—I, who have more power than any queen, pardon this treason in advance."

"Still I must not speak."

"Not when my entire destiny depends on that one question?"

"Madame, I have spoken."

"And still refuse me?"

"Madame, I still refuse!"

"This is cruel! How can I bribe—how can I force you into speaking?"

"This much I can say, as you will have the truth; before another year passes Marie Antoinette will be Queen of France."

"Before the end of another year? You are trifling with me! The king is not so very old, and his health—no, no! I will not believe that; the stars cannot tell you such horrible things. You are angry because I persisted. What is it now? Your very lips are white, your hand shakes, your eyes are looking away into the distance. What is it that you see?"

The man answered like one in a dream. His eyes grew dim, his voice was low and hoarse.

"I see a great concourse of people heaving and jostling each other along many streets, all leading into a public square, in which a scaffold stands reeking with blood, scattered over with saw-dust. Great heavens! I have seen that picture before. A cart comes lumbering through the crowd; a woman sits in the cart, her hands bound, her feet tied. She reels to and fro in the seat; her cries for mercy are mocked by the mob; the hair, cut short at the neck, has fallen over her face. She flings herself back in the agony of a last appeal, the hair sweeps aside. Woman, the face is yours!"

Gosner started up, cast a wild look on the countess, and retreated from her backward till his progress was stopped by the wall, where he stood shuddering like a man who had been aroused out of some terrible dream.

The woman seemed turned to marble. The rouge upon her cheeks stood out frightfully scarlet from the dead whiteness of her lips and face. At length she fell upon her knees by the chair she had left, threw her arms over the cushion and shrieked aloud. The dwarf rushed in, seized upon her dress, and began to cry. Gosner leaned against the wall, and must have fallen but for its support; great drops of

perspiration stood on his forehead. He had come out of that fearful trance weak as a child.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE EGYPTIAN SCARABEE.

ALL at once Madame Du Berry sprang to her feet; her audacious courage assumed all its force. She would not believe the fearful thing that man had said with so much pain.

"Go," she said to the dwarf, "there is no need of all this whimpering. The man is an imposter; my enemies have sent him here. He will boast of the fright he has given me, and they will enjoy the treat. Take your hand from that poniard, Zamara. I will deal with this false wizard alone."

Zamara crept from the room, sobbing piteously. Then the countess turned upon Gosner.

"Confess you were put up to this—some bitter enemy hoped to give me a horrible fright. Perhaps it was the Dauphiness, herself, who could not wait for a report, but came, with a crowd of her ladies, to be near when your work was done."

The doctor shook off his weakness, under this rude attack, and walked firmly toward the angry woman.

"Madame will remember that I came here by her own command—I will add now, much against my wishes. Heaven knows I do not willingly enter into a scene like the one which has just passed! It has not surprised or wounded you more than it has me."

The countess laughed. Tears stood in her eyes, and her voice broke forth in a shriek. She was hysterical with anger and affright.

"You still persist? You wish to leave me in abject terror. Know that in my whole life I—I have never been afraid. Still it would be better to tell me all. I will forgive this wicked attempt to terrify me. Make yourself sure that it has failed—miserably failed. I shall only look upon it as an absurd joke. So you may speak out, and have no fear of punishment."

"I have nothing to say, madame," answered the doctor, "save that I came here by your command, that I am now ready to retire."

"Then you will not confess? Well, yes, I will appeal to you. I shall be happier, not that I was really frightened; but I shall be happier to know that this was the work of an enemy. Make yourself sure of this, no queen ever rewarded or punished as I will reward or punish you."

"Lady, permit me to depart as I came, deserving neither reward or punishment."

Dr. Gosner moved toward the door. The countess followed him.

"Still obstinate, still faithful to my enemies. Here, take this, it once shone in the crown of France. If that is not enough, I will send Zamara to the lord treasurer for gold. Only have some compassion, and do not leave me haunted by that awful prediction. Oh, it is terrible!"

The countess took Gosner's hand and attempted to force a large diamond on his little finger; but he resisted. A ring was already there, so singular in its form that it drew her attention. In a setting of rough gold was a small beetle cut from a chrysoprase gem, and engraved with hieroglyphics. The countess gave this ring a curious glance, and with eager violence attempted to draw it from his finger in order to give place for her diamond; but he tore his hand from her grasp, exclaiming passionately,

"Not for ten thousand diamonds!"

"Why? It is but a green stone spoiled by the graver; let me look at it."

"Lady, for your own sake, forbear. When this ring leaves my finger, it will be to carry sorrow and misfortune wherever it goes. With me, or any of my blood, it brings a blessing; away from us, nothing but evil will follow it."

The countess exhibited no haste to touch the ring again, but her eyes dwelt on it curiously, until a sort of fascination possessed her. In her intense interest she seemed to forget all that had passed before.

"Tell me about it! Give me its history! In what way did it become possessed of this marvellous power of good and evil?"

"As for its history, I can tell you this much. An ancestor of mine, being warned of its existence by a power which I have no right to explain, found this stone in the sarcophagus of an Egyptian monarch, who had been inclosed in the marble many many thousand years. The gold which encircles it was found coiled around the finger of the mummy in the form of a serpent. This serpent seemed alive, its eyes were so bright and its jaws closed on the fangs with such a clinging grip. In this form my ancestor wore it during the rest of his life."

"And it gave him prosperity—happiness?"

"I have said, madame, that it brings nothing but good to any man or woman who has a drop of my ancestor's blood in his or her veins—nothing but evil to the person who has not. My ancestor, who lived centuries ago, believed that his own line ran back thousands of years through the man from whose tomb this chrysoprased was taken. He also believed that it possessed a supernatural influence on the possessor; and the ring has fallen to us from father to son as the most precious inheritance that ever descended for generations in one family."

"Always bringing happiness?" inquired the countess.

"The man who wears this ring finds all knowledge easy

to him—and knowledge to the men of our house is in itself happiness."

"But it is sure to carry mental blindness and ruin into any strange line?"

"So the tradition connected with the ring assures us."

"Has it never passed out of the direct line?"

"Once."

"And what happened?"

"The man who stole it died a maniac, with the ring upon his finger."

"And you would not part with it for gold or honors?"

The doctor only answered with a smile—the idea seemed impossible to him.

Madame put the diamond slowly back upon her finger, still keeping her eyes wistfully on the Egyptian relic. All at once her countenance changed; an idea flashed through her brain, and shone upon her face. She waved her hand in dismissal.

Dr. Gosner gladly accepted this permission to withdraw from a presence which, from the first, had been hateful to him. The moment he was gone, madame snatched up the bell and rang it sharply. Zamara answered it.

"Tell one of my people to follow that man even to Paris, if it is necessary; trace him to his abode, wherever it is. Then, and not till then, I shall expect my messenger back. Quick, Zamara, for he walks fast; glad to escape."

The Indian dwarf made a hurried salam, and left the room. In a few moments madame had the pleasure of seeing one of her retainers, whose talent as a spy she could depend on, stealthily following the track of her late visitor.



## CHAPTER IV.

## KING LOUIS THE FIFTEENTH.

THE two spies had scarcely disappeared when Madame Du Berry observed an old man walking deliberately along the grand avenue leading to the palace.

"Ah! how fortunate! I might have been compelled to wait, but for this. He seems in good-humor, too; but I am trembling yet. Mon Dieu, how I tremble! That awful shock has shaken every nerve in my body. He will see that I am disturbed, and, perhaps, ask the cause. For the world, I would not tell him. Zamara! Zamara!"

The dwarf, who was waiting close by the door, entered instantly.

"Wine, Zamara!"

The dwarf turned, and directly came back with a salver, on which was a crystal flask, full of wine, and a tall glass, engraved with a frost-work of vine-leaves. Madame forbade him to kneel, and filled the glass herself, draining it like a bar-maid.

"Now go," she said; "the king must not be kept waiting."

She need not have been in so much haste, for the old man coming up the avenue, walked but slowly. He seemed to enjoy the sunshine of that pleasant day, and lingered in it as an idle old man might, to whom a degree of weariness was to be endured every day of his life. Still, if he walked slowly, it was with a jaunty affectation of youth, which his costume and singularly handsome features carried out with some appearance of truth. As the sun shone down upon his coat of plum-colored velvet, with all its rich bordering of embroidery—on the little hat, surmounting a peruke of flowing brown hair, and the soft, mist-like lace fluttering at

his wrists and bosom, the picture was far more youthful than it would have appeared at a closer view, or with less elaborate appointments. As he walked daintily forward in his high-heeled shoes, on which the diamond-buckles shot out a tiny flame with each lift of the foot, the old monarch—for this man was Louis the Fifteenth—saw the flutter of a rose-colored dress at one of the palace-windows, and paused long enough to kiss his hand.

"Thank heaven, he is in excellent humor!" exclaimed the countess, moving restlessly around the room, and hiding the parchment Dr. Gosner had made his calculations on beneath a cushion. "This will make my task easy."

She was right; the old monarch was in high spirits that day. Like a school-boy, he had escaped from the etiquette of Versailles, and sought an hour of relaxation in the pretty palace which, from its very proportions, gave some idea of a home.

The countess stood near the door of her saloon, waiting to receive him, her eyes sparkling and her cheeks flushed with the wine she had been drinking. The nervous shock she experienced, subsided into what seemed a pleasant excitement.

The king came in a little tired from his long walk, and breathing quickly. There was no ceremony in his reception. The woman knew well enough that half the charm of that place lay in an entire want of formality. She wheeled a chair near the window, placed a gilded footstool for the old man's feet, when he sat down, and settling herself on the floor close by it, began to chat with the careless grace of a spoiled child. It was not till just as he was going away in high good-humor, that she ventured on the object that had all the time been uppermost in her mind.

"One minute—do not go quite yet, my friend; I have a little favor to ask."

"Oh! that is why you have insisted on keeping at my



feet," laughed the old man.. "One must pay for an hour like this. Well, well, if the price is not heavy, we will consider it."

The countess went to a table, and brought back a small portfolio, which she opened upon one knee, sinking the other gently to the floor.

"Only a little signature—just one."

She held out a paper, on which some lines had been hastily written by her own hand. The king took it with a little hesitation, and holding it a long way from his eyes, read the contents.

"What! another *lettre-de-cachet*!" he exclaimed, a good deal disconcerted. "Do you know, my friend, these things are getting far too common. The people are beginning to question them. Will nothing else content you?"

"Nothing else, sire. Why, it is three weeks since I have asked for one—and my enemies are so many."

"Ah! I know; but this name—I have never heard of it. Who is the wretched man?"

"He is a sorcerer, sire. It is not a day since he terrified me fearfully in this very room."

"In this room! How did an unknown man get here?"

"He bribed Zamara to give him access, under pretence of presenting a petition, and once here, said horrible things, threatening me with death."

"Ha!"

"And saying, that to save the king's life was rank treason."

"Give me a pen."

She opened the portfolio wide, spread it across his knees, and went to the table for a pen. Her hand shook as she reached it toward him, and he remarked it.

"I know! I know!" she said. "The fright has not left me yet."

Louis signed the order, which was to bury Dr. Gosner in

one of the gloomiest vaults of the Bastille, and laying it in the portfolio, handed it and the pen back to the countess.

"It will be very difficult for this bold man to frighten you hereafter," he said, rising a little wearily. "Such audacity must be checked. You will know how to put the order in force?"

"Always gracious, always good!" exclaimed the countess. "Ah, sire! if you could read all the gratitude in my heart!"

"I am just now content to read it in those eyes. Adieu! or rather, *au revoir*, sweet friend!"

The woman permitted Louis to go. She was anxious to see him depart, that she might use the cruel order he had just signed. She watched him eagerly till he disappeared behind the trees of the Park, then rang her bell for Zamara before seating herself to write a note, which she completed without looking up, though the Indian dwarf stood by her chair within a minute after her bell sounded.

"Take this," she said, sealing the note which inclosed the *lettre-de-cachet*, "deliver this yourself, and at once. Do not return to me until you know that this audacious man is on his way to the Bastille. Above all things, say that I want the ring from his left hand. Without that, do not dare to look on my face again."

"Madame shall be obeyed," said the dwarf, taking the letter and darting from the room.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE DWARF AND THE DAUPHINESS.

ON the second day after this scene in the favorite's bower room, Zamara came unsummoned into the presence of his

mistress, and laid a ring, with its green scarabee in her hand. She started up with a shriek, and dashed the ring from her vehemently.

The dwarf picked up the ring, and stood holding it with a frightened look, astonished at the excitement it had occasioned.

"Madame commanded that Zamara should not return without it," he said, with tears in his eyes. "Is it wrong?"

"Lay it down—do not touch it, Zamara. Yet stay. An hour—a single hour can do little harm. Zamara, do you know the palace? Have you ever been at Versailles?"

"Often, madame. No one regards Zamara when he is not in these clothes, especially if it should be night."

"Could you find your way into the apartments occupied by the Dauphiness, Zamara?"

"To give madame pleasure, Zamara would find his way anywhere."

The countess patted the dwarf's head with her white and beautiful hand.

A small enameled box stood on a *chiffonniere* among other articles of expensive jewelry. She opened the box, and bade Zamara drop the ring into it; then she folded the box in a piece of silver paper, and gave it again to the dwarf.

"You understand," she said, "this must go directly into the hands of the Dauphiness?"

"Madame, I understand."

"And you will convey it there, at once?"

"At once."

"But how? It must be done secretly, or you may come to harm, Zamara."

"The harm will be welcome, if it comes in madame's service," answered the dwarf.

"Then go. It is getting late, shadows are gathering over the Park; but be careful. If any one sees you, say that you have a message for the king. There is not a creature in the palace who will dare molest you. Stay, I will write."

The dwarf waited patiently till madame had completed a fanciful little note, which she gave to his charge. Concealing this with the box in his bosom, the dwarf set forth on his errand.

It was no unusual thing for Zamara to be seen coming and going to the king's apartments; but that night he seemed lost in the vast building, and wandered about from room to room, hiding when the guards appeared, and darting across each illuminated space like some deer in an open glade. At last he found himself in a wing of the vast palace that he had never visited before. The dwarf passed several persons unavoidably on his way; but if any one observed him, he asked innocently if the king was yet at dinner, and passed on.

At length, after trying several keys, he entered a spacious bedchamber, dimly lighted, and rendered somewhat gloomy from the massive high bed mounted on a dais, from which curtains of crimson damask swept almost from the frescoed ceiling to the floor. In a smaller room, beyond this chamber, Zamara saw a toilet brilliantly lighted up, and a casket of jewels lying open upon it, from which a rope of pearls had fallen loosely, and lay gleaming like frozen moonlight across an azure satin cushion, on which the casket was placed.

Zamara knew that this was Marie Antoinette's dressing-room. He moved across the bedchamber cautiously, and looked in. The room was empty, but a robe of some glittering white gauze lay upon a sofa near the toilet; and near that was a pair of white satin shoes, with high, red heels, and an enormous pearl in the center of each rosette. These

preparations warned the dwarf that he might any moment be discovered. Quick as lightning he darted across the room, removed the casket from its azure cushion, and laid the enameled box, containing the scarabee, in its place. Before his hand left the box, he heard voices, and a gush of sweet laughter, as of young persons approaching and conversing together. That minute the room was empty again.

Zamara had just found time to flee across the bedchamber and hide himself behind the voluminous curtains, when the Dauphiness came into the dressing-room, followed by several of her ladies. She had just come up from dining in public, where some strange characters among the people, permitted by an old custom, to see the monarch dine, had excited her mirthfulness.

The Indian looked upon her with admiration, increased by her youth and wonderful beauty; the light from a dozen wax-tapers fell upon her rounded arms, shaded at the elbows with a mist of lace; and her neck, white as the purest leaves of a water-lily, gleaming through a kerchief of lace so thin that it lay upon it like a shadow. That string of pearls had fallen entirely from the casket when Zamara lifted it from the cushion, and this attracted the attention of the Dauphiness. She stooped and took them from the floor; then saw that the casket had been removed, and its place occupied.

"What is this?" she exclaimed, unfolding the silver-paper, and opening the box. "Some new gift from my august father-in-law, no doubt. How strange! Look ladies! what a singular thing!"

She took the Egyptian ring from its box and examined it curiously. "A beetle with such strange writing on its breast; a serpent coiled around it. Some valuable antique, I suppose."

"A talisman, rather, which will bring good fortune to

your Highness, and to France," said one of the ladies in waiting. "I have heard of such things."

"And I," said the Dauphiness, removing one of the many jewels from her finger, and putting the scarabee in its place. "It seems to have come here by a miracle, and we will at least test its virtues."

Here the dressing-room door was closed, and Zamara stole from his hiding-place.

An hour after he rushed into the presence of his mistress, wild with triumph.

"Madame! Oh, madame! she has got it! She accepts! I saw the serpent coiled around her finger! It looked alive—it looked alive!"

In her gratitude for this evil act, the Countess Du Berry drew Zamara, the dwarf, toward her, and kissed him on the forehead.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### HOUSEHOLD FAMINE.

A NARROW street in the heart of Paris; houses on each side, towering up so high that the sunshine never reached the earth upon which they stood; and those who lived in the lower stories scarcely knew what it was to see a gleam of pure light from Christmas to Christmas. The houses, solid, old, and moss-grown at the base, were crowded with human beings, who would gladly have worked for a livelihood, had any work been attainable in Paris that cruel season.

But there was stagnation in trade, and distress in all the land. Those who depended on toil for their daily bread, found all their efforts insufficient to appease the incessant cravings of hunger, which was a terrible disease all over

France that year. But there was no work. Those who controlled capital held it close, thus paralyzing trade and adding to the general distress. Thousands and thousands of those who longed to be, in fact, the working people of Paris, suffered terribly for food. This want was felt all through the neighborhood we speak of. Scarcely a family within sight of it had enjoyed a sufficiency of food for weeks. Poverty drove them from story to story, while it kept them almost too weak to climb the stairs as they multiplied upward.

In a small room, under the roof of one of these houses, two women sat in idleness. They would have been glad to work, but that poor privilege was denied to them. They would more gladly have eaten something, but all the provisions they had in the room would scarcely have set forth the ghost of a meal. Still this destitution was borne with a sort of cheerful patience, which nothing but a native of France could have maintained under such circumstances. There was no abandonment to despondency—hunger had, sometimes, made these two females serious, but seldom morose; their burden of life grew heavier day by day, but up to this time it had not broken down the patience which is the most beautiful part of womanhood.

They sat together in the darkening room, two worn and half-famished creatures, wondering if the morrow would have something in store for them with a sort of forlorn hope, which neither had the spirit to express.

These two suffering women were mother and daughter; yet the mother was not at full mid-age, and a powerful constitution made her seem younger than she really was. She was handsome, too, spite of the famine that had pinched her features, and given that hungry light to her eyes. A large, fine woman, of the English type, full of natural health and energy this person had been only a year before; now she was subdued and broken down by sheer physical want.

The young girl who sat near her was a fair, gentle blonde, very thin, white and delicate: her great, blue eyes enlarged with craving; and her mouth tremulous, like that of an infant denied of its innocent wishes.

The woman had just come in from a long, long walk through country roads; her shoes were heavy with clinging mud, and all the edges of her dress were soiled. The girl noticed this, and said, with some anxiety,

"Mother, have you been far?"

"Yes, Marguerite, very far. Once more I have been to Versailles."

"And for no good?"

"For no good! The guard refused me at the gate."

These words were uttered with profound despondency. The poor woman closed her eyes, and leaned her head against the wall of the room as they left her lips, as if about to sleep or die. Marguerite started up and went to her, shivering with mingled pain and nervousness.

"Mamma! mamma!"

The woman was insensible. She had been walking all day without food, and come home hopeless. This had never happened before; through many a weary year of disappointment and pain that noble form had held its strength, but it gave way now, and a cold whiteness settled upon her. To her child she seemed dead.

"Oh! my poor, poor mamma! What can I do?" she cried out, wringing her hands in utter helplessness, for there was not even a cup of water in the room.

"Monsieur! Monsieur Jacques!"

The frightened girl beat her hands against the partition which divided her room from that of some poor neighbor; and cried out in her despair, "Monsieur Jacques! Monsieur Jacques!"

Directly a heavy and most singular man appeared at the door with his coat off, and an iron crucible in his hand.

"What is it, Marguerite, my child? What is hurting you!"

Marguerite came toward the man, and seized hold of his arms with both hands.

"Monsieur Jacques, she is dead. Look, look! the great God has taken her away from me!"

The poor girl was too horror-stricken for tears; but her face was so wild and white that the strange man flung his crucible on the floor, spattering the hot lead it held over the threshold, where it gleamed like silver. The next moment found the head of that insensible woman on his bosom, and his face close to hers. He was listening for her breath.

The girl stood by, mute as stone, watching him with her wild, blue eyes, that seemed twice their usual size. At last the man spoke,

"No, little one, she is not dead. Give me your hand, I will make you sure."

Marguerite reached forth her hand, and Jacques laid it on the wrist he was handling. The well-formed hand fell down from his hold in limp immobility; but Marguerite, after bending her head a little while, cried out joyfully as an infant does when it hears a watch tick, "Oh! my good God! It beats—it beats!"

The girl fell down upon her knees, and, covering her face with both hands, kept repeating amid her tears,

"It beats—it beats! She is alive!"

"Yes, little one, she is alive. Do not cry! Do not cry so!"

The girl looked up, radiant in spite of her pallor and her tears.

"Oh, Monsieur Jacques! it is because I am so happy! How kind the good God is! How he makes us think light of trouble that seemed so great! Only this morning I was so sad, weeping because she must go out, and no

breakfast; not a morsel of bread; not a drop of milk—in short, nothing. It was the third morning I had seen this, and it made my heart sick with trouble. But now that is so little, I smile at it. I have her here alive—she breathes—she opens her eyes! Oh, mamma! you have been so close to death, I thought you had gone and was about to die myself. Only for that tiny flutter in your wrist I could not have helped it. Ah! you know all about it. You look into my eyes, and say in your heart, 'How this poor child loves me. She is worth living for.'"

Here Monsieur Jacques put Marguerite on one side with his hand, in which was a lump of brown bread. In the other he held a cup of water.

"Let her eat this, little one; then she will be strong, and tell us how all this happened."

Marguerite reached out her hand for the bread.

"Oh, monsieur! let me give it to her. I so longed to see her eat it from my hand; but then it is yours—I have no right."

Jacques was holding the woman's head on his arm. She was conscious,—her eyes were wide open,—but quiet from perfect exhaustion. He surrendered the bread into those outstretched hands with a smile that illuminated his grim face into something better than beauty ever was to a man.

Marguerite held the water to her mother's lips, and then placed a morsel of bread between them. This was feebly swallowed. At that moment, made aware that food was near, the woman started up, snatched at the bread, and devoured it ravenously. Marguerite began to cry again at this; then she laughed through her tears, and turned to Jacques, who looked on with two great tears rolling down his cheeks. Seizing his two hands, she fell to kissing them rapturously.

"It is you that I must thank. Where did you get it? bread, and such bread, all of flour; the last we had was half

fern, that made our throats dry. She would not eat, but gave it all to me, saying that she had plenty put away, but liked to eat it by herself. That was wrong, very wrong; it cheated me into eating so much. Do you know, Monsieur Jacques, I fear—nay, I feel sure that she has eaten nothing. Oh! mamma, mamma! if I forgive you, it will be after you have eaten every crumb of monsieur's bread."

The woman, who had been devouring the bread like a hungry wolf, now dropped the last crust from her hands.

"Forgive me! I had forgotten you, little one; but the day was so long, and I walked fast both ways."

Marguerite replaced the fragment of bread in her mother's hands.

"Eat it all!" she said. "I have had enough, haven't I, Monsieur Jacques?"

"Plenty," answered the man. "Never fear; there is yet another loaf—the baker is my friend. Besides, I have made a discovery."

"A discovery! What?" cried Marguerite. "I can believe anything since we have food. See, mamma is listening. Where shall we look for this discovery?"

"Here, in this house."

"Here?"

"Yes, in the roof. We have been close to it all the time. What the people want is, first bread, then arms."

"Well, monsieur."

"And ammunition. Look!"

Jacques pointed to the crucible, which lay upon the floor, and the bright metal which covered the threshold, like a fantastic embroidery. Marguerite shook her head; she could understand nothing of this.

"There is plenty of it under the roof and about the old windows. The people want arms, powder, bullets—I make them, you understand. See, I gather this up—no harm is done. I melt it over again, run it into a mold, that you

shall see—for Jacques not only works for the people, but he invents. Then I take my bag of bullets to the proper place, do a little work where I can get it, and come back with a pocket full of sous, enough for a little bread that is all flour, such as madame has eaten. So do not fear that she will faint again. To-morrow shall be a holiday—I don't just now remember the saint, but we will find one to suit us, or do without. Between us, little one, saints are getting out of fashion since liberty took the lead—not that I like it altogether, mark; but we will have our holiday. In the morning I will go to market—that is, you shall go with me, and I will buy you six eggs, a sprig of parsley, perhaps an onion, who knows, with some milk, and—but it does not do so well when we promise overmuch; still make sure of this, it will be a feast providing we can get the work."

Marguerite smiled, and took both her mother's cold hands in hers.

"You hear, mamma, it is to be a feast!"

"Yes, I hear," answered the woman, brightening into new life. Give me plenty of food and I can do anything."

"Ah!" said Marguerite, with a sigh. "Even food will not bring *him* out of the Bastille."

Monsieur Jacques laughed.

"The want of it may: people who starve are strong as giants. It is hunger which makes lions fierce; famish a man, and he becomes a wild beast. Food may not relieve your father, my little friend; hunger can—but for that what would my bullets be worth?"

The woman, who was listening keenly to all this, sat upright, and you could see the strong vitality of a great idea kindling through her frame.

"Go on, Monsieur Jacques, your words are worth more than the bread; they give life to ideas."

"Yes, I know. We have found a saint worth all the

martyrs in the calendar—nay, we must not call it a saint, but a goddess. Let the clergy take their saints; we want something to work for, not to pray to.”

The woman’s eyes grew bright as stars. Hunger had made them supernaturally large.

“This very day I would have knelt to the king. After so many years of waiting, I had made up my mind to speak to him, or be trampled under the feet of his horses; but though I fell upon the earth, it was of no avail, they would not allow me to reach him. Oh! those nobles are hard, hard as the rock. He did not look that way; so many persons surrounded him that I could no more get through them, or reach him, than I could have stopped an army.

“The king was on his way to Meudon, to hunt, they told me, and no one must impede the way. So they went by, horses and men, spattering me with mud. Ah! how grand they were, how their clothes shone and glittered! How rosy and plump they looked, while I was famishing, and *he* in the depths of the Bastille. Ah, Monsieur Jacques! there is a great gulf between the good king and his people. Who will fill it up?”

“Wait,” said Jacques—“wait and work.”

“Ah! but mamma has already worked so hard,” said Marguerite, kissing her mother with pathetic tenderness. “It is my turn now. I will find something to do, if it is only to open and shut the mold in which Monsieur Jacques runs his bullets.”

“But can you do nothing better than that, little one?”

“Oh, many things!” answered the girl. “I can embroider beautifully, and make the loveliest things—but who will employ me? I have tried, oh! so hard, to get work.”

“No doubt, no doubt; but then work is the thing which no one can get in Paris. Even the earth refuses

to do her part, and lets the seed dry up in her bosom, that is why France is so restless. But madame has just made a revelation—she spoke of some one in the Bastille.”

“She spoke of my father,” said Marguerite, in a sad, low voice.

“And is he in that awful place?”

“Sit down, monsieur, and I will tell you,” said the elder lady, “for you are almost the only friend we have, and I must confide in some one.”

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE PRISONER OF THE BASTILLE.

JACQUES sat down, and Mrs. Gosner went on with her narrative.

“We have not always been so poor as this—far from it. My husband was the lateral descendant from a noble house; my own blood is not altogether plebeian.”

Jacques nodded his head, and muttered,

“I thought so.”

Madame went on,

“My husband was a born subject of the empress. He was a learned man—nay, he had higher powers than mere learning can give. In some things he was great.”

Monsieur Jacques started up suddenly, and struck a table near him with his clenched hand. Some idea had evidently excited him.

“Your name is Gosner—Dr. Gosner. I understand—I understand; but go on.”

“The fame of my husband’s powers reached Marie Theresa at her court. She sent for him not long after our marriage. It was just before her daughter came to France.



He went, but returned greatly disturbed, and for days was haunted by some distressing remembrance. When we mentioned the Dauphiness, he would turn pale, and go off alone, as if afraid of something. But this changed. He became tranquil as ever, and plunged deeper and deeper into those sciences which were his very life. Some happy years went by. One day my husband received a letter from France. It had come all the way by a courier in the king's livery, who was ordered to escort the doctor to Versailles, where some person high at court wished to consult with him.

This summons disturbed us greatly. Instead of being pleased that his renown as a physician had extended so far, he looked upon the summons as a presage of evil. I felt differently, glorying in my husband. I rejoiced that his great learning, and still greater powers, had won this invitation to the court of Louis the Fifteenth, and urged his departure. He went sadly enough."

The woman paused here, and seemed to struggle with her voice against some choking sensation.

"Well?" questioned Monsieur Jacques.

Madame Gosner answered in a single sentence.

"He never came back!"

"Truly, he never did come back," repeated Monsieur Jacques, with a strange smile.

"He was away a long time—no word came to us about him. We inquired of every one who had been in France, but no tidings. At last we believed him dead. Knowing that he had arrived in Paris, we sent a person, who knew him well, to get certain tidings of his fate. This person traced him to Versailles, learned that he entered the Grand Trianon, and remained there more than an hour. It was the palace in which that vile woman, Madame Du Berry, lived. After that he returned to Paris, eat some supper at the house where he lodged, and went out for a walk. A man was waiting near the door, who joined him, and they went off together. That is all."

"And you have never heard of him since?" questioned Monsieur Jacques.

"Not till last year. Then a letter reached me, written on a scrap of soiled paper, and dated at the Bastille. It was in his handwriting, and bore his signature; but it said little that I could understand. This much was certain. Years and years my husband had been shut up in the horrible place. There had been no crime, no charge—and his imprisonment threatened to be eternal. Sometimes prisoners were taken out of their subterranean dungeons, and permitted to breathe the air; but he had no such privilege. Day after day, month after month, year after year, he saw no one but his keeper, who seldom spoke, but was not devoid of pity. Once he had given him a scrap of paper; on this he pierced some letters with a pin; and after waiting months and months, got it carried out into the world by a man who——"

"Who was called to mend the ponderous locks of his dungeon. I was the man."

"You, Monsieur Jacques—you?"

"I remember him well—a tall, thin man, with hair white as spun silk, and a beard falling down his bosom; the face white, and pure as an infant's; the eyes luminous, even in the darkness of his dungeon. Was this like your husband, madame?"

"It was my husband, no doubt."

"This I saw as the keeper left me for a single minute. Then the prisoner came eagerly toward me, his long white finger on his lips, his eyes burning and eager. Thrusting that paper into my hand, he whispered a name and an address. 'Send it!' he said. 'For the love of God, send it!' His hands shook, his face quivered, his teeth knocked together with affright, for he saw the jailor coming back, and feared him.

"I thrust the paper into my bosom, saying only, 'I



will.' He could not answer, for the man was near, but instantly the fire in his eyes was quenched in tears; he crept back to his corner, and sat down, with both hands to his face, weeping.

"What was he saying?" demanded the jailor, looking at me keenly. 'I saw his lips move.'

"Did you?" I answered, carelessly twisting a screw in its socket. 'I did not observe, ask him.'

"My careless answer disarmed the man of his suspicions; but he did not leave me again for a moment; and when I asked the prisoner's name, he answered, 'We have no names here. This man has a number—that is all.'

"But how long has he been here?" I asked.

"Since the year in which Louis the Fifteenth died," he said.

"The prisoner started up, and reached forth his hands imploringly, 'Is the old king dead?' he questioned. 'Then she is queen! Will no one tell her that an innocent man suffers here? Is there no mercy in any human heart?'

"The jailor answered him by a heavy clang of the door, and a grinding noise of the lock I had just mended. I came away with the paper in my bosom, and sent it to the name whispered in my ear when it was given. It was the name of some curé in a town of Germany."

"It was for me, that poor prisoner's wife," cried the woman, who had been listening with intense interest. "The curé sent it to me—and then I knew that my husband was alive, and in the Bastille. It was like a revelation from the grave."

"It was that scrap of paper, pierced with pinholes, that brought you here?" said Monsieur Jacques. "It was to save him that you came to Paris?"

"Yes; in less than a week we set forth. Marguerite had almost forgotten her father; but she was restless to go in

search of him. The little property we had was almost gone, but we turned it into money, and came away. Oh! it was a terrible undertaking. Day after day, I wandered about that grim building hoping, in a wild fashion, that some chance would give me sight of him—but nothing came of it. I knew that he was there, and the knowledge wounded the heart in my bosom; but in Paris I was helpless as in Germany. How would I get him from underneath that grim pile of stones? It was like beating myself against a rock. I went to men learned in the law; I wrote petitions, and gave money to have them presented to the king; I made vain efforts to get speech of him; but all was useless, our money melted away, my strength left me; from one place to another we were driven here, helpless and starving, and oh my God! he is in that hideous dungeon yet!"

"Take courage, my friend; it will not be forever. Do not let those poor hands fall so despondently in your lap. Better times are coming. All these terrible grievances will be laid before the king. He is not cruel; some day he will open the doors of that awful Bastille, and let the people look in. They are getting curious, impatient. No power can keep them much longer in the dark. I have seen it; they thought me a blacksmith, for I went in place of a man who had taught me something of his craft; for, madame, it is my pleasure to know everything, and, like the king, I have a taste for working in iron. I went over more than one of those hideous dungeons, and saw their inmates. What I saw was given to the clubs, and in that way to the people. They are learning all the secrets walled-in by that pile of stone. The knowledge ferments—let it work. By-and-by we shall know what it is to arouse millions of slaves to a knowledge that liberty exists."

The two women looked at the strange man in supreme wonder; his eyes glowed, his figure drew itself up erectly; his right arm was extended, as if addressing an audience. The glow of a powerful enthusiasm was upon him.

The elder woman stood up, the food she had taken made her strong; this man's enthusiasm extended itself to her.

"I have knelt this day in the street, only to be covered with mud," she said. "I have worked, starved, entreated, that an innocent man might be taken from a dungeon worse than the grave, and all to no avail. Others suffer as I do; other women have seen their husbands buried alive, and have heard the cries of their own anguish mocked by the nobility, which stands between the people and their king. Tell me what to do, and if human will can accomplish anything, it shall be done. Marguerite, come hither."

The young girl came at her mother's bidding, an earnest light in her eyes, a faint glow on her face. Her father was in prison, her mother only an hour before had fainted from want of nourishment. She thought of this, and her gentle nature was aroused to profound sympathy. The mother took her hand, holding it firmly as she bent down and kissed the white forehead uplifted to her face.

"We have been selfish, my child," she said. "In our own troubles we have forgotten others. What can two helpless women accomplish against wrongs that have grown strong under centuries of endurance? My child, in ourselves we are nothing; united with others equally unfortunate we may do much. France has wronged us terribly—it is my motherland. It was I who persuaded him to come and cast himself into dangers that seized upon him, as wild beasts snatch their prey. 'The king has sent for you,' I said. 'The king is France.' I was wrong, the king is not France—his people cannot reach him; his heart is good and generous, but who can appeal to it, standing so far off. Still, France is France, and this king is not the old one; he continues abuses, but does not originate them."

Monsieur Jacques listened earnestly. He looked from madame to her daughter, in wonder. Their energy had enkindled a new idea in his ardent nature. He saw in it an

element of strength that would be wielded with force when the time of redemption arrived. The power and pride of a Roman matron lay in that woman, who was lifted far above those with whom poverty forced her to associate. Her intellect was quick and grasping; she comprehended like a man, and felt like a woman—of such characters among men leaders are formed. How would it prove with her own sex? Could she control that subtle element? Would enthusiasm awake to the glance of her eyes, and ignorance follow her lead unquestioning?"

Monsieur looked upon her as she stood, tall, naturally robust, and proud, flinging off all selfish weakness, and ready to suffer for her country, as she had already suffered for her husband, alas! in vain. Then he turned to Marguerite, fair and delicate as a lily; and saw in her beauty another spirit of power; for this man had but one grand idea—and that was "*Liberty!*"

"You think as she does?" he questioned, laying his hand upon her head solemnly, as if consecrating her.

"Let her think for me, I am too young. Where she goes, I will go; where she dies, I, too, will die!"

Her words were low and solemn; sweet as the rustle of living flowers, but resolute, too. The girl felt their import, though she did not as yet understand the magnitude of her concession.

"Those who dedicate themselves to liberty have no sex," said Monsieur Jacques. "Men and women suffer alike; let them resist alike."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

As Monsieur Jacques was speaking, a knock sounded at the door—a fierce, loud knock, as if the person without had become impatient.

Jacques was going toward the door, when it was flung open, and a man entered—a large, powerful man, dressed carelessly, but with something of courtliness; for his clothes were of rich material, and slightly adorned with embroidery; but his hair was of its natural warm brown, thick, wavy, and abundant, giving a leonine power to the great head, remarkable, because it was free of powder, and fell downward in natural waves, which stirred heavily whenever he turned.

“Monsieur le count! I did not expect you so early.”

“So it seems,” answered the man, glancing at Madame Gosner, with mischievous significance. “But I beg pardon; hearing voices in this room, I supposed you had changed lodgings, and came in more rudely than madame will forgive, I fear.”

The rough manner which had marked this person on his entrance, changed to the most elegant courtliness the instant he saw Marguerite standing near her mother. The hat was instantly lifted from his head, and once more he begged leave to apologize.

He came in search of his foster-brother, and had no idea of the company he was honored in finding himself.

The contrast of this man’s address, which was soft and persuasive, with the rude grandeur of his head, had a sort of fascination in it. The two ladies felt themselves transferred back to the saloons which nature and education had given them a right to enter. In this man the energy of

the people seemed blended with the elegance of the court; thus they found him in harmony with old memories and recent ideas.

Madame received his apologies with the grace of a Roman matron. She waved her hand toward one of the rude chairs, and requested him to be seated, while Monsieur Jacques, recovering from his surprise, presented his visitor as the Count De Mirabeau.

Mirabeau seated himself, and began to converse; his words were directed entirely toward Marguerite, who listened in breathless awe to his brilliant sayings, without dreaming that they were all intended for her; and that each glance of those eyes were sent to measure their effect.

In this presence Monsieur Jacques allowed himself to subside into insignificance. He spoke in monosyllables, and sat with his hands clasped, as if in adoration of the talent which broke forth in every word this strange man uttered.

Marguerite, too, was fascinated and enthralled. At first the exceeding ugliness of their visitor had repelled her; but the moment he spoke, this feeling changed, and she listened with all her soul, and that shone in her beautiful eyes.

Count Mirabeau saw all this, as only a man of quick intellect and insatiable vanity can observe. He soon discovered that the surroundings of these two women were far inferior to the rank to which they were entitled—and this both inspired and surprised him. In his own person he blended so much of the extremes of social life—coarse strength with vivid imagination, pride of birth and pride of humanity—that a wild sympathy for these two persons awoke almost to a passion in his nature at the first sight. They were refined, delicate, sensitive, yet still of the people, suffering with them, and, to a certain extent, feeling with them.

If Count Mirabeau had any fixed ideas at this time, they were vague and incomplete, shifting and changing with the current of public opinion, which was firm only to one fixed point, a concentration of power in the people. Mirabeau had watched the storm rising, which was to devastate all France, with the interest of a man born to lead in tempests. How the whirlwind, which he saw gathering, might rage, he, probably, had no idea. Events rush forward in revolutions with a force that defies individual strength; but he was a man to seize upon every means of power as they presented themselves; and even now, with that lovely girl and the stately woman before him, he was calculating how far they might be made available to his ambition.

After a little, Mirabeau arose, and, with a graceful reverence, such as he might have denied to a queen, left the room; begging permission to call again when he might have the happiness to be of service to the ladies.

Monsieur Jacques followed him, looking proudly back upon his friends.

"How strange, how grand, how ugly!" said Marguerite, drawing a deep breath as the door closed. "Oh! if kings were like him, we should not plead in vain!"

Madame Gosner answered with less emotion. She was wondering if this man, who seemed both of the court and the people, would be able to aid her in the one great wish of her life. If he had that power, she was ready to become his slave.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### COUNT DE MIRABEAU AND MONSIEUR JACQUES.

MIRABEAU and Monsieur Jacques went to a neighboring chamber and sat down together; for, strange as the

contrast was between them, they were foster-brothers, and a stronger tie than that of absolute kinship existed between them.

"Well, Jacques, where did you find these people? Who are they?" inquired the count, flinging himself into a chair, and reaching forth his hand for that of his foster-brother. "The demoiselle is beautiful. It is a sin to find her here."

Jacques gave a succinct account of his acquaintance with the mother and daughter, and repeated, word for word, the conversation he had held with them that evening.

Mirabeau listened eagerly. There was romance in this—a mother and daughter devoting their lives to the hope of winning freedom for an innocent man, had something sublime in it, which kindled his imagination, and touched all that was good in his heart. He took out a well-worn purse, which contained only a piece or two of gold, and emptied it on the table.

"See that there is no more starvation. Women like these must not be permitted to suffer," he said, thrusting the empty purse back into a pocket of his dress. "The girl is beautiful, the mother simply grand."

"Ah! but the young lady is so good," answered Jacques, who did not feel quite satisfied with this sudden interest.

"Good, very possible—I am no judge; but she is fair as a lily, and bright as a sunbeam. Did my face terrify her, Jacques?"

"Your face, Count Mirabeau—how should it? Why, your face is magnificent, grand—it is that I glory in most of anything."

Jacques believed all that he was saying. In his heart great love had glorified that massive head, with its shock of ruddy hair, into something beautiful. He heard the question put to him with genuine surprise, as if some one had disputed the brightness of the sun; but Count Mirabeau

understood himself better. He rather gloried in the rude grandeur of his appearance, the conquests which he made in spite of it were doubly grateful to him. "It is a common thing to be beautiful," he would say; "but to be hideous and beloved in spite of it, is sublime."

"Ah! you are no judge, brother Jacques. Of course, I am everything grand and agreeable to you; but with a young lady, the thing is different. I saw her look of surprise when I came in. No wonder; but she forgot to be afraid after a little. Did you see that? How her eyes kindled! What a smile came to her face—a lovely face, undoubtedly; a very lovely face!"

Count Mirabeau fell into a reverie here, and began to thread with his hand the long waves of hair that fell to his shoulder.

Jacques remained silent, and sat watching him.

After awhile the count arose, and taking one of the gold pieces from the table, dropped it into his pocket. Glancing at the two Louis-d'or that were left, he said, with a laugh.

"These will be enough for the present—one cannot do entirely without money. Come to me, Jacques, when you want more."

"But the ladies are proud; they will not accept it, knowing where it comes from."

"They must not know where it comes from. You understand?"

"Yes, I understand."

"Now I will bid you good-night, Jacques. Do you know that my father is in Paris?"

"In Paris! I did not know it. What brings him here?"

"He comes to be reconciled with his son, so I am told. I had a letter from him this morning, appointing a time when I am to call on him. It was this which brought me here."

"Then you will go?"

"Yes. Why not?"

"But he has been so cruel, so harsh. It is not long since the doors of his chateau were closed against you."

"Yes. I am not likely to forget that; but in these times it is not policy to be resentful. My father has influence with the king."

"But I thought you were the enemy of Louis the Sixteenth, and of all his family!"

"You forget the Duc d'Orleans."

"But he is not your friend."

"He is the friend of no man but himself. Still one does not quarrel with him. A bad, weak friend, Jacques; but sometimes such characters carry braver men into power. While he is popular with the people, who will not readily release their hold on royalty of some kind, I, for one, shall not abandon him."

"Still, it is a terrible thing to know that he is plotting against his own brother, his anointed king," said Jacques.

"Nay, it is rather against the Austrian woman, who rules that brother. Surely, Frenchmen owe little allegiance to her."

"That is, perhaps, because they do not know her!" said Jacques.

"That is true. She makes sure that those men who love France, and seek after liberty, never shall come near enough to know her."

"Yet it is said that those who have opportunities of seeing the royal family love her most. To them she is a beautiful, good woman."

"Yes, she is beautiful. She has, sometimes, allowed your humble servant to see her across the theatre; but disdains to receive him at court. Her mother would have known better. She had some idea of statesmanship, and understood how to employ talent, though it might exist a little

outside of court circles. She would never have left a Mirabeau to be converted into an enemy."

"Ah! if the queen only knew you as Jacques does—but how can she? The courtiers who surround her are jealous of powers they cannot rival. The queen will never be permitted to know how brave a friend is kept from her."

"She will learn, rest content, Jacques. She will learn who Mirabeau is, and what he can do, before she sits firmly on the throne of France. She will learn, to her cost, that nobility does not always convey talent; and that the best adviser a monarch can have is the man who is most popular with the people."

"That you are, my count. I do not see you pass the streets of Paris without acclamations!"

"Yes, they love me, and I love them. It was my great fault with that grand old aristocrat, my father, that plebeians would love me, and that I sometimes stooped to their companionship. Even then I felt what was coming, and, knew where the best elements of power lay. But my thick-headed old ancestor was never able to understand it. What do you think he would say now if he knew where I have spent this evening? Yet a lovelier creature, or more dainty, does not live in any court, than the girl we left yonder."

Monsieur Jacques colored crimson, and moved uneasily in his chair. He did not like this open admiration in his foster-brother.

"Yes, the young lady is pretty and gentle as a bird; but I doubt if——"

Here Jacques paused, and colored still more violently than before.

"Doubt if what——"

"If—if she is used to such warm admiration. Is that it, brother Jacques?"

"Exactly," answered Jacques. "She is country bred, you know, and innocent as a fawn."

Mirabeau laughed rather boisterously.

"Why, you foolish fellow, that is her chief attraction. Had she been one of your hackneyed court dames, her beauty would have passed as nothing. As it is, she is charming. Simple as a violet, pure as a lily-of-the-valley—not that I have seen one of late; but those things still linger in my memory Jacques, man of the world as you may think me."

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## CHAPTER X.

### MONSIEUR JACQUES IS INTRUSTED WITH A DELICATE MISSION.

As Count de Mirabeau uttered these last words, Monsieur Jacques arose from his chair, and came close to his foster-brother.

"Mirabeau," he said, laying a hand on the count's shoulder, and speaking with deep earnestness, "forget this girl. Spare her for my sake."

Mirabeau wheeled round in his chair, and gazed upon the man in laughing astonishment. His great head was thrown back, his eyes danced with merriment.

"What! You, Jacques—you in love with that pretty rustic—really, truly? Do tell me how it happened! Why, man, how improbable!"

"No," said Monsieur Jacques, humbly enough, "love is so far apart from me, and so natural to you; but what man ever knows what destiny has in store for him. I saw her so sweet, so gentle, given up to sorrow, which she bore patiently, and, spite of myself, she became dear to me as my own life."

"And does she know this?"

"Not for the world! I should drop with very shame at her feet if she but guessed it."

"I dare say," answered Mirabeau, with cruel sincerity. "So dainty a creature as that might well be astonished. Why, man, I, myself, was half in love with her."

"I saw it."

"And now you warn me off the chase."

"I say to you only this. The foster-brother, who loves you better than himself, has but one thing on this earth that he would withhold from you, this single, forlorn hope of affection. Will you trample it under foot—you who have but to smile, and the best beauty and brightest wit of the land render the homage you scarcely deign to accept?"

"Ah! that is because they do render it. Can't you remember, Jacques, that, as a boy, I would never stoop to pick up the ripest and mellowest fruit that fell to my feet; but was ever up in the topmost branches of the tree, risking my neck for that which could only be got with difficulty. It is my nature, man, and I cannot help it. Now pray comprehend that in placing this interdict, which leaves all to my honor and brotherly affection, you lift the fruit to the very topmost bough, where I shall be forever tempted to climb for it."

"But, for my sake."

"Ay! in your behalf, I will make a brave effort to be good. It is asking a great deal, and I am no saint; but then I am in no haste to give that proud old man, who is waiting for me, a daughter-in-law who is neither of the court or the people. So we will talk no more of this pretty Marguerite, but let her fly, as we sometimes sent the birds we had snared back to their native woods in the pure wantonness of benevolence. Sometimes we would gladly have got them back, you know, Jacques, but the little wretches would not come. Give me my hat, man; do you know that we are keeping the proudest old man in France waiting?"

Jacques took up the hat which Mirabeau had flung to the

floor when he sat down. The count received it lazily, and putting a finger on two of the triangular points, began to twirl it between his hands. He certainly did not seem to be much distressed at keeping his father in suspense.

"Jacques," he said, after a few moments' silence, "Have you seen the old gentleman?"

"Only for a moment."

"Did he speak of—— Well, we may as well be frank. Did he mention finances? Has he an idea of the trouble his close-fisted parsimony has brought on me—of the shifts and arrangements I am constantly compelled to make?"

"How can he help knowing it, monsieur count? A man of good family cannot live on air; and what else has he provided for a son that—I must say it—is the glory of his house?"

"Not much, Jacques—certainly, not much; but more perhaps, than you know of. Still, he comes in good time, for I am fairly at my wits' end for means. Can you manage to let him know this, and impress upon him the necessity of a liberal supply? Tell him of the great popularity you are so confident of. Hint to him that I have had advances from the court, and only need a little persuasion to carry me over, body and soul, which will end in a thorough reconciliation between the people and the king. In short, Jacques, you know what to say, and you know the man. It will not be the first time you have done me good service with him."

"Nor shall it be the last, by a thousand, if I can help it," answered Jacques, delighted with his mission. "God grant that what I say proves true! Then, indeed, you will be the saviour of this unhappy country!"

"Well, well! you understand my wishes, and will know how to carry them out. I have sworn never to ask my father for another sous on earth—and I never will; but my oath does not reach you, brother Jacques. The old man is



a staunch royalist, and would do much for Louis. When he knows how I stand between the court and the people, powerful with both, he will forget past extravagance, and come forward to sustain the honor of his house."

"I will put the case before him in this light; I will tell him all that he ought to know. Even now an agent of the queen is seeking you."

"Ha! Where did you learn this?" cried Mirabeau, flushing scarlet with sudden astonishment and delight.

"The agent came to me."

"When?"

"Only this morning."

"Well, well!"

"He talked cautiously at first; spoke of your power with the people—your eloquence."

"Yes, yes; I understand that—the usual sugared flattery. But come to the essence of the matter. What did he want?"

"He wanted your influence in behalf of the court; and he spoke of money."

Mirabeau felt the hot blood leap to his face again; and with an angry gesture he dashed the hat from his hand.

"They know how poor I am; they feel that I can be bribed. This proud queen does not offer me her confidence, but money. Ah! this stings me! It is an insult; but one which I dare not resent. Oh, Jacques! this poverty breeds a nest of temptations. To want money is to be a slave."

Mirabeau seized his hat, dashed it on his head, and left the room, walking away so fiercely, that his footsteps sounded back from the flights of stairs, like the tramp of a dragoon.

Monsieur Jacques listened till the footsteps died away in the street, then he sat down, with tears in his eyes, muttering,

"Ah! what a grand nature he has! Yet a moment may shipwreck him forever. Yes! forever and ever!"

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE MARKET WOMAN.

MONSIEUR JACQUES started from his aroused reverie, by the sight of that hard gold piece left by Mirabeau on his table.

"This will keep them from want a long time," he thought, gloating over the money as if it had been food, for which he was in fact famishing; for the bread he had given those poor women, was taken from his own hungry mouth.

Jacques, in his devotion to Count Mirabeau, would have starved rather than take gold from him. Indeed, his own hard earnings had been swept away many a time in the vortex of that man's reckless extravagance; and he had gloried in the sacrifice. But now, another feeling came in and he yielded to it without a murmur. He could struggle and endure, but those suffering women must be fed, even with Mirabeau's gold. How? They were delicate and proud—far too proud for almstaking.

"I know! I have a thought," he exclaimed at last, dropping the gold into his pocket. "They shall seem to earn this."

Jacques went swiftly down stairs, and knocked at a door in a lower story of the house.

A clear sharp voice bade him enter, and directly he stood before a little woman,—perhaps fifty years old, who was tearing half a dozen bouquets to pieces, and dipping their stems in hot water, thus partially restoring their lost bloom.



"Ah, Monsieur Jacques, you have found me at my work, cheating the poor, dear people. No matter, it serves them right; why didn't they buy my flowers yesterday, when they were fresh and charming? Ah, my friend, these are hard times for us poor women of the market. With the court at Versailles and food so dear, flowers go for nothing, especially when it is only an old woman who offers them."

"I understand," said Jacques, sitting down by the old woman. "We all have our troubles. That was what I came to talk about. Your business is doubtless much disturbed by these unsettled times."

"Disturbed; *mon Dieu*, it is broken up. One sells nothing but carrots and turnips now. The fruit and flowers that brought in a reasonable profit, are left to wither on our stalls. Working people have no money for them, and your court lords never come to *la Halle* for their flowers."

"But they purchase them yet. There is no famine among the courtiers," said Jacques, steadily pursuing the purpose of his visit.

"But, as I said before," answered the old woman, sharply. "They never come to *la Halle*, and one cannot be in two places at once. Our trade there is sure, if but little, for people must eat."

"Still, a great many flowers are sold. Every day I see pretty girls in the streets with loads, and people buy them."

"True, Monsieur Jacques, but Dame Doudel is no girl, and people no longer call her pretty."

"But if you had a daughter now."

Dame Doudel sighed.

"Ah, yes, if I had, but she is dead."

"Still, a kind heart might supply the place."

"How! you talk folly, my friend."

"There is a young girl in this very house, fresh as a lily, and lovely enough to be your own daughter."

"Poor child but *she* was so beautiful."

"I understand! This girl is beautiful too, and needs work so much. Every one says Dame Doudel has a kind heart; so, when I saw this poor child and her mother pining from want, it was natural that I should come here."

"Yes, it was natural," said the Dame, putting a strand of field grass in her mouth, and twisting the loose end around the bouquet she had arranged.

"The child might make herself useful in arranging flowers, but most of all in selling them," suggested the kind-hearted fellow.

"Poor thing. Yes, she might. Well, my friend, send her here, and we shall see."

"Would it not be better, being as it were an old resident, if you went yourself to Madame Gosner; she might resent my intrusion, for suffering has not killed her pride."

"Yes, I will go, why not? It will not be the only time Dame Doudel has taken the first step in a kind act."

"The girl will have to learn; she may be awkward, at first, you understand. In the meantime they must eat. If it would not be a liberty, perhaps Dame Doudel would use this until the business began to pay."

"This! But it is gold," said the shrewd little woman, eyeing her neighbor suspiciously, "enough to keep two people with care half a month."

"In that time, your pretty protégée will have begun to earn something. I do not forget that until she does, money will be wanted, and who can use it with more discretion than Dame Doudel?"

The market-woman dropped the gold into her pocket. There was no doubting that man longer.

"Well, my friend, it is arranged, and my work is done. To-morrow the little one shall begin, if her mother consents."

"She will consent; for heart and soul, she is with us."

"With the people, you mean. Yes, yes, and the little one, what of her?"

"She is good as an angel."

"And we will keep her so. Our work, Monsieur Jacques, is not for children. The clubs are no places for girls. This one shall sell flowers, and charm us with her innocence. We need something sweet and young to keep us human in these strange times. Are you going? Well, well, adieu."

"Ah, dame, you are kind as an angel. I cannot thank you enough," said Jacques, bending before the market-woman as if she had been an empress.

The dame blushed like a girl, and, gathering up her flowers, took her way to the market in quick haste, ashamed of the pleasure this adroit flattery gave her.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### EARLY IN THE MORNING.

ALL night long, Madame Gosner lay awake, thinking of what she had suffered, and of what she had heard. She was a woman of powerful mind and corresponding physique; all her faculties were in vigorous harmony. In peaceful times she might have been a court dame, leading a throng of triflers into something like intelligent pleasures—for that woman could never have contented herself with mediocrity in anything. As it was, one great object had occupied her for years. The wrongs of a husband, whom she had loved with all the force and tenderness of a great soul, occupied every idea of her life. Even when she believed him dead, this great love clung around him as a memory, which threw her whole being into mourning. The scrap of paper, which seemed to have come to her by a miracle, changed all this in a moment. Her husband lived. There was something for her to do. The sleeping energies of her

nature awoke with a rebound. She determined to save her husband, or perish in the attempt.

Save her husband, rescue him from the Bastille, with walls twenty feet thick between him and daylight; with green mould forming itself out of the stagnant waters, which oozed through the very stones, and clung, like an unwholesome sweat, to the sides of his dungeon. Was it in the power of woman to free this unhappy man from the living grave that inclosed him?

Against all the despairing replies, which came back to her from these questions, the indomitable spirit of the woman answered, "I will free him," and her action corresponded with her words. She took her only child, gathered up the fragments of property left to them, and came into France, her own native country, resolved on obtaining freedom for her husband. We have seen how she succeeded. Her money was all exhausted. She had used it unsparingly, but with no avail up to this time—nothing that she had done could win her even access to the king. Now she was suffering for food; want had sapped the foundations of her strength, and the energies of her soul were giving out.

That night, when she was ready to give up all hope and die, this man, half-demagogue, half-patriot; this singular being, who, born of the nobility, was still the idol of the people, came suddenly into her life, and opened a broader and more sublime road by which her object might be obtained. From that moment, the struggling wife became, what soon was no uncommon thing among the women of France—a patriot; more than that, love that burned in her bosom for the one man languishing in his dungeon, made her an enthusiast; and out of her very womanliness this wronged being was thinking how she might become a leader of that great element which, for a time, ruled the very mobs of Paris.

When it became day, Madame Gosner arose and dressed

herself with more than usual care. The reflections of that night had resolved themselves into a vague plan of action. Other women suffered like herself; other husbands and fathers lay chained, like wild beasts, in those reeking dungeons. How narrow and selfish her efforts had hitherto been. No wonder God had not helped her when she asked his aid only for herself and the man she loved, forgetting thousands and thousands of sister women who suffered with her.

But little preparation for breakfast was needed in that poor room. Indeed, when she awoke, Madame Gosner knew that there was not a fragment of food at her command; but she was hardly dressed when a knock came to the door.

Madame Gosner opened the door, and found a little old woman standing on the threshold. She had seen that genial face before, going up and down the stair case, but it looked peculiarly bland and kind that morning, and the dainty cap, tied around the head with a black ribbon, betrayed an unusual toilet before the visit was made.

"If madame will excuse the liberty, we are neighbors, only one floor between us, and, hearing that madame had been ill, I ventured to bring her a little breakfast, nothing worthy of notice; still if madame will accept the basket, in which she will find a tiny bouquet of violets for mademoiselle, whom I am happy to find sleeping so sweetly. Indeed, it is a part of my business to make a proposal about mademoiselle, whom I have observed to be very fond of flowers. Might I be permitted to step in and explain myself?"

The little woman was courteously invited to take a seat, and Madame Gosner received the basket with a glow of thanks that went to her heart at once. In a few words she explained the object of her visit.

Had an angel dropped from Heaven with hope and suc-

cor, it would not have been more welcome. Here was employment, hopes of food, an opening through which this brave woman could move toward the great object of her life, untrammelled by the wants of humanity. She considered no occupation mean for her child which promised to secure so much, and accepted it with ardent thankfulness, which sent Dame Doudel away supremely content.

As for Madame Gosner, she accepted this visit as a blessing from Heaven itself. It renewed her waning strength, and helped to kindle the new idea born to her in the night. Just as the grander design of aiding others was formed, God has sent the food necessary to her life, and she accepted it as a token and an encouragement.

In the basket she found a little milk, some eggs, and a sprig of green parsley, all promised to her the night before, though Jacques scarcely knew then how the breakfast was to be provided. With these was a loaf of white bread, and some charcoal for cooking.

In a few minutes, Madame Gosner was on her knees, kindling the fire with her own breath. When the charcoal ignited and began to crackle, she went to the bed, and looked tenderly down upon her daughter, who slept soundly. How pale and delicate she was! Not a trace of color remained on those cheeks; and want had almost quenched it from the exquisitely-formed mouth, in which the white gleam of her teeth was just visible as she breathed. No wonder the mother thanked God for the food that had been brought to her when she saw all this; but she would not awake her child then, that delicious breakfast should give her a surprise. It would be, indeed, the beginning of a *fete* day with them.

So the now hopeful woman fell to beating her eggs and chopping up her parsley, with as little noise as possible. At length, when her omelet was on the fire, she went to the bed and aroused Marguerite.

"Come, my daughter, breakfast is ready!"

"Breakfast!" It was a strange word in that room, where no regular meal had been served for a month. Marguerite started up in her bed, looked around in bewilderment, and murmured,

"Let me sleep—I was dreaming so sweetly."

"Dreaming of what, Marguerite?"

"Oh! it is you, mother! Nothing. Only it seemed as if you and I were eating such a delicious meal together."

"Indeed! Such as an omelet and white bread, perhaps."

"An omelet! Oh, yes! and—and—— Why, mamma, there is a smell of it in the room yet. I suppose it is Monsieur Jacques who is cooking. He said something about a *fete* day. Why, what is that? The table out, a cloth on; and, oh, mamma! an omelet—a real, plump omelet. Where did you get it? and parsley. Why, mamma, darling, have you been among the fairies?"

"Our fairy was a little market woman, who came with all these things in a basket early this morning."

"A little market woman, how good; how strange."

"Come, come, child, everything is ready."

Marguerite, who had been making a hasty toilet, twisted her hair in a coil around her head, and sat down by the table, where both mother and daughter commenced a delicious meal, thanking God for it in their hearts.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THEY THREE BREAKFAST TOGETHER.

THE two women, suffering as they were from the pangs of hunger, scarcely looked at each other, but sat rapidly feasting their eyes on the food yet untasted, with a wild, eager craving which made them forgetful of everything else.

All at once, Marguerite started up in absolute dismay.

"Oh, mamma! we have forgotten the good Monsieur Jacques, who all this time has no breakfast."

"True, my child! and he so thoughtful of us!"

Marguerite went to Monsieur Jacques' room, and knocked eagerly.

"It is ready; we have a delicious omelet, my friend. Come, come! there is enough for three!"

Jacques came to the door and opened it a little. His face was flushed, his eyes sparkled.

"Do you really invite me?" he questioned.

"Invite you! Why our little feast is yours."

"Wait a minute, then, while I wash my hands; perhaps madame will excuse the dress, as I have no other."

"Come in any dress. We are waiting, and the breakfast gets cold."

Marguerite came back to her mother, and they placed the omelet near the fire, that it might be kept warm for their guest. He came in soon after, with his face shining, and his hair smooth, as if he had spent some time in brushing it. His blouse was clean, and he looked more respectable than they had seen him the night before. But the good man partook sparingly of madame's omelet, and sat gazing upon Marguerite when he should have been eating.

The sweet girl knew that he was half-famished, and

tempted him to eat, until the animal instinct in him became ravenous, and for the moment, he forgot that she was near him. Then the noble fellow grew ashamed of himself, and drew back abashed.

Without appearing to heed this, Madame Gosner began to talk, and told Jacques of Dame Doudel's generous visit, and of the proposal she had made for Marguerite.

Jacques received the intelligence calmly, but cast anxious glances at the young girl, who looked from him to her mother with affright.

"I fear she will not consent," he said, seized with compunction for the part he had taken, when he saw the color driven from Marguerite's face.

"Yes, yes," gasped the girl. "It is work, it is food! Who am I to put such blessings aside? Heaven forgive me if, for one moment, I hesitate!"

"Heaven has nothing to forgive its angels," muttered Jacques, in a voice so faint and deep that no one heard him.

Madame Gosner leaned over the table, and, her heart being full of the subject, began questioning Jacques very closely about the state of things in the city. She was earnest, clear, and searching in her interrogatories. He saw that some grand idea was in her brain, and answered her without comment.

All this was not wonderful to him. Such mental excitements were sure to follow Mirabeau whenever he condescended to converse. Indeed, his most subtle power lay among the women of Paris. But eloquent as Mirabeau was, Jacques had more telling powers, for he had the merit of honest conviction. There was truth in all this man said, for he possessed that to which his foster-brother often pretended—a thorough knowledge of the people, of their wants and aspirations. Even in the chaotic state into which society was at this time thrown, Monsieur Jacques had wonderful influence, of which his foster-brother took the credit.

When madame and Marguerite were left alone, the mother began to pace the room to and fro in great excitement.

"Marguerite," she said, laying a firm hand on each of her daughter's shoulders, "up to this day we have been cold and selfish."

"Selfish! Oh, mamma!"

"Yes; cold, selfish, egotistical—and for this God has not prospered us."

"Oh, mamma! have we not given up all? Have we saved anything, or spared anything to win liberty for my father?"

"It is for this that I blush, Marguerite. Our poor martyr is but one of many. The Bastille is crowded full. You are not the only child who pines for her father's liberty."

"Alas, no!"

"Yet it is of him, and him alone, we have been thinking."

"But what else could we do?"

"Open our arms, and embrace all humanity."

"But we are only women—helpless and suffering women."

"So much the better; our sister sufferers will have faith in us."

"But what is it you intend? Something grand and strange—I can see it in your eyes."

"No, there is nothing grand in my object; it is simply to perform a duty to others as well as to ourselves. To-day I am going among the market-people. I know some of them, from whom we have made our meagre purchases. They are brave and ardent, ready to act if they only had a leader. The good dame who was here this morning will aid me in my first step."

"And that leader? Not my mother, surely! I see a

power of command in your gestures. All this terrifies me—what does this mean?”

“It means that our poor prisoner shall yet feel the grim walls of the Bastille tremble around him like an earthquake. It means liberty for him and for all. It means that while a woman loves the husband of her youth, she should never forget the country of her birth.”

“But how can you, a lonely woman, without money or friends, accomplish this?”

“I will make friends of my fellow-sufferers. I will make friends of famine and want. Starvation shall be made powerful. Elements of great strength are running to waste. I will gather them up, and hurl them against the walls of the Bastille — hurl them against the throne itself.”

“Mother, you have been dreaming; the fatigue of yesterday has made you ill.”

“No, I have not been dreaming. Last night I never closed my eyes; but I thought, while you slept: thought of him, thought of France, till my brain burned, and my heart grew large.”

“Mother, dear mother! sit down, I pray you! Want of food, and that long, long journey yesterday, have made you wild.”

“No, my child, they have made me wise.”

“But you will not go out?”

Madame had taken a bonnet and shawl in her hand. Marguerite forced them from her gently, but with firmness.

“It is the fever, which is said to rage when plenty of food is taken after a long fast,” she said. “Let me put the things away.”

Madame smiled, but held firmly to her garments.

“You cannot comprehend,” she said; “but I will explain.”

“Not now, mamma, but when you are better. The dis-

appointment of not seeing the king, after so many efforts, is preying upon you; but do not despair—I am young and strong. The next time I will go to the king or to the queen. Perhaps I shall be more successful.”

“Well, what then?”

“I will kneel to him, and beseech him to set my father free.”

“And then, ‘he is but one man!’”

“But he is all the world to us!” said Marguerite, clasping her hands with pathetic earnestness.

“I thought so once. God forgive me!”

“Mother, there is something on your mind that I cannot understand. Put it aside, I pray you; or wait till Monsieur Jacques, or his friend comes, that you may counsel with them.”

Madame sat down and drew a hand wearily across her eyes. It was true; great fatigue, want of food, and intense wakefulness, were telling fearfully upon her system, vigorous as it was. It is, sometimes, out of such insanity, that great actions are wrought.

“Sit down and rest, mamma, after that I will listen to all you can say.”

“And help me?” asked the woman, fastening her large, eager eyes on the girl’s face.

“With all my power and strength. Only rest awhile, and take full time for thought.”

“Ah! if I rest, this resolve may pass from me. I have had such dreams before, — that was in my sleep; but now, but now——”

“Now you will lie down and sleep sweetly, while I take your place.”

Madame sat down on the bed, releasing her hold on the shawl.

“You are right, my child,” she said, gently. “I must have rest and strength before this great work begins; then

you will understand it better, and we both have our task, yours not less difficult than mine."

"But you will rest first?" pleaded Marguerite, who looked upon this sudden outbreak as the result of over exertion, and was troubled by it. "Perhaps Our Lady will bless my poor efforts for your sake."

"Yes—I can wait" said the mother, sinking back upon the bed, and closing her eyes. "To-day for rest, to-morrow for action."

Marguerite sat down by her mother, took one of her hands and smoothed it tenderly between her own palms, striving her best to induce the sleep which would, she trusted, restore the tone of her mother's mind, which she believed to have been disturbed by great fatigue, and long fasting. But she was not the less resolved to assume some portion of the work to which that mother had almost given up her life.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### MARGUERITE FINDS HER PATH OF DUTY AMONG THE FLOWERS.

THE very next evening after Marguerite had entered on her new duties, she was hard at work in Dame Doudel's apartment, where she found delight in arranging the garlands and bouquets, which were to be sold on the morrow.

The good dame was in high spirits. The talent and rapid execution of her young friend surprised her, and she chatted gaily as she handed flower after flower from her lap, to be richly clustered by those active fingers.

"And you have never seen my good husband, that is strange; he is often on the stairs when off duty. Every-

body loves him, for he is tender-hearted as an infant. That is singular, people say, considering that he is a prison guard, and has been years and years in the Bastille."

Marguerite uttered a faint cry, and dropped the flowers she was twining.

"The Bastille! The Bastille! Is your husband a guard in the Bastille?" she cried.

"Of course he is. I thought everybody knew that; why, he has grown old in the Bastille; old, but never hard-hearted—nothing can make him that, my good Gaston; but he sees sights—such terrible sights, and hears moans that make his blood run cold. But then sometimes he does a little good, and that cheers him. I tell it you, in strict confidence, my child, but many a time he has eaten little, and carried half his breakfast hid away in his pocket, for some of the poor creatures, pining to death in those awful vaults. Yes, yes; those poor prisoners would lose a good friend if Gaston were to leave."

Marguerite listened breathlessly. A strange, wild light came into her eyes. Her words came swift and eagerly when she spoke.

"But will they let him. Is it possible? oh! if I could see your husband!"

"Well, that is easy, little one; for he is coming now. You can hear his step on the stairs. Ah—yes, that is Gaston. I can never mistake."

A smile of kindly affection lighted the old woman's face, as she turned it to the door, which opened, admitting a tall, elderly man, who walked wearily into the room.

"Ah! you are tired, my friend. I can see it," exclaimed the dame, emptying the flowers from her lap into a basket, and smoothing down her dress. "Been walking the ramparts? It was your turn, I know. Hungry, too, I dare say. Well, well; your supper is waiting. Ah!

you see my little friend here; and are surprised. No wonder."

"Is she not lovely? Like some one, *mon chere*, we never talk about. You observe that. Yes, yes, I see it in your face."

"She is at least welcome," answered Doudel, kindly. "Now dame, for our little supper. I have had a hard day at the prison."

Dame Doudel bustled off into the next room, which was one of those tiny, neat kitchens, the French know how to make so inviting; and, after a little time, looked through the door again.

"Come, my friend, come little one. There is a plate for you always, remember."

Marguerite arose eagerly; at another time she might have hesitated, now she forgot everything in a wild desire to speak with the man who might have seen her father. They sat down together, but the girl could not eat, her heart was so full. Dame Doudel observed this, and, seeing how thin she looked, heaped her plate with bountiful hospitality.

"No, I cannot, I cannot. He has seen my father, my poor, poor father, who lies buried in the dungeons of the Bastille. How can I eat or sleep, knowing this."

"Your father, child, and in the Bastille. Our Lady forbid," said Doudel, with infinite compassion in his voice.

"In the Bastille—your own father? Heaven be good to us," exclaimed the dame, holding up both hands in amazement. "Oh, Doudel, if you know, tell her about him—tell her about him."

"His name is Gosner, Doctor Gosner, a learned man from Germany. He was torn from us when I was a child. You have seen him, you know him; his eyes are blue like mine, his hair soft and light. He was tall and slender, with a benign look. Oh, tell me about him."

The poor girl left her chair as she spoke, and clasping her hands, went round to where the guard sat, and knelt before him.

"You have seen him? Oh tell me!"

"Poor thing, poor, sweet child, how can I tell her?" said Doudel, appealing to his wife. "We have no names at the Bastille, nothing but numbers."

"I know the number; ah, I know that, monsieur, I——"

Here the girl checked herself, remembering that Monsieur Jacques had given the number in confidence.

"Yes, I know the number. It is here; I wrote it down and laid it next my heart, saying to myself, 'some day our blessed lady will lead me to him.' Here it is."

Doudel took the paper from her quivering fingers, and read it.

"My poor child, it is down in the very depths. I know this wretched prisoner. Sometimes, I speak to him, not often; for it is against the rules. He is gentle as a lamb."

"Ah, it is like my father, every one says that."

"Once," continued the guard, "but that is a long time ago, his hair was yellow and glossy, like yours, but it is white now; his beard is like a snow drift, his eyes weak and faded. It is an old, old man you speak of, little one."

"Ah me, I ought to expect that. In darkness and solitude so many miserable years, how could he be anything but old! Oh, monsieur, let me see him, let me look on my father's face."

"See him, poor child, that is impossible."

Marguerite turned imploringly to Dame Doudel.

"Plead for me, oh, think of some way. The good God did not send me here for nothing," she said, lifting her clasped hands upward.

"It is our child who asks this; our angel child pleading through the eyes of this poor girl. Doudel, God ordains it. She must see her father," cried the wife with tears in her eyes.



"But how, dame, how?"

"You must do it, Gaston. There may be danger in it. What then, my husband is brave."

The guard turned his eyes from the kneeling girl to his wife, and thoughtfully stroked his beard with one hand. Marguerite held the other prisoner.

"Sometimes," he said, slowly, "the children of the guards come to the prison and are let in to the outer court. More seldom I have seen them within the drawbridge. Mademoiselle is so young, and like a child, they might think her my own daughter; no one there will remember that she has gone away from us forever. It is dangerous, but possible."

"Wait, wait a minute, while I think," said the wife, answering her husband's train of thought. "This is what we will do. The governor trusts you, Gaston; he will give you privileges."

"But not that, not that."

"I know; but he may take an interest in this good child, thinking her your daughter. She shall take her flowers to him, make him used to her, as she passes in and out of his quarters; then some day she can watch her opportunity and steal with you into the lower prison."

"But this will take time, dame, and may get me into trouble in the end."

"No, no, I will be cautious; no one shall know. I will die rather than bring harm on you," exclaimed the girl, who had been listening eagerly to his words. "Let me once look on my father's face, and I will bless you forever and ever."

"It is dangerous, and may cost me dear; but who can say no to a child who only prays to look on her father?"

"He consents, he consents!" cried Marguerite, flinging up her clasped hands in an ecstasy of delight.

"But it must be a secret with us; no human being must

be told; a breath would destroy us both," answered the guard, half-frightened by the promise he had made."

"She can be dumb. The child who has such courage knows how to keep a secret," answered the dame. "Tomorrow, she shall try her fate with the governor."

"That will not be hard," said the guard, with a grave smile; "he loves to have plenty of flowers in the dim rooms of that old fortress, which need them enough, and never is severe upon a pretty face. We shall manage it—we shall manage it."

Dame Doudel kissed her husband with the ardor of a sweetheart.

"Ah, you have courage! I knew it, I knew it. Come now, little one, let us finish the flowers. Your very first attempt shall be at the Bastille."

Margaret went to her work in an ecstasy of delight; her eyes were on fire, and her hands quivered like young birds over their work. She had never known what real hope was before. Marguerite lay by her mother's side all that night, wide awake, and restless with thought. On the morrow, the great task of her life was to begin. What her mother in her experience and strength had failed to accomplish, she must undertake, and in her very weakness carry out.

Very early in the morning, the young girl arose, and, after preparing the breakfast she had no wish to eat, went forth into the street with Dame Doudel's blessing on her head, and a basket of blooming flowers on her arm.

"Remember," said the good dame as she heaped the basket with flowers, "you are our own daughter; your name is Marguerite Doudel; you have just begun to help your parents by selling bouquets, and turn first to his excellency the governor, who perhaps will let you carry a few violets to your father, one of his own faithful guards."

"I know, I know; there is little danger that I shall forget," said Marguerite, breathless with agitation; and pale as marble, she went forth to her great work.

"Will you sell me some of your roses?"

Marguerite had walked some distance from home, forgetful in her intense excitement of the character she had assumed, when these words fell on her ear, uttered in a sound so sweet and low that the heart in her young bosom leaped for the first time to the voice of man. Marguerite stopped in her swift walk and lifted her eyes to the speaker, a young man in citizen's dress, which he wore with a grace befitting our best ideas of a nobleman. His eyes, soft and deep as a mountain spring, were bent upon her in smiling admiration, for the flowers on her arm were scarcely more beautiful than Marguerite appeared that morning.

"Will you sell me some of your flowers?" the young man repeated, lifting his hat.

Marguerite drew a deep breath, and turned her fascinated eyes from the wonderful beauty of that head and face.

"What shall I give you monsieur," she faltered, trembling all over with a sensation of delight that pure soul had never felt before.

"It shall be a white moss rose, I think," said the young man, "can you find one in your basket?"

Marguerite's hand was instantly searching among her flowers, from whence it brought forth a lovely moss rose.

"Will this please monsieur?" she said, holding up the rose by its long, flexible stem.

The pallor had left her face then, and a soft bloom came over it, more exquisite than a blush. She had forgotten even the Bastille, and her father.

"Will it please me, oh yes—one seldom sees two objects so beautiful in a day."

Marguerite cast down her eyes, and the rose shook in her hand. Something more sweet and subtle than its breath had entered her heart. The young man's face brightened all over. He took the flower and placed it gently between his vest and the snow white linen that covered his bosom.

"To-morrow it will be withered," he said; "no matter, your basket will be full again then, and I shall not fail to know when you pass this way."

He took a piece of silver from his pocket, and held it irresolutely. It seemed like sacrilege to offer money to a delicate creature like that. Stealthily, and half-ashamed of the act, he dropped the money into her basket.

Marguerite saw the act, and the silver seemed to have fallen upon her heart. She looked up with a hot flush overspreading her face, but remembering that to sell was her business, dropped her eyes again, and instantly their lashes were heavy with tears.

"Good morning, monsieur, I wish the roses were mine to give," she said, moving away almost with a sob.

The young man followed her a step or two, then turned back muttering to himself.

"Can it be that the women of our clubs were like that? Is it possible that any thing will make her one of them? Does liberty demand that women, lovely and gentle as she is, should debase themselves?"

"Ha, St. Just, is it you? We missed your eloquence at the club last night."

The speaker was a low-browed, heavy featured man, ill dressed and unwashed, coarse in his person, and rough in his speech.

St. Just lifted his hat, thus unconsciously rebuking the rude manner of his companion, which seemed to challenge rather than salute him.

"Good morning, citizen Marat, I was busy elsewhere last night."

"And especially busy this morning," answered the demagogue with a coarse laugh. "Do not look so black, citizen, or your frown may wither the favor in your bosom. A dainty piece of mischief that. We must have her at the clubs. Now that Theraigne de Merecourt is exiled, there is great need of fresh beauty and spirit there."

St. Just clenched his hand with a sharp desire to knock the brutal man down; but checked his wrath, and moved away with absolute loathing.

As Marat stood with a hand on each hip, laughing till his uncombed hair shook like a fleece over his shoulders, a young woman came up the street, dressed in the loose fashion of her class, and addressed him.

"Who was it, citizen, you were talking with a moment ago?"

"A gentleman whose name I will not give, he carried a white rose in his bosom, which I saw him take from the prettiest flower girl you ever saw. She has but just passed out of sight."

"Ha! tell me, for I will know. Was it Mirabeau?"

A malicious pleasure came into the rude face of the demagogue, and he answered warily: "You must not tell him that I said so, *citoyenne* Brisot, but there is an excuse. The flower girl was so beautiful."

"Ha! but just passed out of sight, and she went this way. Good morning, *citoyen*."

Fierce and swift the woman left Marat, and threw herself like a hound on the track of that poor girl.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### IN THE DUNGEONS OF THE BASTILLE.

"THERE is silver for your flowers, and I thank you for bringing the first choice here. So you are Doudel's daughter; I wonder he never gave me a sight of you before. A faithful man is Doudel. So you wish to speak with him,—have a message from his dame. Well, there is no treason in that; few women can pass from this court across the

ditch of the Bastille; but you shall go with your flowers and brighten the gloomy shadows, if that is possible. Ho! there! Pass this girl and her basket across the drawbridge, and find the guard Doudel; he is her father."

Seldom had an order like that passed from the governor of the Bastille; but Marguerite had brought him fresh flowers, of which he was passionately fond; and Doudel, one of the oldest of his guards, had been faithful to his trust so many years, that it seemed impossible that he, or this beautiful young creature who called herself his daughter, could be in any way dangerous.

A guard answered this order, and conducted Marguerite down the large avenue, which led from the Cour de Gouvernement, to the deep stagnant ditch of the Bastille, which coiled itself around that gloomy group of towers like some hideous serpent, green and slimy with incessant slow creeping.

A huge drawbridge, with great rusty chains dangling from it, and rust-eaten hinges, which shrieked and groaned like living things in torment, began to move heavily, and at last fell with all its ponderous weight across the ditch, over which the girl, now shivering and white as a ghost, walked.

When she had crossed the bridge, which rose groaning behind her, it was to pass through a guard house, full of wondering sentinels.

Then a strong barrier of crossed timbers, sheeted with iron, loomed before her; and, passing that, she stood in the interior court, bound by nine lofty towers linked together with massive stone walls, adown which the sunshine never came. These towers, black, weather-stained, and hideous in grim antiquity, were pierced here and there with narrow slits widening inwards, and crossed with rust-corroded iron bars.

In the dread solitude of this place, the girl was left alone, while her guide went in search of Doudel.

The damp dreariness of the court chilled her through and through. In the dull gray light, her flowers looked like the ghost of blossoms long since dead.

All at once, far above her, she heard a hoarse clangor, as of bells clearing the rust from their throats. She looked up, and there, on the grim face of the nearest tower, two iron figures, chained to the dial of a huge clock, clanked forth the hour. The very soul in that poor girl's body, recoiled from this weird sound. She would gladly have fled from the spot, but her limbs shook and refused to move.

At last some one approached, and a voice close behind her said,

"Little one, be still, be cautious, and you shall see him now."

The blood stirred once more in those young veins. A glow of life rushed through the frame that a moment before had seemed chilled to death.

"Come, tread softly, and keep close. It is my turn to visit the lower vaults, and for this one minute we are alone. Keep close to the wall, then no one can see us from the ramparts. Now be swift and still."

Doudel spoke in a hoarse whisper; his voice was husky with apprehension. A single cry or failure of courage on the part of that frail girl, would inevitably plunge him into ruin. He moved close to the foundations of the nearest tower, and turned his face back, to make sure that she was following him. The face that met his was white as death.

"Do not fear," she whispered, "I will follow."

Doudel opened a ponderous door in the wall, and held it while she passed through. Then it was closed and they stood together in total darkness, but for the time safe from observation. Doudel felt for a lantern in a niche of the wall, struck fire from a flint and lighted it. Then he moved along a close stone passage, adown which Margue-

rite could hear the great water rats scuttling from the light. Down a flight of steep, slippery steps, and along other passages she followed her guide, as it seemed to her, into the very depths of the earth; for she could hear the waters sweeping and lapsing, as it seemed, above her head, and great clammy drops fell down upon her as she walked. It was a weird sight, if any one could have witnessed it—that tall man with his lantern, and the pale, resolute girl, delicate as a lily, gliding on behind him with that basket of bright flowers on her arm.

Doudel sat down his lantern, took a great key from a bunch in his hand, and fastened it into the lock of a low iron-studded door, which swung backwards into the darkness.

Marguerite heard a faint murmur and a rustling of straw, then a sharp cry as Doudel lifted his lantern and threw its light into the cell he had opened. She went forward, shivering all over with excitement, and looked in.

A man was sitting upon some mouldy straw in a corner of the dungeon, holding two thin pallid hands before his eyes, shielding them from the sudden glare of the lantern. His beard, long and white, flowed down the garments that fell in mouldered and decaying tatters around him. His voice was feeble and broken, like that of an old, old man.

Marguerite stood at the door one moment, with this miserable picture before her—the grim, dripping walls, the reeking straw, and that shadowy man, sitting upon it in pathetic helplessness, uttering his feeble protest against the pain of so much light. Then she stole across the little space of rocky floor and sunk to her knees by his side.

"Father, father!"

The prisoner hushed his voice and seemed to listen, but still kept both hands over his eyes. Marguerite placed her basket on the straw, and the breath of her flowers arose to his nostrils. All at once a sob shook his bosom, and the

thin hands dropped away from his eyes, from which great tears of delight were rolling. He looked down upon the blossoms and touched them cautiously, with strange gleams of mingled joy and distrust.

"They are yours, father," said Marguerite in sweet, pathetic thankfulness, that she had given one ray of joy to that dreary man. "Will you not look at me now? I brought them for you."

The prisoner turned his eyes slowly on the kneeling girl.

"That voice, sweet, like the flowers, comes from a great way off. I have dreamed such things before, but that is long ago. Even the dreams have left me at last. I suppose this drip, drip of water washed them from my brain. But they have come back to me now, and you, you! Why, you were my wife then. Don't move. Don't turn your eyes. I will not stir my hand. Don't I know how such things fade away when one reaches out his arms.

"Oh, my father, if you would but touch me, or look into my face. Indeed, indeed I am—not your wife—but your child, your own little Marguerite."

The prisoner shook his head and a mournful smile crept over his wan face.

"Now I know what a sweet snare it is; with that name you seek to win me to move or cry out; then all would melt away. Why, do you think I have forgotten because I am a prisoner? The child, my little Marguerite, could just reach my knees. You are—yes, you *are* like my wife; no change, not a whit, since I married her; but you know that cannot be; people must grow old; and it is a hundred years since I came here. You must understand I can reason. People do grow crazy here sometimes, but I can reason yet. That is why dreams do not cheat me; but this is very sweet, very, very sweet."

Here the wretched man stooped forward and seemed to give himself up to the perfume of the flowers, weeping softly all the time.

Marguerite looked on in piteous helplessness. At last she reached out her arms, clasped them around that bowed neck, and kissed the pallid forehead.

A shudder ran through the prisoner. His feeble arms clasped themselves around the form that clung to him, and he murmured in a quiet, dreamy way:

"Yes, yes; we will not disturb it. This is not the first time you have been here, but never, I think, never did you seem so real. Why, I can hear your heart beat; your very breath stirs my beard; and there is my guard, my good, kind guard, looking on. Does this light come from his lantern? Are you a real breathing woman? Tell me, my guard. I know your voice. If you will speak to me, I shall believe."

"My poor friend, it is your daughter; for years and years, she and her mother have been searching for you."

"My daughter, my own little Marguerite!" said the prisoner, holding Marguerite back with both hands, that he might look on her face. After perusing it eagerly for awhile, he shook his head and sighed heavily.

"Is it her or her mother? I cannot tell them apart, and it wearies me to make it out. She was so little, you know."

"But years have made me a woman, father. You will not love me the less for that."

"Love you less! Why, what have I had to love but your shadow and hers, all these years—hundreds on hundreds, I think, only for awhile I lost the count."

"And all these years we have been searching for you. The letter you sent us——"

"Hush! hush! we might do that good man harm; even my guard must not know of that."

"He brought me here. He will permit me to come again and again. Now and then, I shall send you a little fruit, fresh out of the sunshine."

The prisoner laughed, and patted her head like a thankful child.

"And a flower which the good Doudel can hide in his bosom. We—mamma and I—will think of nothing but you. Some day we shall come with the king's order and take you home with us."

The prisoner shook his head. The idea of freedom seemed to give him little pleasure. Nor did he question about his wife. His feeble memory could not disconnect the child in his arms from the woman who was most vividly on his mind, as a bride. Marguerite was, from that day, both mother and child to that solitary man.

After a while, Doudel went into the passage, and came back with some sodden black bread and a pitcher of water, which he placed on the dungeon floor, saying gently to Marguerite,

"It will be dangerous to stay longer."

Marguerite cast her eyes on the repulsive food, and shuddered.

"Not that—not that," she cried. "Oh God! make us thankful. There is something in the bottom of my basket. The good dame put it there, lest I should be hungry before my flowers were sold. See, here it is."

Marguerite thrust her hand eagerly among the flowers, and drew forth a tiny loaf of white bread, and two purple figs.

"Take these—take these!" she said, tearing one of the figs apart, and holding its juicy pulp to the old man's lips. "They are fresh; they are sweet. Oh! thank God that they were in my basket. See how he eats, how he loves them. Oh, my good kind Doudel, was there ever happiness like this?"

"I have tasted these before," said the prisoner, earnestly, pausing a moment in his delicious repast, to examine

the half devoured fig; "but the name—I cannot remember the name."

"Must we go? Oh! for another ten minutes. It is such pleasure to see him eat; but we will come again. Oh, I will be so crafty, so cautious; but then it shall not be long now. I will find my way to the king, or be trampled to death under the hoofs of his horses."

"Do not go near the king; he is a hard old man. It was he who put me here," said the prisoner. "No wife or child of mine, shall go near enough to look in his evil face."

"That king is dead long ago," answered Marguerite. "I should have no hope if he was on the throne."

"Dead! Is he dead, and I living here? Well, well; I cannot understand it. Louis the Fifteenth is gone. Then who rules in France?"

"His grandson, who was the Dauphin."

"And the Queen?"

"Is Marie Antoinette of Austria."

"Marie Antoinette of Austria?"

A look of wild inquiry, more vivid than anything the prisoner had expressed yet, flashed over his face; but Marguerite had no time for questions or answers.

Doudel would not give her another moment; so she left the dungeon so full of thankfulness, so resolved to set her father free, that the dark corridors and gloomy sounds had no terror for her. Her father was a reality now. She had seen him—felt his arms around her, fed him with her own hands. Yes and she would set him at liberty or die.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE KING'S WORKSHOP.

THE thoughts of her father, in that awful dungeon, took entire possession of that young girl; all other things became as nothing to her. Her new occupation, her old friends, only presented themselves to her mind as aids to the one great object. She would go to the king. She would obtain freedom for her father, or die at the cruel monarch's feet.

Marguerite had promised secrecy to Doudel, and could tell her mother nothing. The great secret preying on her soul, drove her wild. In her impatience she went to Monsieur Jacques, and besought him to find a way to the king.

Jacques promised, and fortunately for her, Madame Gosner had fallen ill; the reaction of great excitement had left her weak as an infant, so weak that she scarcely knew when Marguerite went away, and left her to the generous care of Dame Doudel. The next morning, Monsieur Jacques and Marguerite presented themselves at the guarded entrance of the palace of Versailles. The man was admitted, for he brought a message to the king, from a person whom the guard had been ordered to respect. But the poor girl was sent away, and she went drearily back to The Swan, a public house kept by a sister of Dame Doudel, to whom Marguerite was consigned with a kind message.

The palace which Monsieur Jacques entered seemed gloomy to him, in spite of its regal splendor; for even then the shadow of coming events was gathering around the vast edifice, which the queen herself forsook whenever she could get an opportunity, for the freedom and pleasure of her bijou of a palace in the great park.

Though France was one grand field of excitement, and

had already begun to tremble with the moral earthquake that shook it to the very foundations, it seemed impossible to convince the court of the awful danger that threatened it. The very anxieties of her position drove the queen from the distractions of gayety, the gloom that gathered around her, made even pleasure tiresome; and it was with an effort that she flung off the cares of state, which fell heavily, indeed, on a nature so light, so gay, and so womanly as hers.

Our readers have seen Marie Antoinette years ago, and only for a moment—the girlish, beautiful, and lovely Dauphiness, burdened with no care heavier than that imposed by court etiquette, and anxious only about the day's amusement. They see her again escaping from the anxieties that beset St. Cloud and Versailles, striving to bring back the light-hearted gayeties of her youth in *La Petite Trianon*, which of all places on earth seemed most likely to accomplish that object.

On the day that Marguerite presented herself at the gates of Versailles, Marie Antoinette was making one of her rustic sojourns at the little palace, while the king, glad to escape from cares equally burdensome, had retreated into the private chamber, in which an anvil and a chest of tools promised him at least amusement equal to any she could hope for.

It is true that matters of state called for royal attention; that the cries of a suffering and impatient people ought to have been heard, even among the click of locks and rasping of files; but it was the fault of this really good man, that he was always ready to put away troublesome cares, and permitted others to think for him, save where, with a stubborn sense of right, he would persist on a given point without understanding all its relations. Indeed, at this time the burdens of state were so heavy, that a greater man might have willingly laid them down, even for the primitive employment which Louis loved so well.



That day Louis the Sixteenth was alone in his work-shop. A furnace was all aglow in the chimney, and a bench across one of the windows, was scattered over with tools. To this bench a vise was attached, and a heavy man, somewhat awkward in his movements, was hard at work there. His velvet coat, heavy with gold-lace and embroidery, hung across the back of a chair, and a diamond star on the breast shot out gorgeous rays of light, whenever a fitful flame from the furnace flashed up and quivered over it.

No one, to have seen that man working so earnestly at the lock which was in the fast grip of that vise, would have believed him capable of exasperating a great nation into such crimes as soon left France lying, like a monster, saturated with the blood of its own children. His face was gentle and serious, a little full and heavy, perhaps, but neither wanting in dignity or character. The lace-ruffles had been loosened at his wrist, and, with the garment to which they were attached, rolled back to his elbows, revealing a strong, rounded arm, white as a woman's, but which was sprinkled with iron-filings. Indeed, this metallic dust had fallen over the rich lace on his bosom, and glistened in dark specks among the powder of his hair. As he worked, the intricacies of the lock seemed to puzzle him; he unscrewed the vise, and examined its workmanship with great earnestness. Nothing could be more intelligent or patient than his face, as he bent over the work-bench. Again and again he attempted to fit the parts together, but something was wrong about them, and each attempt proved a failure.

At last he sat down and wiped the perspiration from his face, to all appearance resigned to his defeat. He was evidently a man to suffer, to endure, but not to trample obstacles under foot. As he sat pondering thoughtfully over the disjointed lock, a servant came to the door. The king shook the iron-dust from his hands, and turned toward his coat, evidently a little ashamed of his undress.

"Sire," said the man, decorously looking downward, that he might not see what his master wished unobserved, "a man has just come from Paris, who says that De Witt is taken ill, and sends him to ask your majesty's pleasure. He brings a written recommendation, which states that he is trustworthy, and master of his craft. Shall I send him back, or is it the royal pleasure that he should be received?"

The king looked at his disjointed lock, hesitated, and at last gave orders that the mechanic from Paris should be sent up.

When the door was closed, Louis began to arrange his dress with true regal pride. He would rather have been found at a disadvantage by a prince of the blood, than discovered wanting in any appendage of royalty by this strange mechanic. Directly the work-room door was opened again, and a short, stout, and almost uncouth man, presented himself before the king. He had evidently been conducted to the room by some private entrance, for his hat was left outside, and some attempt had, undoubtedly, been made to render his rude toilet presentable since his entrance into the chateau.

Rude and strange as this man appeared, he was neither awkward nor abashed, but approached the work-bench, and leaning one hand upon it, waited to be addressed. There was something manly, and indicative of strength, in this attitude, which took the king by surprise; for the moment he realized that he was in the presence of one of the people.

"De Witt sent you, and vouches for your faithfulness," said Louis, more embarrassed than his visitor; for at times he was rather ashamed of his passion for mechanics.

The locksmith bowed, and his eyes turned on the lock which had been taken apart, but all the genius of the king had failed to put it together again.

"You see that I have only the power to do mischief," said Louis, smiling pleasantly.



"So the people of France have been bold enough to say," was the prompt answer.

Louis frowned at this bold reply; but directly his brow cleared, and he looked earnestly into the man's face, as if questioning that instead of his words.

"The people of France know but little of their king," he said, gravely; "but let us to our work."

The man again bent his head, and took up the disjointed lock, which was, in fact, a new invention, full of complications.

"Yes," he said, "this is after De Witt's plan. I have seen it before; but here is something I do not understand."

"Ah!" said Louis, coloring a little, "that is my own improvement."

The locksmith smiled, examined the new complication well, and nodded his head in approval.

"This is really an improvement—but it fits ill; a free use of the file, and a screw here, will make the thing perfect."

The man reached out his hand for a file; but Louis had already flung off his coat again, and was fastening a bolt into the vise.

"Give me the file, I see what is lacking," he said, eagerly. "So you like the improvement. De Witt may not be of your opinion. He is not willing that the king should be considered so good a craftsman as himself. This lock is for the queen's chamber. I shall present it to her myself when it is complete."

"It will be safe and strong," said the workman; "delicate, too, for the metal is of the best. I put one upon a dungeon of the Bastille after the same pattern, lacking the royal improvement; but that was of ponderous iron, which is by this time thick with rust."

The king started as the Bastille was so suddenly mentioned, and, holding his file in suspense, looked steadily at his strange instructor.

"You have been in the Bastille, then?"

"Yes, sire; more than once."

"And you have been in the dungeons?"

"Almost every one of them."

"And what did you see there?"

"Souls in torment—some of them innocent."

"You are a bold man," said Louis, after a brief pause.

"Because I am a true one!"

"And so our commissioners should be; but they give no such report."

"There it is," cried the locksmith, with sudden warmth. "There is no one to report the wrongs of the people. The ministers are deaf to them; the king hears them when their cries have been smothered by commissioners—owned by these men. Ah, sire! if you could once go among your subjects, see and hear them as I do, France might yet be saved."

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE KING AND THE WORKMAN.

THE king drew back as if a viper had sprung out from the iron he was filing, when the workman who had entered his presence so strangely made this direct appeal. Anger, astonishment, and something like consternation, rose to his face. Perhaps a King of France had never been addressed in such language before by a man of the people. The fact seemed incredible, even to the kindest and least exacting monarch of his race.

"Who is it that dares use words like these to the king?" he said, at length, drawing his heavy figure up with dignity.

"One who loves his king better than anything on earth, save France," was the reply given firmly, but with profound respect.

"Our grandfather used to say that the king *was* France," answered Louis, so impressed by the earnestness of the man that he forgot, for the moment, his low origin.

"A good king, who loves his people as fathers love their children, might say this, and ask God's blessing upon it. Ah, sire! it is in this spirit the people would recognize their sovereign: let him represent France in his own person; let him open his heart to their love, his mind to their great needs, his hand to help them; and no monarch ever lived who would be worshiped like Louis the Sixteenth. Oh! think of this when the proud men who surround you seek to crowd back the people from your presence."

The locksmith fell upon his knees as he spoke, and clasping his hard hands, held them up, quivering with emotion; for, brave as he was, this interview with the king, face to face, shook his stout frame from head to foot.

Louis stood up proudly above him—for that moment the man was striving nobly against all the traditions and prejudices of the monarch. He was angry that any human being should dare to address him with the manner and words used by this workman, whom he now thought had gained access to his presence by a stratagem. But the humble position and absolute bravery of the man awoke more generous feelings in the really good heart of the monarch. After the first rush of angry surprise, he rested one hand on the work-bench, and said almost smiling,

"Stand upon your feet, my good friend, and for once let me hear from my people directly through one of their number. If you are, indeed, what your appearance indicates, a worker in iron, and nothing more, even though your craft has been used as a device, I will forgive it. Speak the truth, and that fearlessly, as if this were your workshop, and not mine."

This speech, so different to what the man expected, took all his presence of mind away. Anger he could have

borne; danger he was prepared for; but this generous composure took him unawares. He began to tremble with a rush of strong emotions; once or twice the rough hand was drawn across his eyes. When he did speak, his voice was low and broken.

"My king, I thank you."

Louis smiled. He liked the generous homage betrayed in this rude emotion, better than the position this man had just left at his feet.

"Speak frankly. We will leave our work for awhile, and learn if you are as well skilled in state craft as in this other, of which you, indeed, seem to be master. Half an hour ago this lock was chaotic fragments of iron, which puzzled my poor brain sadly. Now it is almost compact, its bolts slide with a touch of the key—all its parts are in harmony. Tell, if you have the knowledge, can my kingdom be so arranged?"

"Not with its present workmen," answered the smith, resuming all his powers of mind; "never while the nobility hedge their king in from the common people as with a wall of granite. Sire, sire, old traditions are melting away, the people are losing their reverence for the greatness which has for generations set its heel upon them. They begin to understand that labor has its privileges, and should not forever be taxed that arrogance and idleness may become more powerful, and only use that power for oppression. They want the King of France to be the monarch of *all* the people of France, not of a privileged class."

"That is, they desire the king to commence a revolution, and begin it by despoiling himself of power, and his court of rights hereditary since the foundations of the monarchy. By what excuse can he wrest privileges from one class and distribute them to another?"

"By the right of humanity he should do it, and human progress will give him the power. Those vast privileges

were secured to the nobility in the ignorance of the many and grasping ambition of the few. Then physical might ruled supreme, and the people were in fact serfs; now mind, thought, energy, are at work through the masses. They begin to feel the great strength that lies in numbers; they clamor for a share of God's blessings. Yes, sire, a spirit of revolution is abroad among the people who love their king, and ask him to be at the head of a grand reform.

Louis listened gravely, while troubled shadows settled upon his face. He felt dimly all the truth that lay in his strange visitor's words, but still more clearly the formidable powers opposed against them. Nobility clinging to the rights which, in fact, upheld his throne; the clergy, which in no country ever loosened its grasp on wealth or power without a death-struggle — all were to be braved and despoiled in behalf of a people of whom he, personally, knew nothing, and for whom his sympathies had never been thoroughly enlisted. The people, had, in fact, never approached their king, save in clamorous multitudes, or in committees, that sometimes appealed to his reason, seldom to his sympathies.

The most difficult man to deal with in the world is one of just mind and kind heart, who, holding power, has not the mental force and stern will necessary to its vigorous execution. To such men half-measures are sure to present themselves, and as certain to prove inadequate to the occasion when great difficulties are to be overcome. Indeed, it is seldom that they thoroughly understand the danger until it is upon them.

This was true with regard to Louis the Sixteenth. It required a gigantic mind even to comprehend the dangers that had each year crowded closer and closer to his throne; and he had no ministers capable of giving him thorough enlightenment, because they did not themselves understand these terrible signs of the future.

Was it strange, then, that he received the suggestions of this singular man with astonishment; that his kind heart swelled to his rude eloquence, and he felt, for the time, ready to lead his people on to the broader liberty they asked for?

Was it strange, either, that while the man was talking, the influences which had surrounded the king for life came back and stifled the generous impulse? He knew that in order to benefit a class of which he knew little, he must first enter into bitter contest with those who had been the friends and supporters of his house since it was royally planted on the throne!

"These are vast questions, and involve much which my people do not understand," said Louis, a little impatiently; for if his reason had not been convinced, it certainly was disturbed. "I am not sorry, even in this way, to meet one of the people who dares to speak the truth. Had it been a courtier, now, or even a minister, who ventured so far, I am not sure that he would have been a stranger to our prison of the Bastille to-morrow morning."

The locksmith shuddered.

"Ah! that fearful prison, sire, planted in the very heart of Paris, it has become so hateful to the people, that they mutter curses on it in passing."

"That bespeaks them unreasoning and factious. Nations that build up thrones, at the same time lay the foundation of prisons; crime must be punished that the people may live. The palace in which I stand is not more an appendage of royalty than the prison of the Bastille."

Louis spoke the truth; despotism had no monument more closely allied to itself than the Bastille. It had so long been an appendage to royalty, that no king, not even the kind-hearted Louis, ever thought of its horrors, save as necessary to the punishment of those who were considered as his enemies.

"Sire," answered the locksmith, turning pale under the memories that crowded upon him, "I have been in the Bastille, and know all the horrors of its dungeons. Has any man ever told your highness of the deep, fetid caves and cells that are dug to a level with the common-sewers of the city, where men born, perhaps, to luxury, have to struggle with toads, rats, and every species of foul vermin, for the privilege of breathing the pestilential air? Have they told you of strong men chained by the waist to walls reeking with slime, till they become little better than skeletons; when the rusty girdles were unclasped, and they were carried, in the dead of night, to the cemetery of St. Paul, and buried without name and without record, save some rude inscription scratched upon the walls of a dungeon by the rusted nail, which some poor wretch had hoarded as a treasure?"

The king turned white as the man who addressed him with such passion and power, that the picture of the Bastille seemed to loom up, and cast its gaunt shadows over them both.

"Have they told you of this cruel man, Latude, crawling back and forth, like some wild animal, on those ponderous rope-ladders, by which he descends the grim towers, and swings himself to the earth? Do the dainty commissioners, who go once each year to examine this place of horrors, tell the king of these things, and can he still say that this monster pile is an appendage of the throne?"

The king made a gesture with his hands, and turned away, as if this description revolted him. But the locksmith had plunged into the subject with all the fierce energy of a man so completely in earnest, that he lost all sense of the rank and power of his auditor.

"And if these enormities exist now under a monarch that all men know to be good and merciful, what must it have been when men less gracious held sway over the

palaces and prisons of France? How many generations of Frenchmen have moaned, and suffered, and perished, under those black towers? How many innocent hearts have broken in despair? What oceans of rageful tears have been spent in vain! How many heads have been dashed against those pitiless stones? It stands there yet! Ay, king, it stands there yet! Innocent men are even now buried within its walls, sent there in the wantonness or cruelty of your grandfather—not many, not many. They do not live so long in the Bastille; but that old man——"

"Silence, I command you!" broke forth the king, pale with agitation, trembling with anger.

The locksmith dropped his uplifted arm, the word upon his lip broke in an angry sob.

"Sire, forgive me! I was standing in that awful prison. I heard the moans of agonized men coming up from under my feet; I heard the clank of chains, and saw such sights. Sire, forgive, or punish me; I, who have no self-command, and should claim little mercy."

The king sat down and wiped away the beaded drops from his forehead; his breath came unevenly, his white hands shook.

"Tell me, in one word—is what you have said the truth?"

The locksmith fell upon his knees, and again held up his clasped hands.

"As heaven sees me, sire, every word I have uttered is a terrible truth."

"And for this I am responsible!" said the king, as if speaking to himself. "It shall be remedied! It shall be remedied! Good man, I thank you! It is seldom that a monarch hears the truth, when it cuts him to the heart like this. I can listen to no more," he added, lifting his hand as the locksmith opened his lips to speak. "Some other

time you shall come to me again, but not here. I had hoped in this place to escape from all cares of state; but I do not complain. You have performed the duty of a good citizen, and have the king's gratitude. Mark me, when the people say that Louis is inaccessible to his subjects, tell them that he not only sees them, but listens to painful truths without anger, when they are honestly told. Some day hereafter I may need you as a medium between me and the people, for whom you plead so boldly."

The locksmith bent his head in deeper reverence than he had yet given to the monarch.

"When I entered the gates of Versailles, sire, my heart went out first to the people of France, then to the king. I go away with them united so firmly in my love, that death itself shall not tear them apart."

The locksmith laid one hand on his breast as he said this, bent low, and turned to quit the room. Louis recalled him.

"Your name, citizen?"

"They know me as 'Monsieur Jacques' in the city."

"Leave that and your address with the guard as you go out. You may be wanted."

"At the gate!" These words seemed to arrest the man, and he turned suddenly. But the king had arisen, and was leaving the room by another door. Whatever Monsieur Jacques wished to say was thus rendered impossible; and he left the work-room with a baffled and dejected look. This was the second time he had represented De Witt, the locksmith, very successfully; but he could hardly hope to gain access to the king in that way again; and in the excitement of his patriotism, he had utterly forgotten the most immediate object of his visit until it was too late.

"Heaven forgive me! It will break her heart! And he would have done it—I am sure he would have done it!" exclaimed the noble-hearted man who had forgotten everything in his love of France.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE LANDLADY AND THE WHITE HENS.

ALL that morning a young girl sat in the parlor of a little public house in the town of Versailles, waiting with such impatience as can only be felt by anxious youth, for the appearance of Monsieur Jacques.

"Have no fear," he had said, in going out with a box of tools in his hand. "I shall see the king, and so plead with him that you will read my good news on my face at the first sight. Perhaps I shall have managed to get an interview for yourself; so keep a brave heart, and watch for me at the little window yonder."

She had watched, poor child, until the minutes seemed turning into hours, until her eyes grew dim, and her heart faint; for one moment hope grew strong in her bosom; the next a pang of dread would seize upon her, and she longed to flee away and hide herself from the disappointment which seemed sure of coming.

As she sat looking wearily through the window, the landlady came into the room once or twice, and, standing close by her, looked through the upper panes into the street, as if in expectation of some one. Marguerite lifted her eyes to this woman's face anxious for sympathy, for it was a sister of Dame Doudel who kept the house. But the good woman was that moment filled with anxiety on her own account.

"Ah! here he comes a third time, and all for nothing!" exclaimed the woman, excitedly. "As if little hens, with wings and bosoms like snow, could be picked up in a minute. I dare say the queen thinks such things are hatched full-grown. Good-morning, monsieur. Good-morning once again! No better news!"

"What, nothing yet, and her majesty so impatient?"

"Ah! you know it sometimes happens that nature will have her own way in spite of the queen."

"Then nature is full of rank treason," answered the man, who stepped across the threshold, and threw himself into a seat where he could stare at Marguerite more conveniently. "Your daughter, dame, I suppose, and a demoiselle worth looking at. Where have you kept her till now?"

"We were talking about hens, monsieur, not about daughters; but you are mistaken, I have no child—though this pretty creature does remind me of a niece who is in her grave. Do not blush, child, for she was good as well as beautiful."

"And this one is beautiful, let her be good or not," muttered the man, who wore a royal livery, and seemed to assume great authority thereat.

Marguerite turned her face away, and looked out of the window more earnestly than ever; for she heard the remark, and those bold, searching eyes annoyed her.

"Well, monsieur, step this way," said the woman.

"No, I will wait here," answered the man, crossing his feet on the floor, and stretching himself into an easy position.

"But it is no use to wait; the thing you want cannot be found in the whole town. I have sent to the market in Paris, and among the farmers in the country. Perhaps one will come in, but it may not be for a week."

The man changed his position a little and laughed.

"Oh! I prefer to wait awhile," he answered.

"Then mademoiselle will, perhaps, walk upstairs?" said the woman. "Other windows than this overlook the street."

Marguerite arose, blushing deeply, and cast a grateful look on the landlady who was so kindly attempting to shield her from this man's impertinent admiration.

"Pardon, I would not incommode any one for the world, so will take myself off at once. But you have not yet divined my whole business. I was ordered to summon the good dame herself to the little palace."

"What, me? No, no! There is some mistake."

"Not at all. Her majesty is in a dilemma."

"That is not unlikely," muttered the landlady. "It seems to me that all France is in a dilemma."

"She has discovered that none of her ladies know how to make butter."

"To make butter?"

"Exactly. Thus you can understand all the choice cows that live so daintily around the Swiss cottages are a sad reproach. Her majesty knows how to set the cream; but when it comes to churning butter, that is beyond her. Not even the Princess Lambella or Madame Campan can aid her in that, clever as they are."

The landlady laughed, holding her side with both hands.

"I should think not—I should think not," she said, at length rocking herself to and fro in jovial enjoyment of this absurd idea. "What have court ladies to do with useful things like that?"

"So this is one reason that I am sent here. You are wanted, dame, quite as much as the white hen."

"Me! Wanted for what?"

"This is it. Her highness, the queen, desires a perfect dress, and sends for a *modiste* to superintend her toilet. In the same way she wants golden butter from a herd of the most beautiful cows in the world—butter of her own making, remember; but is compelled to send for the mistress of The Swan, who will now put on her shawl and proceed to one of the Swiss cottages, to which I shall have the honor of conducting her. It is her majesty's order."

Still the landlady laughed; she was half flattered, half incredulous. The idea that she was summoned to teach the queen was too astonishing for belief.



"Monsieur has had his little joke," she said, doubtfully.

"But it is no joke. I come by the queen's order to demand your attendance."

"Monsieur, if you trifle with me, I shall be angry."

"And with good cause. But I do not trifle."

"And you wish me to go?"

"At once."

"But it is a long walk."

"Look through the window, and you will see that her majesty has made provision for this difficulty."

The landlady leaned over Marguerite and saw that a calashe, drawn by a pair of fine horses, stood outside. Her eyes brightened; she nodded her head and began to untie her apron.

"Monsieur shall not be made to wait," she said. "It is not every woman who can say that the queen has sent for her."

Just as the delighted woman went out of one door, Monsieur Jacques came in at the other, stooping forward dejectedly, and turning his eyes away from Marguerite, as if afraid to look her in the face.

Marguerite started as he came in, and clasped her hands; but when she saw his face, her fingers fell slowly apart, and she sunk back in her chair moaning unconsciously.

"Do not punish me with that look!" exclaimed the unhappy man, drawing close to her in deep humiliation; "I have betrayed you, and left my errand unfulfilled, but it came out of my love of France. In my insane enthusiasm I forgot you, and everything else, when a little moderation would have won all. Can you forgive me?"

Marguerite lifted her great blue eyes to his face, and he felt their mournful reproach tremble through his heart.

"And you did not see him?" she said.

"Yes, I saw him, and forgot you—everything else but France and its sufferings."

"Ah, me! and I had hoped so much."

"It is I—your best friend—who have betrayed you."

"But is the opportunity entirely lost? We may never again be so near the king. He is in the palace; oh! if I could obtain entrance! Tell me, sir, is it possible?"

Marguerite addressed the queen's messenger, who sat with his legs crossed, regarding her with smiling interest.

"Is what impossible, mademoiselle?"

"That I can gain one minute's speech with the king?"

"Utterly impossible, I should say!"

Marguerite dropped into her chair with a look of broken-hearted disappointment, which cut Monsieur Jacques to the soul.

"It is I that have done it," he said desperately. "I who would rather have perished."

"Are you her father?" inquired the queen's messenger, with interest.

"Her father? No!"

"Her friend, then?"

"No, I am her worst enemy. Ask her."

"Indeed he is not," cried Marguerite. "We expected him to accomplish impossible things, and he could not—for this he condemns himself."

"Is it that you so much desire an interview with the king?"

"No," answered Monsieur Jacques. "It is I who have thrown an interview away—wasted it in complaints and invectives, when I should have been pleading for mercy."

"That is a misfortune!" said the messenger, striding up and down the floor, "a great misfortune, but not, perhaps without its remedy."

Marguerite turned her eyes upon him. He met the look of wild entreaty, and paused in his walk.

"To get an interview with the king is beyond my managing; but her majesty keeps no state just now. I could almost venture to——"

Marguerite started up, her sweet face on fire with sudden hope.

"Take me to the queen—take me to the queen, and I will bless you forever," she pleaded.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE SWISS COTTAGE.

"WHAT is this? Who is it that is begging and praying to see her majesty? My young friend here, with the mournful eyes? Why not? If I had a daughter now, she should follow me into her presence, and look on while I give her majesty a lesson. Not having the daughter, why not take this pretty pigeon under my wing? What say you, monsieur? They could only refuse to let her in, and no great harm done?" cried the landlady, entering the room in haste.

"I was about to propose as much," answered the queen's messenger, upon whom the landlady had borne down with this burst of eloquence as she entered the room, equipped for an excursion.

"You will consent," cried Marguerite, turning from one to the other in breathless anxiety; "you will let me go?"

"Look in her face now, and say if she is not enough like me to pass for my own child. Blue eyes, hair with a dash of gold in it—that is before mine turned to silver; a nice trim waist, such as mine was not so very long ago—in fact, the girl is patterned after me, and I have a mind to run some risk for her, especially as it will please my good sister Doudel, and monsieur seems willing."

Marguerite clasped her hands and turned her beaming face on Monsieur Jacques.

"You will not leave me? Wait till I come back. It is best that we appeal to the queen. Had it been otherwise you would never have forgotten."

Monsieur Jacques came out of his dejection. The thoughtfulness and hope in that sweet face inspired him.

"Go," he said, "I will follow you. When fate closes one door, she opens another."

"It is not fate, Monsieur Jacques, but our Lady; I was praying to her all the time you were out."

A curt smile died on Monsieur Jacques' lips. He was beginning to have very little reverence for "our Lady" or any other being, human or divine; but the most irreligious man prefers to find devotion in the woman he loves; so this stout democrat stifled the sneer that had almost curved his lip, and bent his massive head in homage to the simple piety in which he did not believe.

"Now," said the dame, taking Marguerite by the arm in cordial good-humor, and marching toward the carriage with a stir and bustle, which would have drawn the attention of passers-by, had the royal livery been insufficient to produce that effect, "you shall see what power the mistress of The Swan has at court. There, climb up over the front wheel, while some one brings me a stool. Thank you, monsieur; it is not that I am unable to mount the wheel as she does, but my shoe is a little tight. There, let me rest my hand on your shoulder—it helps famously. Oh! here we are, comfortable as birds in a nest. Now for a swinging ride through the town."

They had a swinging ride, and a handsome man, in royal livery, attending them on horseback. More than that—a stout, hardy working man tramped after on foot, resolved to keep his charge in sight, if vigorous walking would do it. But the queen's horses were full of fire, and soon left Monsieur Jacques toiling in the mud far behind, while they dashed toward the *Petite Trianon*, fairly taking Marguerite's breath away.



The carriage stopped, the attendant dismounted and opened the door. Directly the portly person of our hostess of The Swan was safely planted in front of a rustic gate which led to a *bijou* of a Swiss cottage, fanciful as a fairy dwelling in its construction, sheltered by the green old trees that spread out from the Park, and surrounded by grass that grew greener and thicker than could be found elsewhere, upon which a drove of choice white cows were feeding luxuriously.

The landlady turned as she touched the earth, and held out her two stout arms, as if Marguerite had been an infant who claimed her help. But the young girl scarcely touched the kindly offered arms. She sprang to the earth in breathless haste, white to the lips, trembling in every limb. Her friend gave a nod of encouragement, over her shoulder, and led the way toward the cottage.

A beautiful woman came to the door, and looked out; a merry laugh was on her lips; her large eyes were bright as sunshine. A dress of brown stuff, looped up from a blue under-skirt of the same material, gave piquancy and grace to a figure, which had the rare beauty of perfect womanhood. A dainty little cap was tied over an abundance of rich brown hair, in which there seemed to be a slight grey tinge; but, on a closer view, this tinge was produced by traces of powder, which could not be entirely brushed from tresses so habitually accustomed to its use.

The lady spoke a few words, still laughing, to some one within the cottage; then two or three other faces crowded into the background, and bright eyes glowed out upon the portly figure of Dame Tillery, as she came up the walk, almost concealing the slight figure of Marguerite, who came trembling behind her.

The women of France were a brave, outspoken class even when they came in contact with all the exclusiveness of a court. When the people and the nobility met, face to

face, honest truths were often spoken, which could not have been palatable to king or courtier. Of this fearless class, Dame Tillery was a superior specimen. She walked with something like dignity, toward the cottage; the heavy shawl folded over her ample bosom neither rose nor fell, with a quickened breath: a bland smile was on her face. She was pleased to be summoned, but in no way embarrassed.

"My queen!" said the Dame, addressing the lady in the door-way, "you have sent for me, and I have come."

Dame Tillery looked at the white hand, which lay in beautiful relief against the brown dress, as if she longed to kiss it.

Marie Antoinette smiled, and held out her hand, about which the sweet smell of milk still lingered.

"Ah, dame! we are in sad trouble," she said, laughing pleasantly. "The cream is obstinate to-day, or we are sadly ignorant. It is delightful to see how helpless we all are. Here is Madame Campan breaking her heart."

"If your highness permit——"

"Nay, dame, there is no highness here, remember. All that is left behind, at Versailles. It is only a company of dairy-women, more ignorant of their business than is proper. As a dame of experience we have sent for you."

"Yes, your—— That is, certainly; I have some experience."

"And discretion," rejoined Marie Antoinette, looking anxious for the moment, and scanning Dame Tillery's face with a clear, keen glance, with which the queen sometimes examined those who approached her.

"And discretion, if that means silence," answered the dame.

Once more the careless light came back to the queen's face; and throwing off the thoughtfulness which had made her appear ten years older, she turned and entered the cottage.

"Madame, your highness, can my companion come in also?"

Marie Antoinette frowned and regretted the step she had taken. She was evidently annoyed by this constant appeal to her royalty.

"Ah! your daughter. Yes, yes, let her come in. She, too, may be able to teach us something."

Marguerite, in a wondering way, knew that she was in the presence of the queen. She would have spoken, but the words died on her lips, for the frank, smiling woman who met them so cordially, had been in an instant transformed into a creature of evident power; her frown was ominous as her smile was bright; but Marie Antoinette was a creature of wonderful variability, and almost on the instant took up her *role* of dairy-maid.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### ROYAL MILKMAIDS.

MARGUERITE followed Dame Tillery into the cottage. A confused sound of voices, and low bursts of laughter met them at the threshold, and with this was mingled the tinkling sound of metal-pans jarring against each other, and the patter of high-heeled shoes upon the wooden floor of a room beyond.

"Put aside your hood and shawl, dame," said the queen; "you are wanted at once."

Dame Tillery took off her outer garments, and drawing an apron of white linen from her pocket, tied it around her stout waist with the air of a woman about to perform some important duty, then she entered the room which seemed so full of merriment, as if it had been her own parlor in The Swan Hotel.

The room was a singular one; the floor was of dark walnut, and entirely uncarpeted. Along one end ran a range of shelves, cut from thin slabs of marble, on which pans, some silver, some of white porcelain, were arranged in rows. These pans were full of milk, on which the cream was mantling richly. Pails of almost snow-white wood, hooped and mounted with silver, hung on brackets against the opposite wall. At a long, marble table, which occupied the center of the room, stood two or three pans of milk, with a long, porcelain dish half full of thick cream. Two or three ladies were by the table busy at work, but laughing, chatting, and making merry over their labor, as if they had been accustomed to it all their lives.

One, a little, plump woman, with blue eyes, and a round, pleasant face, had rolled her sleeves to the elbows, and drawn the skirt of her dress through the pocket-holes, while she skimmed the cream from one of the pans, and dropped it into the long, porcelain dish preparatory for churning. A fair young girl, habited in like rustic fashion, but with a good deal of blue in her dress, was washing milk-pans at a marble sink in one corner of the room; while a piquant little lady, with red ribbons in her cap, stood ready with a long, white towel, with which she polished the pans into brightness.

The person who washed these pans was Elizabeth, the king's sister; the lady who received them was the Princess Lambella—but all titles were ignored in this rustic retreat, and each highborn lady went by her simple name.

"See, Dame Campan, I have brought a person here who will set us all right," cried the queen, introducing Dame Tillery, with mischievous laughter in her eyes.

The lady, who was skimming milk, dropped her hand to the edge of the pan, and turned her pleasant eyes on the landlady.

"Ah! I dare not go on with my work," she said, laugh-

ing merrily; "that is, with any one who understands it better than I do standing by."

"No wonder," answered Dame Tillery, going up to the table and taking the skimmer from the plump, little hand that held it. "Why, you are ladling out more milk than cream; and that makes sour butter."

With a subtle turn of her wrist, the landlady glided the skimmer between the strata of golden cream and impoverished milk with a dexterity that separated them entirely.

"There," she said, allowing the rich mass to glide into the dish, "that is the way to skim a pan of milk."

"Ah! what a bungler I have been!" exclaimed Madame Campan, clasping her hands in mimic humiliation; "but I can never do it like that."

The landlady laughed, and stood with a hand resting on either hip, while Campan made an effort to imitate her dexterity; but that moment the queen called her away. She stood by a tall churn of spotless wood, mounted with silver and with the dasher grasped in both hands, called out,

"Come hither, landlady—come hither! Dame Capet stands in more need of help than any one. This churn is obstinate as a mule. See how it has bespattered my dress."

"Certainly, there did seem to be cause for the queen's complaint, for little rivulets of cream were running down the side of the churn, and a shower of drops hung like pearls upon her white arms and her dress; while she worked so vigorously with the dasher that her cheeks were one glow of roses, and her eyes sparkled brighter than all the diamonds she had ever worn.

"What is it that makes the cream grow thinner and thinner the more I beat it?"

Dame Tillery took the dasher from those beautiful hands, lifted the lid of the churn, and examined its contents with wistful interest. Then she drew a fancy milking stool towards her, sat down upon it, and holding the churn between

her knees, began to agitate the cream with a slow rise and fall of the dasher, which would have irritated Marie Antoinette with its dull monotony.

"There, there! let me try!" she exclaimed, all impatience. "It is easy enough."

She took the dasher, while Dame Tillery moved her stool back and looked on. A few moments the rise and fall of the dasher was slow and cautious; but after a little, the impulsive character of the queen broke into action. A shower of snowy drops flashed upward, the lid was knocked one side and then the other, frothing cream dashed tumultuously against the sides of the churn, and everything was in commotion again.

"There, you see! You see nothing can be more obstinate. I have been following your method perfectly, but it comes to this."

"Nay," answered the dame, resting an elbow on each knee, as a broad, genial smile swept her face, "it is because you try too much. Slow and sure—slow and sure is a good maxim, both on the farm and at court."

"Hush! we have no such thing as court here, good woman," whispered a tall, dark lady, who had just come in. She was in a rustic dress, like the rest; but Dame Tillery instantly recognized her as a lady of the royal household. "Dame Capet has no knowledge of the queen, remember that."

Marie Antoinette had relinquished her hold of the dasher.

"It takes away my breath," she said, moving toward a window and looking out.

Dame Tillery drew the churn between her knees again, and went on with her monotonous work. Marguerite came and leaned upon her chair; she was very pale, and her eyes shone with suppressed anxiety.

"Tell me," she whispered, "is this lady, in truth, the queen?"

"In truth she is," answered the dame, suspending the motion of her dasher a moment.

"And if I speak to her?"

"Speak to her! Ah! now I remember, it was something more than a wish to see how royal ladies can amuse themselves, that made you so anxious to come."

"It was life or death—nothing less."

"So serious as that? I am sorry for it. Of all places in the world, this is the last for such things. The queen and her ladies came here to escape them."

"I see. It is almost hopeless; but I must speak."

"Not yet—wait a little. I will watch for an opportunity. Go to the other window yonder, and tell me what they are all looking at."

Marguerite went quietly to the window, and saw a drove of cows coming up from their pasture in the Park, beautiful creatures, with coats like velvet, and coal-black horns curving inward like cimeters.

A group of young men, wearing blouses and ribbons upon their hats, were driving the cows, all laughing, chatting, and making the air riotous with mirth. Marguerite saw one or two of these young men go up to the window, around which the inmates of the room were grouped.

"It is of no use inviting us out," said Marie Antoinette to a young man who protested, with grave earnestness, that the cows suffered for want of milking. "We have our own duties to perform first; so, my Lord de —, I beg ten thousand pardons, my gentle herdsman; you must watch and wait a little longer."

"But how long, Dame Capet? My companions are getting impatient of their idleness."

The Princess Elizabeth ran out of the room, and returned with a sickle in each hand, which she held out of the window with a demure smile.

"Let them cut grass for the cows," she said, "while we go on with our butter-making."

The young Duke de Richelieu, for it was no less a person, took the sickles, and tossing one to the feet of his companion, fell upon his knees beneath the window, and made an awkward attempt at cutting the grass.

The ladies at the window burst into shouts of mellow laughter, and smoothing their aprons, went to work again like so many dairy-maids.

"Now," said Marie Antoinette, approaching the churn, "I will be more obedient."

She took the dasher between her hands, and continued the slow, steady motion, which seemed so easy to Dame Tillery. The work had almost been done in her hands. Directly she saw the ridges of cream that gathered in a circle about the dasher divide off into particles, while the rejected milk flowed in thin bluish drops back to the churn.

"It has come!" exclaimed Dame Tillery, with mild triumph.

"What has come?" demanded her pupil, astonished to hear a liquid-splash come up from the churn, instead of a mellow sound, half-smothered in the richness of the cream, which her dasher had all the time produced.

"What has come? Your, your — My pretty dame! why, the butter, of course. You can hear it floating in lumps against the dasher."

"Butter! and I have really made it! Oh! how delicious, Campan. Elizabeth Polignac, come and see your Capet in her glory. Butter of her own churning—golden butter, sweet as violets, and such quantities! Look! look!"

The queen lifted the lid of her churn, and a swarm of pretty women crowded around it.

"Oh! this is something like!" exclaimed one.

"Superb!" cried another. "But how are we to get it out?"

"Bring a dish," said Dame Tillery, whose portly figure

seemed to swell and broaden under a consciousness of superior knowledge. "Bring a dish, little one."

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### DAME TILLERY TEACHES THE COURT AN ACCOMPLISHMENT.

MARGUERITE sprang from her place at the window, and taking a long porcelain dish from the table, brought it to the churn, and kneeling on the floor, held it up to be filled.

Dame Tillery arose, slipped the lid of the churn over the handle of the dasher, and gave the whole group a view of the golden treasure floating within. Then she gave the dasher a dexterous twirl, and drew it up gently, laden with fragrant butter, from which a white rain of milk dripped back in showers. Easily and daintily she deposited this first relay upon the dish, and dropped the dasher for another deposit. But here the queen broke in,

"No, no! I must gather it with my own hands. I promised the king—that is, my good man, that he should breakfast on butter of my own making, and so he shall. This is the way you separate it from the milk?"

She gave the dasher a vigorous twirl, which produced a tumult in the churn, but accomplished nothing.

"Softly, softly," urged Dame Tillery, rubbing her fat hands together. "There, sink the dasher so, give it one turn under the milk, then lift it daintily. Oh! what butter! it makes my mouth water! Oh! you are an apt scholar. If the people could only teach you other things as easily."

"Hush, woman! You will offend the queen!"

Dame Tillery lifted her eyes to the haughty woman who gave her this warning, and answered gravely,

"Be careful, madame, that you and your mates do not offend the people."

The lady's eyes flashed, and her red lip curved ominously; still there was no real dignity in her resentment; that small commonplace figure had nothing imposing in it, and a low, heavy forehead spoiled the otherwise beautiful face. She turned to the queen.

"Madame, do you know whom we have here?"

"A kind woman, who has taught me how to make the most beautiful butter," answered Marie Antoinette, laughing gleefully. "Why, Polignac, I am delighted! It is a triumph over the—over my good man, who disputed my power to accomplish anything of the kind. You shall all see my success astonish him. It will be delicious! Now what are we to do next, dame? This is to be made into little pats, somehow, with pretty devices on the top."

"But first, the milk must be worked out."

"Ah, I see; but how?"

Dame Tillery placed a hand on each knee, and lifted herself slowly from the stool. Taking the dish of butter from Marguerite, with a deep, long breath, she carried it to the table, where a butter-stick had been lying all the morning, with its uses quite unknown. With this in one hand, the dame tilted the dish a little that the milk might drain off, and began patting, pressing and moulding the butter with a dexterity that excited even the queen to rival her in a work so delightfully pleasant. Directly her own white fingers closed on the butter-stick, and with much laughter and infinite grace, she managed to press out the few drops of milk Dame Tillery had left, and sent them rolling out of the dish like waste pearls, that broke as they fell.

When the fragrant mass lay on the dish, pure and golden, the queen was at a loss once more. How were the delicate little pats and balls, which sometimes graced her table, produced? In order to make her triumph complete,

the precious contents of that dish must take this last artistic form.

Again Dame Tillery chuckled, and this time her hand plunged deeply into her pocket, and brought forth a little wooden mould carved daintily in the inside. This she dipped into water and thrust into the butter, closing it like a pair of scissors. When it was drawn forth, a large golden strawberry dropped from its clasp, which so delighted and surprised the group of ladies looking on, that their soft murmurs of wonderment filled the room.

"Oh! the enchantress! the beautiful, beautiful, golden strawberry. I shall not only supply delicious butter to my friend over yonder, but it will come to him as from the hands of an artist. Isn't the idea charming?"

"Beautiful!"

"Charming!"

"Exquisite!"

Each cherry lip had some epithet of praise to bestow on Dame Tillery's pretty device, except that of the Duchess de Polignac. She swept discontentedly toward the window, jealous even of this woman of the people, as she had been for years of any one who approached the queen.

"Shall we never be admitted to take our share in the work?" cried one of the young men who had been making a vain attempt to cut grass.

"In the folly, you mean," answered the duchess, angrily; "for my part, this practice, which brings one on a level with women of the city, becomes repelling."

"Ah! that is because you have no taste for simple pleasures like her majesty, who evidently finds them charming."

"And you?" questioned the duchess.

"I," answered the young man, with a thrill of deep feeling in his voice, "I shall never have the audacity to condemn anything that gives relief to the existence our royal lady must find so full of care."

The duchess gave him a keen look, which brought the blood to his face; but that moment Marie Antoinette lifted up the wooden mould, and bade them all look on while her first strawberry was forming. When it fell, round and perfect, into the silver dish, a little shout rang up from the crowd. With a group of admirers watching each graceful movement, she proceeded to fill her dish, and thus accomplished what seemed to her a great triumph.

By this time the day was drawing to a close; a tinge of gold melted into the atmosphere from the coming sunset, and gleams of crimson shot in and out through the great elms in the Park. The cows, which had been driven up to the cottage ready for milking, began to low, as if they were getting weary of standing there, hoof deep, in the velvet grass. While others, still wandering in the Park, answered back with something like general dissatisfaction.

"Now for the milking," cried the queen, taking a pail from one of the brackets. "Each one find a stool for herself, and this good dame shall teach us how to be less awkward."

Obeying this suggestion, each lady took her pail in one hand, with a stool in the other, and went forth into the soft grass, where a dozen cows were waiting to be milked. Here the gentlemen came into active service, and made laughable attempts at milking in company with the ladies. Dame Tillery had placed her ample proportions on the broadest stool she could find, and was sending double streams of liquid whiteness into the pail lodged against her knees, while the queen and Elizabeth looked on, when a shout started the animal she was milking. It made a leap, struck the pail with its foot, and overturned that and Dame Tillery into the grass, where she lay clutching at her stool, and crying lustily for help.

No help came. The cause of alarm was too serious.



Some newly-purchased cow, selected for the wildness of her beauty, suddenly darted from its covert in the Park, and careering like a mad creature across the lawn, bore furiously down upon the group of fancy workers. With her eyes on fire, and her head tossing savagely, she plunged through the group of milkers, scattering them as she went—turned suddenly, leveled her sharp horns, and made a leap at the queen, whose shrieks of terror increased the animal's fury.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE QUEEN'S PERIL.

THAT instant a young girl, pale as death, sprang before the queen, her white lips apart, her eyes burning with heroism and terror. With both arms she flung up the folds of her scarlet shawl, thus maddening the creature afresh in a wild effort to drive her back.

For one moment the vicious animal shook her fierce head, veered, turned again, and gathered up her limbs for a great leap forward. But as she made the plunge, and the leveled horns almost touched the girl, a man sprang upon the beast, seized her by both horns, and with the strength of a giant, bore her head down, even forcing her back until her fore hoofs were lifted from the ground.

That instant Marie Antoinette fell upon her knees, and flung her arms around the brave girl, who had leaped in between her and death, clinging to her in wild gratitude.

"Who is it? who is it that flings her life down to save mine?"

Marguerite turned her white face to the queen, and answered with a single sentence,

"Thank God, and the mother of God!"

Still the queen clung to her. Even then, she did not feel entirely safe; though the animal which had assailed her was lying upon its side, panting for breath, tethered head and hoof, and bellowing fiercely under the pain of her sudden bondage, while her conqueror stood with one foot on her panting side, tightening the thongs that held her down.

"Sister! sister! Are you safe? are you safe?"

It was Elizabeth, the king's sister, one of the sweetest women that ever drew breath. In all the terror of her flight, she had come back to learn of the queen's welfare.

"Yes; thanks to this brave girl," said Marie Antoinette. "Had the beast kept on she would have been trampled down first."

"How can we thank her, sister?" said Elizabeth, turning her grateful face on the girl. "What can we do in return for this brave act?"

"It was not brave. I did not think—there was no time. Pray, pray do not thank me so much! It will make a coward of me; I shall not dare ask anything—not even *his* life. Forgive me, forgive me! I did not know what I was doing."

"If you are grateful, lady, give her the thing she asks for. Give liberty and life to her father, who has been years on years in the torments of the Bastille. That is what she came here to implore at your hands."

"Who is it that speaks for her so warmly?" said the queen, still pale and trembling, but assuming something of her royal dignity.

"A man of the people, your highness, and her friend."

"But—but surely, you are not the person who conquered that cruel beast? The face is like——"

She turned and cast a shuddering glance where the brute, that had so terrified her, lay panting out its rage.

The man laughed a little scornfully.

"Oh! it was nothing; I only held her back till some one flung me a rope from the window; besides, I had help to bind the brute, a young fellow who ought to belong to the people, for they love bravery in lord or workman."

"I saw him, your highness. It was Richelieu," whispered Elizabeth.

The conversation was drifting away from the subject which lay so close to Marguerite's heart. She looked around, almost in despair. Elizabeth, with that keen delicacy which seems like intuition, saw this, and touched the queen's arm.

"She is anxious—she suffers."

"But Dame Tillery has no husband in the Bastille, that her daughter should crave freedom for. I do not understand."

"Madame, it is a mistake; I am not the daughter of this good woman. In her kindness she brought me here, without knowing how urgent my business was."

"Then tell me whose daughter you are, that I may better understand."

"My father, your highness, was Dr. Gosner."

The queen uttered a sudden cry, and retreated a step, as if the name had inflicted a pang.

"Ah! I have heard the name. It was one which made even my imperial mother tremble."

"But that could not have been his fault; he was good, and gentle as any child, I have heard my mother say," pleaded Marguerite.

"No, child, it was not his fault—and God forbid that it should be our misfortune. Dr. Gosner! It is years since I have heard that name. We thought him dead."

"In a living tomb; but not dead, your highness."

"But how came he in the Bastille?"

"That I do not know."

"How long has he been there?"

"Since the year of the old king's death."

"Heavens! and we not know; but it shall be remedied."

Marguerite clasped her hands, and her eyes filled with tears.

"You will pardon him? You will free him?"

Marie Antoinette smiled; she was now all the queen. With a wave of her hand she had kept the little crowd of her friends back, while this dialogue was going on. It was now sunset; a red glow was kindling up the landscape, and the last slanting beams fell across the group, revealing each figure clearly, like light thrown across a picture.

"I promise," said the queen, extending her hand: "your father shall be set free. It thrills me with horror to think of him in a prison."

Marguerite sunk upon her knees, and kissed the hand extended so graciously. Her beautiful face was aglow with gratitude; her lips quivered with emotions they would never have the power to express.

"Oh! if I could thank your highness."

"But you cannot, and must not. It is I who should give thanks for a life saved."

Again Marie Antoinette held out her hand. This time Marguerite observed that her lips touched a serpent coiled around a green stone, which circled one finger. She started; a strange sensation crept over her, and she seemed fascinated, as if a real serpent were charming all her faculties.

"There, you have our promise and our gratitude," said the queen, gently withdrawing her hand. "To-morrow I will have this case inquired into—that is, I will suggest it to the king."

"God bless you!"

This benediction broke from the lips of Monsieur Jacques, who had been listening eagerly.



The queen turned a look upon the man which made his heart swell.

"Oh! if the people of France could see their queen now," he exclaimed.

"They would believe no good of her," answered Marie; and all at once her eyes filled with tears.

The features of the strong man were troubled. He looked upon that proud, beautiful woman, with evident compassion.

"Ah, madame!" he said, with a genial outburst of admiration. "If the people of France could only look through these eyes, you would be adored."

The queen gave him an eloquent glance, and turned away.

"To-morrow," she said, "conduct this girl to the palace. The king will be glad to thank her and you. Now, ladies and gentlemen, let us back to the *Petite Trianon*. Dame Tillery, you will take care of these good people, and accept something better than thanks for the trouble."

Dame Tillery, who had been lying prostrate in the grass, among the wrecks of her milking stool and broken pail, for a longer time than I dare relate, had at last rolled, and plunged, and scrambled to her feet, deluged with milk, and a little lame from a blow she had received, when the cow trampled over her. Feeling in a state of dilapidation, she hesitated to draw near until the queen called her by name. Then she came rolling forward, took Marguerite by the hand, and making a profound reverence, led her charge away, followed by Monsieur Jacques.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## COUNT MIRABEAU AND HIS FATHER.

AN old man sat in the saloon of a hotel in Paris, awaiting an interview which had been delayed beyond the appointed time, a fact that seemed to give him no little annoyance. He rang the bell upon his table with violence the third time; and when the servant came, in obedience to his summons, asked if any one had called—a question the same man had already answered three times that morning.

The man answered with profound respect, that no one monsieur expected to see had as yet presented himself.

While the man was speaking, a loud, ringing step was heard on the oaken stair-case, and Count Mirabeau strode up to the door, which was obsequiously held open for his reception.

The old noble arose, and a faint color came into his face, while the young man approached and held out his hand.

"Welcome to Paris, my lord count. I had not dared to hope for this pleasure."

The delicate and slender fingers of the old man clung around the large, white hand of his son with a touch of irrepressible affection. The light blue eyes, a moment before keen and anxious, grew misty; and the thin lips moved with a visible tremor before they framed the words of welcome, that seemed to harden and grow cold as they were uttered. In his pride, the first impulse of nature was suppressed on the moment; and dropping the hand he had not touched in many a year, the old nobleman sat down quietly, and motioned his renegade son to occupy a chair close by.

Mirabeau threw himself heavily on the chair, and dropped his hat carelessly on the floor beside it; at which the old man motioned the servant, who still lingered, and bade him

place Count Mirabeau's hat in a proper place, and then betake himself from the room.

Mirabeau laughed, stretched himself lazily in his chair, and waited for the man to withdraw. When he had gone, the count turned abruptly toward the old man, and said, in a voice full of the deep feeling which made his eloquence so impressive,

"Father, I am grateful to you for coming here. It is long since we have met, and longer, I fear, since you have cared to meet me. But now, I think, you will confess that I have not altogether degraded the name I bear. If men of my own class shrink sometimes from Mirabeau—the people love him."

"Yes, I have learned this, even in the seclusion of my retirement. But I have also learned that Mirabeau uses this influence against his own class—against his king."

"Not when his king is true to the people!" answered the count, promptly. "It is only when he refuses to be the monarch of all France that I oppose him."

"They tell me also that my son has degraded himself into becoming the editor of a factious journal."

"Degraded himself! Who dares to call a full use of one's intellect degradation? I cannot make myself heard and known to the people of France by speeches only—the thought in these speeches must take various forms, and be brought home to every man's understanding. Yes, I am the editor of a journal which speaks of hope, progress, liberty for the people. If such engines of power are a terror to the king and his haughty Austrian wife, so much the worse for him, and the better for us."

"But, this is treason!" broke in the old man, angrily.

"Father, there is no such word as treason now. We have rebaptized the sentiment, and call it liberty!"

"And is this the doctrine taught by a son of mine! He forgets the noble blood in his veins, and gives himself up to

the rebellious spirit which would equalize refinement with ignorance, nobility with degradation. The very ermine of royalty he is ready to drag in the dust."

"And why not, if it fails to protect the people?"

"But the people are rising up in antagonism against the class to which you belong; this feeling may reach the king."

"May!" exclaimed the count, with a mocking laugh. "Why, it is already upon him."

"And you exult over it?"

"I exult over it," was the prompt, and almost coarse answer. "Why should you be surprised at this? Was it not my own father who first repudiated me—drove me from men of my own class, and sent me downward to rule among the canaille. Was it not my own mother who denounced her son as unworthy of companionship with high-born women?"

"No, no!" interposed the old noble. "Your mother was blind to your faults, gentle with your sins. She, at least, deserves no censure at your hands. Many a tear has she shed over the alienation which was not her fault."

Mirabeau drew a hand across his eyes, then dashed it down, as if impatient with himself for the feeling that disturbed him.

"My mother is an angel," he said; "God bless her!"

"Night and morning she blesses you," answered the old man, in a broken voice.

"But I do not deserve it."

"No," said the old man; "the best men on earth rarely deserve the blessings good mothers are ready to lavish on their sons."

"Spare me—spare me! If I have given her pain, it has fallen back on myself with many a sharp heartache. But for her I should, undoubtedly, have been a worse man."

A faint smile quivered across the thin lips of the old noble; some sarcastic reply was evidently trembling there. Mirabeau saw it, and his face flushed.

"You smile; you think it impossible that I could descend to a deeper level."

"Was it not a terrible stride downward when you left our old ancestral home for the Jacobin clubs and gambling saloons of Paris?"

"Granted; but what sent me there?"

"Your own predisposition to low company."

"Rather the parsimony of my father, who withheld the means by which a man of birth could maintain his position."

The old noble drew his slight figure up with a dash of angry pride.

"Young man," he said, "let me tell you now, if you have never learned it before, that my estate is yet cumbered with legal obligations, every dollar of which went to pay your debts. Years of economy have been forced upon us, that the honor of my name might be redeemed."

Mirabeau, flushed and indignant, made a rude gesture of dissent, at which the old man turned pale; for the manners which his son had slowly adopted from low associations seemed threatening and coarse to a man of his superior refinement.

"Mirabeau! Is this gesture intended as a denial of my assertion, or is that hand clenched as a threat of violence?"

"I scarcely knew," answered the count, "that my hand was clenched; we learn these things in our rough life here, and adopt the manners of the people with their sentiments. But this is certain, I did not intend to contradict a word you were saying. If I was rude, it was from impatience with myself that I had given you so much trouble, and with

fate that cast my lot among gentlemen, without giving me the means of maintaining a position with the best."

There was something natural and frank in this man, bad as he was, which won even upon the fastidious old noble, who, perhaps, understood his faults better than any man living. He smiled faintly, and held out his hand.

"Ah! my son, have you yet to learn that extravagance is not necessary to the maintenance of a great name?"

"No, father; but one cannot live upon a great name. Sometimes I have found it an incumbrance; the people distrust the aristocracy which traces too far back; and, spite of everything, my lot is cast with the people."

"Against the court? Do I live to hear a son of mine say that?"

"I have not said that. But the court, and that proud Austrian woman at its head, have repudiated me from the first. It is royal scorn and courtly injustice that has driven me into the arms of the people, who adore me; the more because I am turned out from my own class and belong to them. In this way my nobility is worth something."

"I have heard of your apostacy, and read your speeches, with shame and bitter sorrow," said the old man, with touching earnestness. "If any severity of mine has driven you into this ruinous course of thought and action, I have come to redeem the mistake. Throw off these associations, so unworthy of your birth and breeding; return to the higher associations which you have abandoned; stand firmly by our good king and most gracious queen in the troubles and perils that gather around them, and no man in all France can rise higher or win such gratitude from king and people. Do this, my son, and all my poor possessions shall be divided with you from the hour of your renewed allegiance."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## THE OLD NOBLEMAN MAKES CONCESSIONS.

MIRABEAU looked at his father in amazement a moment, then he turned upon his heel and walked the room with quick, heavy strides, gnawing his under lip and working his fingers with nervous energy, as if the thoughts in his bosom were crowding upon him almost to suffocation. At last he stopped, and stood before his father again; his eyes, burning with restless fire, and his face pale, as if the struggle of a moment had drank up all its color.

"And if I did, there would be no frank reception of my homage. That haughty queen would throw it back with such scorn as only a beautiful woman can use in crushing the man who might have worshipped her. Were I to follow your advice, and offer to wield the mighty power, which it were folly to say I do not possess, in favor of the court; were I to defend it with my eloquence; sustain it with my pen; cast myself in the breach between royalty and its foes; what reward should I have?—the covert scorn of this royal beauty, the distrust of the king; a defection of the people, for a time, at least, perhaps an entire loss of popularity, which alone enables me to be of service anywhere."

"But you would be doing right, my son."

There was tenderness and persuasion in the old man's voice that touched the mercurial nature of his son. He no longer paced the floor, like a caged panther, but went close to his father, and answered him with an earnestness so deep, and evidently so sincere, that the old man, for the first time in his life, was thrilled with a sentiment of respect for his wayward son.

"But I am not sure that it is right. These good people

of Paris are beginning to feel that humanity has been trampled down too long; that a king is invested with the purple for some higher purpose than self-indulgence. If I attempt to lead the people to the feet of Louis the Sixteenth, he must meet them half-way."

"Louis the Sixteenth is a just king."

"But he is surrounded by unjust courtiers, influenced by a wife trained in the Austrian school of statesmanship. No real truth will ever be permitted to reach him while a cordon of churchmen and noble leeches is drawn closer and closer around him every day. Nothing but a moral earthquake can root out the traditions of royal prerogatives and noble privileges which have chained the people down till the shackles are eaten through with age and rust, and it only wants a vigorous blow to dash them asunder. When the king is made to understand this, his good heart may bring him in real sympathy with the people."

"You do not understand Louis," said the father, after a moment of breathless silence, for Mirabeau had spoken with an outburst of feeling that astonished the old man. "No king ever lived who felt more kindly towards his subjects."

"But Louis must do something more than feel; he must act in his own person fearlessly, independently. The people love him, no matter how deeply they hate his nobles; he can never convince them that his heart is in the right place while the Bastille is crowded full of groaning humanity, that their malice may be appeased; while the prisons all over France are choked up by victims that are yet suffering injustice done them by the old king and his parasites. I tell you, sir, these evils must be redressed, or the people will rise up in their wrath and learn what strength lies in multitudes."

"But who would dare to speak such language to the King of France!" said the old man, half-frightened by his son's impetuosity. In the very thought there is something like treason."

"I dare," answered Mirabeau, proudly. "Why not; there are hard truths that must be accepted, sooner or later, either from the lips of such friends to France as I am, or at the point of the bayonet."

"The point of the bayonet, and against the king."

"Father, do not remain wilfully blind, for, as surely as you and I live, it will come to that unless the king arouses himself to the peril which threatens him, and asserts his own authority."

"But who will dare to tell him this?"

"Some one must, or the people of France will enlighten him with a roar of thunder. If you love him, and have sufficient courage—"

The old man drew himself up with a sudden impulse of pride.

"The men of our house have been supposed to possess sufficient bravery for any occasion that might present itself. Convince me that these harsh truths should be spoken to the king, and I shall not shrink from the task."

"Then say this: King Louis, the days of despotism are at an end; the people have learned to think, and neither superstition, nor all the traditions of power made manifest, in your prisons, your armies, or in the force of ancient usages can perpetuate the bondage in which they have been held. In order to make them loyal, make them free. Ask the nobility and the clergy to take their feet from the necks of the working-men; they want work, bread for their children, freedom from oppressive taxation; in short, they ask the king to acknowledge their manhood, for this they will surround his throne with a power stronger than the nobility which has undermined all its foundations ever gave."

Mirabeau was going on with increasing vehemence, when the door was opened by a servant, and Monsieur Jacques stood in the passage. The count held out his hand in cordial good-fellowship, that surprised the fas-

tidious parent, who looked upon the good Jacques as little better than a servant, and had other prejudices against him; for in all the contests and troubles that had arisen between the son and father, Jacques had resolutely adhered to his foster-brother.

"Well, what news, good brother? for I take it you have been gathering something from the people, since the business that I sent you about has been so entirely neglected," said Mirabeau, good-humoredly.

"Forgive me," answered Jacques, bending low before the elder noble; "if I was unable to obey your wishes at the moment, it was from a reason that you will approve, and which I trust no one here will condemn. Count Mirabeau, I have seen the king."

"You, Jacques? Has his majesty been out hunting again, and wheeled his horse, rather than trample you under his hoofs?"

"You will not believe me, but I have been at Versailles, and have talked with the king in his own work-shop."

"In his own work-shop?" exclaimed the old noble, holding up his two white hands in astonishment.

"Jacques, you are getting crazy?" rejoined Mirabeau.

"Almost," replied Jacques, excitedly; "for I have not only seen the king, and uttered stern truths to him, face to face, but I have, so they tell me, though I can hardly comprehend it, saved the queen's life."

"Anything else, Jacques?" cried the count, with a broad laugh. "This is a noble romance; perhaps you have taken the Bastille with a toasting-fork."

"But, I am speaking the truth."

The father and son looked at each other in questioning amazement; the man seemed so earnest, and so wounded by the half-scoffing unbelief with which his assertion had been received, that they began to put some trust in it.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## THE LINK WHICH CONNECTED MIRABEAU WITH THE COURT.

"WELL, well, go on with your story," said the count, while suppressed laughter still trembled on his lips. "I, for one, am ready to believe anything, even that Marie Antoinette, having trampled *me* and my services under her feet, is ready to atone for it by a tender passion for my foster-brother."

"Do not scoff at me," said Jacques; "I cannot bear that from you."

Mirabeau was touched by the deep pathos which lay rather in Jacques' voice than his words.

"I did not scoff, man; go on, go on. My father is ready to listen, and I am anxious to believe. Indeed, an explanation is necessary, for I fully expected that you would have preceded me here, and was somewhat annoyed on hearing that you had not yet presented yourself."

"I come now in all haste directly from Versailles."

"And what took you there?" asked the count.

"A young girl whom you saw in her mother's room. You know what her business was, and how hopeless it seemed that she should obtain an interview either with the king or queen."

"Yes, I can imagine that."

"But she would go; helpless, young, beautiful as she was, the girl was determined, and I was not coward enough to let her undertake the journey alone. A second time, I took advantage of my acquaintance with my friend, the locksmith, and in his stead forced myself into the king's presence."

"And the girl; did she, too, obtain an interview?"

"No; the guard refused her admission through the

gates. I went in to urge her cause; and, God forgive me! came away without having mentioned it."

"How?"

"It was because I love France better than anything on this earth; how else could I have forgotten the poor girl, who sat weeping in the public house, while I was pleading for the country, and forgetting her?"

"Sit down, Jacques; sit down, my good friend," said the old noble, composing himself in an easy-chair. "This is a strange story, and I should like to hear all its details. Be seated, my son, here is evidently something worth listening to."

Mirabeau seated himself, but Monsieur Jacques stood leaning on the back of his chair, while he related all that had happened to him at Versailles the day before.

"I went there," he said, "with a forlorn hope of helping this young girl; but when I found myself in the presence of the king, and saw how kind and good he was, enthusiasm for once swept everything else out of my mind, and my heart turned traitor to this unhappy girl."

"And what did you say to the king?"

Jacques repeated his conversation with Louis in the work-shop, word for word.

"And he endured this without anger—he listened?"

"Without anger, truly, but not without agitation. Indeed, I could see that he felt every word I said, and would ponder over it."

"Yes," muttered the count, "until the next man comes to argue it all out of his head."

"Do not think so, count; the king is a good man, and loves France."

"If he had the strength to govern France it would be better; good hearts are charming in social life, but to govern kingdoms power of intellect and power of will must be added, and these Louis the Sixteenth never had. Those around him will always govern—most of all the Queen."



"Ah! my brother," said Jacques, resting one hand on the count's shoulder, "if you and the queen only could understand each other all would go well with France."

"But we never shall understand each other; her prejudices are bitter; her ideas of royal prerogatives tenacious. Among them she considers that of crushing all who swerve from the royal path as an inherited power. I have joined my interests with those of the people, and Marie Antoinette will never forgive it."

"Not while your enemies keep so resolutely in the way," answered Jacques.

The old man listened to the conversation, but just then took no part. He seemed astonished at the familiarity which existed between his son and the foster-brother, whom he had always considered as little better than a servant. Was this the fraternity and equality which was becoming so broadly popular in France? The very idea shocked all his lordly prejudices. Yet Jacques was, in fact, seconding his own arguments, and rendering them far more forcible than anything he could have uttered. The old man felt this, and the idea galled his pride.

"There it is, my enemies always are in the way, and my worst enemy is here."

"Mirabeau turned his face full upon Jacques, and smoothed his chin with one hand. It was indeed, a rough face, but full of power, like that of a sleeping lion—a face that, from its very ugliness, carried fascination with it. The expression was so intense, the outlines so full of rugged grandeur, that no man could look upon it without feeling its force, and no woman turn from it with indifference. Still this proud and most reckless man was, sometimes, angry with the rude features that met him in the glass; and there had been seasons in his life when he would gladly have exchanged them for the beauty of weaker men, which is so taking at first sight, especially with women.

This distrust of himself had in early life, no doubt, led Mirabeau into many adventures unworthy of a great mind. His restless vanity was forever asserting itself, and calling for proofs which he was always ready to seek for at the sacrifice of his own self-respect. It was the glory of this man to step in between some elegant courtier and his love, and, spite of his ugly face, carry off the prize, which he really did not care for after it was won. It filled him with bitterness when women of his own rank would sometimes resist his efforts at conquest, and ridicule them, as beautiful women sometimes will. It was here that the bitter drop lay.

Mirabeau had at one time dared to lift his eyes to the queen herself—a conquest there would have rounded his ambition grandly. To love Mirabeau was to be a slave, as many an aching heart had learned; to make the Queen of France his slave would have crowned this man's vanity and his ambition at once. Through her he would have ruled the king, the court, and in his own might the people. It was a daring venture, founded upon the slanderous reports which had so long been in circulation regarding the queen, and it ended in an ignominious failure.

Repulsed by his presence, and shocked by the character he bore, Marie Antoinette had absolutely refused to accord him an interview, and even opposed his appearance at court, thus unwisely adding to her personal enemies a man whose sarcasm was ruinous, and whose eloquence would yet make her tremble. To wound the vanity of a man like that was to fill his soul with bitterness.

This had all happened at a time when Marie Antoinette was all powerful, when she could reward her friends unquestioned, and scorn the power of her enemies with all the force of her queenly pride. Is it wonderful, then, that Mirabeau spoke loftily, and waited for some advances from Versailles before he acceded to the wishes of his father, or the rough eloquence of his foster brother?

"The Queen of France does not look or speak like a woman who would turn from the face of a friend, because it did not happen to charm her eye at the first sight," said Jacques, after awhile; "to me she appeared frank, simple, and honest. In her fright, at least, she was like any other woman. Not so brave as Marguerite, truly, for that brave girl sprang between her and danger; but she is no coward, I can swear to that, and not ungrateful; for, in spite of my protest, she would insist upon thanking me for an act any man living could have performed as well."

"And for all this she has accorded you an interview," said the count, while his face darkened and took new shades of ugliness.

"I shall scarcely have time to get back to Versailles before the hour appointed," answered Jacques. "The moment I had left Marguerite in a place of safety, I travelled by night to Paris, and, failing to find you at home, came here."

"And you return at once," inquired Mirabeau.

"Within the hour. I shall not be in time else."

"And what is the object?"

"The queen commanded it; and for the sake of the poor man who lies in the Bastille, I will accept gratitude for an act that deserves nothing of the kind. But that brave girl has herself earned freedom for her father. I can claim another reward without harming her—and it was for this I came. At first I refused any acknowledgment; but thinking of you and of France, I remembered that great good might be wrought out of this simple act of mine, both to the man I love, and the country I adore."

"What good can you expect to win out of this heroism; for, pass it over slightly as you may, it was still a brave act? In what will it affect the count?" asked the elder noble.

"I hope that it will bring him face to face with their majesties."

Mirabeau's eyes sparkled. He started up and began to pace the floor, as he had done on his first entrance to the room. This was his habit when any new idea struck him. After a time, he slackened the heavy pace at which he had been walking, and moved slowly, and more slowly across the room as the thoughts which had sprung, hot and fast, into his mind cooled down to a deliberate purpose. This woman had scorned him, repulsed his aid, laughed at his supreme ugliness; but this was in the days of her triumph, in the first bloom of her beauty, when all men worshiped her. Now clouds were gathering around the throne upon which she sat; her footsteps were beset by enemies; her actions were misrepresented; her words distorted. The man she had so scornfully repudiated might hope for a different reception now. But he would not seek a rebuff; the queen must be won to send for him and offer the interview once so scornfully refused. If Jacques managed his one opportunity adroitly, she might be won to this measure. He turned to Jacques with a frank smile that transfigured his face into something almost beautiful.

"Yes, my brother, you shall do this, and both my father and myself will thank you; for his sake I will consent to make concessions. Mirabeau is a stronger and more powerful person than he was when no higher aims were known at court than a masked ball, or a state drawing-room. He might not have figured to the content of a handsome queen in such pastimes; but where sterner matters are to be handled, she will be mad to turn her back upon the help he can offer. Go, my brother, and for reward, know that half France will bless you."

"And I have leave to use your name as I may think best to the king or queen?" said Jacques, turning his radiant face first to the count, then to the elder noble.

"Always remembering that it is the influence of an old and noble family that you offer," said the old man, with a courtly bend of the head.



"And of one who controls multitudes when he but opens his lips," added Mirabeau, with baughty triumph.

"I will remember," answered Jacques; "the honor of the house and of the man shall suffer nothing in my handling."

The singular man turned as he spoke, made a low, sweeping bow, and left the room.

The father and son looked at each other in silence, until the sound of Jacques' footsteps was lost in the noise of the street; then the count said, with more respect than he usually exhibited to any one,

"I trust that you are satisfied, my father."

"More than satisfied, Mirabeau; the coming of this man is fortunate. It would have been a severe stain upon our pride had I been compelled to make advances in your behalf, though I would have done it for the sake of my country—I would have done it; for it wounds me to know that a son of mine should be an alien from the court of his sovereign—not to say a leader among his enemies. The adventure of our retainer will save us from much humiliation. Is his discretion to be trusted?"

"Entirely. He has but one ambition in this world, and that rests in the exaltation of our family. Even your fastidious pride is safe with Jacques."

"I am glad to hear it. If this reconciliation can be brought about, I shall go back to my estate satisfied that a noble work has been done."

The old gentleman took out his gold snuff-box, tapped the diamond-studded lid daintily, and gathering a pinch between his thumb and finger, inhaled it with gentle satisfaction.

"Now," he continued, softly, inhaling his snuff, while he held the box in his left hand ready for a second application, "I can pay my homage to their majesties without a blush. Once more my son is in harmony with his family—all shall be forgotten, all forgiven."

Mirabeau's face kindled hotly. He had so long commanded those around him that this tone of forbearance and forgiveness irritated his pride, and the effeminate indulgence into which the old man so readily sunk, came near to arousing his contempt. To a man whose life was spent among the clubs of Paris, and whose ambition had been appeased by the homage of that roaming class of citizens, which was even now ready to throw off all law at his command, the refinements to which he was born seemed trivial and weak. In his riotous life he had long since cast aside all the gentler habits of his class, and was disposed to regard the old man, who had spent half his life in redeeming the waste of a son's extravagance, as a supine old aristocrat, who might be induced to make even greater sacrifices, in order to win him back from the people.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE LANDLADY OF THE SWAN PLUMES HERSELF.

MARGUERITE spent the morning after her adventure at the Swiss cottage, in the front chamber, to which Dame Tillery had been ready to conduct her on the previous day. The good dame was in high spirits after her experience with royalty. It was with great difficulty she could keep back the exhilaration of her pride sufficiently to preserve that discreet silence which the queen had so delicately recommended. Whenever a customer came in, she found dangerous words of triumph struggling to escape; and nothing but an application of the plump hand to her mouth kept them from proclaiming the glory of her visit to the whole town.

Feeling her weakness, and resolute against temptation, the good woman was constantly appeasing her desire to talk,

by passing in and out of the room in which Marguerite sat, where she could indulge in comments on her high good fortune with safety.

"To think of it," she would say over and over again. "Only yesterday you and I were strangers, and now we have been at court together, saved the very life of the queen, to say nothing of teaching her how to make butter, and have a right to enter the palace and be thanked graciously with the highest of the land. While you sprang forward and flung yourself before the queen, I kept the animal I was milking from plunging at her, by throwing myself on the earth under her very feet. She had not the power to leap over me; besides, the pail and stool got under her feet and tamed her down; but for that there is no knowing what sorrow might have fallen on the nation. In a great event like this it is an honor to have acted the principal part; I feel it so—I feel it so. That idea it was what made me so patient while I lay before the cow, a bulwark between her and the queen; but you did your part, I must confess that, and shall say as much to her majesty."

Five or six times the proud dame visited Marguerite in her chamber to say this; and for half an hour together she would sit by the window with a hand on each knee, looking radiant as a full moon, while she described the scene in the park, in which her own chivalrous action became more and more prominent.

While the good woman was solacing her vanity after this fashion, a young man passed the house more than once, and looked up to the window where Marguerite and her friend were sitting. Dame Tillery saw him, bustled up from the chair, and threw the window open.

"Monsieur! Monsieur! are you looking for me? Is the queen getting impatient. Don't be bashful, but come up and tell me all about it."

The young man's face brightened, he lifted his hat, smiled

pleasantly, and came into the house. Marguerite heard his light step on the stairs, and the next minute saw him standing within the door, his hat in one hand, his coat glittering with embroidery, and a profusion of gossamer lace floating over his bosom.

Dame Tillery lifted herself from the chair, which creaked under her weight, and stood up to receive her courtly guest. Marguerite followed her example, and shrinking behind her portly figure, stood, blushing and confused, while the young man's eyes were fixed upon her. She remembered him well. He was the young man who had made such awkward attempts to cut grass with a sickle the day before. He had sprung to her relief when she and the queen were clinging together in mutual terror, while Monsieur Jacques was conquering the vicious beast which had frightened them so.

"I trust," said the young man, treading his way daintily into the room, as if that humble chamber had been the boudoir of a princess, "I trust that the affair of yesterday has left no bad effect on Dame Tillery or mademoiselle?"

"Oh, monsieur! do not think of us," said the dame; "but relieve our minds about her majesty, the queen."

"I have not seen her highness this morning; but Madame Campan reports her in no degree injured by her adventure. The king, she says, is most disturbed of the two, and declares the Swiss cottages shall be razed to the ground, and all the pretty cows butchered."

"Oh! that would be cruel!" protested the dame; "just as her majesty was getting such a knack at churning, too."

"True, it would be a great privation; for her highness loves these rustic amusements. All her ladies have been trying to make the king understand that there was no malice in the beast; but he will not be convinced."

"How should he," cried the dame; "it was a savage monster, and would have led the whole drove into mischief, if I had not flung myself before her, heaven only knows at what peril. I hope the king understands all about that."

A mischievous smile came into the blue eyes of Richelieu, but his lips gave no evidence of amusement. On the contrary, he answered, with great appearance of interest, that the king knew how much he was indebted to the landlady of the Swan, and it was that he might be assured of her safety, and that of her fair protégée, that he had himself ventured to call upon them.

The young duke took a chair as he said this, begged Marguerite to sit down with his eyes, and Dame Tillery to oblige him in the same way, with his voice. When they had obeyed him, he dropped into a conversation, which soon arose far above Dame Tillery's capacity, though she listened attentively, and occasionally raised her plump hands in admiration.

At first Marguerite answered him shyly, and with blushes; but, after a little, her interest deepened, and she spoke with less restraint. He had found the way to her heart, and was talking of the queen—of her goodness, her beauty, and the gratitude she was sure to feel for the fair girl who had thrown herself, with such heroic self-sacrifice, between her and danger.

"Let me say to you," he continued, in a low, earnest voice, "that there is nothing you can ask of the king which he will not grant, in return for this one act of devotion to the woman he loves better than anything on earth. I was told, last night, that some friend or relative of yours is in the Bastille, and that your object in coming here was to ask mercy for him. There is nothing, perhaps, that the king shrinks from so much as this subject of the Bastille. The clamors of the people have

only made him regard it more resolutely as one of the royal appendages, which they threaten to destroy, and he is bound to defend. Say as little as possible of the horrors of that terrible prison, but confine yourself entirely to pleading the cause of this one man, be he friend or relative."

Tears came into Marguerite's eyes; she lifted them to his face with an expression of gentle thankfulness that went to the young man's heart.

"You are kind," she said; "I will not forget what you have suggested, and I shall always be thankful that you have remembered my mournful errand with interest."

"Who could look on that lovely face and not be interested. Surely, surely, you are not related to that stalwart man, who——"

"Who saved the queen," said Marguerite, quickly. "No, he is no relative of mine; only the very best man that ever lived."

"I hope you will not always think so," was the gentle reply. "But now I come to say, that the queen will expect you two hours hence."

Marguerite gave him a quick, frightened look.

"But Monsieur Jacques may not be here," she said, anxiously.

"Then I will escort you," said the duke. Then, with a smile and a wave of the hand, he left the room.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### DAME TILLERY PIQUED.

MARGUERITE was still at the Swan, waiting with great anxiety for the appearance of Jacques, for the landlady of

the hotel had so often repeated and improved upon the exploits of the day before, that she was getting weary of the subject and almost ashamed of the whole affair. She had noticed that the chamber which she occupied was by no means exclusive to herself. Dame Tillery not only kept coming and going, but now and then other persons would drop in with her, and remain to listen while she related the wonderful exploits which had lifted her into sudden notoriety. But in this she satisfied her conscience by mystifying the position, and speaking of the queen as if she were some court lady walking by the place where Dame Tillery was milking quite by chance.

The truth was, Dame Tillery was almost as shrewd as she was loquacious. She dearly loved talking, especially about herself; but she also knew the danger there was in handling the name of the queen with too great familiarity; still she managed to win considerable glory out of her confreres by weaving her narrative up into a half romance, in which the queen was shadowed out as a high court lady, whom she had rescued from the most imminent peril by rolling in the grass, throwing her milking-stool in the right direction, and performing other great feats of valor.

Sometimes the dame would appeal to Marguerite to confirm her story, which grew and grew till the young girl became weary of hearing it, and shrunk from giving the confirmation so often demanded. When this happened, the dame would laugh, and repeat herself again with liberal additions. Thus the time was spent between young Richelieu's visit and the return of Jacques.

Among the persons who came and went so unceremoniously to her room, Marguerite noticed a little creature scarcely larger than a child, but with the lines and expression of a man past thirty-five in his dark and shrunken face. Threads of gray were in the coarse, black hair, which fell a good deal over his forehead, and that sharp, fox-like look

of the eyes no child ever possessed. It could only have been learned by experience in the world. This little personage never spoke, and seemed scarcely to listen; but occasionally Marguerite caught a glance of those keen eyes, and wondered who he was, and why he regarded her so furtively all the while Dame Tillery was talking.

At last Jacques came, breathless with haste and bespattered with mud, for he had traveled at a furious rate, and almost despaired of reaching Versailles in time for the promised interview. The little personage we have spoken of was lingering near the door when Jacques passed through, and placed himself in a position to listen so quietly that no one observed him.

"I am ready!" exclaimed Monsieur Jacques, wiping the beaded perspiration from his face.

"The horse I rode fell lame; for the roads are heavy and I pressed him hard."

Marguerite sprang up all in a glow of expectation when she saw Jacques. She had waited so long, and watched so earnestly, that it seemed like a release from prison when his kind face beamed upon her.

"You have been to Paris?" she said. "You have seen my mother? She knows that I am safe?"

"Yes, I have seen your mother. She knows that you are safe. I left her upon her knees, thanking the blessed Virgin for the great hope I brought her."

"But you should not have been so certain—my heart fails me when I think of going to the palace. While she is beaming with hope, I may bring nothing but disappointment."

Monsieur Jacques saw that the nerves of this poor girl were shaken with too much thought; suspense had left her almost hopeless. He sat down by her side and kindly encouraged her. During the conversation he spoke of her father by name. "When this great and good man was set

free, some clue would be found to the person who had sent him there, and who had torn out so many years of his life. That person, whoever he or she was, should meet with severe punishment—the people would attend to that. For his part, to avenge the wrongs of this one man should be the object of his life.”

Jacques, supposing himself alone with Marguerite, spoke in his natural voice, and with some energy. All the time that Indian dwarf lingered near the door and listened. As the conversation went on his face contracted, and his eyes gleamed—the words he gathered interested him deeply, there could be no doubt of that.

After awhile Dame Tillery presented herself, ready for an excursion to the palace. The amplitude of her dress, and the gorgeous incongruity of colors with which she arrayed her person, fairly brightened the old rooms and filled them with the bustle of her presence, as she passed through into the chamber where Marguerite was sitting.

“Ah, monsieur!” she said, in high good-humor, “I am glad you are ready, for we should have been greatly put about for some one to give us countenance before the king, not that it is needed, now that we are friends with her majesty, but one likes to go with a party. Besides, you were of some use. I shall take great pleasure in saying that much to their majesties, you can depend on me for that.”

Monsieur Jacques looked at the woman from head to foot, half in anger, half in amusement.

“Are you prepared for a visit to the palace, dame?” he inquired.

“What—me? Who else should go? Did not her majesty say to her deliverers, ‘Come in the morning that the king may thank you?’”

“But she spoke particularly to the demoiselle, as I understood it”

Dame Tillery turned scarlet in an instant; all her garments began to flutter ominously. She turned upon Marguerite.

“Does the demoiselle, then, reject my company? Does she fancy herself able to penetrate to the presence of the queen without me, that is what I wish to know?”

This terrified the girl. She turned pale and shrunk away from that angry face.

“After taking her with me to that little cottage, and placing her in the way of favor; after saying what I did about her resemblance to my own precious niece, who will this day protest in heaven against such ingratitude to her poor aunt; after adopting her, as it were, into the very bosom of The Swan, she empowers this rude man to say that she alone was invited to the presence—that I am nobody. I, who flung myself headlong in the path of that infuriated cow. Oh! the ingrate—the ingrate!”

Here the dame flung herself upon a chair, took out a voluminous pocket-handkerchief and applied it to her face, while heaving sobs shook her frame.

Marguerite was distressed by all this. She arose and laid her fair hand caressingly on the dame’s shoulder.

“You mistake,” she said. “I do wish your company. You were kind—very kind to me. I shall never forget it. My good friend here meant nothing that could wound you. Perhaps he is a little too thoughtful of me over others; but you will forgive that—you who are so kind.”

Dame Tillery wiped her face, hushed the sobs that were heaving her broad bosom, and opening her arms, gathered Marguerite into a warm embrace.

“I knew—I knew she could not look so much like my niece and be an ingrate,” she said. “It was all a mistake. Monsieur meant no harm. It is only my sensitive nature, that is my chief fault. I strive to conquer it, but cannot. Kiss me, child, and we will think no more about it. You

understand, all is forgiven, forgotten? It must not wound her majesty by anything that seems like discord—we who saved her life only yesterday.”

Marguerite obeyed this request, and kissed the plump lips of the dame, casting a pleading look at Monsieur Jacques, who was by no means satisfied with the conclusion of this little scene, but would rather have died than dispute that lovely girl in anything.

“Now it is all over, except that crying always makes my poor eyes as red as a ferret’s; but a little fresh wind will change all that,” murmured the dame, drawing forth a huge green fan, with which she deliberately commenced cooling her face, the motive power being one fat hand laid in her lap, which moved the enormous fabric with a slow, continuous motion, that kept all her ribbons in a flutter, and soon reduced the redness of her face into a glow of self-complacency.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### UNWELCOME GUESTS.

ONE thing was certain, Dame Tillery never remained many minutes together without finding something to say. Just now her mind was occupied by two important subjects: This visit to the palace, which she had assumed the right to make, and the arrival of a guest at The Swan, who had brought her no little tribulation.

“Would you believe it, monsieur,” she said, addressing Jacques in the most confidential manner, “just as I am getting on such excellent terms with her majesty, comes an annoyance—something that threatens to bring disaster, if not disgrace, upon our house. Last night a carriage drove up directly from Paris, and a lady got out so quietly that I

didn’t know she was there until the carriage drove off, and she came in with a little mite of an attendant, that woke me up to what I was risking the minute I set eyes on him. The woman asked me for a private room. I was just going to say that we hadn’t an empty chamber in The Swan, when she walked up stairs, followed by her attendant, and, pushing a door open, took possession, as if it had been her house instead of mine.

“‘Get me some supper, and see that my people are made comfortable,’ she said, throwing her cloak off and sitting down. ‘We have had a long ride, and are hungry.’”

“She spoke like a princess, and waved her hand as if that was enough to make any one obey her. I did not move. I knew this person. Years had changed her; the ups and downs of life had done their work on her face—but I knew her. Now, tell me, can you guess who the woman was?”

Monsieur Jacques moved his head impatiently.

“How should I know, dame?”

“True enough. There may be found so many women travelling from Paris to Versailles, any day of the week, that guessing at this one might be hard. Well, will you believe me when I say——”

Here the dame arose, drew close to Monsieur Jacques and whispered so loud that Marguerite heard her.

“It was the Countess Du——”

“What, that infamous woman!” exclaimed Monsieur Jacques, now thoroughly interested, “at Versailles, too? Why, it is understood that she is in England.”

“I tell you she is in this house, with Zamara, that pestilent dwarf that every one hated so. I saw him prowling along the passage just as you came in.”

“But what is the woman doing here?”

“That is the question, monsieur. She looks anxious and unsettled, older, too, and worn; but there may be found



many persons at Versailles who would know her at the first sight, and some of them would not mind doing her an injury. The truth is, I tremble to think that this person is under my roof. If the queen should hear of it, that would be the end of my visit to the Swiss cottages."

"But she must have some strong motive for venturing so near the court, dame; this woman, who comes from the dregs of the people, is worse than an aristocrat. It was her cruelty that choked up the Bastille with innocent victims. With her malice and her beauty she ruled the old king, and oppressed his people, till they hate her even yet when her power is gone."

"Well, as I was saying, she wanted supper, and I ordered the best of everything; went into the kitchen myself and made a delicate patty with my own hands, for she has pleasant ways; and I saw that a purse, which she held in her hand, was heavy with gold. When she had eaten and drank a glass of wine, the anxious look went out from her face, and she insisted that I should sit down and sip a glass of wine with her. Well, this was a change—I can remember when it was almost as much as one's life was worth to approach her without leave. I sat down. Why not? The queen had permitted it in her presence, and I had no need to be afraid of this woman who would not dare to present herself before her majesty. Thinking all this, I took the glass she offered and drank the wine, waiting quietly to learn what she wanted of me.

"Well, she began by asking questions about the townspeople; then spoke of the court, and wanted to know the smallest things that was going on. I told her everything. Why not? There is no secret about it. The king is getting more and more unpopular every day—the people will not trust him; and they hate the queen—yes, hate is the word; while I, yes, since yesterday, I adore him. They do not understand; but the time will come when Dame Tillery will enlighten them——"

"But you were speaking of this woman," said Jacques, impatiently. "She was questioning you about their majesties."

"I was about to say that, monsieur, when you interrupted me; but it was all questions—not a morsel of news did she give me in return; and when she had got all out of me that I had to tell, the politeness with which she permitted me to withdraw was enough to aggravate a saint. Now this is what I want to know—what brings the woman here? Her coming is an insult to the people. They hated her when she lived here, and they hate her worse now, for she was of the nobility only by the fraud of a marriage, and was always hard and cruel to the class she first disgraced, then left."

"For a higher range of infamy!" muttered Monsieur Jacques.

"Exactly," answered Dame Tillery. "That is why her coming here seems so wonderful; but her impudence is something beyond belief. It is not so very long since she came here one moonlight evening, when the great waters were all aflow, and seated herself, side by side, with her majesty. The whole town rang with this audacious boldness; but the queen knew nothing about it, I am told, and never dreamed that the lady who sat so quietly beside her, not once looking out from behind her veil, was, in fact, the Countess Du Berry, a creature from whom she had always turned her eyes in scorn while she was Dauphiness of France."

Here Dame Tillery ceased walking up and down the room, and closed the huge fan, which had waved faster and faster as she grew more angry and vehement, using it now as a baton.

"I hear a knock at the door," she said. "It is the voice of that young man, the duke. Do not be frightened, mademoiselle—remember, I am with you."



Marguerite did not hear these encouraging words; her eyes were fixed on the door, her breath came hurriedly. She knew that the most important event of her life was approaching, and the terror of it made her pale and faint.

Monsieur Jacques arose, took his cap from the table, and stood ready for anything that might arise.

As these three persons waited in breathless expectation, the Duke de Richelieu entered the room.

"Come," he said, addressing Marguerite, "their majesties will see you."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE QUEEN AND HER LADIES

A MORE beautiful woman than Marie Antoinette was not to be found in all Paris. Above the medium height, splendidly proportioned, and graceful in all her movements, she possessed a presence that was more than queenly. In her first youth she had been gentle, caressing, and so "pure womanly." Then her simplicity had been a cause of complaint with the royal family. But time, and the cares of her regal station, had deepened these qualities into the elegant repose of assured power; added to that, anxious lines had begun to reveal themselves faintly on her beautiful forehead, and around a mouth that had at one time known nothing but smiles.

On the day we present her again to the reader she was at her toilet, surrounded by the ladies of her household, beautiful, stately, and given up to the strict etiquette of the court, as if they had never seen a Swiss cottage, or dreamed that butter could be made with human hands.

"This young person has seen us at our play, where she,

in reality, had no right to know the persons she met. She must be made to feel that the dairy-maid, whose life she saved, is a creature to be forgotten, or we shall have those vile prints in Paris touching up the scene with malice for their Paris readers."

"Ah! it was, perhaps, imprudent to admit her," said the Duchess de Polignac. "Just now your highness cannot be too careful. This demoiselle, modest as she seems, may be nothing but a spy of the people."

"She is not that," answered the queen, with generous warmth. "No one can look upon her face and believe ill of her. She is a brave, noble young creature, to whom we owe a debt of gratitude that shall be right generously paid."

"As all your majesty's debts are," murmured the grateful little Madame Campan, who loved the queen with all her heart.

The queen turned a bright look on the fair, plump face turned upon her, and replied with a beaming smile,

"Your flattery always comes from the heart, my Campan, and we find it pleasant."

All this time the queen was standing among her ladies half-dressed; garment after garment had been handed to her by the lady-in-waiting of highest rank; and now she stood with her neck and shoulders exposed, her white arms folded over her bosom, ready for the robe which was to complete her toilet, and a little impatient of the etiquette which prolonged her hour of dressing. Directly the robe of crimson velvet was looped back from her white brocade underskirt, and with exquisite yellow lace falling from her elbows and around her bosom, she walked out of her dressing-room a queen in every look and movement.

In the audience-chamber, attached to her own apartments, she found the king, who had been aroused to keener admiration and deeper tenderness by her late danger. He ap-

proached her with smiles of welcome, and pressed his lips upon her hand as if she had been a goddess, and he her slave; happiness gave grace and quick intelligence to his face; for when Louis the Sixteenth thought from his heart, the result was always correct and full of tenderness.

"We have been waiting your presence, almost with impatience," he said. "My heart will never rest till it has done something to reward the man who saved me and France from a great calamity. This person is now in the outer room."

"But there is another, sire; a young girl, fair as a lily, and as modest. She must not be forgotten."

"We forget nothing which relates to our wife and queen. No one ever gives her help or pleasure unthought of. The demoiselle is also in attendance—shall they come in at once?"

The ladies of the household had ranged themselves behind her majesty with more than usual regard to appearances. Some of the king's gentlemen were present; in fact, it might have been some foreign ambassador that their majesties were about to receive, rather than a poor girl and a working man from the city.

The queen gave a smiling glance at her mistress of ceremonies. Directly the door opened, and Marguerite was led into the room by the young Duke de Richelieu, who seemed as proud of his charge as if she had been one of the highest born ladies in the land. Behind him Monsieur Jacques walked alone, his head just visible over the broad shoulders of Dame Tillery, who spread her enormous fan as she crossed the threshold, and performed a courtesy so low and profound that she came near falling headlong at the queen's feet, in a bungling effort to recover herself.

The mistress of ceremonies, terribly shocked, made a dignified motion that Dame Tillery should draw back;

but the good woman placed herself at Marguerite's side, shook out her skirts, and settled into position, smiling broadly upon the mistress of ceremonies as if a mutual understanding on all subjects of court etiquette had existed between themselves from the cradle up.

The queen, who sometimes enjoyed the discomfiture of her own hard task-mistress, where etiquette was concerned, cast a quick, mischievous glance on her ladies, and allowed a faint smile to quiver on her lips. But for that smile, Marguerite would have been completely bewildered. She saw the same faces that had met her the day before, but so changed in expression, so rigidly proud, that their very identity seemed doubtful. The long, trailing robes, the elaborate head-dresses, the floating masses of yellow lace were so unlike the short, rustic dresses in which she had seen the same persons only a few hours before, that she could not realize her position.

The queen saw her embarrassment, and hastened to relieve it. With a gentle smile, she extended her hand.

Marguerite fell upon one knee, and touched the hand reverently with her lips, then, with a gesture of exquisite humility, looked up to the beautiful face bent over her, and clasping her hands, broke forth in a voice so sweet and pathetic, that it thrilled every heart within hearing.

"Oh! sweet lady! you promised to pardon my father. He has been in the Bastille since I was a little child. Only as a beautiful shadow can I remember him—but you will set him free. I shall look in the eyes which they tell me were always soft with infinite tenderness. I shall come here some day when you show yourself to the people in your carriage, or on the balcony, and together we will look upon the benefactress who has brought him back to life. Then his grateful heart will give you blessings, while I, oh, lady! I will work for you, pray for you, die for you! Indeed, indeed I will!"

"My good little girl, you were very near doing that yesterday," said the queen, taking those two quivering hands in her own, and pressing them, while her fine eyes filled with tears; "but it is the king who grants pardons. We shall soon learn if he can withhold anything from the person who was so ready to come in between his wife and a great peril."

As she spoke, Marie Antoinette gently raised the girl from her kneeling position, and led her to the king. The poor girl would have knelt at his feet also, for no homage seemed sufficient for the great boon she was asking; but Louis received her hand from that of the queen with such kindness, that the impulse of humiliation was lost.

"Tell us," he said, "all that relates to the father you would have us pardon. This is the first time that we ever heard his name, or knew of his incarceration."

Marguerite gave her father's name, and told so much of his history as was known to herself. She spoke low and rapidly; her eyes were suffused, her voice was full of tears. The name uttered more than once, reached the queen. She was seized with a nervous dread; she seated herself; the whiteness of her face alarmed the persons who surrounded her, but before any one of her ladies could approach, Dame Tillery swept forward, opened her fan, and planting herself directly in front of the queen, commenced fanning her with both hands so vigorously that all the lace and ribbons on the royal dress fluttered as if a high wind were passing over them.

The queen looked up. The consternation of her ladies at the ponderous attentions of the dame, struck her with a sense of the ridiculous so exquisite, that all the superstition which had shaken her nerves fled at once; she leaned back in her chair and laughed outright.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## TRUE WOMANLY POWER.

THE king, who was listening intently to Marguerite, looked toward his queen as the light, musical laugh rippled by him, and frowning a little, drew the young girl further down the room, for his interest in her story was becoming painful.

"And this Dr. Gosner was not a native of France, you say?"

"No, sire, he was born subject to the great Empress Maria Therese, and at one time had frequent access to her highness. His name, I think, must have reached the queen, for she seemed to remember it."

"And you have no knowledge of the charges made against him?"

"Sire, we did not know that he was in prison for many years after he left us."

The king looked grave and distressed. The very name of the Bastille had become a subject of solicitude to him. This prison had been, century after century, so completely a portion of his kingly prerogatives, that he could not hear of a cruelty practiced there without disturbance. "What," he argued to himself, "will the people say when I let this wronged man out among them. His very presence will create a tempest of vituperation."

Marguerite saw the cloud gathering slowly on his face, and her heart fell.

"Oh, sire! have compassion on him. Think what it is to live, year after year, without a glimpse of the blessed sunshine, without knowing of anything once beloved, without occupation, buried, but not dead."

The poor girl spoke with some vehemence. She was losing all hope; this hesitation in the king terrified her.

"There is little need to remind us of all this," answered the king; "but it is sometimes very difficult to redress wrongs for which others are alone responsible. This is an act of which we knew nothing; but when it once becomes public, great blame may be cast upon the throne for an injustice for which no living man is answerable."

"Nay, sire, the people are not so unreasonable."

Louis shook his head, and smiled gloomily.

"They will rather rejoice, sire, that present mercy is strong enough to undo the cruelty of the past."

Louis hesitated. He was never a man of prompt speech, and the difficulties which this question of mercy brought to his mind were strong and numerous.

Marie Antoinette, having recovered from the impulse of merriment that had seized upon her, turned her attention once more toward the king. She saw that the young girl had become fearfully anxious, and that a look of sullen thought was creeping over her husband's face. She arose from her chair, and walking across the room, drew near the window to which Louis had retreated.

"Sire," she said, laying her hand on the king's arm, "is it that you hesitate? Can the price be too heavy which you pay this brave girl for Marie Antoinette's life—for she saved it? But for her intrepid act, that stout man, yonder, would never have sprung upon that beast as he did."

"Can we refuse her? No—a thousand times, no!" answered the king. "But how to accomplish it. When we release this poor gentleman, it will be to assail ourselves. The people clamor over every new revelation of wrong done by our grandfather as if we were directly in fault."

"But his release is right in itself, sire."

"It is impossible to suppose otherwise; but sometimes the most difficult thing in the world is to redress a long-standing injustice."

Marie pressed her white hand still more caressingly on

that arm, and the sweet persuasiveness of her speech was enforced by the expression of her face.

"Ah, Louis! I have promised. Remember, it was your wife who was saved."

The heavy features of the king brightened; he took the white hand from his arm and kissed it tenderly.

"It was only of your future safety I was thinking," he said. "The people are so ready to clamor against us, and this will be a new excuse. But it shall be done. This day I will speak to the minister."

"To the minister, sire! Ah, no! Write it yourself. I must see this young creature made happy before she leaves the palace. Step to my cabinet, Louis, and write the order with your own hand."

She drew him gently with her while speaking, and they entered a little cabinet, or boudoir, in which the queen usually spent her hours of retirement. Drawing her husband up to the ebony desk, she gently forced him into the chair that stood before it, arranged some paper, and put the pen in his hand.

"Now," she said, leaning over his chair, and bending her cheek almost to a level with his, "now write the order, if you would not have me kneeling at your feet."

Louis dipped the pen in the crystal inkstand, which stood upon golden supporters just before him, and began to write. A sunbeam struck the single, large diamond that flamed on the handle, and quivered over the signature as it was formed. The queen smiled; it seemed to her like a good omen.

"Ah!" she whispered, "how pleasant it is to make others happy; but, alas! our lives must be spent in atoning for the wrongs that were perpetrated before we were born. This poor man now was imprisoned by your grandfather."

"Worse than that," answered Louis gravely. "This wicked act belongs to Madame Du Berry. My grandfather probably never knew of it."

"That horrible woman!" exclaimed the queen. "How much misery has she brought upon France!"

The king, who had signed the pardon, laid down his pen.

"Let us be merciful, my friend, even to this woman; some good there may be in her. Since the people we love so well have begun to say harsh things about us, we should be careful not to join them in reviling others. Let us bury the sins of that old man in his tomb. Our Lady forbid that we should be called upon to excuse, though it is our misfortune to answer for them."

"But this woman—oh! I remember her so well! She was my enemy! She hated me from the moment I entered France an inexperienced girl. My cheek warms even now when I remember how she was forced upon me before I could understand her position, or protect myself from her society."

The queen spoke with angry vehemence; she had of late been subject to these sudden outbursts of feeling. The hard throes of life accumulated on her so heavily, that her sweet temper was sometimes submerged in a sea of troubles. The king took her in his arms and kissed her tenderly.

"Be calm, my angel, be calm! It grieves me that reminiscences of this woman can disturb you so. Remember, my own, it was by your advice that we left her in undisturbed possession of the estates she had gathered together."

"The estates? Why—yes! Let her keep them. They could not again become appendages to the crown without disgracing it. Besides, at the last, she was humble enough; and you know, my good friend, the daughter of Maria Theresa never does battle with a fallen foe?"

"Well, let this woman pass," said Louis. "Pleasanter things await us in the next room. At least, we can give happiness to this young girl."

"And I had forgotten her; let us go! Every moment is a year to her; let us go!"

There had been nothing but whispers in the reception-room since the royal personages left it. Marguerite stood where the king had left her, near the window, growing paler and more hopeless every moment. The darkened countenance of the monarch had struck her to the heart. After that one night of hope the reaction was terrible.

Louis and the queen entered the room together, but so quietly that the poor girl was ignorant of their presence until they stood close by her. Then she looked up with sudden affright. A mist came before her eyes, and through it she saw a paper in the king's hand.

"Take it," said the queen. "It is an order for your father's release. Take it, and remember that now and always the Queen of France is your friend——"

She broke off suddenly, and uttered a sudden cry. Marguerite, in reaching out her hand for the paper, had dropped like a dead creature at her feet.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE JOY OF A GREAT SURPRISE.

MONSIEUR JACQUES, who had stood near the door, watchful, but inactive, came forward, and, kneeling on one knee, lifted the fainting girl in his arms. She was deathly white, and the stillness of the grave seemed to have fallen upon her.

"Joy has killed her," said the queen, pressing her hand upon the pale forehead. "We were so abrupt. The poor child had lost all hope, and we brought it back too suddenly."

"Is that the pardon?" exclaimed Monsieur Jacques, forgetting the rank of those he questioned.

"It is the order for her father's release from the Bastille," answered the queen. "Where no crime has been committed it is impossible to grant a pardon."

"Ah! she will live to hear that!" cried Monsieur Jacques, gazing steadily down into the pale face. "Look up, look up, and bless with a glance of your beautiful eyes the—the—"

Monsieur Jacques broke off in confusion; words were upon his lips which he would not have dared to utter for the whole world. He looked around, and made a motion to unclasp his arms from around that inanimate girl; but that instant her eyelids began to quiver, and her lips parted with a struggling breath.

"Look up; do not be afraid to smile. It is a pardon—it is all you want," whispered the strange man.

A smile dawned softly over those pale lips, tinting them like a rose.

"Are you sure—are you quite sure?" she murmured, fixing her eyes on the rude face bent above her.

"Indeed, he is quite sure," answered the queen, with tears in her eyes; "The order but now dropped from your hand. It is the king's gift."

Now the color came back to Marguerite's face, quick and warm. She withdrew herself from Monsieur Jacques' arms, and stood up trembling with joy, as a rose quivers when the first gush of morning sunshine bursts upon it.

"Oh, this is joy!" she said, lifting her eyes to the queen, "this is joy! I never knew what it was before in all my life. Let me go—let me go, that I may tell her! She is waiting; she sits with her hands clasped, holding her breath till I come. Oh, lady, forgive me! joy has made me wild. I forget that it is the queen to whom I speak, or that this is the king, at whose feet I should throw myself. I only

know this, the happiest mortal that ever drew breath is prostrate before you, overwhelmed with gratitude for which she has no words."

Marguerite was on her knees, her face uplifted, beaming with smiles and glistening with tears. The queen bent down and kissed her. Good-hearted little Madame Campan sobbed aloud, at which the mistress of ceremonies drew herself up and frowned darkly. In all her experience it had not been considered etiquette for a Queen of France to shed tears in her audience-chamber. No wonder the pillars of state were tottering under such innovations.

After the first ecstasy of her gratitude had subsided, Marguerite arose and retreated toward the door, drawing close to Monsieur Jacques. Dame Tillery followed, and seeing her flushed face, opened the green expanse of her fan, and shed its cool air upon her, whispering,

"Hush! hush, my child! do not weep any more—remember, I am here to protect you. See, her majesty smiles; that is because she knows that Dame Tillery is caring for you. Why, there goes monsieur up to the king—what confidence, what audacity. I, who have so much greater right, hesitated and lost the opportunity, being modest."

True enough, Monsieur Jacques had respectfully approached the king, but not before he was informed by the young duke that her majesty desired it. Up to this time Louis had not looked directly at the man. His attention had been completely taken up by that beautiful girl and he gave little heed to anything else. But as Jacques came slowly toward him he remembered the features, and a slight frown contracted his brows.

"What, our strange locksmith!" he muttered. "Can this man have been of service to the queen?"

"Sire," said Marie Antoinette, "this is the person who conquered that wild animal. The heroic girl would have died for me, but his strength saved us both."

Louis hesitated, cleared his throat, and, after a moment, addressed the man as if he had never seen him before.

"You have rendered the queen a great service," he said, "and for that we are glad to thank you, not in words alone. A king has always the power to be grateful, and here he has the wish. Name the thing you most want without hesitation."

"Sire, I wish to speak with the King and Queen of France alone."

Again Louis frowned; he had not forgotten that interview in his work-shop, and the bold words spoken there.

"It is an unusual request," he said, glancing uneasily at the queen; "and one which her majesty must decide upon, after she has been fairly warned of the free speech which may await her compliance."

"Ah, Louis! I can deny nothing to this man—he has saved my life."

"I know," answered the king; "but that does not give him a right to lecture his monarch."

"He will never attempt that," answered Marie Antoinette, smiling. "Let us go to your private cabinet, sire; this good man has some favor to ask, and is modest. Why not see him alone?"

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### MONSIEUR JACQUES PLEADS BEFORE ROYALTY.

LOUIS made a motion with his hand. A door was opened, and he led the queen from her presence-chamber into a small cabinet, to which he was followed by Monsieur Jacques. Here the king seated himself after first conducting the queen to a chair. He was very grave, and seemed

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to be dreading that some unpleasant subject might be forced upon them; but Jacques stood in the presence, modest, grave, and unassuming as a child. The king could hardly recognize in that still face the man who had almost terrified him the day before.

"Now speak freely," said Marie Antoinette, who had no idea that this person was not an entire stranger to her husband, "speak out your wishes. It is our desire to gratify them."

"Lady, I but ask the privilege of free speech."

The king moved uneasily in his seat. He had grave fears that even gratitude would not make Marie Antoinette tolerant of such bold language as he had listened to the day before; but the lady answered,

"But a moment since we desired you to speak freely."

"Then I will ask his majesty to remember all that I said to him yesterday."

"Yesterday!" exclaimed the queen; "and you saw his highness yesterday?"

"Yes, madame. I intruded myself upon him, rudely, perhaps, for I am but one of the people; and I said things that would have cost me life or liberty had they been uttered to his grandfather; but they were honestly said, and our good king forgave their roughness because of the truth that was in them."

Monsieur Jacques bent his large, earnest eyes upon the king as he spoke, and, spite of himself, the monarch bent his head in grave assent.

"Madame, this is what I said to the king: 'The people of France and the nobility of France are at variance; light has broken in upon the ignorance of the masses. They begin to look up to heaven and ask if they are not men? If they are to be downtrodden forever and ever by the dominant nobility? They look at your nobles, and measuring them by the standard of real manhood, find that



their strength lies in traditions, that their privileges are hedged in by benefits wrested from the labor and strength of the people they despise. Strip them of their jewels and their laces, and sometimes they are found less than men."

"Be still!" cried the queen, rising from her chair, scarlet with indignation. "It is men like you who teach these heresies to the people. I wonder if, in truth, you have dared to be so bold, that the king did not place you under arrest. But for the service which I cannot forget; but for that, sirrah, you should only leave this cabinet for the Bastille."

"Still his majesty will not send me there for better reasons than that I chanced to seize an infuriated beast by the horns, when he might not even have been dangerous—pray mention the ridiculous feat no more. I claim no gratitude for that, and only remember it because it has been the means of bringing me here. If so poor an act can induce you to listen with charity, the reward will be too much."

Marie Antoinette seated herself again.

"We have promised that you should speak freely, and will be patient," she said, fairly biting her lip to keep back the haughty words that crowded to them.

"Madame, I have offended you, when it was my desire to be of service. Forgive me!"

"What is this service?" inquired the king.

"There lives a man in Paris, sire, who would be a firm friend to the King and Queen of France, were his friendship desired. This man was born a noble, but his quick intellect, burning genius, and indomitable will, carried him out from them into the great masses of the people. Still he possesses the instincts of his race, its power of command, its love of true royalty. Above all, he adores France as the people adore him."

"Go on," said Marie Antoinette, in a cold, almost harsh tone, "let us have all the noble qualities of this wonderful man."

The voice cut through Monsieur Jacques' enthusiasm like a knife. He stopped, caught his breath, and looked into the proud beauty of her face with a glance of reproach, which was absolutely pathetic from its intensity.

"Madame," he said, at last, "I think you guess who I am speaking of."

"Perhaps," answered the queen, with a cold smile. "But go on, the king listens."

Monsieur Jacques knew well enough that it was the queen to whom he was to address himself. When the two royal personages were together, her energy was sure to prevail. While he looked proud and unyielding, he seemed anxious, if not distressed.

"This man, lady, can be the friend of royalty, and the friend of the people; take him into your councils—not publicly, that might not be prudent—but let him come to you, time by time, fresh from the people; let him bring the two elements of human power, statesmanship and labor, into harmony. He can do it—he will do it. It is the work for a great mind like his."

"And what is the name of this wonderful personage?" inquired the queen, speaking in cool and bitter irony.

"The Count de Mirabeau."

"Enough!" cried the queen, rising from her seat. "When we need the help of this admirable gentleman, he shall be notified. But the King of France is not so near his downfall as to require support like that."

Louis arose, greatly agitated.

"My angel," he said, kissing her hand, "is not this a rash message? Can we afford to repulse a man like this?"

"When we cannot, the monarchy of France is no longer worth preserving," answered Marie vehemently. "The royalty of a great nation must protect itself—the trust is too stupendous for demagogues. No, sire, it is not rash."

"But we may, perhaps, wish to reconsider, expostulated the kind monarch. "Let us send him at least a courteous message."

"Frame it as you will, sire, only let the rejection be positive. From my first sight of this man Mirabeau, I detested him."

"Ah, lady! you could not understand how this great man adored you," said Jacques.

Marie Antoinette drew her figure proudly up to its full height, glanced at the king, and turned upon Monsieur Jacques.

"You have our answer concerning this person. Now say what can be done for yourself."

"Nothing! I ask nothing—accept nothing. But the time will come when you will seek this man—he who is now spurned a second time from your feet."

Before the queen could answer this audacious speech, Monsieur Jacques had left the cabinet.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### ZAMARA BRINGS BAD NEWS FOR HIS MISTRESS.

THE woman who had given Dame Tillery so much anxiety, sat in the chamber she had so resolutely possessed herself of, waiting for the dinner ordered an hour before. She was wonderfully restive, for oppressive and exciting memories became peculiarly vivid and harassing in that place. With the royal chateau clearly in sight, it was impossible to forget the time when its inmates were almost her slaves; when the daughters of France, in all their royal pride, had been compelled to receive her with honors, while all the assembled nobility of the court

witnessed her triumph. Even the haughty and beautiful queen, who reigned there now, had, as Dauphiness, submitted to her companionship at the royal table, in the first flush of her bridal honors.

No wonder the woman walked to and fro in the mingled triumph and arrogance of these thoughts. If they brought some relief to her vanity, they were also full of bitterness, for never again could such homage and power return to her. Even now, with the scenes of her former grandeur in sight, she felt herself to be an intruder in that commonplace house, where the lowest mechanic in the town had a right to come. She knew well enough that one glimpse of her through the window might bring a mob about the house who would be glad to hunt her down. People who formerly considered it an honor to be soiled by the mud from her carriage-wheels, would, she felt sure, be among the first to hoot her out of town, and follow her with all sorts of coarse revilings. Madame Du Berry knew this well, and felt it keenly, for, depraved and despotic as she had been, she still possessed some good impulses, and had not yet outlived that first great want of womanhood, a desire to be loved.

For once in her life, Madame Du Berry was possessed of a noble object. She had never liked Marie Antoinette in the days of her supreme popularity; but as years wore on, and troubles gathered about the throne, this woman's sympathies grew strong in her behalf. She had tasted too deeply of the sweets of power not to feel for those who were struggling that it might not be wrested from them. Perhaps some memory of the old monarch, who had been more than generous to her, had aroused a loyal feeling for his grandson. In a wayward creature like her, it is impossible to give any act an undivided motive; but that day she had come to Versailles in a spirit of noble self-sacrifice, and was anxious to give back to the heirs of

Louis no inconsiderable portion of the wealth his prodigal hand had bestowed upon her. In the mockery of her own royal state, she had become deeply enamored with the prerogative of kings.

Filled with these generous ideas, anxious to fulfill them, she walked the floor to and fro, waiting impatiently for the return of her messenger, who had found his way to the palace. The dinner was brought in, but she could not force herself to eat. The very atmosphere of the place excited so many emotions that she could neither conquer nor fling them off. For the time this woman was both loyal and munificent.

A noise in the street brought her as near the window as she dared to venture. She looked out and saw two females approaching the hotel. One was Dame Tillery, who swept her portly figure forward with a pompous swell of importance calculated to dazzle the citizens who had seen her sail through the palace-gates, where the guards saluted her with all honor; for up to that point the young Duke de Richelieu had accompanied the party. The other was Marguerite, modest, quiet, and so preoccupied with her own great happiness, that she scarcely heeded the crowd that gathered after them, or cared that Dame Tillery was making herself so absurdly conspicuous with her gorgeous complications of dress, and by the solemn spread of her great fan, which she used as a screen or baton, as she wished to lay down law, or keep the sun from her face.

Du Berry broke into an immoderate fit of laughter as she saw the landlady coming through the streets of Versailles in all the inflated glory of a late reception at court. A keen sense of the ridiculous, and a coarse relish of fun, had been one of the principal charms this woman had carried with her through life. It was, in fact, this contrast with the elaborately elegant women of the court, which had formed the chief element of her power in former years.

Neither time nor misfortune had dulled this broad sense of enjoyment; she had thrown herself into a chair, and was laughing until the tears rolled down the rouge and tiny black patches on her face, when Zamara, who had undertaken to convey a message to the palace, came in and paused at the door, astonished by this outburst of hilarity.

Madame composed herself a little, and wiped the tears from her laughing face.

"Did you see her, my Zamara? Did you watch her progress down the street, wielding that green fan, kissing her hand to the crowd? Oh! it was delicious! Come here, marmosette, and tell me your news. I have not had such a laugh in years; in fact, that heavy climate of England would take the laugh out of Hebe herself. It is an enjoyment, and I feel all the better for it. Now tell me all about it."

"I have failed to reach the queen. These people were in the way, so I brought the letter back."

"Oh! that is bad! It will compel us to wait another day in this dismal place—and that I can hardly endure!" exclaimed the countess, losing all desire to laugh. "How unfortunate!"

"But that is not the worst," answered the dwarf.

"Well, what can be worse than two long days in this hole; let me have it, if that is not enough. I have learned how to bear evil tidings, as you know, rogue—so out with your news."

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## MADAME'S CRIME COMES HOME TO TORTURE HER.

ZAMARA drew close to his mistress.

"Madame will, perhaps, remember a man whom she once summoned from his home in Germany—a learned physician——"

The countess put a hand up to her forehead, and seemed to search her memory. All at once she looked up.

"You mean that Dr. Gosner, with the ring?"

"Yes; that is the man."

"Well, what of him? He was sent to the Bastille; I remember it all. It seems to me that I intended to let him out; but the king died, and then all my power for good or harm ended. Of course, there was no one to intercede for him. The Bastille makes quick work with its inmates. Of course, he died."

"No, my mistress, he still lives; and the young girl you saw yonder with Dame Tillery has his release in her bosom. To-morrow he will be the lion of Paris. All France will know that a word of yours took this man from his family, and shut him up in a dungeon deep below the sewers of the street, where his best companions have been toads and creeping things from which human nature revolts. In this dungeon a good man, a learned man, has grown old in misery. He will come forth with hair like the drifted snow, weak and tottering, perhaps imbecile; and the people, who hate you, will cry out, 'This is the work of that monster, Du Berry. She kills souls! She had no mercy! She——'"

The countess uttered an impatient cry, and clapped both hands to her ears.

"Stop, Zamara—stop, if you have not resolved to kill me.

All that was so long ago, I had almost forgotten it. Can men live forever under ground?"

"Not often; but some lives defy nature, and all that outrages it. Another man has spent half a lifetime in those hideous vaults, and came out at last to exasperate the people. This will complete their frenzy. Gosner will appear in the clubs, in the market-places, everywhere. His white hair will madden the people like a hostile banner; his own lips will tell the story of his wrongs. This will draw tears from the women, clamors of rage from the men. They will demand the author of this cruelty, and he will pronounce your name."

Madame shrunk back in her chair, white and craven with fear; the dwarf had drawn his picture with terrible force. Shuddering, she acknowledged its truth, and cried out,

"What can I do, Zamara? How can all these horrors be averted? They know that I am in France. I cannot leave; I cannot exist in that horrible England. Oh! why will all one's little errors keep upon the track so long? I had forgotten this but for the ring—you remember the ring, Zamara?"

"Yes, my mistress. It was only to-day that I saw it coiling around the queen's finger. They tell me it never leaves her hand."

"I placed it there. It was only by the ring I remembered this man Gosner at all. It was to get that I obtained the *lettre-de-cachet*. You know how I hated her then. She scorned me so, it was natural; but when the king died how forbearing she was, how generous. No insults reached me from her; all my estates were left; she crushed me beneath the grandeur of her magnanimity. Then I repented; then I would gladly have taken that fatal serpent from her finger. I remember well what he said of its power—to every hand but his it would bring disgrace and sorrow.

Without it, all these evils would fall on him. I took it from him and gave it to her. See how his prediction has turned out, Zamara—from that day to this he has languished in a dungeon; while she, who wears the ring, has seen her great popularity vanish from the hearts of the people. All the power of the throne began to crumble beneath her feet from the very hour that she mounted it."

"I have often thought of that," said Zamara, who was now more than formerly the companion of his mistress. "When I heard that he was alive, a great terror seized upon me, for I saw danger to the queen in his release, more fearful danger to yourself. The people will know that you cast this learned man into prison without even naming his crime; they will believe that the queen kept him there through all these long years."

"When she did not even know of his existence!" exclaimed the countess. "See how just this great monster, the people, is!"

"Just! It is a ferocious wild beast, with no higher reason than instinct of rage and greed—a wild beast that may easily be goaded into madness."

"And the release of this man may do it—I see that, I see that!" cried the countess. "But how to avoid the peril? The populace had almost forgotten me; this will arouse the old hatred afresh. Ah! if I had but one friend!"

Poor woman! this was a mournful cry from one who had seen a whole nation at her feet; but of all that host of abject flatterers, this Indian dwarf, the creature of her bounty, the plaything of her fancy, the scoff of her former worshippers, alone stood faithful. This it was that wrung the cry from her heart.

The dwarf stood near her, troubled and anxious as a dog waiting for orders. At last he drew close to her chair, a gleam of partial relief came into her face as she looked into his.

"You have thought of something," she said. "What is it, my friend?"

"Mistress, this man must not come out of the Bastille."

Zamara spoke almost in a whisper, and looked warily around, as if afraid of being overheard.

"But how can we prevent it?"

"You know the governor?"

"Yes. When he was young, I obtained for him a subordinate place in the prison," answered the countess.

"That is a pity!"

"But why?"

"Gratitude does not often stretch back so many years—it has neither the life or grasp of revenge. I would rather this man owed you nothing."

A low, bitter laugh broke from the countess as she replied,

"Never fear, the man will have forgotten it."

"Then our task is easier. I do not know how it is to be done. Give me a little time for thought. Will it be possible to keep this young girl here till morning?"

"Not of her own free will, if she has her father's pardon, as you say, in her bosom. I have never seen so much happiness in a human face. She is very lovely. Ah! it is a terrible thing to break up all this joy!"

"But more terrible to be driven to a strange land, or torn by a mob," answered Zamara.

"I know—I know. Oh! why did I not let this poor man alone! He would have done me no harm. Now, I think of it, the girl looks like her father; his face was almost as fair as hers, his eyes of the same tender blue. It is strange how clearly I remember them—and she is so happy?"

There was irresolution in the woman's words, and in her heart. Disappointment, trouble, and ingratitude, had broken down her arrogance and humanized her conscience.

She felt a yearning desire to protect this young girl in her happiness, and give her wronged father back to his life.

Zamara saw all this, and trembled. He understood better than she did the danger that lay before them.

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## CHAPTER XXXV.

### DAME TILLERY DINES WITH THE COUNTESS DU BERRY

BEFORE the dwarf could urge the conversation further, Dame Tillery came into the room, followed by a maid-servant, who carried a tray, on which were some delicate trifles, and a plate of fresh figs, for madame's dessert.

The good dame burst into a torrent of exclamations when she found that the first courses of her dinner were untouched, and became pathetic in her entreaties that madame would just taste the fresh fruit, and delicate cakes, which were to have been the crowning glory of her meal.

The countess consented to taste the fruit, but only on condition that Dame Tillery should, in the meantime, help dispose of the viands which had been so long neglected.

Dame Tillery was not so elated by her reception at the palace as to lose any portion of her fine appetite. "It was a shame," she said, "to allow this delicious p<sup>â</sup>te, and that lovely pullet, without mentioning the delicate salad, to be taken back ignominiously to the kitchen. They might be a little cold; but, even then, any one must understand that a cold dinner at the Swan was worth a dozen hot ones at any other public house in Versailles. She would just cut a slice from the breast of the pullet, perhaps seeing her eat would give madame an appetite."

Here Dame Tillery put away her outer garments, set her fan in a corner, and drawing a chair to the table, buried it

under the amplitude of her skirts, while she squared her elbows and carved the pullet with professional dexterity, stopping now and then to nibble a dainty bit from her fork.

"She had known people," the dame said, "who lost their appetite the moment a great honor or grief came upon them; but, for her part, she was well used to such things, and took them quietly. Now there was the little girl down stairs, who absolutely refused to take a morsel of dinner, just from the excitement of having spoken with the queen; while she, who was, in fact, the person who had introduced her to their majesties, was ready for a hearty meal, and felt even increased appetite from all the honors that had been showered upon her."

Du Berry sat quietly peeling the purple coat from a fig while Dame Tillery was speaking; but her quick mind was at work, and the expression of her face revealed a new idea.

The sensual nature of this woman had, for many years, prevailed over her intellect. But one noble feeling had found root in her heart, and aroused the sympathy of her faculties. *She was grateful.* When we say this, it is to acknowledge that a noble capacity for goodness still lived in this woman, as lilies spring up, pure and snow-white, from a soil prolific with impurities. Thus it was that she had come to Versailles on an errand which would have been pronounced noble in a better woman.

But while she seized upon every word calculated to help out her object, quick animal sympathy awoke her slumberous appetite. She saw with what hearty relish Dame Tillery devoured the savory chicken, and filled her mouth with the delicious salad; and the sight was appetizing. "I declare it makes me wish to eat," she said, placing the half-peeled fig on its dish, and holding out her plate for some of the more substantial viands, which the good dame seemed content to monopolize.

"Ah, that is pleasant!" exclaimed the landlady, heaping

some of the white meat and savory dressing on the plate. "To dine alone is always desolation to me; but as madame has found her appetite, my place is no longer here. I only sat down to save the credit of the house, which would have been in peril had a dinner gone down to the kitchen untasted. Permit me to open a flask of wine for madame."

"Yes, certainly," answered the countess, laying her white hand on the landlady's arm, "but only as my guest. I cannot permit a person who has been honored by a presentation at the chateau to serve me except as a friend."

Dame Tillery flushed like a peony, and fluttered like a peacock under this compliment.

"There," she said, drawing the cork from a wine-flask with the prong of a fork. "It is not often this wine sees the daylight; but on a day like this, and with guests that may be considered as old friends—"

"You know me, then?" exclaimed the countess, turning pale wherever the rouge on her face would permit of pallor. "You know me?"

"I confess that I knew madame from the first minute."

An impulse of gratified vanity conquered the caution that Du Berry had resolved to maintain.

"Then I cannot have changed so much; years have not entirely swept away the beauty which—which——"

"Oh!" interrupted the dame, so full of vanity herself that she had no thought for that of another. "It was the little dwarf. He has grown old, and has wrinkles; but no one can forget the monkey, especially those who hated him so."

The painted woman, whose pride had plumed itself for a moment, sunk back in her chair with a heavy sigh; but continued despondency was not in her nature. She drank off a glass of the wine Dame Tillery poured out, and resumed the conversation.

"It is not known that I am here, I trust. Zamara has been in the street but once, and then he was dressed like a child," she said, anxiously.

"No, the people have not yet discovered him. If they did, his life would not be worth the half of that fig."

"Do they, indeed, hate us so?" questioned the countess, really frightened. "Poor Zamara! he is the only faithful friend I ever knew. In killing him they would break my heart; but you will keep our secret?"

Dame Tillery laid a broad hand on her broader bosom.

"From every one but her majesty, the queen," she said, solemnly; "from her I can keep nothing, being, as one might say, one of her council. When I go to her majesty to-morrow morning——"

"To-morrow morning! Will you have access to the queen then?"

"Of course," answered the dame, "an especial interview. When we came out of the audience-chamber to-day, that little roly-poly lady, Madame Campan, followed after us, and bade me return again at the same hour to-morrow. 'It was the queen's order,' she said. No doubt her majesty was disturbed by the way in which that man from the city put himself forward—I assure you his audacity was abominable. One could scarcely get an opportunity to look at their majesties, much less say a word."

"And you will see her to-morrow?" murmured the countess, taking up the fig again, and burying her still white teeth in its pulp.

"To-morrow, and the next day, if I wish. Is there any one who doubts it?"

"I certainly do not," answered Du Berry, removing the fig from her mouth, and stripping away the last fragment of skin with her fingers. "On the contrary, I was about to ask a favor."

"A favor! Ah! madame knows my weakness."

"As you just now hinted, it would not be safe or possible for me to attempt an entrance into the chateau; but it is



of great importance that I should send a message to—to her majesty.”

“Her majesty! You?”

The countess waved her hand with a dash of her old impatience.

“A message which you can carry, and be sure of a kind reception, with a rouleau of gold from my hand when it is delivered. Is it understood between us, my friend?”

Dame Tillery smiled, shook her head, and repeated, “Ah! madame knows my weakness!”

“Then it is understood,” replied the countess, rising. “Pray see that Zamara is neither allowed to famish, or to expose his presence here; but first tell him to bring my travelling-desk, he will find it among the baggage. Good-day! good-day! I am sorry you are compelled to leave me so soon; but, of course, the citizens, who have been gathering around the door, will be impatient to hear about this visit to the chateau. I can understand that, and you describe it so well.”

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THE DISGUISED COUNTESS.

THE adroit flattery of Madame Du Berry carried Dame Tillery out of the room, quite unconscious that she had, in fact, been summarily dismissed. The moment she was gone, Zamara entered, bearing a little ebony travelling-desk, which he opened and placed on the table before his mistress.

“Madame,” he said, anxiously, “they are going; before dark, they will be in Paris with the order for that man’s release.”

“But they cannot present it before morning; no man living can gain access to the Bastille after three o’clock. Besides, Zamara, it goes to my heart to disappoint the poor child.”

“If you do not, it will cost you your life,” answered the dwarf.

Du Berry arose and began to walk the floor. It was hard for her to go back into her old, cruel life, just as some dawns of compassion had made her understand how sweet goodness was. But with this woman existence was everything—she had enjoyed it so much; and with her fine constitution had years and years to enjoy yet. This man had, doubtless, become accustomed to his dungeon; or, if he must die, it would be a relief. If she could only save him without hurting herself, how pleasant it would be to let that poor girl depart with all her warm hopes undisturbed. But, after all, nothing like what the child expected could come to pass. She need not hope to find her father, but an old man, weak, blind, dazed, to whom this world would be a bitter novelty. The strength of manhood never could return to her victim, though a thousand daughters stood ready to lavish tenderness upon him. What was a life like this compared to hers! Even if the canaille did not accomplish her death, it was sure to drive her back to England, a country which was like a prison to her. No, no, she had concluded.

“Zamara.”

The dwarf approached her.

“Bring the dress in which I came back from England.”

“Madame shall be obeyed.”

“Order the groom to have a horse saddled.”

The dwarf bowed.

“Say to that abominable woman that I am weary, and have a headache which nothing but rest and quiet will cure; on no account must any one approach my room.”

“I will guard the door, mistress.”

"That is well. Now bring the dress; it was left in your keeping."

The dwarf went out almost smiling. He knew that his argument had prevailed over the scruples of the countess, who walked the room in a restless fashion still, but with stern and settled determination in her face.

Directly Zamara came back, carrying a heavy bundle in his arms.

"Shall I prepare to attend, madame?" he questioned, anxiously.

"No; the people would recognize you on horseback, and I must ride with speed. Follow the directions I have given, and keep guard at the door; be vigilant and cautious."

"Does madame find it necessary to say that to Zamara?"

"Perhaps not: but there is danger here—great danger; a word, a look, might betray me. You have examined the house, and know all its entrances?"

"All; there is a back door leading to the stables. No matter how fast it may be locked, you will find it ajar at any hour between this and to-morrow morning."

"Always on the alert! always anticipating my orders!" said the countess, patting him on the head. "At least, I have one faithful friend left."

Zamara lifted his dark eyes to the face she bent over him—they were full of tears.

"There, there! we must not be children," she said, giving the little figure a gentle push. "Go and order the horse to be saddled."

The dwarf disappeared, and instantly the door was bolted after him. When he came back, announcing himself with a respectful knock, a person, undersized, and with the air of one who had at some period of his life been a lady's page, stood upon the threshold so disguised, that Zamara scarcely recognized his mistress.

"Is the passage clear? Will no one see me go out?"

"Everything is clear."

Zamara glided away as he spoke, and the page followed. Through a back door, only used by servants, across a yard strewn with worn-out vehicles, empty boxes, broken bottles, and refuse lumber, he led the way into the stables, where a horse stood caparisoned for the road.

The page lifted himself to the saddle, and bending down, whispered,

"No sleep; watch and listen till I come back."

Zamara smiled till all his white teeth shone again; then laying a tiny hand on his bosom, he bent low muttering,

"Did Zamara ever sleep when his mistress was absent?"

These words were lost in the clatter of hoofs, as horse and rider passed out of the stable. There was nothing about this page to draw particular attention; he might have belonged to any nobleman at this time in Versailles, and thus have passed unquestioned. A few turned to look at him as his horse trotted leisurely through the town, wondering to whom he belonged; but no one became really interested, and he passed away into the country unmolested.

Some three or four miles along the road to Paris, the page saw two persons on horseback just before him—a man and a woman, who seemed to be urging their unwilling steeds to unusual exertion.

The page touched his beast with the spur, and in a few minutes brought himself on a level with the travelers.

Marguerite, when she saw a stranger so near, drew the hood of dark silk over her face, and made a fresh effort to urge her horse forward. Monsieur Jacques turned in his saddle, looked keenly at the new comer, and once more gave his attention to the road.

"Rough roads," observed the page, addressing Jacques.

"Very!" answered Jacques, glancing at Marguerite with a sense of relief, as he saw that the hood had been drawn over her beautiful hair, and almost concealed her face.

"Going towards Paris?" continued the stranger.

"Yes," was the laconic reply.

"Then, perhaps, you will not take it amiss if I offer to bear you company; in these disturbed times, there is safety in numbers."

"We travel but slowly," answered Jacques; little pleased with the proposal, for every moment that he spent alone with Marguerite was a grain of gold to him. "You seem better mounted than we are, and will find it hard to keep to our dull pace."

"I think not; these rough roads fret my poor beast all the more because of his spirit; besides, the country between Versailles and Paris is not always free from highwaymen! I trust you have nothing very precious about you?"

Marguerite raised a hand to her bosom and gave the page a terrified glance from under her hood. The most precious thing on earth lay close to her heart—that order for her father's release.

Jacques gave no answer to this adroit question, but allowed the page to talk on while he listened in sullen silence.

After a few more efforts to be sociable and enter into conversation, the page rode on, but now and then took a sweeping circuit back, keeping the two travellers in sight until they entered Paris. After that, he followed them at a distance, saw them dismount, and took note of the residence in which they disappeared. This object obtained, the page turned his horse and rode toward that portion of the city in which the Bastille stood, dark, grim, and terrible to look upon.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## JOYFUL NEWS.

"MAMMA! Mamma! I have come! He is saved!"

A woman started up, still and white as a ghost, from the dim shadows that had settled around her. She would not believe the joyful news. The very sound of a voice cheerful, and ringing as that which startled the silence of the room had a thrill of mockery for her. She had been so long used to disappointment that joy fell away from her heart unrecognized.

"Mamma! dear mamma! do you understand? I have spoken to the queen, the beautiful queen, and the king; so kind, so gentle! Oh, mamma! his goodness is unspeakable! To-morrow, one more night, and you will see my father!"

The woman gave a deep gasp, flung out her arms, and fell to the floor insensible—the whitest living thing that joy ever prostrated.

"Oh! it has killed her! What can I do? What can I do?" cried the poor girl, appealing piteously to Jacques.

"Give her air! Give her water! We broke up the pain of her suspense too suddenly," answered Jacques, lifting the lady in his arms, and laying her on the bed. "She was strong to battle against sorrow, but this good news has almost taken her life."

Marguerite flung open the windows, and brought water, with which Jacques bathed that white face; but it was very long before a faint breath proclaimed that the locked heart had commenced to beat again.

"Mamma! Mamma! Can you hear me?"

The woman turned her great eyes wistfully upon that eager face.

"Let me tell you slowly, mamma. Do not try to take it in all at once, but word by word."

Madame Gosner sat upright, but she seemed like a person coming out of a dream. She swept the hair back from her temples, threading it through her fingers, and whispered,

"There is white in it. He would not know me."

Then she turned slowly toward Marguerite, and questioned her. "You were saying something about *him*?—or is it that I have dreamed?"

She said this mournfully and in doubt, not yet having come out of her bewilderment; but as her heavy eyes were uplifted to the girl's face, they kindled under the glow of happiness which met them in every beautiful feature.

"Is it true? Did they give us hope?"

"Mamma, I have an order for his release."

"No! Tell it me again. I do not believe it—of course I do not believe it, such words have mocked me so often; but you look as if it might be—and this man. Ah! it is Monsieur Jacques; tell me, monsieur, and I will believe you. Is there really a hope?"

"Dear lady, have a little patience, try and compose yourself. To-morrow your husband will be here!"

"And you say this? To-morrow! Oh, mother of God! how I have prayed, worked, suffered, and now my heart refuses to receive this great joy. It is so used to sorrow—oh, my friend! it is so used to sorrow."

"But a brighter day is coming," said Monsieur Jacques.

"I cannot believe it. God help me, I cannot believe it."

The poor woman lifted both hands to her face, and, all at once, burst into a storm of tears. Thus she sat, rocking to and fro, while the ice in her heart broke up and let the sunshine of a mighty joy shine in.

When the woman lifted her face again it was wet, but radiant. Marguerite threw herself upon her knees before the transfigured woman.

"You are beginning to believe, I see it in your face, I can feel it in the heaving of your bosom, in the trembling of your hands. Mamma, mamma! it is true."

"I know; but to-morrow seems so far off. Could we not go at once? After so many years, they might cut off an hour or two."

She appealed to Monsieur Jacques, who shook his head.

"I should feel sure then?" she said, piteously.

"Be sure, as it is; no one would deceive you."

"He might—I mean the king."

"Not so. Louis is a kind man, lacking somewhat in courage to act promptly; but there is neither treachery or falsehood in him."

Madame Gosner drew a deep breath, and a look of forced resignation came to her face.

"It seems but a little time," she said, "and I have waited so long; but these few hours seem harder to bear than all the lost years."

"But they will soon pass."

"Yes; and he will be here. You have seen him, monsieur? Tell me, has imprisonment made him old as sorrow has left me?"

"It was an old man that I saw in the dungeon."

"Yet my husband should have been in the prime of life; and I, when he went away, monsieur, I was not much older than Marguerite, and so like her."

Monsieur Jacques glanced at the lined and anxious face of the middle-aged woman, from which perpetual grief had swept away all the bloom, and hardened the beauty into a sad expression of endurance. Then his eyes turned upon Marguerite, more lovely a thousand times than he had ever seen her before; for the happiness had left bloom upon her cheeks, and lay like sunshine in the violet softness of her eyes. The contrast struck him painfully. Was grief then so much more powerful than time? How many women in

France even then suffered as she had done? Was this to be a universal result? Would oppression in the end destroy all the sweets of womanhood, by forcing a sex, naturally kind and gentle, into resistance wilder and fiercer, because more unreasoning, than men ever waged on each other?

These thoughts disturbed the man. In admitting the unnatural influence of women into their revolutionary clubs, had they not already begun to uproot all that was holy in social life? In order to gain liberty, were they not giving up religion, and trampling down all the beautiful influences of home-life? He looked at Marguerite where she stood, in all the gentle purity of young maidenhood, wondering if she could ever be drawn into the vortex of those revolutionary clubs in which he was a leading spirit. Why not? Others as young, as lovely, and as good, had followed the cry of liberty and equality into places quite as dangerous and unnatural. Might not the time arrive when in the turmoil and disorganization of a government which France was beginning to hate, even he might seize on any help, to carry out the wild idea of liberty which was driving the people of France mad. Might not he urge her, and creatures innocent and enthusiastic like her, into the surrender of everything that makes a woman's life beautiful, in order to obtain that political liberty which France never knew how to use or keep.

Monsieur Jacques sat moodily in a corner of the room, and thought these things over as Marguerite knelt by her mother, and told her in detail all that had happened during her sojourn at Versailles. He saw that the narrative did more to convince the mother that her husband's release was a reality than all his reasoning could have done. Once or twice he observed a faint smile quiver across that firm mouth, while Marguerite caught the infection as flowers meet the sunshine, and laughed while telling Dame Tillery's mishap.

Jacques felt the influence of this low, rippling laugh, a sound he had never heard in that gloomy place before, and thought to himself how naturally happiness brought back all the soft, sweet traits of womanhood in these two persons.

"No, no!" he said, "from the strongest to the weakest, women should be the creatures of our care and protection. It is unnatural that they should struggle and fight for us—more unnatural that we should assail them. Thank God this great happiness will rescue a noble woman from the vortex toward which she was drifting! The moment her husband is free, I will myself take them across the frontier. In their old home they shall find rest while the storm bursts over France."

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### MIRABEAU AND HIS FOSTER BROTHER IN COUNCIL.

"MONSIEUR JACQUES!"

Jacques started up and went to the door, which had been slightly opened. It was the voice of Mirabeau.

"Come out, I would speak with you in your own room," said the count, abruptly. "It seems to me you are never at home now."

"But you know where to find me," said Jacques, good-humoredly.

"Yes, always with these women. I think the girl has bewitched you, my friend."

Jacques made no answer, but his face flushed crimson as he unlocked the door of his own room, and stood back for Mirabeau to enter.

"Well, what news have you that will give me pleasure!" demanded the count, the moment they were alone.

"Nothing, my count; but I fear much that will anger you."

"From that woman? Well, speak out. It will only be another rejection of the power that could save her."

Mirabeau refused a seat, and kept walking up and down the chamber like a wild beast in its cage. While Jacques hesitated how to tell his story best, he turned fiercely upon him.

"Well, my friend, has the Austrian struck you dumb?"

"No, count; but I can scarcely relate my interview with a hope that you will understand it as I did. The words were discouraging enough; there was something in the king's manner that convinced me of his wish to accept your help."

"No doubt. He has some little discernment; but the woman is guided entirely by her prejudices. Tell me what she said."

Jacques did tell him word for word; but he said nothing of the look of scornful pride that made each syllable so bitter. Mirabeau paused in his walk and listened.

"And this is all?" he said, when Jacques paused. "Why, man, this is better news than I expected—the woman leaves a loop-hole for the future; the stubborn pride would not all come down at once, but it is yielding. We must not speak discouragingly to my father, or all his generous plans may freeze up again. He has set his proud old heart on making me the saviour of the monarchy—and so it may be, Jacques; so it shall be."

"But the people—who shall save them?" questioned Jacques, a little sternly; for with all his fond admiration of the man, he could not blind himself to the sublime egotism of this speech, or the utter selfishness which inspired it.

Mirabeau turned suddenly; the grand ugliness of his face was illuminated by a smile.

"Will you never understand, my friend? When Mirabeau has saved the monarchy, he will, in fact, be king."

This haughty queen once at his feet the creature of his power, subdued by his genius, as many a woman, proud and self-sufficient as she is, have been, who shall dare oppose any reform he may decide upon for the consolidation of his power, or the benefit of the people? Mirabeau is already made sovereign, by his own will, of the great revolutionary movement, which has terrified the Austrian into something like civility. A few months later and she shall implore the aid she now dares to reject. This will make his father the happiest man on earth, and give this irresolute, good-hearted king the quiet he so much craves."

"But the people—the clubs—the women of Paris? Remember how they worshiped Necker, yet he failed to satisfy them."

"Necker!" exclaimed Mirabeau, with infinite scorn in his voice. "A man of money, a financier, whom the insane populace expected to bring corn out of the parched earth by magic. Failing in this, he had no resources within himself by which to win the discontented back again; but it is different with Mirabeau. His voice is persuasive, his will potent, his power over multitudes is supreme; with his foot upon the throne, he will reach forth his hand to the people, and sustain their rights. You, my friend and foster-brother, shall be a connecting-link between Mirabeau and his old followers. Thus he will control the court, the assembly, and the populace."

"That would be a glorious combination, if it could be carried out," said Jacques.

"If," repeated the count; "can you doubt it? Think what the pen and eloquence of one man has accomplished already. Ah, Jacques! this idea of reaching the people through newspapers and pamphlets, was an inspiration of liberty. This is a power which we have learned how to wield with force, and which can be used in behalf of the throne as well as for the people."



But not against the people, at least with my poor help," said Jacques.

Mirabeau turned upon him angrily.

"Will you never understand that it is by the power of the people alone the monarchy can be sustained?" he said, in his rough, dogmatical way. "There is but one man living who can bring these great elements in harmony; because it requires the union of two extremes in the same man; a nobleman who carries in his own person the traditions of the past, but whose life and sympathies have been with the people. A man God-gifted with eloquence both of speech and with the pen; in short, a being who concentrates in one existence two distinct and opposing characters. Does France contain more than one man of whom you could say this, my friend?"

"No; France has but one Mirabeau."

"Then have no fear, for on all sides our prospects are brightening. This coalition once made, our good father opens his money-bags, then all this harassing anxiety about finance will be at an end. You did me good service with the old gentleman, my brother, though he did wince now and then, as the conviction was forced upon him that we were in fact, as well as in sentiment, equals before the people, in defiance of the blue-blood of his ancestors. It was amusing to see how the old man's prejudices rose against this simple fact. He did not comprehend that the people glory in having persons of the old pure descent advocating their cause; why that old buffoon, the Duc de Orleans, has seized upon the idea, and even now is using it against the king. If this old renegade only had brains, he might prove a dangerous man. As it is, he is sure to make some stupid blunder, from which even that clever woman, De Genlis, cannot save him; so the best wisdom is to leave him to work out his own ruin. This prince has ambition, and nothing else. Now tell me all that passed at Versailles."

Mirabeau had by this time exhausted his excitement, and sat down to listen. Monsieur Jacques informed him, in a few brief words, of all that had passed during his absence. When he had finished, the count arose and took his hat from the table.

"Let us go and pay our respects to Madame Gosner," he said. "It will be pleasant to congratulate her."

Monsieur Jacques arose reluctantly, and the two men went out together.

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## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### A VISITOR AFTER DARK.

THE governor of the Bastille had retired to his own apartments within that grim old fortress. All the duties of the day had been performed. The allowance of black bread and impure water had been doled out to the prisoners, and the doors closed, leaving them in utter darkness. All these horrible duties being settled to his satisfaction, the governor was ready for his own luxurious supper, and sat waiting for it with some impatience. Originally this man was neither hard-hearted or cruel; but holding a position where these qualities were exacted from him, they had gradually become a part of his nature. Unlimited power of the worst kind had made him a tyrant, and hardened his heart to iron.

As this man sat, calm and indifferent, in an atmosphere of misery, which rose around him like a miasma, a grim, stalwart man, in the dress of a keeper, knocked at the door and stood upon the threshold, removing the cap from his head in token of respect for the presence he was in.

The governor turned in his chair and recognized the man.



"Well, Christopher, what news from the city? A little more quiet, I hope."

"Not a bit," answered the keeper, promptly. "I have been among the clubs, as you bade me, and have made my observations. The feeling of discontent grows stronger and stronger."

"Well, what do they expect to accomplish by grumbling, the varlets? I wish we had them here, Christopher; a week or two of such lodgings and fare as we could give them, would bring down their courage. We have that whole lower range of cells unoccupied now, for our Louis is chicken-hearted about sending his subjects here, merely to oblige his friends; and he has no favorites, Marie Antoinette looks well to that."

"Yes; and she it is who prevents the prison being full, as it was in the good old time, when we registered a *lettre-de-cachet* every day. It is this clemency that emboldens the people, and sets them clamoring for the thing they call 'liberty!' Liberty, indeed, we would give them enough to quarrel about if we had them all here but for a single month."

"Ah!" said the governor, who seemed on excellent terms with his man. "But how are we to get them here, when we never see the king's signature, except it be to empty our cells of their prisoners? He seems to forgive all men before they are sentenced, especially his own enemies. I tell you, Christopher, this king, in his leniency, has brought this fortress of the Bastille down to the level of a common jail; and his conduct fills me with such disgust, that I am at times half resolved to throw up my commission."

The keeper looked through one of the narrow windows, and took a survey of the ponderous walls; then, turning with a grim smile, he said,

"If the walls were less thick, a resignation might be

prudent just now; but I think they will defy all the clubs in Paris."

"Or in all France," answered the governor, laughing. "My drawbridge once up, and no monarch in Europe sits as firmly on his throne as I do. Would to heaven his majesty was half as safe in Versailles!"

"Nay, I think the people hate the man they call their tyrant of the Bastille worse than they do the monarch at Versailles," said the keeper, a little maliciously — "for cruel men are very seldom kind to each other."

"Let them hate," laughed the governor. "It will be a long time before their malice can reach him."

"Yes, as I said, the walls are thick."

"And here comes my supper, Christopher, which your news from the city shall not spoil," cried the governor, interrupting his subordinate, as a door was opened, and a daintily-arranged table revealed in the next room. "Step in, though, and let me hear all the news you have gathered."

The man entered the supper-room, and stood leaning against the door-frame, while his superior placed himself at the table.

"It is the Bastille against which the people hurl hatred, and launch their curses most bitterly," he said. "Thinking me one of them—for I wore this—they spoke freely enough."

Here Christopher took a red cap from his pocket, and shook it viciously, as if he hated the very color.

The governor looked up and laughed again.

"So they thought you one of their order, my poor Christopher, and took you into their confidence on the strength of that red abomination. Well, when do they intend to tear down the Bastille?"

"Tear down the Bastille! Have we not decided that the

walls may defy them?" replied the keeper, uneasily. "If I thought otherwise——"

"Well, what then, my good Christopher?"

"Why, then I should be glad to exchange places with any prisoner in the cells."

"A hard alternative, Christopher," said the governor, smiling over his well-filled plate, "and one not likely to happen. But we must be careful. If the rabble hate us, as you say, we must do nothing to arouse them."

That moment the loud clangor of a bell sounded down the passages of the building.

"What is that, Christopher?" inquired the governor, laying down his knife and fork with something like consternation.

"Some one claiming admittance, who rings boldly, either an enemy, or an officer under authority of the law, I should say," answered the keeper.

"Go and see, Christopher."

The keeper went out, passed from the prison to the drawbridge, and looked across. Beyond the huge timbers and drooping chains, he saw a single, slight figure claiming a passage over, both by voice and gesture.

"Why was the bell rung?" asked Christopher of the guard.

"Because it is some one with an order for the governor. He held up a paper."

"Is he quite alone?"

"Yes, I saw him dismount from a tired horse, which you may yourself discover standing within the shadow of yonder building."

"Let down the drawbridge; but see that but one man enters—it may be a messenger from the court."

Directly the great chains of the drawbridge began to shake and rattle, the mighty hinges turned with ponderous heaviness, and the great mass of wood fell slowly downward.

A slight figure crossed the bridge with a quick, nervous step, which soon brought him to the keeper, who keenly regarded him during his progress.

"A letter for the governor," said the stranger, promptly taking a folded paper from his girdle.

"Where from?" questioned Christopher.

"Directly from Versailles. Besides this, I am entrusted with a message which can only be given in person; oblige me by saying so much in my behalf."

Christopher took the letter and held it between his teeth, while the ponderous machinery of the bridge was put in motion again, and the whole fabric loomed up.

The stranger started as he saw the huge timbers uplifted like some massive gate rising between him and the world he had left; but he made no protest, and only grew a little paler than before, as the awful blackness of its shadow fell upon him.

"There is no danger from any one on this side," muttered the keeper, moving slowly away, leaving the stranger standing by the guard; "but in these times it is hardly safe to admit even a stripling like that after dark."

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## CHAPTER XL.

### THE GOVERNOR AND THE PAGE.

CHRISTOPHER found the governor deep in his meal, which he enjoyed with the zest of a man who has few sources of occupation or amusement, and, therefore, gives free scope to the appetite. He was just filling a glass of wine as the man came in, and holding it up, smiled to see its amber hues sparkle in the lamplight. Indeed, he was too pleasantly occupied for any remembrance of the errand on which the keeper had gone.

"Ah! is it you again, my Christopher?" he said, draining the glass with a mellow smack of the lips. "Well, what news? The bell rang, if I remember. What unreasonable person was so bold?"

"It is a person from Versailles, your excellency; some one with a letter, and a special message to yourself."

"From Versailles? Let him in; let him in. It is not often that Louis the Sixteenth requires my services. That is why the rabble has dared to lift its clamor against the Bastille. If he would open its gates to the populace and crowd the old prison from foundation to roof with the disaffected, there would be no more cries of 'Down with the Bastille!' in the streets of Paris. Let the king's messenger present himself, he is welcome."

Christopher went out, and directly returned with the page in close company. When this person was seen in the full glare of the light, his appearance of extreme youth vanished. He was slender, elegant, and bright; but there was something in the curve of the mouth, and a depth of expression about the eyes, which belied the boyish air and foppish costume so completely, that the governor arose to receive him with unusual courtesy.

"This letter," said the page, "will inform you of my business; after that let me pray that we converse alone."

"Christopher, you may go," said the governor, filling another glass of wine, and holding it toward his visitor with one hand while he replenished his own glass with the other. "Now, sir, sit down while I read this missive."

The page accepted the wine, and drank it off, for he felt the need of it after a long and wearisome ride of hours. While the slow color came back to his face, the governor was earnestly perusing the letter. It evidently caused him some disturbance, for a flush of hotter red than the Rhenish wine could give, rose into his face, while his eyes grew large and opened wide with astonishment.

"From her," he muttered, uneasily. "Why it is years and years since I have seen her name. How came she at Versailles? Must talk freely with her messenger! As if I wanted anything to do with him or her either! Why it might cost me dear with his majesty, and set the rabble to hunting me down like a dog! My own safety! Danger! Humph! Humph!"

All this was muttered incoherently by the astonished governor, while the page sat keenly regarding him, catching up here and there a disjointed word, which made his eyes sparkle and his lips curve scornfully.

"Well," said the governor, crushing the letter slowly in his hand, where he rolled it indolently between his thumb and finger, "you come to me from Madame Du Berry—a beautiful woman in her time, and in some sort a friend of mine."

"In some sort?" repeated the page, almost with a sneer. "I thought from what madame said, that she had been a most earnest and all-powerful friend to you in times when her friendship was a fortune, and her enmity ruin."

"Did she say that? Very natural. The importance of objects magnifies as they recede. It is many years since I knew the madame; and in those years she has ceased to be powerful, either in love or hate. Even her beauty, they tell me, is all gone—and in that lay the power she makes such boast of. Still I have a tender remembrance of the madame, who had a kind of loveliness that was distracting. At one time I almost adored her; as for the lady herself—Well, it would not be quite proper to state how much of her boasted kindness sprang from a more tender sentiment than she would have liked to acknowledge before the king; but I have my memories."

Here the page sprang to his feet, clenched one white hand under its frills of common lace, advanced a step, as if to dash it in that flushed face, and let it fall again with a sharp, unnatural laugh.

"Another glass of wine," he said, unclenching the hand; "these reminiscences are so pleasant they amuse me!"

The governor lifted the bottle near him, and dashed a flood of the amber liquid over the white hand which held the glass, for his own was rendered a little unsteady by the sudden action of the page; who tossed off the wine with a laugh that rang mockingly through the room.

"Well," he said, "as you and the Du Berry were such intimate friends, we can talk with the more freedom. Both you and the lady are just now in imminent peril."

"Peril! How?"

"Both with the king, which is not so threatening, but with the people, who are getting dangerous."

"As how? Speak out! This is the second time to-day I have been warned of the people's hate. But the king—in what way have I offended him?"

"In nothing that I know of. But occasions arise in which our best friends act, unconsciously, with our worst enemies. The king, in his goodness, works hand-in-hand with the people, who hate him and us."

"In what way?" inquired the governor, now deeply interested. "Why should his majesty do aught to imperil an old and faithful officer like me? That he should hold some malice against Du Berry is not remarkable. She was impudent enough while he was Dauphin to account for any ill-feeling he may have toward her now; but with me, who have always been a favorite, the thing is impossible."

The page still kept on his feet and walked up and down the room, forgetting all forms of politeness in his excitement. He paused at last, and flashed a glance of brilliant scorn upon the governor.

"There is no such thing as impossibilities where the selfishness or ingratitude of men are concerned," he said. "The idol of the people to-day is not sure of his position for a week."

"Of the people? Yes. But I claim nothing of them; my strength lies in the king."

The page gave his antagonist—for such these two persons were fast becoming—a sharp glance, but made no answer to his last speech, which had apparently made little impression upon him.

"The king, the queen, and, most of all, you and the lady on whose behalf I come, are in danger. A single new cause of discontent against this prison, and the smouldering hate of the people will break forth. Louis foresaw this, but had not force of will enough to prevent it. One word from his wife, and he was ready to brave everything."

"But what has he done?"

The page drew close to the table and leaned one hand upon it.

"Years ago, the very last of our old king's reign, a man was brought to the Bastille—his name was Gosner."

"Gosner—why that man is alive yet. Neither dampness or famine seem to have any impression on him. He was brought here under a *lettre-de-cachet*, and was one of Madame Du Berry's enemies. I remember, she came here to the prison, just after the old king died, and upbraided this man with having killed him by his necromancy. She was very bitter against the prisoner, and seemed afraid that he might be pardoned out. That woman had a hard heart."

"Yes; she had a hard heart," repeated the page; "but often, ah! so often, she was forced to be cruel in self-defence. It is so now—it is so now!"

Once more the page commenced walking up and down the room; he paused suddenly.

"This man, Gosner, was, at the request of madame, put into the underground cells," he said, "where he has been until within the last year. When we took him out for a week or two, and found him almost blind—a poor, enfeebled creature, hardly worthy of the new life we gave him."

"And now?" questioned the page.

"Now he is but little better—a gleam or two of light and air does not change a prisoner of many years so much as you might imagine; besides, this man was feeble from the first, but lived on, withering away into the shadow he is; we have put him back again; the sight of his decay was too much."

"Well, this is the man they will parade before the people as a proof of the terrible cruelties practiced here."

The governor half rose from his feet in sudden alarm.

"Who will do this?" he exclaimed.

"The king; or, rather, his Austrian wife."

"The king!"

"Who has pardoned this man, Gosner."

## CHAPTER XLI.

### THE COUNTESS AND HER VICTIM MEET.

THE ruddy countenance of the governor lost its tone, and a cold whiteness crept over his lips. At last he turned a blanched and scared face upon the page. The great danger of his position had forced itself upon him.

"And the king has done this? I cannot believe it."

"You may, for to-morrow will bring the proof. The order of Gosner's release was signed this morning, and is now in Paris."

The governor was on his feet at once.

"What is to be done? You came here for something more than this. Madame Du Berry has heard of Gosner's pardon. She sent you here. What does she propose? This is a case that concerns us all, and may destroy us all."

"Unless proper steps are taken," said the page, in a low voice.

"But what steps can be taken?"

"You ask me that?" answered the page, with a strange smile on his lips; "you, who know all the mysteries of this prison, who receive men without record, and send them forth for burial with a number instead of a name?"

"Who told you these things?" demanded the governor, with a sudden panic.

"No matter; I know, also, that this man, Dr. Gosner, is not an inmate of this prison. He was buried within the month, and the number attached to his name is registered against it."

"You know this?" cried the governor. "Rather you suggest it."

"Yes, I suggest it. This man must not be let loose to prowl the streets of Paris, and drive the rabble wild with his stories of the Bastille, its cruelties, its dungeons, and its underground horrors. He was a man of wonderful eloquence, and freedom will touch his tongue with fire. His white hair, the wonderful pathos in his eyes, and that shadowy form, will excite the people to terrible wrath."

The governor was trembling visibly throughout his entire frame. He leaned his hand so heavily on the table that the glasses, with the amber and ruby-tinted drops left in them, shook and rattled together beneath his pressure.

"Madame Du Berry was the person who cast this man into prison, the people hate her already," continued the page, who was himself growing strangely pale. "This man will first assail her; as for yourself——"

The governor dropped into the chair he had left, and gazed upon the page with frightened eyes and parted lips, a remembrance of all he had done to the prisoner since his incarceration, of the neglect, starvation, the awful solitude in which he had been left, year after year, scarcely speak-

ing to a human being, swept over him in all the blackness of its horrors.

"As for yourself," continued the page, "all the enormous cruelties practiced in the Bastille, during the last twenty years, will be heaped upon your shoulders. This man has been an inmate of the lower-cells; he has been chained by the waist to your dank walls, over which reptiles were eternally dragging their slime across and around him; he has heard the perpetual lapping of fetid waters against the enormous walls, which were not thick enough to keep the poisonous drops from creeping down them and dropping on his hands, his hair, and his emaciated limbs——"

"Hold! hold!" cried the governor. "If this man says but half of these things to the people, they will seize upon me in the street and tear me limb from limb."

"But the danger must be avoided. It is a question of life and death with you and the madame. The king in his clemency is flinging fire-brands among his own enemies, with which they will consume him."

"When did you say the pardon would come?" inquired the governor.

"In the morning, very early."

"We will be prepared!"

The color was coming back to that broad face. The governor had arrived at a conclusion—his prisoner should never go forth to the world to fire the hearts of men against him. He rang a little house-bell that stood upon the table with a sharpness that soon brought Christopher to the room.

"Bring me a light, Christopher, and lead the way to the office where our books are kept."

Christopher lighted a lamp, and led the way into a dark stone chamber, which contained several oaken desks, on which lay ponderous books chained to staples driven deep into the wall. The governor opened one of these imposing

volumes, and, after turning over several of its leaves, ran his finger down a column which bore a date that ran back to a period in which Louis the Fifteenth reigned in France.

"Only two entered at this period left," he muttered; "and this delicate man one of them. How fearfully strong life is. It seems as if some men never would die."

"Who are you seeking for—the man who died this morning?" inquired Christopher, who was greatly astonished that the governor should have entered that room, or thought of examining the books.

"Did a man die this morning?" demanded the governor, quickly. "What is his name? How long has he been here?"

"His name," answered Christopher, with a grim smile, "has died out long ago; but we can trace it by the number, if you will give me time. As to the how long—I cannot remember when he was not here."

Here the page stepped forward.

"You have seen the man who remains, I suppose—tell me, was he fair or dark, large or small, old or young?"

"He was fair, young, sir, when I first knew him, slender, too, and of most gentle bearing. As to age, men grow old here rapidly."

"But he seems old?"

"Yes, a little, worn, old man."

"That will do," said the governor, promptly. "Now let us see this person. Get the keys, Christopher, I will go with you to the cells—there is the number."

Christopher took the scrap of paper, on which a number was written, and selecting a bunch of keys from a heap that lay in one of the desks, took the lamp in his disengaged hand. The governor made a sign to the page, and all three plunged at once into the black labyrinth of passages which led into the stony heart of the prison. Through long, vault-like halls, down narrow chasms, that



seemed hewn from the original rock, far into the very bowels of the earth, these three persons penetrated. After a time, they heard low, sobbing murmurs, indistinguishably mournful, which came to them out of the darkness, as if the very stones were saturated with tears. Once the clank of a chain broke sharply through these murmurs, and the grinding sound of a curse broke across the blackness of their progress.

At last they stopped before an oaken door, studded heavily with great iron knobs, over which time and dampness had woven a coat of reddish rust. A great, clumsy lock of iron spread far out on the ponderous oak, into which Christopher thrust an equally clumsy key, which ground its way through the rasping rust, and was only turned by a vigorous wrench of both the keeper's powerful hands.

At last the door was forced open, and there, sitting upon the bare, wet stones was a human being. He had just been aroused from a dreary sleep, and, supporting himself by the palms of both hands pressed upon the floor, was peering at them through a fall of snow-white hair, which drooped over the most mournfully white face that human eye ever gazed upon. When he saw the light, and more than one human face looking in upon his misery, this man, who scarcely knew what the presence of a fellow-creature was, began to tremble with strange apprehension, and crept half across the floor, whispering,

"Has she come—has she come?"

His eyes were bright as diamonds, his white face was full of piteous entreaty; his voice sounded like the heart-broken prayer of a dying man.

They did not speak to him, but drew back, and partly closed the door upon him. Then a wild shriek broke from the dungeon, a cry of anguish so terrible that the page covered his face with both hands, and went staggering through the dark passage like a drunken creature.

"Oh! if I could but take it back—if I could tear this one sin from my soul!"

The governor heard this cry of anguish, but did not comprehend the words. He had witnessed too many scenes like the one they had left to tremble at the sight.

"Have no apprehensions," he said. "They will not find him here in the morning, rest content; not even the king knows all the secrets of the Bastille. There exist lower dungeons yet."

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## CHAPTER XLII.

### THE PAGE TRANSFORMED.

At daylight the next morning, a dashing page, clothed in the livery of some great house, which no one in Versailles could satisfactorily identify, came riding up the streets of the town entirely at his leisure, and looking around curiously as if the place were new to him. He dismounted in front of The Swan, and calling for a hostler in the affected and somewhat effeminate voice so fashionable among his class, entered the inn.

"What do I please to want?" he said, giving a twirl to the long love-lock that waved down his shoulder. "First, I shall want some breakfast, and a room in which this dilapidated toilet can be arranged; for, upon my honor, madame, I am ashamed to stand in this guise before a lady of so much taste, and so fine a presence—queenly I might say, but that I fear so much familiarity might——"

"Nay, speak out—speak frankly, my friend," said Dame Tillery, fluttering heavily. "It is true, the air of a court may cling to one; indeed, I feel that it is so. Since yesterday this inn, large and commodious as every one will



admit, seems too small for me. There is no room for the expansion that comes natural after a free intercourse with royal personages."

"Ah! I understand; but there is nothing surprising in the fact that royalty knows where it can bestow favors."

"Not favors, but confidence," interposed the dame.

"Yes, confidence. I dare say it is you who have granted favors."

Dame Tillery drew close to the page, first looking over her shoulder to make sure that no one was listening.

"Would you call it a favor if a person I will not mention, being modest, had saved the queen's life?"

"Would I?" answered the page, stepping back and throwing a world of reverence and astonishment into his air; "that would be to make one's self immortal. Ah! if the chance had been given me."

"You could not have done it. Such things require strength and wonderful presence of mind."

"I dare say; in fact, the thought was presumption. If I could but obtain an audience with her highness, it would be glory enough for me, even though I do bring her good news."

"Indeed," said the dame. "Is that your business? Good news for her highness, and no one to introduce you. Well, we shall see what can be done."

"Kind and noble, as they told me," answered the page, with enthusiasm. "Go to Dame Tillery, of The Swan. She has power, she has influence with the court; her introduction will be the making of you." This was what was said to me."

"But who said it? Pray tell me, who said it?"

"Ah! that is my secret. Some one who knows you well and understood how you are considered up yonder;—but we will mention no names—diplomacy forbids it."

"Diplomacy!" said the dame, somewhat puzzled by the

word. "Certainly, I understand. He is the lord you serve, who sends good news to the queen. It would be a shame, a pity, if you could not reach her; but, as I said before, we shall think of it."

"And now for the room and the breakfast," answered the page, accepting her patronage with a profound bow.

"The breakfast I can promise you—in that respect The Swan is never wanting; but as for a room, the truth is, I have a person here whose name I need not mention, as it might be an offence to some one we know of—a lady whom one neither wishes to entertain or offend, but who has taken every room in my house for herself and her train; but there is a closet next her own chamber, which a little marmosette of a page sleeps in; I will turn him out and give the room to you. Only move softly and speak low, for the partition is thin, and there is danger of being overheard."

The page bowed low again with a hand on his heart.

"I see that the praise I heard of madame's goodness is well bestowed. Place me anywhere, I shall be content, so long as there is a pallet on which I may snatch a few hours' rest, and light enough to refresh my toilet by."

"The room has a glazed window, and you shall not be disturbed."

"Meanwhile, perhaps you will think of some method by which I can speak to the queen."

"It is difficult, very difficult; but there are few things that Dame Tillery cannot accomplish when all her energies are set upon it. This is the room; marmosette has arisen—go in, go in; if he has left anything there, set it outside the door, and draw the bolt. I see his bed has not been touched."

The page stepped over the threshold, saying,

"I will not disturb the lady with any noise."

"Oh! never mind her—she cannot rule here! The time was—but no matter; a good morning's sleep to you. When the breakfast is ready you shall be informed."

The page entered the little room assigned to him, threw himself on the pallet-bed, and burst into a low, rich gush of laughter, that was little in keeping with the promise he had made not to disturb the lady in the next room. A few minutes after Zamara came to the door. The page sprung up, drew the bolt, and gave the dwarf a glimpse of his laughing face.

"Go away!" he said, "I am here safe and well. Your lady will sleep late; she is ill—has an abominable headache. I should not wonder if she keeps her bed all day."

Zamara left the door infinitely relieved, for he had been very anxious during the night. In the passage he met Dame Tillery.

"How has your lady rested?" she inquired. "Have you seen her this morning?"

"No; but I will inquire," answered the dwarf.

"It is time, we must be thinking about her breakfast."

"I fear madame will have but little appetite; she was not well last night."

"Still we must take her orders. Yes, yes, I am coming! Was ever a house like this! Dame Tillery here, Dame Tillery there! If I could cut myself into a dozen, it would not be enough. You hear how they are calling me, marmosette. In ten minutes I will be back again—expect me."

Zamara went at once to the door which he had just left, and, after a faint knock, put his lips to the key-hole, and whispered something to the person he heard moving inside. Then he sauntered away, waiting patiently for the reappearance of the dame. She appeared at last, breathing heavily, and flushed with the exertion she was forced to make in lifting her ponderous weight up the stairs.

"Now you will make inquiries about madame," she said. "It is important; I have so much to accomplish before presenting myself at the chateau."

## CHAPTER XLIII.

## THE LAST ROULEAU OF GOLD.

ZAMARA walked softly to Madame Du Berry's chamber and knocked at the door. A voice bade him come in, and he disappeared. Directly he came back and beckoned to the dame, who was glad enough to enter the sleeping-room of her guest. She would not have known the room in her own house, so completely was it metamorphosed. Silken hangings fell over the windows through which the light came, richly filling the chamber as with a warm sunset. The only table in the room had been covered with a scarlet cloth, on which golden scent-bottles, pomade-boxes, and caskets, shone in gorgeous profusion. Instead of the best sheets and blankets that her linen-closet could afford, Dame Tillery saw sheets of the finest linen peeping out from blankets of delicate lamb's-wool, and over them was a coverlet of pale green satin, which swept the oaken floor with a border of delicate embroidery.

In this bed, with her hair all loose, and her night-dress open at the throat, lay Madame Du Berry, with all the rouge washed from her face, and her head resting languidly on the snowy whiteness of her pillows. She certainly had all the appearance of an invalid. The countess held out her hand with a gentle smile.

"This is kind," she said; "I have been so ill in the night. You are looking at these things. It is foolish, I know, but they please me—they have become necessary; so, when I travel, Zamara always has them ready. I hope you are not offended."

"Offended! Well, I was, almost! Her majesty, I think, would not have scorned to sleep in my best room as it was.

"Ah, dame! but she is the queen. She has everything, while I possess nothing but old memories and habits, that make commonplace things repulsive."

"I do not know about it. Princes have slept in this room before now, and never seemed to feel a want. Well, madame, if you are so dainty, the aid of Dame Tillery can be nothing to you. I shall not take your message to the queen, remember that."

"Ah, dame! this is unkind."

"I think it is only prudent."

"Well, if you really refuse, I have nothing more to say. There was a time when the most courageous woman in Versailles would have been afraid to refuse a request of mine."

"But now it would take the bravest woman in Versailles to grant a request from the Countess Du Berry."

"But you have courage for anything."

"Not for that. When the Queen of France selects a favorite from the people, she expects discretion—and that she shall find with Dame Tillery."

"But you have already introduced a stranger—that young girl."

"Ah! but that is another matter; the difference here is that Madame Du Berry is not a stranger."

Du Berry almost laughed at the blunt frankness of this speech.

"Well, well," she said, "if you will have nothing to do with me, I cannot help it; but you have lost a rouleau of gold which I had already counted out."

Dame Tillery had evidently forgotten the gold, or she might not have been in such haste to assert her determination. Her countenance fell; her fat fingers worked nervously in the folds of her dress.

"Well," she said, "tell me what the message is and I will decide—everything depends on that."

A mischievous smile quivered around Du Berry's mouth, and amusement twinkled in her eyes.

"No," she said, "I will not embarrass you; perhaps I shall myself go to the chateau."

"What, you?"

"Possibly. At any rate, I will bring no one else into dispute."

Dame Tillery was crestfallen enough. She had expected to be argued with and implored, but found herself utterly put aside.

"But I did not mean to be altogether unaccommodating. It was the slight you put upon my room that aggravated me. There is not a more obliging woman in the world than Dame Tillery, if she is a little restive at times. So, if your message is a safe one——"

Du Berry rose to her elbow, and with her still fine hair falling around her shoulders, drew a ponderous gold watch, flaming with jewels, from under her pillow.

"It is getting late," she said. "You will have scarcely time to prepare; as for me, talking makes my head ache."

Dame Tillery arose, feeling the poorer by a rouleau of gold.

"Madame has had no breakfast," she said, still lingering.

"Not a morsel," murmured Du Berry, closing her eyes with an appearance of disgust. "I shall not eat a mouthful to-day."

"But, shall I send nothing?"

"On the contrary, I must have profound rest. No one but Zamara need approach me. He will understand if I want anything."

Dame Tillery went out, feeling herself put down; but she had no time to dwell on her disappointment. The breakfast of that dashing page had not yet been served, and the time was fast approaching when she was to appear

at the royal chateau. She hurried down to her kitchen, saw that the stranger's meal was in reasonable forwardness, and then gave herself up to the mysteries of a most wonderful toilet, in which she appeared an hour after, armed with her fan, and rustling like a forest-tree in October.

The dame joined her latest guest, who seated himself at the table, with his hair freshly curled, his laces spotless as gossamer, and the ribbons on his dress fluttering airily.

"Ah! but this is magnificent!" he said, with an affected lisp. "Who shall say after this it is the nobility alone that understand what is befitting the presence of royalty? Under such protection I shall be sure of success."

Dame Tillery had found such unthought of success in her last protégée that she was emboldened to test her fortune again, and, being a woman, was particularly pleased that this time her companion would be a handsome and dashing fellow, who would not feel abashed by anything he might see at the palace.

"You are in haste, I see," observed the page, helping himself to the nearest dish; "but this omelet is delicious, and I must detain you for another plate."

"Take your time; take plenty of time," answered the dame, charmed that he should have praised the dish she had herself prepared; "it will be half an hour before her majesty can be kept waiting, so there is no especial haste; still it is always well to be ready."

The page finished his omelet, shook off a crumb or two of bread, that had fallen among his ribbons, and arose.

"Pray, my good dame, glance your eyes over my person, that I may be sure that all is right," he said, pluming himself like a bird. "It seems to me that this love-lock might be brought forward the fraction of an inch with

good effect. Pray let me have your judgment on the matter."

Dame Tillery took the glossy curl between her fat thumb and finger, laid it very daintily a little forward on the shoulder, and stood back with her head on one side to mark the effect.

"That is perfect," she said. "The Duke de Richelieu's love-lock fell just in that way when he presented us yesterday. He is a handsome man, a little younger than you, I should think; but if I were to choose——"

"Younger than me, dame, that seems impossible. Look again."

It seemed as if the page were determined to challenge the woman's most critical attention, for he went close to her that she might scrutinize his face, and exclaimed at last,

"Now, can you persist in saying that I am not younger than the Duke de Richelieu?"

"Well, I am not sure. At a little distance I should say no; but with the light on your face——"

"There, there! do not say it, the very thought breaks my heart," said the page, interrupting her airily. "One does so hate to feel the bloom of his youth going. But I am keeping you. It is time—it is time."

Dame Tillery took her fan from a corner where she had placed it, and settling all the amplitude of her garments, led the way into the street, and sailed off toward the palace like a frigate with all her canvas set to a stiff breeze.

The people of the town, who had by this time heard pretty generally of her good fortune, crowded to their doors and windows to see the dame pass. Children paused, open-mouthed, in the street, wondering at her finery; and those who met her stood aside, as if contact with royalty had given her some mysterious prerogatives, which they were bound to reverence.

The dame felt all this glory with wonderful exhilaration.

She bowed graciously, right and left, as she moved on; gave one or two near acquaintances the tips of her plump fingers in passing, and swept through the palace gates like an empress.

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## CHAPTER XLIV.

### DAME TILLERY OBTAINS AN AUDIENCE IN THE PARK

THERE had been no audience arranged for Dame Tillery that day. The queen wished to see her, that some proper reward might be given for the danger she had run, and, perhaps, promised herself some little amusement from the eccentric vanity of the good woman, whose superb airs had excited the merriment of all her ladies. But the day happened to be very lovely, and Marie Antoinette forgot her gratitude so far that she went into the Park with one or two of her favorites, ready for any amusement that might present itself, and in a humor to enjoy the bright, fresh air of those green glades with peculiar relish. She was unusually happy that day—kind acts bring a glow of contentment with them. She was pleased with the great blessing her interposition had secured for that young girl; she was grateful that an outstanding wrong of such terrible duration had been redressed. No harassing intelligence had reached her from the city, and she went forth from her palace cheerfully, like a child let out from school before the stated hour.

"After all, my Campan, this is a beautiful world," she said, lifting the folds of her dress enough to reveal her dainty high-heeled shoes, as she descended the broad flight of steps that led to the grand fountain. "It is full of music and lovely colors. How greenly the trees overarch that arcade; how bright the grass is. Oh! if these people

in Paris would only let us alone for a little while we might be very happy here. The king asks so little; and I—tell me, my Campan, am I very unreasonable? Do I require so much more than other women?"

Madame Campan lifted her soft eyes to the handsome face bent upon her, and Marie Antoinette saw that they were misty with tears, such as sprang readily from her affectionate heart.

"Ah, my mistress! if the people only knew how little would satisfy you, how earnestly you seek their welfare, rather than your own, all the discontent we hear of might pass away as yonder mist arises from the lawn, and turns to silver in the sunshine."

"How I wish it might," answered the queen, fervently. "Sometimes I think it is my presence in France that has occasioned all this broad-spread discontent. Yet the people seemed to love me once. You remember how they would go into a tumult of delight if I but waved a bouquet to them from my box at the theatre; how they would crowd around my carriage only for a sight of my face. Tell me, Campan, was it because I was younger then and more beautiful, or is it that they have really learned to hate me?"

Campan shook her head, and heaved a deep sigh while her affectionate glance rested on that queenly face.

"The people loved their queen once, and will love her again when the terrible clamor of the clubs has worn itself out," she said, speaking from her simple wisdom, for she could not comprehend any of the great causes of discontent which lay seething in the riotous city of Paris—causes that were rooted so deep in the past, that it has taken almost a century to discover and trace them back through the awful convulsion they led to. "The people have their caprices," she added, "and change easily. Wait a little, and all this popularity will come back."

"God grant it!" said Marie Antoinette, clasping her

hands, and looking upward where the blue sky, bright with silvery sunshine, bent over her like a promise. "I did not know how sweet it was to be beloved until this terrible change came."

The queen was growing anxious, the bright spirits with which she had left the palace were saddened by the turn her conversation had taken. She walked on awhile thoughtfully, and with all the beauty of her face clouded, as it was so often of late; but after awhile she seemed to throw off this depression, and looked up with a smile.

"You are a kind prophet, my Campan, and I will believe you. Why should a people I have never wronged hold me in perpetual dislike? I will not believe it! I will not believe it!"

Madame Campan smiled till all her round face was aglow. She was delighted that any words of hers should have brought courage to her beautiful mistress. The queen had more genial sympathy with Campan than any other person in her household. During all her residence in France, this cordial, kind-hearted woman had been so closely knitted with her domestic life, that a spirit of sisterhood had sprung up in the queen's bosom toward her. The little woman herself fairly worshiped her mistress, while she never forgot the vast distance that lay between them.

"Let us turn down this shady path," said the queen, who, for the moment, had outwalked all the ladies that had followed her, except Campan; "no matter if we do lose them. It is so pleasant to be alone; but we must talk of more cheerful things, my Campan. I, too, will believe that this black cloud will be swept away from France, and that our bright days will come back again. It shall be my policy, as it surely is my pleasure, to conciliate the people. That was not an unwise thing which his majesty did yesterday—I mean the pardon of that poor girl's father."

"It was an act of justice—a brave act, because just now dangerous, perhaps."

"Dangerous, my Campan! How?"

"Because the awful wrong done this man by one king, has been continued so far into the reign of another, that the people will never distinguish which has been most in fault."

"I did not think of this," said the queen, thoughtfully, "but the pardon was right in itself; and if it had not been that lovely girl did, in fact, save me from being torn to pieces, I could not have refused her, though the life she gave me had been at stake."

"Our Lady forbid that I should say anything against a clemency as fearless as it was just. I did but speak of the unreasonableness of the people," said Madame Campan, glancing anxiously at the queen's face, which was again overclouded.

The king must have had some apprehensions when he hesitated, she thought; but in my impulsive gratitude I forgot everything but the fact that this poor man was unjustly incarcerated, and that his child had flung herself between me and death. Well I am glad, only these ideas were in my mind; too much caution makes cowards of us all. I, also, might have hesitated, for these times harden one's heart fearfully. Still, with those wistful eyes looking into mine, I must have done it—and I am glad it is done.

When she came to this conclusion in her mind, Marie Antoinette lifted her head from its bent attitude, and looked around smiling.

"I think we have escaped our ladies," she said, with a gleam of the sparkling mischief in her eyes which Madame Campan knew well, but had seen so rarely of late. "Oh! here they are coming, I can see their dresses through the branches. We must take up our state now, my Campan," she said with a sigh, "there is no escaping it."

"But it is not the ladies," said Campan, shading her eyes and looking through the trees; "but—but—— Why, your highness, it is the woman who taught us how to churn."



"What, my dame of the dairy! I had forgotten all about her," answered the queen, laughing. "Well, I am glad she finds us here. But who is this coming with her?"

"A page; but I do not know the livery," answered Madame Campan. "He lingers behind, now that he has seen your highness. Shall the woman approach?"

"Oh, yes! We shall find amusement in her, if nothing more. You have my purse; it will be needed, for, after all, the woman has done us a service; but for her we should never have met that young girl, or the man who took that fierce animal by the horns. Let her approach."

Madame Campan laughed with the faintest, mellow chuckle in the world, spite of the high sense of etiquette that reigned at court. In fact, she could not help it; for Dame Tillery was approaching toward them, her face all smiles, her dress in a flutter of gorgeous colors, her closed fan held in the middle like a baton, and her body swaying forward now and then in a ponderous salutation, which was repeated over and over again as she approached the queen.

Marie Antoinette had too keen a sense of the ridiculous to think of reprimanding her lady; in fact, she put up one hand, and gave a little cough behind it to break up an impulse to laugh, which was almost irrepressible with that woman in sight; but as Dame Tillery drew close to her, a gentle gravity covered this feeling, and she kindly bade the dame draw near.

With all her boastfulness, there was something in that presence which subdued the exuberance of Dame Tillery's self-conceit. So she came forward smiling and blushing like a peony in the sunshine, and waited in a flutter of expectation for the queen to address her.

"So, my good dame, you have found your audience, though we had forgotten it," said Marie Antoinette.

Dame Tillery performed one of her profound courtesies, which swept the grass with the swelling circumference of her garments.

"The gentleman up yonder knowing that the queen desired my company, bade me and my companion walk in the Park until the pleasure of your highness should be known; these were his very words."

"So you came out here to see our Park, and chanced upon this spot. Well, dame, all places are proper where a service is to be rewarded. Madame has a purse of gold that I have desired her to present to you."

Madame Campan arose, smiling, and placed the purse in Dame Tillery's hand, which was rather reluctantly extended. The queen who was not accustomed to see her favors received with awkward silence, looked a little annoyed; but before she could speak, Dame Tillery had dropped down on her knees in the grass, making what a school-girl would have called enormous cheeses with her dress, and clasped her plump hands in a passion of entreaty.

"Take the money back. Oh! your royal highness and sacred majesty, take back the gold! It is another reward I want."

"Another," said the queen, scarcely caring to check the burst of sunshiny humor that came over her face. "Well, let us hear what it is that you love better than gold."

"Oh, madame! Oh, my queen! I love the wife of our king ten thousand times better than gold or precious stones. I want to serve her; I want to adore her. I pine to go forth among the people and say how good, how grand, how beautiful she is! I wish to say that it is not always from the nobility she chooses those who serve her; but where the people have ability, she is ready to acknowledge it."

"And so I am," answered Marie Antoinette, looking at Madame Campan for sympathy with this new idea. "So I am, if that would please our subjects; but how to begin."

The queen had addressed her companion in a low voice, but Dame Tillery heard her. Leaning forward, and pressing one hand into the grass, she lifted herself up and spoke



with great earnestness, before the little governess had time to collect her thoughts.

"I do not ask to be made a lady of the palace!"

Here the smile that had hovered about the queen's lips broke into a laugh, so clear and ringing that the dame stopped abruptly, and looked around to see what object could have given her majesty such amusement; but discovering nothing, she went on,

"No, I ask nothing of that kind; but there is a position, a title, as one may assert, that a woman of the people might fairly claim. Make me the Dame of the Dairy."

Again that laugh rang out louder and more prolonged, until tears absolutely leaped down the queen's cheek, and so sparkled in her eyes that she was obliged to use her handkerchief.

Dame Tillery drew slowly back, and her broad face clouded. She began to comprehend that the laughter was for her.

"Is it so strange," she said, with something like dignity, "that a woman of the people should ask to be mistress of the queen's cows?"

Marie Antoinette arose, and continued wiping the tears from her laughing eyes. Dame Tillery's face grew more and more stormy. She cast the purse at Madame Campan's feet, and was turning away in hot anger, when Marie Antoinette's voice arrested her.

"Strange, dame—no, it is not strange. Only the title; but, after all, it is a good one, and expresses the duties well. So, henceforth, consider yourself as belonging to the court, and Mistress of the Dairy at the little Trianon. But all positions have a salary attached, so take up the purse, it contains yours for the next half year."

Dame Tillery stooped with some difficulty, and lifted the purse from Madame Campan's feet. Her broad face was rosy with happiness as she turned it on the queen.

"The people shall hear of this—they know Dame Tillery. When she speaks they listen and believe. The queen has enemies among the people of Versailles—they shall disappear."

When the good woman ended this speech, tears stood in her eyes. She turned to go away, but saw the page lingering a little way off, and was reminded of her promise.

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## CHAPTER XLV.

### ONE VIRTUE LEFT.

"MADAME, your highness."

The queen, who had been somewhat moved by Dame Tillery's earnestness, met her return with a pleasant, questioning look.

"Your highness, before coming here I made a promise. Yonder page, who has something that he wishes to lay before your highness, besought me to let him follow my poor footsteps to the royal presence. Bethinking me of the great good which chanced to the young demoiselle who was made so happy yesterday, simply because she came under Dame Tillery's wing, I could but give this young man his opportunity."

The good humor with which Marie Antoinette had received the woman, who took such extraordinary liberties, was not yet exhausted. She glanced toward the page, and her practised eye discovered at once that he must belong to some powerful family. She made an assenting gesture with her hand, which the page comprehended even better than Dame Tillery, and he advanced at once.

Marie Antoinette's keen eyes were bent on his face as he came clearly out of the shadows. Somewhere, it seemed to

her, that she had seen it before, but she could not recognize the colors that ought to have distinguished him as the follower of any great family well known to the court, and was a little puzzled to guess who he was.

Nothing could be more courtly than the manner of the page as he drooped his hat, and bent his perfumed head low before the queen.

"You have some message? You would speak with us?" she said, with that gentle grace in which she was surpassed by no queen in Europe.

"Your highness, may I crave an especial indulgence, and ask that my message may be given to your majesty alone?"

The queen looked at her strange visitor searchingly a moment, then waved her hand; at which Madame Campan drew discreetly out of ear-shot, after giving Dame Tillery the signal that she was expected to withdraw.

"Now," said the queen, "what is the message you bring, and from whom?"

She lifted her hand as she spoke, from which the glove had been withdrawn, and among the jewels that blazed on the slender fingers was the serpent holding that scarabee in its folds. Marie Antoinette saw that the face she looked upon was turning coldly pale; this agitation disturbed her a little, and she drew a step back, watching it keenly.

"I come," said the page at length, recovering from what seemed to have been a sudden shock, "I come from one who wishes to be a friend to the Queen of France, and who may have some power to aid her; but at present I am forbidden to reveal the name."

"This is a strange message," said the queen.

"Not strange, unless gratitude is unusual," answered the page, with profound respect. "This person has once received great kindness and much undeserved forbearance from the King and Queen of France, and she would gladly

prove, in some way, that the favors so royally conferred have not been thrown away."

A faint and almost bitter smile curled the lips of the queen.

"This is, indeed, a stranger thing than I dreamed of. Does some one offer the king help out of simple gratitude?"

"Out of simple gratitude, nothing more. Nay, so anxious is the lady——"

"Then your principal is a lady," cried the queen, interrupting him, "and one who has been the recipient of royal favors, too; this is more and more remarkable. Well, what is it that she wishes?"

"Only this, your highness; through the royal munificence this lady has become rich."

The queen lifted her hand while she seemed to reflect; but after a little she shook her head.

"There have been so many such, that I fail to guess at your mistress from the number: but out of them all she seems to be foremost in finding a memory for thanks."

"My mistress would do more. She has heard—it may not be true—but she has heard that in these disturbed times the royal exchequer is often in want of money. She has some to spare, that is, to give back, if it will help the king to struggle through the difficulties that beset the throne."

Marie Antoinette drew herself up as the object of this speech dawned upon her; but the color gradually grew fainter on her face, and a flush, as of hardly suppressed tears, came about her eyes when the page ceased speaking, and with downcast look awaited her answer.

"This is kind, but very, very strange," she said, as if reasoning with herself. "Where and when have we dealt so generously with this lady, that she is ready to stand by the throne when so many that should have upheld it to the

last are ready to flee anywhere to save themselves even from unpopularity."

"I was forbidden to explain further than I have already done," answered the page; "but of this your highness may be certain, so long as my mistress possesses a Louis d'or, it belongs to the Queen of France."

Marie Antoinette was touched by this strange offer. Such generous acts had been very rare with the court of late; and she felt this all the more keenly. She would have given much to know who the friend was who offered such help, and yet concealed everything.

"That your highness may have no doubt," continued the page, "I was empowered to beg your acceptance of this, and to say that twice the amount will await the royal order whenever it is needed."

The page took from the bosom of his dress a slip of paper, which represented so large a sum of money that the queen opened her eyes in astonishment.

"There is no need of this now," she said, with deep feeling; "take it back to the generous lady who sent it. Say that the queen is grateful, but can yet look to the people of France for such support as the throne may need."

"But should the time ever come?" said the page, receiving the order with hesitation.

"Then we will refuse help from no loyal man or woman of France who has power or wealth to give—for it will be for the nation not ourselves that we shall receive."

"May the time be far away when France shall be so menaced," said the page, looking wistfully at the queen's hand, from which the green tints of the scarabee stood out in dull relief among so many jewels. "But the time may come when even the best friends of the monarchy may not find easy access to the queen, when even the little help my mistress could give would not find its way to the royal coffers."

"Nay, this is a dark view to take even of gloomy times. Those who love their sovereigns have seldom found it difficult to gain access to them through friends or enemies."

"Even now," said the page, "when my object was a loyal one, I was compelled to crave assistance from yonder good-natured dame, who almost forced a passage for me through the guards."

The queen looked toward Dame Tillery, who was walking up and down in a neighboring avenue, watching the interview between her protégé and the queen with some jealousy and impatience. The smile which brightened that beautiful face seemed to encourage the page.

"If I had anything that would insure me entrance to the royal presence without such delay as has impeded me now," he said, looking so wistfully at the queen's hand that she observed the glance.

"That is easy," she said, with the quick imprudence of action which cost her so dearly, "one of these——"

She was about to take one of the jewels from her finger, but with an impulse he could not control, the page cried out,

"Not that; not that, your highness, it is of value; but that serpent with the dull-green beetle in its coil. Oh! I pray you, let me have that as a token!"

Marie Antoinette drew the scarabee half off her finger, then thrust it back, remembering how little she knew of the person before her.

"No," she murmured, "this is a talisman;" and with a sudden gesture of dismissal, she walked toward Madame Campan, leaving the page standing there, trembling under what might have seemed a trivial disappointment.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

## WAITING FOR THE MORNING.

ALL night long Marguerite Gosner lay by her mother's side, with that precious paper folded close to her heart. She did not sleep, though the last two days had been full of excitement and fatigue; but her wild, bright eyes were wide open, looking through the darkness, and picturing there a scene of exceeding joy that would come to them upon the morrow. How often during that night did she steal her hand under the pillow, and draw forth the ivory crucifix hidden there, that her lips, all quivering with thankfulness, might kiss it in blessing of the Holy Mother for the great happiness that filled her heart. Yet all this was done so quietly that the woman by her side thought the girl asleep, and scarcely dared to draw an irregular breath lest she might disturb her. Thus the morning found both mother and child so restless with happiness, that it amounted almost to pain.

"What if they would not give him up," thought the poor woman, who had been so often thrust back from her hope, that nothing good ever seemed quite sure to her; "or he may be taken suddenly ill and unable to move. The king might be persuaded to retract his mercy—she had heard of such things."

Thus the poor woman, who had been so long inured to suffering that she did not know how to be happy, tormented herself through that long, long night; but when the day broke and Marguerite's eyes looked into hers all this changed. Her heart leaped toward the hope held out to it. She reached forth her arms, and drawing the young girl to her bosom with an intensity of affection never known to her before, cried out,

"To-day, this very day, we shall see your father, so good, so learned, so wonderfully beautiful! Ah, Marguerite, my child! I almost feel his last kiss on my lips, my forehead, my hair. You were clinging to me, one arm about my neck, the other reaching forth to him. 'Only a few days,' he said, 'and I may come back covered with honors. The King of France has sent for me—Louis has learned that Gosner is wise, that he has a knowledge of wonderful things. Perhaps, my wife, we may yet lay up honors and riches for our little one.' Then in this beautiful hope he would come back and embrace us again. I was weeping, for a strange, black presentiment of evil crept over me; but you sent kisses after him, fluttering that little hand in the air like a butterfly. He waved his hand in adieu; I saw him through my blinding tears; I watched him depart. His voice sounded like a knell through my whole being; the sorrows of an eternal parting fell upon me. Then I felt your arms around my neck, and the soft pressure of your lips on my face; your tiny hands, soft and white as rose-leaves brushed away my tears. Oh! how I loved you, how I do love you—*his* child, his child and mine."

She threw her arms around the girl in a passion of love; then she pushed the young creature away, and looked down in her face with a wild consciousness of the great change that had fallen upon her. Beautiful as the face was, it seemed to fill her with infinite regret.

"But his child is gone," she cried out; "this is a woman who holds up her arms and tries to comfort me. Gosner will not know her; he will not know me. This child is the creature I was when he left us, young, beautiful, delicate. In her he may recognize the woman he loved; but in me what will he find, lines of sorrow where he left dimples, golden hair turned to ashes, which long years of suffering strews upon the head. Alas, alas! this is not all joy; these cruel people have dug a gulf between us since I

was like you, my child. When we meet, the young man and that girlish wife will have disappeared forever. A man and a woman will clasp hands, broken down with sorrow, each carrying a weight of years that cruelty has rendered a dead blank. The king has pardoned him, the queen has smiled on you; but is there in all their royalty power enough to take back the awful wrong that has been done to us?"

Marguerite trembled and grew pale in her mother's arms. Never, since her first remembrance, had she seen that look of wild excitement on her face, or heard that thrill of agony in her voice. And this was the morning that should have been so resplendent in their lives. What did it mean? Was it possible that the woman who had suffered so long and struggled so bravely was lost to all sense of enjoyment? Had sorrow absolutely killed hope in her bosom?

"But, mamma, you would both have grown older even if this great calamity had not fallen upon you," said the young girl, striving to reassure her mother.

"Yes; but not here, not here," cried Madame Gosner, pressing a hand upon her heart. "Ah! this is terrible—we shall meet and not know each other. We shall look into each other's eyes and see nothing there but wondering sorrow."

"But there will be love also," murmured the girl.

"Love? Yes, but never again the old love; regret, compassion, that infinite tenderness which springs out of infinite sorrow will be ours; but the darkness of the past will forever cast its shadows upon us."

"Not so, mamma. We will leave this terrible country; back in your own home, you and my poor father will yet find that life has its sunshine."

"But this is my own native land."

"I know it, mamma; but it has only given you sorrow."

"And what have I given it? Nothing but the selfishness of my grief."

"What else had you to give? Alas! what else?"

"My life, my energies, every thought of my brain, every pulse of my heart; but I was selfish—one idea filled my existence. In my love for him all other duties, all other wrongs merged themselves. I was a wife, and could not be a patriot."

"God be thanked that it is so!" said Marguerite. "The woman who loves her husband and her home best is a patriot in spite of herself, for she gives strength and power to the man whose duty it is to govern."

Madame Gosner kissed the lips that uttered this noble truth, and lay back upon her pillow silent and thoughtful. Then she murmured to herself, "He will know, he will decide."

Marguerite was also silent, the words uttered so passionately by her mother troubled her. Did she, indeed, think with so much regret of the country they were in? Could that overbalance the gratitude for the royal clemency? Could she accept this noble act of pardon with a feeling of revolt in her mind?

"Henceforth," said Marguerite, with gentle firmness, "it will be our duty to pray for the King and Queen of France, to live for them, die for them, if need be."

The mother was silent; to her this obligation of eternal gratitude was a question of sacrifice. In her heart she loved France; but her life in Paris had gradually uprooted all love of royalty there. To save her own life she would not have asked mercy at the hands of a Bourbon king; to save her husband she had done more, sunk upon her knees at the roadside, only to be covered with mud by the royal cavalcade as it swept by her. She remembered, though her daughter did not, that the pardon had been granted as a reward for services rendered to the queen, not from an

absolute sense of justice. With all the passions and prejudices of a Jacobin strong in her bosom, it was hard for this woman to accept simple obligations of gratitude from a king she had learned to hate, and a queen slander and misrepresentation had taught her to despise.

All this passed while the gray dawn was breaking, and after a night of utter sleeplessness; but when the sunshine came, warm and golden, into the windows, the woman arose in her bed, held out her arms to the light, and thanked God for the blessed day, which was to give back her husband from his living tomb! Then a feeling of intense gratitude possessed her. She flung aside the dark thoughts that had haunted her soul in the night, and was once more pure, womanly. All that she asked, was, that *he* might share her life in any peaceful place that promised safety and shelter for the coming age which would soon be upon them.

Marguerite saw the change, and it completed her happiness. To her gratitude had been prompt and natural as rain is to the earth. Heart and soul she was devoted to the royal couple of France. Next to her mother, and the father she expected to see, at perfect liberty, that day, her thoughts were given to the two persons who had been so good and kind to her.

The sun was scarcely up when these two persons were ready for the summons which they expected from Monsieur Jacques. The remnants of a poor wardrobe were brought forth and arranged by Marguerite so deftly that an air of youth and refinement was imparted to the mother, which gave back something of her lost loveliness. Never had that girl's face looked so bright; never had the eyes danced with such living joy; those slender fingers absolutely seemed to be doing fairy-work with the ravages of time.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

## DEAD SEA FRUIT.

It was a great relief to Marguerite that there was something for her to accomplish; but for that the suspense would have been terrible. As it was, Monsieur Jacques called an hour before there was any hope of being admitted into the prison. "They would walk slowly," he said, "and be there at the moment. It would not be the first time he had wandered around that old moat, and watched the grim towers as they blackened the sky. Now, thank God! he could look upon them with hope."

Marguerite lifted her blue eyes to his face as he said this. They were bright as stars, and for the first time this strong man felt a thrill of something like hope in his bosom. But for him Marguerite knew well enough that her father's freedom would never have been wrought out, and she longed to throw herself at his feet, and bless him for all the joy that made the morning a heaven to her.

They set forth more than hour before the time—Marguerite still carrying the precious pardon in her bosom; the mother, pale as death, for to her the next hour was momentous beyond anything a human life can experience but once; and Jacques, so strong, so hilarious in his rejoicing, that his very steps seemed regulated to martial music, and his face was almost handsome in its exceeding brightness.

"Another hour," he said, as he came in sight of the Bastille, "another hour, and the sun will shine on him."

All at once a new idea struck the man. He had been to the Bastille in disguise more than once, through that means many of its secrets had become known, among the most important that of Dr. Gosner's identity. If he pre-



sented the king's pardon, the keeper might recognise him, and thus destroy all chance of further information.

This fear made Monsieur Jacques hesitate. Madame Gosner saw this, and the color left her face. At every step she had feared some delay, for nothing but disappointment and trouble seemed absolutely real to her.

"What is it?" she said, in breathless terror. "Why do you hesitate?"

Monsieur Jacques explained the cause of his uneasiness. But directly the cloud left his face. "It proves nothing," he argued, "except that I am connected with those who have power with the king. Let them recognize my face, the paper itself is our indorsement of loyalty."

Madame Gosner drew a deep breath, and the light came back to Marguerite's frightened eyes.

"I feared you were about to forsake us," she said.

"Did you, indeed, fear it?" he asked, kindling with gratitude.

The intensity of his voice surprised her; she looked up wonderingly. To her Monsieur Jacques was like a brother on whom her weakness could lean with a certainty of support. Could she have seen the smothered passion that lay crouching like a lion in his heart, ready to leap forth at a word or smile from her, the truth would have frightened her. As it was, she gave him a pathetic smile; for, with her whole being so preoccupied, she could do no more than that, but it touched him to the heart.

By this time they were in sight of the Bastille, which was approached through a tangle of narrow streets, and surrounded, so far as the defences would permit, by low and squalid buildings, for the very atmosphere of the prison drove thrift and cheerfulness away. Nothing but misery itself could be forced into propinquity with the fetid waters of that moat, or the sounds that came across it sometimes, when the night was still.

Those three persons stood before the drawbridge, which led to the governor's quarters; and looked across it with eager, wistful glances. The gaunt towers, blackened with age, into which the light crept sluggishly through narrow loop-holes that gashed them like wounds; the flat, dead walls, thick almost as the quarries from which they were dug, pierced in like manner with deep slits, which drank up all the light before it penetrated to the dungeons, flung their terrible shadows in the distance. Before them was the drawbridge, with its ponderous timbers uplifted and held in place by bars of iron that seemed to have rusted in their staples, against which it strained and wailed like a monster bolted to the wall.

Madame Gosner was deadly pale. She was looking upon the tomb of her living husband. Would it ever be opened? Was there force enough in that little slip of paper to loosen the hinges of the massive draw-bridge, and unlock the iron-clad door that frowned behind it?

Time wore on. They saw the golden sunshine creep slowly down the towers, bathing the top, but leaving the base in eternal shadows. Then there was a movement at the draw-bridge, the chains began to rattle, the timbers groaned, swayed, and settled heavily downward. Guards were being placed for the day.

Monsieur Jacques advanced to the guard house and presented his order. The guards passed him and his companions without a word—the king's signature was enough. In the guard-room they found Christopher. A grim smile quivered across his mouth as he read the paper. Madame Gosner shuddered. She could not mistake that smile for one of pleasure that a prisoner was to be released. Still nothing could be more urbane than this man. "He would call the governor; when an order of release came directly from his majesty, it was usually honored by that high functionary in his own person. Would monsieur and the ladies walk this way?"



There was something forced and hollow in all this politeness, that made the heart in that poor woman's bosom sink like lead as she followed Christopher into the presence of his master. Marguerite, who remembered the good Doudel, remained outside with Jacques, afraid that the governor would recognise her as the flower girl who had sought his presence once before.

The governor, like his subordinate, was eloquent in expressions of pleasure that the good king had at last extended mercy to a prisoner whose fate had so much in it to deplore. "But he had a doubt, a fear, that the prisoner might be unable to leave the Bastille for a day or two. There had been a report that he was not quite well; indeed, that was not wonderful. Dr. Gosner was almost the oldest prisoner now in the Bastille, that is, counting from the date of his entrance into the fortress. But the goodness of the king might give him new life. Madame should judge for herself; they had no concealments in that place. When the relatives of a prisoner come with an order from the king, all doors were flung open. Would madame please to descend?"

Christopher appeared with the keys, and taking upon himself the air of a commander, led the way into the heart of the prison. There was something unnatural in this man's demeanor, an air of bravado, which they all noticed without comprehending.

"I think," he said, loitering by the side of Jacques, "that I have had the pleasure of meeting monsieur before, but where, I cannot remember."

Jacques had dressed himself that morning with unusual care. A suit of clothes, discarded during the last year, had been brought forth for the occasion; and though Jacques was deficient in the high breeding which so strongly distinguished the man of birth at that period, he possessed the air and look of a man who had thought much, and would

act his part bravely, whatever it might be. The wild masses of hair that usually half-concealed his eyes, was now parted, perfumed, and curled in waves that revealed the white breadth of his forehead, and the keen power of those deep-set eyes. With his coarse clothes he had flung off the slouching gait and heavy tread of a workman, and it was with the air of a person who considers the familiarity of strangers an impertinence, that he turned full upon the head keeper.

"If you have been much in Paris when gentlemen happen to stir abroad, it is possible," he said, "though I have no recollection of the honor."

He looked earnestly at Christopher as he spoke, and moved on with an appearance of so much tranquillity that the man was baffled, and muttering an excuse, walked on swinging his keys.

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## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### THE BITTERNESS OF DEATH.

THAT little group moved forward in silence; the guards restless and preoccupied; the two females, pale with expectation, and faint from the nauseous atmosphere into which they were descending. Along dark, damp passages, down slippery stairs, in and out of vaulted corridors, they made progress toward that dungeon one of the party had visited only the previous night. The door was heavy, and so sodden with damp, that the iron-headed spikes rattled in their sockets as it was swung open, and they could see water-drops glistening thickly on the walls as the light was held into the dungeon a moment before Christopher entered.

At last he stepped in, and advancing to some mouldy straw that lay in a corner, spoke to the man outstretched upon it, motionless, and apparently asleep.

"Wake up, number five!" exclaimed the keeper, swaying his lantern to and fro over the prostrate man. Dr. Gosner! Dr. Gosner! Look up, if you have not outlived the name; here is your wife come to take you home!"

The man did not move, his face was turned to the wall, a mass of gray hair swept back and mingled itself with the straw, in which there was the stir and sound of something creeping away from sight.

Madame Gosner pushed the keeper aside, and falling upon her knees, took the gray head between her trembling hands. The moment she touched it, an awful whiteness came to her face. Seized with trembling, she turned upon the guard, her eyes full of horrible questioning, her lips apart, her teeth gleaming. She spoke no word, uttered no sound, but fell down by the dead body, lifeless, and still as it was.

Marguerite saw it all, and recognized the calamity that had fallen upon them; but the disappointment was too mighty for words, far too awful for tears; the light reeled before her eyes, the dungeon seemed to contract itself into a grave. She felt herself falling, but Monsieur Jacques caught her in his arms, and carried her from the dungeon. With the speed and strength of a wild animal he threaded that labyrinth of horrors, mounted the broken stairs, and carried her out into an open guard-room, through which the morning air swept. Here he bathed her face with water, rubbed her hands—but all was in vain; the dead man he had just left upon the straw did not seem more lifeless than this young girl.

Jacques had left two living persons in the cell with the dead man, but they were more like ghosts than human beings. The guard was terror-stricken; the lantern shook in his strong hand.

"Is she, too, gone?" faltered Jacques, who had left Marguerite when she returned to life, and stood looking down at the pale form lying by the dead upon the straw. "God help us! This is fearful!"

"I do not know, she does not seem to breathe," answered Christopher, holding the light on a level with the deathly face. "If it were so, a world of trouble might be spared us," he whispered to himself. "I almost wish we had not meddled with this. I fear me his death will bring us greater evil than if we had turned him free into the street."

"She is not dead," exclaimed Jacques. "She moves, her eyes open. Heavens, how they look!"

The woman arose upon her hands and knees painfully, and with evident dizziness. Then she stooped over the dead man, and turned his face to the light. The whole body moved in the straw as she did this; but wonderful strength seemed given to her, and though it was like turning a statue of marble, she did it tenderly. She put the scattering locks back from the worn face, and pored over it with yearning fondness, as if she had parted from her husband but yesterday, and hoped yet to arouse him.

"Changed! Oh, my love! how changed! and it seems such a little time, now that we are together. Wake him for me—you can; it is the chill and the damp of this awful place. No wonder he is cold! I, too, am shivering. Wake him, I say—you should know how."

"My poor woman, he is dead! I have no power over him now," answered the guard, shrinking from her outstretched arms.

Madame Gosner arose and stood upright, regarding the two scared faces with a fixed look.

"It was you that killed him," she said; "but who gave the order? Was it the king?"

"The king! Madame, this is treason!"

"And this is death!" cried the woman, pointing down-

ward with her finger, "death! for which there shall be a terrible atonement. Where is my child? Is she afraid of this poor clay, which was her father—her father? Oh, my God! and he was alive but yesterday. Only one day too late. Where is my child, I say? There is something for her to do."

"She has gone away with your friend; he was here a moment ago, but has gone back again; doubtless they are in the guard-room. Shall I show you the way, madame?"

"No. Bring them to me here—my daughter and my friend."

Christopher went out, glad to leave the woman whose very presence terrified him. He found Marguerite just coming out of her fainting fit, and besought her to go down and persuade her mother to leave the dungeon.

Marguerite arose, shuddering at the thought of going down those horrible passages again; but she gathered up her strength, and half-supported, half-carried by Monsieur Jacques, moved away into the darkness.

"Come hither! Come hither, my child! it is your father who speaks. It is he who asks us with those mute lips to avenge his murder. Kneel down, my child—kneel down, my friend. It is he who commands it. It is the dead who speaks."

Awed by her words, and the deep solemnity of her manner, Marguerite sunk upon her knees and touched the cold hand of her mother that lay upon the dead man's forehead. Marguerite felt the chill strike through her fingers, but she was brave, and did not once attempt to draw back. Madame Gosner turned her eyes upon Jacques; he, too, knelt and bent over the dead.

Madame Gosner lifted her right hand,

"Listen, oh, my God! here, in this awful place, and in the presence of my dead, I swear, that I will neither rest, or take thought of any other thing, until the place in

which my husband met his slow murder is razed to the ground, and those who slew him are brought to justice. This child in her innocence, this man in his strength, shall bear witness to my oath."

The woman arose slowly to her feet as she spoke, her hand still uplifted, her finger pointed heavenward, the fire of a terrible resolve burned in her eyes; her lips were set, her form dilated. She turned to the guard, commanding him like a sibyl.

"Bring men hither who shall carry forth my dead. The people of Paris must know how innocent men can be tortured out of their lives. Send two of your guards. I will not leave the dungeon save with him."

"It cannot be, madame. The king's order demands the living body of Doctor Gosner. It is not here. The man who died was a prisoner, and as such he must be buried. This is the law."

"But I, his wife, having the king's order, command you."

"Hardly, if the king himself commanded, could I obey him, for even he must bow to the law."

"Even he and his myrmidons shall bow to that stronger and grander power than kings—the people!" she exclaimed; and turning to the dead man, she took off her muslin scarf and laid it reverently over his face. "Stronger now than in his life," she said, passing out of the dungeon with a firm step. "The last stone of this fortress shall be his monument, and the people of France shall build it for him."

## CHAPTER XLIX.

## A WOMAN'S NATURE TRANSFORMED.

MADAME GOSNER moved through the door, as she uttered a threat which was treason in itself, leading Marguerite by the hand. Monsieur Jacques remained behind, though Christopher stood waiting for him to depart, holding the door with his hand. He had set down the lantern in the passage that those who went out might have more light.

All at once, Jacques took up the lantern, passed through the door, and lifting Madame Gosner's scarf from the dead man's face, held down the light and closely examined the features. A quick intelligence came to his eyes. He glanced at Christopher, and saw that he watched these proceedings uneasily.

"Monsieur forgets that his friends are standing in the dark," said the guard, impatiently.

"No," answered Jacques; "monsieur forgets nothing."

Saying this, he set down the lantern, drew a knife from his pocket, and stooping down, cut a lock of hair from the dead man's temple. All this was done with his back to the guard, who sprang forward and snatched up the light at the moment, and thus was unconscious of the act.

A moment after the two men passed into the passage, the dungeon-door fell to with a crash, and Christopher turned his key in the ponderous lock with a smothered exclamation of thankfulness.

In the upper corridor Madame Gosner turned and addressed a sentence to the guard, who was walking fast as if anxious to escape from the gloom of the place. She paused a moment while speaking, and stood close by the oaken door which marked the position of some cell which her voice had penetrated. From that cell came a cry so

wild, so plaintive and thrilling, that the whole group stopped awe-stricken.

"Move on," said the guard. "It is only some prisoner who has heard our voices. No wonder he cries out; few strangers are ever admitted here, and conversation in these vaults is an unknown thing."

Marguerite went close to her mother, who stood immovable, listening keenly.

Again the noise commenced, and a tumult of words seemed forcing themselves through the oaken door, against which some heavy weight flung itself with a violence that made all the rusty iron holding it together rattle in staples and sockets.

"Move on! Move on!" cried the guard, stamping his foot with vehement impatience. "Move on, madame! The prison has laws, and you are in the act of breaking them."

Christopher, who carried the light, walked forward with rapid strides, and the rest were forced to follow him.

When Madame Gosner came into the light of the guard-room her eyes gleamed like stars, and the deadly pallor of her face was terrible to look upon. It seemed as if she had been walking through burning ploughshares, and was ready to go still further along the fiery path. The disappointment, which would have taken away all strength from another woman, had given to her almost superhuman power.

When they reached the governor's quarters, Christopher desired them to enter, but Marguerite saw Doudel by one of the guard-houses and went to him, thus separating herself from the rest. The good man saw by her face that some great evil had fallen upon her, and placed her on a stone bench near him where she could rest in peace while her mother and Monsieur Jacques followed Christopher into the governor's presence. Here the guard reported the

death of his prisoner, which was received with an appearance of profound commiseration.

The governor had recovered all his silky equanimity. With urbane politeness he invited madame and her friend into his own apartments, offered them wine and confections, as if people so disturbed could partake of such dainties; and with elaborate hypocrisy regretted the event which had made their visit to the prison so severe a disappointment.

Madame Gosner listened to all this dumbly, and like one in a trance. Had the man been a statue of granite, she could not have looked into his face with less consciousness of the life that was in him. Some new idea had taken possession of her faculties and locked up her whole being.

Glances of unrest passed between the governor and his subordinate; the marble stillness of this woman seemed to threaten them with danger; her appearance puzzled them. In her dress, and somewhat in her air, she might have belonged to the people; but her language was pure, her manner commanding. If she really was of the lower order, she must be one of those who wield a powerful influence among her compeers, for when she spoke, her words were impressive; when passion swayed her, as it had done in the dungeon, they swelled into powerful eloquence that would have stirred crowds with enthusiasm. She was the very woman to sway ignorant masses; and such women were even now kindling up terrible discontent among the people of Paris.

It was for this reason the governor strove to conciliate the woman before she left the Bastille.

But Madame Gosner would neither eat or drink in his presence. Once she crossed the room suddenly, as he was speaking, and laid her hand on his arm, as if about to question him. But a change evidently came over her purpose, and she drew back without having uttered a word.

Then, in dread silence, she left the prison, pale, haggard, and so depressed by bitter disappointment, that she seemed

more like a prisoner, worn out with suffering than a human being acting from her own free will.

Madame Gosner entered her room, and bade her two companions enter also. Up to this time she had not spoken, but walked rapidly through the streets of Paris, looking straight ahead and pressing her lips firmly together, as if some sharp cry were attempting to break forth which she would not permit to escape her.

When the door was closed and bolted, she turned upon Monsieur Jacques, and looked him steadily in the face.

"Monsieur, you visited the prisoners once. Was the man we saw lying dead in a dungeon of the Bastille my husband?"

"Madame, you ask me a hard question. I had my doubts, I have them still. This man was of the same size, thin, emaciated, tall, with masses of gray hair—all these belonged to your husband; but his eyes were closed, all the sweet expression which made his face beautiful, even in that dungeon had disappeared. It may have been the work of death, but my mind rejects the identity."

"My God, help us! How are we to know? In what way can the truth be discovered?" exclaimed the woman passionately.

Monsieur Jacques drew a lock of hair from his bosom, which he held toward her.

"I cut this from his head. The suspicion was strong upon me, and I thought it might aid us in discovering the truth. Look! You should know the color of his hair, for this is not all gray."

Madame Gosner reached forth her hand, but drew it back again, shrinking from a touch of the hair. She dreaded the conviction it might bring, for wild as the hope was that had sprung up in her heart, she felt that all strength would go from her if it should utterly fail. She took the hair at last, something in the color reassured her.

"It is darker, less silky, coarser!" she exclaimed. "His hair was like an infant's, almost flaxen, with gleams of pale gold in it."

"But time changes the hair more than anything else," said Monsieur Jacques. "I was wrong to think it a sure test. We must have some more certain proof."

"For another this may be insufficient, but I ask nothing more. My husband's hair never could become so dark or coarse as this."

"Still opinion is no proof. Why should an imposition be practiced upon us? How did the governor know that a pardon was coming?"

"Only through one channel. The king who signed the pardon may have taken this method of evading it."

"No, no! he never did that," cried Marguerite.

"No one else had the power," answered Madame Gosner. "If my husband is yet alive, as I solemnly believe he is, and that I have heard his voice this day, the fraud practiced upon us was known to the king, and done under his sanction."

"I would give my life to know the truth," murmured Marguerite. "Oh! if they would have taken my liberty in exchange for his!"

Monsieur Jacques drew close to the girl and bent over her.

"Would you give the man who searched out the truth, and afterward saved your father, something dearer than liberty, your love?" he said.

She looked up earnestly.

"As God witnesseth the promise, I will try!"

Monsieur Jacques fell upon his knees, pressed a burning kiss upon her hand, dropped it, and left the room.

## CHAPTER L.

## THE DAME OF THE DAIRY.

DAME TILLERY called her household together, maids, grooms, and helpers, and standing at a long table in one end of the most public room in her house, proclaimed to them the high honor that day conferred on her by the queen.

"Not altogether to myself has her majesty done this honor," she said, lifting her closed fan on high, and looking around benignly on her retainers; "but as the sun sheds light on the weeds and the grass, as well as the flowers, my glory shall, in some sort, fall on the humblest of my servants; from this hour you may look upon yourselves as next in service to the retainers of the high nobility of France. I have not decided yet upon a livery or a badge, all that will be left to more cool deliberation; but you can go forth with a feeling of high preferment; and as such honors can no longer be kept secret, you have my free permission to promulgate this good news throughout the town as occasion may offer. Now, my humble friends, you may disperse for a holiday. In the tap-room a cask of wine has been broached, free to every man and woman in my employ. All that I ask is, that you drink the health of their majesties, and your liege lady, The Dame of the Dairy."

Dame Tillery opened her fan with the slow spread of a peacock's tail, waved it once or twice with superb dignity, and closing it into a baton again, retired amid the bewildered shouts of her household. On her way from the room she met the strange page, who came in hurriedly and flushed with excitement. He was about to pass the landlady, but she stood smiling in his way, and rendered that impossible.

"You had an audience, and such an one as no other person outside the court could have obtained for you," she said,

in high good-humor. "Did her majesty speak of the great honor conferred on your humble servant? Did she say that, in her serene goodness, she had lifted Dame Tillery, who stands here before you, into the nobility of France? Did she tell you that this day a new order has been created, and Dame Tillery, of The Swan, stands at its head?"

The page listened impatiently and did not seem to comprehend what the woman was talking about; but, with a sudden start of memory, he drew a rouleau of gold from his pocket and handed it to her.

"What is this? For whom is it intended?" she inquired, drawing her portly figure up with a swell of importance.

"It is the gold I promised for the service you have rendered me, with enough added to cover the cost of my lodging here," answered the page. "I give it now, because in a few minutes I shall take the road again."

"Nay," replied the dame, waving the gold aside with her fan, "that was all well enough yesterday, when I was only mistress of The Swan; but I have my doubts about it now. Can a person of my rank receive money in her own person? I—I am in doubt—I think not."

"I crave pardon," said the page, and a laughing imp came dancing into his eyes. "If there is any person in your household who can act as treasurer, I will give the money to him."

Dame Tillery, who had been all the while eyeing the rouleau of gold askance, broke into an approving smile, and called aloud for one of the men she had left in the public room, whom she ordered to take charge of the money, and see that it was properly bestowed in her strong coffer; then she turned to address the page again, but he was gone.

"Zamara."

The dwarf started up and opened the door through which the page came in haste.

"Zamara, I have failed; the ring is on her finger, but I cannot get it off. Oh, Zamara! how often I have wished that wretched man had never crossed my path!"

"It was a great misfortune, my lady. Nothing seems to have gone well with us since that terrible ring was taken from his finger."

"If we could only get it back again—if we could devise some way. Zamara, can you think of no device by which it can be obtained? The poor queen has given us nothing but kindness, and to her we have brought perpetual disappointment—perhaps undreamed of trouble. Try, marmosette. In the old times you were never at loss for invention—help me in this strait. I cannot go away and leave that accursed serpent clinging to her hand."

Tears stood in this hard woman's eyes, she was passionately in earnest. Zamara started up, and seizing her hand, kissed it with heathenish devotion.

"Madame has spoken; Zamara has seen her tears, and will give his soul to the task she appoints him."

"My good Zamara, my kind, kind friend! I know that you will wrest this talisman from her hand, if human ingenuity can do it. If I have trust in mortal being, it is in you, my poor marmosette. But to help me in this you must stay at Versailles, while I go up to Paris. Ah! this task of uprooting the wrongs one has perpetrated is a hard one. Something baffles me ever when I strive to do good, while it was so easy to be wicked. Why is this, I wonder! Ah me! how different it might have proved had I been born among the great, rather than forced upon them."

"Madame, I hear some one at your chamber-door."

"Go, go. It is doubtless that tiresome woman."

The next moment Zamara stood by Dame Tillery, who was knocking loudly at the door of Madame Du Berry's chamber.

"Ah!" he said, "let me congratulate you, Dame; all



the house is in commotion—such joy, such unheard-of good fortune. Why, it is like being made a princess. They wanted me to come down into the public room and drink to this new dignity—but I said no. When madame herself appears, I will drink to her health, but not with servants, only in her own august presence. This was what I said, madame.”

Zamara pressed a tiny hand upon his heart, and bent low as he finished speaking.

“That was the thought of a person endowed with most gentle breeding,” said the dame, wheeling from the door full of hospitable thoughts. “Come with me to my own room, where you will find something better than the people down yonder would know how to relish. You shall taste of Burgundy from the best bin in my cellar, the more readily because I wish to send a flask to your mistress. It was this that took me to her door but now.”

Zamara stood by bowing and smiling, while the dame filled a goblet with wine from a bottle that seemed to have rested years in her cellar, and, though compelled to hold it between both hands, he drained it to the bottom.

“Now,” said the dame, giving him a salver to carry, on which she had placed a second bottle and glasses. “Follow me to madame’s room; she must not be neglected when the lowest scullion in the kitchen rejoices.”

There was no difficulty of access now. The page had disappeared. His clothes lay huddled in Zamara’s closet, and Madame Du Berry was in bed, resting in a recumbent position on her pillows in a demi-toilet, but with her hair less elaborately arranged than usual. She received Dame Tillery with a smile, congratulated her warmly when she heard the good news, tossed off a goblet of the sparkling Burgundy, and declared that the exaltation of her friend had made her well—so well that she would start for Paris within the hour, leaving Zamara behind to arrange the baggage, and follow her when she should send for him.

Dame Tillery expostulated a little; but finding her guest positive, allowed her to depart, but not till the bottle of Burgundy had been drained in honor of her new dignity. What Du Berry refused to drink, the jovial dame insisted on dividing with Zamara, whose eyes twinkled with infinite mischief when she sat down with the bottle on her knee, and proposed that he should drain glass for glass with her.

So confused became the happy landlady of The Swan before the hour was gone, that she arose in the morning with a vague idea that the page had left rather abruptly, but of the period when Madame Du Berry took her departure, she had no recollection at all.

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## CHAPTER LI.

### EFFORTS AT ATONEMENT.

MADAME GOSNER was absent from her apartments. The terrible disappointment which had fallen upon her preyed so heavily upon her mind that anything like repose was impossible. For the time she was at war with life itself. The doubt that her husband was still living haunted her like a cry of destiny. She said little, and scarcely tasted food. The never-ending pain of her existence renewed itself, and threatened destruction to both reason and life.

Marguerite felt the change and was so wounded by it that her young life was doubly embittered. She did not share in her mother’s doubts of the king and queen; but honestly believed that her father had perished in prison, as thousands had died in that terrible place.

All these thoughts weighed down the heart of that young girl, for now she felt more lonely than ever. She was crying bitterly in her solitude when Monsieur Jacques

came in. The man was greatly changed, both in person and manner, since she first saw him. He had gradually thrown off the rude dress and seeming of a plebeian, and assumed the garments and habits of a gentleman of the second class. His hair no longer concealed a noble forehead under its tangled masses; his hands were cleansed from the dust of the workshop; his features, having thrown off their heavy expression, were grand rather than harsh. Marguerite did not know that she herself had won this man out of his extreme radicalism, and lured him back to his old nature, but it produced a kind and winning impression on her, which deepened the gratitude already in her heart, and would have made love a possibility but for the face she had seen that day in the streets of Paris, when her first flowers were offered for sale.

"Why is it that you weep?" he inquired, seating himself by the girl, and taking her hand tenderly in his, as if it had been a lost bird he feared to frighten.

"You ask me this, as if I had not double cause for tears," she said, lifting her eyes to his face with a look of pathetic desolation. "My poor father is dead, I can no longer have a hope for him; my mother is silent, stern, self-absorbed—she leaves me alone. Still you ask me not to weep."

"Marguerite!"

She looked up quickly; then her eyelids drooped, and the slow color came to her cheeks. "You were about to say something, monsieur," she said, very softly.

"Is there nothing else that makes you unhappy? Has repentance for the words you spoke the other day nothing to do with it? Is it that you think it a promise, and so weep?"

"I think it a promise, but do not weep for that," she answered, lifting her mournful eyes to his face. "But, oh, monsieur! it will never be—my poor father is dead."

Monsieur Jacques dropped her hand. Was it the cer-

tainty of her father's death that had made Marguerite so willing to give that promise?

"Marguerite!"

It was the second time he had called her by that name, in a voice so sweet and low that it thrilled her to the heart. She attempted to answer, but could not.

"Marguerite, I love you! How much no human being can ever know, and I dare not attempt to tell you, lest you think me mad; but I do love you, and hope to win some little return. You did promise to *love* the man who brought your father alive from the Bastille. Or was that one of my wild dreams?"

"It was a promise," said Marguerite, timidly.

"And if I give freedom to your father?"

The color left the face on which his pleading eyes were fastened. It seemed to him that a look of affright broke into her eyes; but after a moment she held out her hand.

"It was a promise," she said, simply.

Monsieur Jacques flung himself on his knees before that young girl. He grasped her hands and covered them with kisses; and then she felt great, warm tears falling over them, as if in penitence he was striving to wash the kisses away.

"If it is in the power of mortal man to break through those walls to find and liberate your father, it shall be done," he said, rising from his knees.

Marguerite followed him with her eyes, which slowly filled with tears.

"It will be all in vain," she murmured, "my poor father must be dead. It was no fraud that the beautiful queen and that good king committed. How can my mother, how can you, Monsieur Jacques, believe them guilty of this cruel deception?"

"Wait! Do not let us judge yet! By-and-by we shall know; for as there is a just God in heaven, not a stone shall be left upon another of that hideous building!"

As Monsieur Jacques spoke, a clear, ringing knock sounded at the door of the room. Marguerite arose, but it was flung open, and a man, dressed as a page, and with the audacious air of a superior, entered the room.

"I was ordered," he said, looking around, "to find a lady, the wife or widow of one Dr. Gosner, who died last week in the Bastille. Is this her apartment, or have I been directed amiss?"

"Madame Gosner has gone out," answered Monsieur Jacques, for Marguerite was so taken by surprise that she could find no voice.

"Then I must wait," said the page, seating himself; "it is my orders."

"Fortunately, that is madame's step on the stairs," answered Monsieur Jacques; and that moment Madame Gosner entered the room, her noble presence, the air of refinement and authority with which she presented herself, brought the page to his feet, and prompted a low bow, to which madame turned a calm and questioning look.

"Madame will forgive what may seem like an intrusion," said the page; "but I am ordered by a personage that I dare not venture to disobey, and must do my errand. This personage has heard with profound regret that the husband of madame has perished in the Bastille just as the royal clemency had ordered that he should be set at liberty. There is no power in France that can bring back life, but all that justice and sympathy can offer to his widow and child I am empowered to give. In this portfolio, lady, are twenty thousand francs, which I am ordered to present to your daughter as a marriage portion, should she ever choose to leave her mother's protection. For yourself there is an annuity already secured, which will make your future life free from care."

The page paused, and held out a small portfolio; but Madame Gosner put it gently back.

"Did this come from the king?" she inquired.

"Madame, I am forbidden to answer."

"Or the queen?"

"Here also I must be silent."

"If it comes from either the King or Queen of France, take it back, with this message: say that the wife of Dr. Gosner accepts no bribes, and has no price for her husband's liberty. Say that she knows——"

Here Monsieur Jacques laid his hand on her arm, and checked the imprudent words that trembled on her lips—words that had left the cheek of the page suddenly colorless.

"The lady simply means to say that she can accept no bounty from the King or Queen of France," he interposed with dignity; "therefore your errand is so far accomplished."

The page put away the portfolio in the folds of his tunic, and moved toward the door, but a sudden thought struck him, and he turned back, drawing it forth again.

"Madame, this money does not come from their majesties, who are at this moment, for aught I know, ignorant of Dr. Gosner's death; nor is it a gratuity. In his early life, that learned man did a service to the person who sent me here—a service which has never been repaid, and which, at this time, nothing but money can repay. Hearing of his hard fate, that person was conscience-stricken. A debt so justly due should have been paid to his widow or his heirs; but it was unknown in France that the unfortunate gentleman had either a wife or child. You will not wrong a person who wishes to redeem a neglect that may have caused much trouble by refusing the privilege of restitution."

"But what was the nature of this debt? In what way was it created?" demanded Madame Gosner.

"Without danger to the person in question I cannot

explain, answered the page; "but of this be assured, it is justly due, and this money will never be used for any other purpose. Indeed, a portion of it is invested in your name beyond recall. The rest I will not carry from this room—it is my orders."

The page waited for no answer, but laid the portfolio on a table, and went swiftly out of the room, leaving its inmates gazing on each other in blank amazement.

"Follow that man Monsieur Jacques," exclaimed madame; "I will receive none of his money. Who has dared to force a charity on me in this way?"

Monsieur Jacques took the portfolio and hurried with it down stairs. He reached the door just in time to see the page spring upon his horse, and flung the portfolio at the animal's feet. The page dismounted, took up the portfolio, and rode away with a dejected air.

Monsieur Jacques entered Madame Gosner's room again.

"Have you done right to reject this money?" he said. "Perhaps his story is true. With all his knowledge and power, it would be strange if your husband might not have performed some act which would entitle him to a sum like this."

"But I will not take it! Who in all France, save the royal pair at Versailles, knew that my husband was supposed to have died so lately? No one but the governor of the Bastille; and he is not likely to have appeased his conscience in this way."

"But even from the king it might have been accepted in behalf of France! It would help to feed many a famished mouth."

"The people of France! Oh! I had forgotten them!" cried Madame Gosner, with enthusiasm. "But, no, no! I could not have taken it even for them. Gold coming from the man or woman of Versailles would blister my palm. Let us think no more of it; while they have hands

to work, neither Gosner's wife or child will ever accept alms."

"God grant that the good man still lives!" said Monsieur Jacques.

"God grant it!" answered the woman, sadly; "but sometimes it seems such a forlorn hope. If he is alive? How the words torture me! Oh! of all torments, uncertainty is the greatest!"

"Trust me it shall not long be uncertainty."

"What do you mean—is this a promise?"

"Upon which more than my poor life depends. Within three days we will know of a certainty that Dr. Gosner is alive and still a prisoner in the Bastille, or dead. Then it becomes our duty to save or avenge him."

"But in either case?" questioned the woman, wistfully.

"In either case that monstrous pile is doomed. It shall no longer crouch like a monster on the heart of France. Will you not breathe one prayer for me?"

These gentle words were spoken to the young girl, who lifted her beautiful eyes and met his gaze with a gentle smile.

"I shall not cease to pray till we meet again," she said.

Madame Gosner heard this conversation, and was struck by the thrilling tenderness of Monsieur Jacques' voice.

"What is the meaning of this?" she inquired, sharply.

"I do not understand."

"It means," answered Monsieur Jacques, "that I love her better than my own soul. When I have rescued her father from his dungeon, this will be the reward I shall dare to claim."

The strong man fell upon his knees as he spoke, and pressed Marguerite's hand to his lips. Then he arose, saying aloud, "God and our Lady prosper this day's work—the reward is so great that it makes a coward of me."

## CHAPTER LII.

## MONSIEUR JACQUES TURNS BLACKSMITH AGAIN.

MONSIEUR JACQUES went to his room and prepared, with more trepidation than he had ever felt in his life, for the enterprise which would give him the only object he asked for on earth, or throw him back into utter disappointment. Once more he flung off all the appearances of a gentleman, and put himself on a level with the rudest workmen of the city. The thick masses of his hair were dulled with powdered dust, his brows and lashes were darkened, and with a few touches of the pencil, dark circles under the eyes deepened them almost to blackness. Directly a stout, high-shouldered mechanic, in coarse workman's clothes, and carrying a box of tools in his hand, came out of the room; a cap of faded cloth was on his head, and his hair fell in unkept locks over his forehead, half concealing his eyes. Marguerite saw him pass the door, and a faint smile stirred her lip. It was in this guise she had first seen him, and the memory of all his kindness since that day made the heart swell in her bosom. Monsieur Jacques cast one glance through the door, and went on his way, nerved by the look with which those beautiful eyes had followed him. He passed through several streets, nodding now and then to a fellow workman whom he chanced to encounter, and at last entered the shop of a gunsmith and general worker in iron, where he seemed to be well known.

"Is the master no better?" he inquired of an apprentice, who was working at a vise near one of the windows.

The boy looked up, blew some iron-filings from his fingers, and answered carelessly,

"No better, and cross-grained as a file. Step in yonder, you will find him there, I suppose."

Monsieur Jacques went into the inner room to which the lad pointed, and found his friend in a great easy chair, with his night-cap on, nursing an unfortunate leg, which was cruelly tortured with the rheumatism.

"Ah! you have come at last; that young reprobate out yonder protested that he did not know where to find you. Can anything be more aggravating? Here is the governor wanting me at the Bastille. Some prisoner has nearly battered down one of the crazy doors, and so wrenched the lock, that they can neither get in or out of his cell. So there is a chance that the fellow may starve to death for his pains, for I could not walk a step to save my life.

The locksmith gave a dash at his aching leg, as if violence could help the matter, and, settling back in his chair, waited for his visitor to speak.

"I heard that you were ill, and happened to remember that this was your usual day for service at the prison. Having represented you before, I suppose they will accept me again. If there are keys to be fitted, let me have them; and if you will write a line to the governor, saying that I am sent as the most trusty of your workmen, it will save all trouble about the admission."

"You are kind, my friend. So good a craftsman is not often found ready to take a sick man's place. Give me pen and paper, I will write a line to my friend Christopher—it is not necessary to trouble the governor; but you must put forth all your strength here, for they are getting terribly anxious about the safety of their prisoners. No wonder, the damps of those vaults are enough to corrode the best lock ever forged in a single month, and after that there is no key that will turn against the rust. Still I ought not to complain, it rolls up my bill handsomely at the end of the year; and there is no lack of good wine at the Bastille after the work is done."

"I remember it," said Jacques, with a relishing movement of the lip; "one does not readily forget such wine. I hope they will be as liberal to the man as they are to the master. Oh! you have finished the paper, and I have no time to lose."

Monsieur Jacques took up his case of tools, put the paper in his pocket, and went out, smiling cheerfully. In half an hour he stood before the draw-bridge of the Bastille, presented his note to the guard, and was admitted to the interior of the prison. He found Christopher in a guard-room, where he was giving some extra orders to half a dozen of the prison-guards, who had done something to displease him. He looked around as Jacques entered, recognized him as a person who had done duty there before, and went on with his lecture, not considering a humble blacksmith worthy of his immediate attention.

Jacques sat down his tool-case, and seemed to be absorbed in the pompous reprimand Christopher was dealing out to the poor fellows who had been so unfortunate as to offend him. This attention touched the keeper's vanity, and he launched out into more fervid eloquence for his especial benefit. At last he sent the delinquents away with a lofty wave of the hand, and bestowed his entire attention on the locksmith.

"So," he said, reaching forth his hand for the paper which Jacques gave him, "the old locksmith is down again, chained by the leg as fast as any prisoner in the Bastille. It is no time for strange hands to be let into the fortress; but if he is so ill, there is no help for it. Wait a moment; if I remember rightly you have been here before?"

Monsieur Jacques would have betrayed himself by a sudden flush or pallor but for the brown hue which had been liberally imparted to his complexion that morning. As it was, a flickering light in the eye alone revealed the panic that seized upon him. It was needless. Christopher only

alluded to the workman whom he remembered to have come on the same errand once before. He had not the remotest idea that he had so lately seen this man in another capacity, nor did he recognize the voice which was peculiarly rich and deep, for Jacques had put a leaden bullet under his tongue, which confused all the tones and vulgarized his speech.

"Shall I go to work now?" he asked, in an awkward, deprecating way. "It will need a light, I suppose."

Christopher took a lantern from the wall and lighted the candle within.

"I will go with you myself," he said. "In these times we trust but few of the keepers where you are going, not even our oldest guard Doudel, who is suspected of having fed a prisoner."

Monsieur Jacques' heart fell. He had hoped that a common guard would be sent with him, one whom it would be possible to evade for a moment; but Christopher took some keys from the drawer of a desk, and moved toward the interior of the prison.

Perhaps in his whole life that brave man had never felt such keen anxiety as stirred every nerve in his body during his descent into those gloomy corridors. How was he to prosecute the investigation he had come purposely to make? By what means was he to reach the particular cell, from which that cry came, with Christopher on the watch? There was not one chance in a hundred that it was the lock that poor prisoner had shaken, with so much violence, that wanted mending; yet a wild hope possessed him that he might be led there. No, he was conducted down a damp corridor that branched off in another direction, and shown into an empty cell, from whose wall the staples had been wrenched out by some desperate man, to whom suffering had given a giant's strength.



## CHAPTER LIII.

## LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS.

THE disappointment which fell upon Monsieur Jacques was terrible. Still, actuated by a despairing thought that God, in his mercy, would open some way to the truth, he went vigorously to work with a heavy sledge, and drove the staples back into the granite wall with a force that echoed through those vaulted passages like the roar of a wild beast. When this ponderous work was done, he turned upon his companion, and, with a faltering voice, asked if that was enough.

Christopher hesitated, and answered,

"Follow me, and remember, not a word must be spoken to any prisoner. The man who breaks this rule will stand a fair chance of occupying a cell himself. Am I understood?"

Monsieur Jacques took up his tools, muttering that he had nothing to say, and had no wish to talk with any prisoner, but to get out of that unwholesome place as soon as possible.

While he was speaking, Christopher turned into a passage he recognized, and Jacques scarcely drew his breath till they came opposite the very door which had so painfully fastened itself on his memory. There the keeper paused, and set down his lantern.

"It is seldom we permit any workman to enter a cell in which prisoners are—but this door cannot be opened. It is some days since we have been able to get food or water through, and we must reach him now, or he will starve to death."

Jacques sat down his tools and tried the lock with his hands, but they shook violently, and fell away red with wet rust.

"The bolt has got twisted, no doubt," said Christopher. "The whole lock must be taken apart, and the hinges fastened. Pah! that was a lizard creeping across my ankle, and here drops a spider into my very hair. It makes the flesh creep on my bones. Come, come, my friend, have done sorting your tools, this is not a pleasant place to linger in. The light is burning blue already. Oh! there it goes! that was a powerful wrench! Pry away! pry away! force the staple! Hercules! what powerful arms! How the door trembles—open at last. Ah! our friend has fainted, so much the better."

Christopher entered the cell first, and stooping lifted a truss of straw, which he flung over the deathly face of a man who lay in the furthest corner. Then he placed himself directly between the prostrate form and Jacques, who was examining the door. Without appearing to observe these movements, he went on with his work, and seemed to be laboring with great zeal, but made so little progress that Christopher became impatient.

"Why, man, at this rate we shall not get away from here in an hour," he said, casting impatient glances around the dungeon.

"An hour! Why if I get through all that is to be done here in three hours, it will be better than I expect."

"Then, by our Lady! you will not spend them here! Come out into the passage, and mend the lock there. I see little chance that this poor fellow will be disturbed by the noise; but, in common charity, be quick, or he may die on our hands."

Monsieur Jacques had hoped to weary the man out by naming so many hours; but failing in this, he answered that it was impossible to remain all the time outside the door, he must go in and out while repairing it; but, for the prisoner's sake, he would lose no time.

"Well, see that you don't," answered Christopher, setting



his lantern on the floor. I wouldn't spend three hours in this place to save the Bastille from destruction."

The seeming locksmith muttered that it was equally disagreeable to him, and went on with his work; but his eyes were now and then turned upon the lantern, and Christopher might have seen that the hand which was turning a screw in one of the hinges worked unsteadily. After an interval of some ten minutes, he swung the door back, as if to try the hinge; it struck the lantern, overturned it, and the next instant they were in profound darkness.

An oath broke from the keeper, and he began to grope for the lantern; but Jacques had been before him, the lantern was in his hand, the door open, and he was about to grasp the candle, when a sudden jerk sent it flying into the darkness.

"What is to be done?" questioned Jacques, rising from his knees. "How are we to get a light?"

"Confound your awkwardness!" answered the keeper, fumbling about for the lantern. "The door is broken open and the candle gone. This is an awful fix. You may thank your stars that the only man in the Bastille who can thread its passages by night, is in this infernal place with you."

"Thank heaven it is only an inconvenience!" said the locksmith.

"If to sit here from fifteen minutes to half an hour in the dark, breathing this pestilential air is only an inconvenience, you may, perhaps, be grateful. For my part, I have no fancy for groping my way through the black labyrinth of passages that lie between us and the guard-rooms; and you can tell your master, from me, that when we want work done again in the Bastille, he must come himself. We want no more bunglers."

"I beg ten thousand pardons—it was an accident!"

"We do not permit of accidents here!" answered the

man, by no means appeased by the humility with which the workman strove to atone for his fault. "For ten thousand francs I would not grope my way through the places that lead to this, with those slimy things creeping around one. Pah! It is bad enough when a light is there to frighten them away; but now, curses on your blundering! if I come back without a battle with the rats, it is more than I expect."

Monsieur Jacques knew by the keeper's voice that he was outside of the cell. He could hear the lantern rattling against the stones of the wall as he staggered forward in the darkness; but he did not hear the muttered words which followed.

"Confound the fool! he is safe enough from any chance of mischief. The prisoner hasn't got the strength to speak; and as for seeing his face, let him try. One might as well look through sheet-lead as that darkness. Steady! Steady! How close the walls are together! How plainly you can hear the waters of the moat licking the stones. Heaven have mercy! Help! Help!"

Christopher's foot had slipped on the wet slabs of the floor; he caught at the wall but his hand had no power to clutch the dripping stones, and he went down with a crash, which reached the locksmith, who sat in the darkness, listening keenly. After a little Jacques heard a volley of muttered curses, and slow footsteps, picking their way through the distance. Then all was still, save the horrible lapping of waters against the walls, and the hard breathing of his fellow-prisoner, who seemed to stir faintly in the straw. For a half minute Jacques held his breath, and listened for those footsteps, or that voice to renew themselves. Then he reached cautiously forward and began to feel for something in his tool-case. A moment of stillness followed, then the sharp click of steel striking flint, and a few sparks of fire ignited on the dungeon-floor. Quick as

thought the man sprung to his feet, snatched a wisp of straw, and held it close to the sparks, blowing them with all the slow strength of his lungs into a tiny flame.

The sparks flashed upward, the straw blazed, and for one instant the whole dungeon was illuminated. Jacques caught one glance at a deadly white face, with the eyes wide open, looking at him. He had no time for recognition, but was searching for the candle. It lay at his feet, and had been trodden upon. What of that? A wick was there, and tallow enough to last a minute—he asked no more. He began to tremble, for the wick had gathered moisture from the floor, and refused to ignite.

“Great God! stand by me this one minute!” he exclaimed, passionately, forcing his hand to hold the burning straw with steadiness. He had given the straw a twist, and it kept fire. The spluttering wick broke into an uncertain flame, trembled, half went out, and rose to a clear light.

“Thank God!”

Jacques went close to the prisoner with these words on his lips. He held the light down to that white face. The wild glitter of those eyes frightened him.

“Speak to me! If you remember a name, tell it before any one comes. Speak! For God’s sake, speak! Are you Dr. Gosner?”

The prisoner began to tremble violently; his thin hands clasped themselves; every feature in his face quivered, and from his white lips dropped these faltering words;

“That was my name when I had one.”

Jacques blew out the candle, and flung it into the darkness.

## CHAPTER LIV.

### A DETERMINED BENEFactor.

THE Count De Mirabeau had just come in from an exciting debate at the club. This man seemed to have changed places with his foster-brother; for while one had, to a certain extent, cast off the coarseness which made him a favorite of the people, the man of noble birth had been striving to brutalize himself down to a level with the lowest strata of civilized life. Marie Antoinette’s rejection of his advances had plunged him deeper and deeper into the abysses of popular favor. But there was a natural revolt in all this; Mirabeau would much rather have been the saviour of monarchy than the leader of the mob, and his very power as a demagogue sometimes filled him with disgust.

That particular night the count was in a restive frame of mind; by bringing out the very coarsest powers of his nature he had excited the crowd that day into the most clamorous homage—homage that never would have been given to the splendid genius and great powers that he knew himself to possess, unaided by the rudest and lowest passions. It is doubtful if even his powerful intellect foresaw the terrible scenes that the eloquence of men like him was destined to fasten upon France. That night his better nature recoiled from the hideous work his genius was doing, and he flung himself down on a chair, weary and sickened by the clamorous adoration of his followers.

Some one knocked at the door of his chamber while he was in this dissatisfied mood, and he called out roughly for the person to come in, thinking that, perhaps, it was some messenger from the printing-office.

A woman entered, elegantly dressed, and scattering a

delicate perfume from her garments as she moved. She held a small mask before her face, such as ladies sometimes carried to protect their complexions from the sun; but when the door was closed, she dropped it, and moving softly across the room, bent over the chair on which Mirabeau was sitting.

He started up in surprise, stood a moment irresolute, and then broke forth,

"Madame Du Berry, and here!"

"So you did know me," she said, with a gleam of pride and thankfulness that he had so readily recognized her features.

"Know you?" answered the count, reaching forth his hand to grasp hers heartily, as if she had been a man. "When will the time come when Mirabeau can forget——"

The woman held up her finger.

"Ah, count! that was before the days of Versailles, when you were the gayest young scapegrace among the nobility, and I one of the people. I wonder if either of us are the better for having changed places."

"I was just asking myself that question," said Mirabeau, gloomily. "After all, the greatness that springs out of a false position must ever be unsatisfactory; but tell me of yourself, fair countess. It is years since I have known much of your good or evil fortune."

Du Berry shrugged her shoulders.

"The last few years I have languished in England—that cold, cruel country, where the sun never shines fairly out as it does in France. Is not that enough of misfortune? But I must not talk of myself. Of course, I did not come here simply for the pleasure of seeing you. There is a man in whom you take interest—a person who calls himself Monsieur Jacques."

"My foster-brother, and as true-hearted a man as ever drew breath; but how did he come to attract your notice, my friend?"

"No matter, it is a long story; besides, it is not the man that I am so much interested in, but a young woman whom he loves."

"A young woman! You cannot mean Mademoiselle Gosner?"

"Yes, that is the young person, a fair girl, whose father, I, in some sort, wronged in the days of my power. I wish to make atonement for that wrong, and cannot—she rejects it; so, in the desperation of my good intent, I come to you. My belief is that these two persons love each other."

"Love each other! What, will he persist in loving that girl?" cried Mirabeau, starting to his feet. "Does he not know that Mirabeau has honored her with his admiration?"

Du Berry flung herself into the chair from which the count had risen, and burst into a fit of laughter.

"An excellent reason why no honest man should think of her for himself," she said, wiping away the quick tears of merriment that flashed down her painted cheeks. "Oh! but you are droll as ever, my friend."

"But the girl is beautiful!"

"So much the more reason that your foster-brother should be desperately in love with her, as he certainly is—that is what brings me here."

"But I tell you that he will not presume——"

"My dear friend, he has presumed; and what is more, the girl will marry him!"

"What, after I had condescended to be pleased with her? Du Berry, you have ceased to be discriminating."

"Come, come, be pacified. She is only one, and Paris has so many; let the poor fellow have his love unmolested—I ask it of you."

"Now I remember," said the count, "it is weeks since I called; in fact, I neglected her after the first impression. Of course, it was my own fault, and, as you say, Mirabeau

can afford to be magnanimous. Besides, I really think it is the fellow's first love. Nay, do not go off into another fit of laughter—such things do happen. Then again, I remember he asked my forbearance, and I almost promised it. Well, the best thing I can do for him is not to go near the demoiselle—that might unsettle things.”

“If you would be so good,” said the countess, with a droll look of humor in her eyes, “it was a part of the favor I was about to ask. This man is, I believe, poor—he possibly cannot afford to marry.”

Mirabeau thought of the little estate, whose income had been so generously given up to his extravagance, and had the grace to hesitate in answering. Was the countess going to suggest that he should relinquish that income? Had that, indeed, been the truth, she might have found more difficulty than had accompanied his renunciation of the girl; but she promptly set his mind at rest.

“I take it for granted that he cannot afford to marry,” she said, “and in this I want your help. Be my banker; let me leave money enough for their comfortable independence in your hands!”

“In my hands!” exclaimed Mirabeau, laughing. “My dear friend, you should know better. It would melt away while the priest was giving his blessing. If you have any sharp notary who will arrange it so that it may be a trust; in short, that will insure it to him, and save it from me—I should not mind undertaking the business—I dare say that can be done.”

“But it must seem to come from you. They would not touch it else,” said Du Berry.

“He will never believe it; but we can manage that; it can be done in my father's name. Now, fair lady, as your conscience is at rest, tell me——”

“Not yet—not yet! I have another thing to ask.”

“Of the same kind? I warn you now, do not lead a

reckless man too far. Money is a sad temptation, when one needs it so much.”

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## CHAPTER LV.

### GENEROSITY AND DIPLOMACY.

Du Berry hesitated, and sat for some moments in silence, now and then casting a doubtful glance at Mirabeau, while the color came and went under her rouge. She had lost all delicacy years before; but there was something in what she wished to propose that taxed all her ingenuity. At last she spoke out.

“Mirabeau, you are the enemy of royalty.”

“Well!”

“You hate the queen.”

“And if I do?”

“This cannot be real, there is something personal under it all.”

“What makes you think so?”

“You are the idol of a people you despise!”

“Go on.”

“And might be the saviour of France; should be a close friend to the queen.”

Mirabeau laughed again; but there was angry fire in his eyes, and a curve of scorn on his lips.

“How long is it since the Countess Du Berry became the advocate of Marie Antoinette?” he demanded.

“Ever since she was too generous for the persecution of a fallen enemy; ever since she has been cruelly unfortunate, and most unjustly reviled. Of all the people in France, I have most cause to love the woman for whose overthrow you are toiling.”

"Nay, let me tell you a secret. You are a woman of sense, and can comprehend the situation—Marie Antionette rejects the friendship of Mirabeau."

Has it been offered her?"

"Twice, indirectly."

But the time may come when that friendship will be implored. Then, Mirabeau, be generous, be noble, use your great power for the defence of the throne. Earn the queen's gratitude, force her to acknowledge the power of your genius, the grandeur of your magnanimity—promise this, my Mirabeau."

"When Marie Antoinette seeks my aid it will be time enough to promise."

"But if she does seek it—if she asks your influence with the people, your protection from her enemies—what will be your answer?"

"Perhaps, that it is too late."

"The time will come, and then you must remember Du Berry, who wishes to aid in this; who implores your permission to pay a vast debt of gratitude to the grandson of Louis the Fifteenth—to the daughter of Maria Theresa, who was so pure and good herself that she never went out of her way to taunt and insult those who were less fortunate. To the clemency and forbearance of Louis, and his most persecuted queen, I am indebted for every franc that makes up my wealth; I ask nothing better than to employ it all in their service. When you are a friend of the monarchy, let me find the money which the cause will so much need. Thus you and I will unite in a holy work, which shall redeem much evil that we may have done. You, with your eloquence, and I, with money, which justly belongs to the crown, may, perhaps, be so fortunate as to save the monarchy of France."

The woman spoke earnestly, sometimes with passionate warmth, that astonished the man she addressed. He knew

that she was in earnest, that a grander element than could be found in his heart was speaking through her words. Perhaps he felt, through all its subtle indirection, that something like a bribe for his influence lay under all this real generosity; but Mirabeau was not a man to revolt at an idea, so long as it took no offensive clearness. On the contrary, he reflected that his own power would be wonderfully enhanced by wealth, let it come in what form it would. If his proud old father fell short of his expectations, here was a resource.

"Have you spoken of this to the queen?" he inquired.

"How could I? She would reject it. No, there is but one way, and that I have pointed out. The time will come when this persecuted lady will seek the friendship of a man who controls the people of Paris, who knows how to excite or depress the passions of her enemies. When that day arrives, the money she would scorn now can be used in her behalf."

"God grant that the rabble does not get beyond all control before she comes to her senses," said the count, thoughtfully. "Ignorance and passion are hard things to manage; but if Mirabeau cannot control them—where is the human power that can?"

Du Berry laid her hand on his arm.

"Some day your old friend may ask that protection for herself," she said.

"It shall not be asked in vain," answered the count, holding the door for her to pass.

When Madame Du Berry reached her lodgings she found Zamara, who had just come in from Versailles. His clothes were muddy, his face heavy with disappointment.

"Madame, Zamara has failed; I could not get the ring; she never takes it from her finger," he said. Madame only answered,

"The fates are against us, Zamara."

## CHAPTER LVI.

## THE ENERGY OF MADNESS.

MADAME GOSNER and Marguerite were alone in their room, which had become more gloomy than ever since their disappointment. All the spare time these two women could obtain from their sorrow was given to the toil which earned their daily bread. Marguerite spent every day in the street, carrying her sweet burden of flowers from purchaser to purchaser. Her evenings were occupied generally in preparing bouquets for market, but on this particular night Madame Gosner was employed on some embroidery which was wanted in haste for a court-dress. The very nature of her employment, perhaps, exasperated the poverty of the elder woman, whose hatred of the monarchs of France amounted almost to monomania. She went on sewing with sharp energy, taking her stitches with jerks, as if she picked them out with the point of a dagger. Her breath came heavily as she worked, and her lips were pressed together—she had not spoken in an hour.

Marguerite was sewing also—for the work must be done at a given time—but her thread came out with a more even pull, and the delicate surface of her work revealed no imperfect stitches. The dull, heavy gloom which lay upon her mother was not dark enough to kill all the girlhood in that young bosom; and more than once a faint smile flitted across her lips, as if the thoughts in her mind were not altogether melancholy.

At last the young girl looked up from the dull monotony of her work, and, pausing with her thread half-drawn, listened eagerly. She had heard a step on the stairs, though her mother had not; for one moment the heart leaped in her innocent bosom, and a smile of loving expectation

trembled on her lips, the next it died away and her face bowed in disappointment over her work.

Madame Gosner heard the step also, and suspended her work. Was it possible that some one was coming with news! Even in her despair this poor woman was always expecting news, and holding her breath as a footstep passed her door.

It opened now, and Monsieur Jacques came in, pale, worn, and so weak from protracted excitement that he fell upon a chair, and wiped the heavy drops from his forehead before speaking a word. Madame Gosner looked at him earnestly. He understood the question in her eyes, and answered as if she had spoken.

"Yes, my friend, I have been to the Bastille. I have wandered through those infernal vaults, and seen such sights."

"Have you been in *that* cell?"

Madame Gosner's voice was sharp as the cry of an eagle. She had lost all control over herself.

"Yes, I have been there, and I have seen him—your husband——"

"Alive?"

"Alive! I held his hand—I spoke with him. He told me his name. It was he who cried out when your voice penetrated his dungeon. They have practiced a foul fraud on us—one that shall be answered by the thunders of stones as we hurl down that accursed building.

Madame Gosner stood up, and lifted her clasped hands on high.

"So help me God, I will never rest till this thing is done!"

She spoke like a woman inspired; her very stature seemed to rise higher; her chest expanded itself.

"Be it so. I have already sworn," said Monsieur

Jacques; and the two went out together, leaving Marguerite alone upon her knees, where she had fallen.

All was changed now in the humble dwelling of Madame Gosner. No more work was done; scarcely was there food enough prepared to sustain the strength of that excited woman. Solemn duties lay before her—a gigantic task, which she would perform or die. The people of France were to be aroused into keener vindictiveness—the women organized—the clubs urged to swifter action. Stern and terrible had been the effect of Monsieur Jacques' intelligence on the woman who had refused to consider herself a widow. Her whole being rose up in bitter wrath against what she deemed a horrible fraud. So fixed and deep were her prejudices against the royal family, that she never, for a moment, doubted that the king himself, if not the queen, had sanctioned the awful wrong that had been done, rather than cast a new witness of royal cruelty among the people to bear testimony against them.

With these feelings, it is not strange that all the sweet sentiments of undisturbed womanhood was swept out of her nature. No amazon, born to war, ever suffered or felt a deeper thirst for vengeance than possessed this wronged wife. From that day her very face changed; all its fine features were set, and locked with the iron resolution that possessed her. In some way her husband should be set free, or fearfully avenged. Many a woman besides herself had equal wrongs and equal sufferings to redress or avenge; but, lacking a leader and organization, this great force, this underlying principle, which was enough to stir the already excited passions of the lower order into anarchy at any moment, had as yet been allowed to exhaust itself in complaint and denunciation. Now it should be centralized and spread forth from an organized power.

Madame Gosner knew that she was eloquent, and felt within herself the force of great individual strength. That

which had been an idea before was a fixed resolve now. In order to liberate her husband, freedom must first be given to the French people. She could only reach his dungeon through the ruins of the Bastille, only avenge him by hurling the king from his throne.

That day a strange sight was witnessed in the market-places of Paris. A lady, being clad like the commonest working-woman, but of commanding presence, was seen moving from stall to stall with the firm, energetic tread of an officer mustering recruits. At each stall she uttered words that burned and thrilled through the heart of the occupant like the blast of a trumpet, yet they were spoken in a low voice, and circulated through the market from lip to lip, drawing the women together in clusters, who told each other the story of this woman, and swore to avenge her.

Her low, stern utterance of wrongs that seemed without a parallel, was like a spark of living fire flung into their own smouldering passions.

That night a Jacobin club-house was crowded with eager women. From the market, the garrets, and the cellars of Paris, they gathered, crowding their husbands and sons aside that they might hear something of their own wrongs from the tongue of a terribly persecuted woman.

Gosner's wife stood among them like a priestess. Unlike the women around her, she was educated, eloquent, powerfully impassioned, but capable of deep reasoning. She had dwelt so long on the wrongs of France that her acute mind searched down to the very roots of all the grievances that disturbed her people, and laid them bare before the rude women, who seized upon them as hounds fasten upon game, routed from bush and covert by the huntsman.

For two hours she filled that Jacobin strong-hold with such burning eloquence as never before had fired the hearts of those rude, impetuous women, not cruel then, but who



afterward leaped into the fight, unsexed, fierce, wicked female tigers, who, having tasted blood, lost forever afterward all relish for the milk of human kindness.

It was this awful element that the genius of Madame Gosner aroused in the heart of France; it was this which cast eternal shame upon one of the greatest nations of the earth; it was this which makes all true and refined women tremble when they are called upon to plunge into the arena of politics, or the strife of nations.

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## CHAPTER LVII.

### UNSEXED WOMANHOOD.

THE women of France had, perhaps, more excuse for revolt than those of any other country. Misery, hardship and injustice, drove them into a storm of politics with terrible violence. With a single leap they sprang out of absolute subjugation into a wild chaos of ideas. In riot, rapine, and bloodthirstiness, they shamed the coarsest men by their unbridled excesses. While violating all law, and trampling human rights under foot, they sang pæans to liberty, and inaugurated their terrible orgies with declarations of equal rights and eternal brotherhood. Such were the women who, claiming political equality with men, and superiority over monarchs, flung all the sweet attributes of the sex behind them in the turmoil of politics, and in a subsequent carnival of blood forgot that they had ever been wives and mothers.

How could it be otherwise? The woman who once flings aside all the beautiful entanglements of home, and assumes duties which never were intended for her; who gives free rein to the coarser passions, plunges into such

fierce struggles as brutalize men and degrade her beneath their lowest level. If a woman like this expects to return at any period to the gentle immunities of home life, she knows little of the destiny she is carving out for herself.

Imagine these women going home from a fierce debate at the clubs to caress their little ones, and teach them their prayers at night; could they touch the smiling mouths of innocent children with lips hot with smouldering hate, or curl their silken tresses over fingers wet with human blood? Could they, without an outrage on humanity, permit their little ones to kneel in holy prayer at the feet which had just been treading down saw-dust around the guillotine? After partaking of such scenes, could any woman expect to go back to her sweet motherhood in the shelter of a pure love? No; the quiet life, the care of childhood, the love of strong men, are not for such women. Let them once forsake the shelter of home, the blessedness of a calm hearthstone, and half that is valuable in existence lies behind them. When they enter the turmoil of moral or physical war, return is impossible; a great gulf has been dug between them and the happiness of womanhood, which can never be re-passed.

In her despair, Madame Gosner thought nothing of the great moral effect her action might produce. She had for years been urged forward by one grand, womanly motive—the freedom of her husband. If this object had sometimes led her into strange positions, great love had always sanctified them. She had endured poverty, humiliation, sickness, with the strength of a martyr, and in all things had protected the delicacy of her child. Even in the depths of her sorrow she had found time to educate this girl, and fill her mind with all the refinements which make womanhood beautiful. But now, in the madness of her despair, she forgot everything but her wrongs, and the agony of a slain hope. What was that miserable

shadow of a home to her? What was there on the broad earth but sorrow and desolation for a woman so bereaved, and so cruelly dealt by? In her anguish she felt a yearning sympathy for thousands and thousands of women, who haunted the market places and streets of Paris, with an eternal craving for bread written on their half-famished faces; for the earth, as well as the rulers of the earth, had, for two successive years, been cruel to the poor. The sufferings of these people became a part of her own wrongs. In the mighty thirst of her revenge, she was ready to embrace the whole universe of suffering. Was she insane? Had one idea preyed so heavily on her mind that it swept all other thoughts before it?

Be this as it may, from the hour that terrible deception was made known to Madame Gosner, the woman was lost in the patriot. In gaining freedom for her husband, she took upon herself the gigantic task of giving liberty to France. This spirit animated her whole being; it inflamed her speeches, it aroused her in the dead of night, and filled her dreams with burning pictures of liberty. She had but two possessions left—her own talents and her daughter. In the depths of her soul she devoted both to her country. All hopes of individual happiness became a thing of the past to her.

With Monsieur Jacques the ideas of liberty, as they were given forth to the people, like an inspiration from the tongue and pen of Mirabeau, had consolidated themselves into a passion; but, like Mirabeau, he still clung to the monarchy, and hoped to liberalize France, by making its king the enemy of his own power. Brought up and educated as he had been, day by day, with his foster-brother, sharing the same lessons, caressed by the same motherly hand, he could not, all at once, yield up the traditions of a superior race to which, by implication and experience he almost belonged. It was in vain that he took

upon himself the habits of the people, that he lived in a garret, and gave up the income of a little property which he had inherited from his own parents, to swell the extravagance of his foster-brother. A neglected toilet, unwashed hands, and coarse clothing, were insufficient to brutalize this man into one of the monsters that baptized themselves patriots.

Notwithstanding his moderation, and his wish to save the monarchy, and give freedom to the people at the same time, Monsieur Jacques went hand-in-hand with Madame Gosner, and threw himself into this fearful work with equal energy and unswerving determination. He, too, believed that a wicked deception had been practiced upon a long-suffering woman, and could find no way of accounting for it which did not implicate the King and Queen of France. Sometimes, when he thought of the honest, kind face of Louis the Sixteenth, of the simplicity of his words, the shy gentleness of his manner, this belief became almost an impossibility to him. Nor could he think of the queen, so earnest, so generous and beautiful, without recoiling in his heart and reason from the thought that she could have known and sanctioned an act so full of dishonor, so bitterly cruel.

But the fact still remained, no matter where the blame lay. A terrible wrong had been done, a human life worse than sacrificed. More than this, out of that awful place one soul had made its cries of agony heard; but how many others lay in those vaults, unknown. Those awful walls, with their seven feet in thickness, were built thus massively, that the cries of human anguish might never penetrate them. What became of the hundreds on hundreds who had crossed that draw-bridge, never to be heard of again? Had they been carried out in the silence of midnight to unknown graves, or were they still chained to those reeking walls, and crouching in cells so far beneath the earth that

they possessed all the horrors of a grave, without its peacefulness?

The fire spread. Mirabeau heard the story from his foster-brother, and thundered it through the clubs. It burned like a romance on his lips, and glowed out in words of fire on the pages of his journal. In less than three days all Paris was in a storm of indignation, and poured itself tumultuously into the streets. If human ingenuity could have imagined anything more terrible than the horrors of that man's fate, the passions of an ignorant people would have invented something more awful than the truth; but here the bitterest passion failed, and the simple fact was far more powerful than exaggeration ever could have been.

Monsieur Jacques told the story, and in his own stirring language described the scenes he had himself witnessed in the Bastille. Madame Gosner pleaded with a woman's pathos and a man's power for the husband who had been torn from her in his youth, and was now perishing in the cells of that hideous prison. All the terrible traditions of the old kingly fortress were nothing to the story of this man, as it came from the lips of his wife.

Through the work-shops, the markets, the quays, and the clubs, the fact of a man's incarceration, after a pardon had been granted, and his death proclaimed, spread like fire along a train of powder.

The reckless demagogues, who had been so long striving to fire the people into a fiendish spirit of revolt, saw in all this an element of revolution stronger than their eloquence, and seized upon it with sharp energy. The clubs arose at once, uniting in one grand effort; but it was in answer to a clamorous demand from the people, who, ready for revolution, called aloud for guides and leaders.

## CHAPTER LVIII.

## THE FIRST ROLL OF THUNDER.

THE time had come.

One night the streets of Paris were darkened by crowds of silent, stern men whose eager faces looked sinister in the lamplight, as they turned invariably toward the Place de Grève. The men moved swiftly on in comparative silence; but wherever they paused a warehouse was broken open, and everything of iron or steel it contained taken therefrom, though all other articles were scrupulously left untouched.

Women, too, came out of their domicils, and swelled the stream that poured into the Place de Grève. Each carried some burden—a loaf of bread, a bar of rusty iron, or a ponderous fire-shovel, from her own hearth-stone. Before midnight the Place de Grève, and the adjoining streets broke into a blaze. Anvils and forges in full blast seemed to start out of the very earth, lighting up all the grand outlines of the Hotel de Ville and the great crowds of men and women that swarmed around it, with gleams of light thrown against deep, deep shadows, that made the whole scene terrible. To this was added the sharp ring of iron against steel, the roll of wheels bringing in heavy loads of plunder, the crash of hammers thundering to each other, and the awful hum and swell of angry voices in suppression.

Men toiled that night like demons. Many who had thought themselves too feeble and famished for exertion, now wrangled with each other for a chance of work at the forges. Pale, hungry faces grew stern as death in the lurid light of the fire; while demagogues from the clubs, and Bohemians of the press, passed in and out of the crowd with inflammatory words, which kept the wild enthusiasm at a white heat.

Women crowded in, some with their arms bare to the

shoulders, unloading wagons like men; others enforcing the fiery ardor of the demagogues with passionate appeals, and hurling bitter taunts on those who stood aloof. The market-women, having broken up their stock for the next day, distributed stores of provisions to the workmen, and fed the hungry with their own hands. Some even seized upon the tools, and began to forge instruments of slaughter with the skill and energy of men; some mounted on piles of arms already forged, and harangued the men as they worked. Among these appeared Madame Gosner, the martyr of the day, whose presence was everywhere heralded with tumults of sympathy and applause.

"Not for my sake," she cried, mounting a wagon in which crude metal had been brought to the forges, where she stood like some Roman matron in a victorious car, "not for my sake, nor for the redemption of one man do I urge you forward——"

Here the impassioned orator was interrupted by shouts from the women, and wilder demonstrations from the men, who paused in their work to listen, and snatch a mouthful of bread from the hands of such women as were giving food to the hungry, that no man's strength need fail till his work was done.

"Let no man stop his work that my voice may be heard," continued Madame Gosner. "God will give strength to my lungs, and you shall hear me, though ten thousand anvils rang out such glorious music as this at a single crash. In this sound I hear the downfall of that odious prison, where kings deal with their victims like incarnate demons, chaining them to walls like beasts of the fields—burying them alive in eternal darkness—rendering them up to worms and reptiles while yet alive."

"Citizens, this is not the work of one generation, but of many. Kings and Queens of France have, for generations, held those accursed ramparts of stones as a monument of

their greatness, dear to royalty as the throne itself. It is an awful contrast which makes the luxury of their palaces more perfect. Without misery for the people, courts and kings would never feel how much they are above us. In order to know how high they are, it is their eternal effort to debase us. We are the beasts of burden that drag forward their triumphal chariots; creatures to starve while they riot. By our labor they are fed; by our toil they are exalted, till pride becomes arrogance, and their very laws are made to protect them and degrade us.

"The wealth of a nation lies in its labor. Where has that gone which our forefathers created by the strength of their hands? Look for it in the enormous estates which cover France from border to shore. Has one of them descended to the laborers, whose toil wrested them from the wilderness? Who among you owns a rood of land? Not one. If to you belongs the sledges you wield, and the spades with which you dig, it is all that they will give you out of a thousand years of hard toil, rendered with reckless generosity to these pampered lordlings. What are these creatures, after all, but things of our own creation? Their palaces, their estates, their jewels belong to us, and are made the instruments of our debasement. It has taken a thousand years to consolidate the power that crushes us. Men and women of France, let us unite, and a single year shall tear it down."

"I have a husband in one of those hideous dungeons; for years and years they have buried him from my sight. When we parted, he took me in his arms, and promised with many a farewell kiss, to return within the month. My hair was bright with the gloss of youth then—look at it now; I have not seen his face since then. But I do not plead for him alone; other women have husbands to lose—other women, for ages on ages have been made widows, knowing their husbands living, but buried far

from the light of day, as mine is. It is for them I plead and implore you to shatter these enormous walls, and let God's free sunshine into those hideous vaults.

"Every stone of those blackened towers is cemented with blood and saturated with groans. I ask you to sweep an awful plague spot from the bosom of France. Let us tear it away, stone by stone—uproot it, rock by rock; break through those rugged walls, and choke up the festering moat with their ruins. Citizens, the strong arms of your fathers built this prison, which your kings have turned into a place of torment that fiends would shrink from. Are your arms weaker than theirs? What they built have not you the strength to pull down, or shall the women of France show you the way?"

A yell went up from that portion of the crowd which surrounded Gosner's wife, for there the women of Paris had assembled in the greatest numbers.

"Give us arms—give us arms, and we will take the prison ourselves," shrieked the infuriated women. "There are plenty of arms at the Hôtel des Invalides—will the men of France get them for us? or shall we storm the place ourselves?"

These women were answered with one simultaneous shout.

"To the Invalides! to the Invalides!"

A huge mass of the people left the Place de Grève, shouting this cry. In half an hour they were thundering at the gates of the Invalides.

The governor would have temporized, but some one cried out,

"He only wants time to defeat us!"

That cry was enough to set the whole crowd in motion. They leaped the ditches, disarmed the sentinels, and plunged headlong into the vaults below where the arms were stored. The confusion was fearful. These men crowded on each

other in masses, the torches were extinguished, the weak were trampled down by the strong, but through it, all twenty thousand muskets and some pieces of cannon were taken into the streets of Paris.

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## CHAPTER LIX.

### THE FIRST DRAW-BRIDGE.

As an ocean broken and heaving with the underswell of a continued tempest, rushes upon some rock-bound coast, the people of Paris poured themselves upon the Bastille, wave upon wave, thousands upon thousands, armed and unarmed. Some cool and resolute, others noisy and clamorous as blood-hounds, men, women and children, swarmed through the streets and threw themselves in tumultuous masses on the grim old prison.

The French guards had fraternised with the mob and gave to a small portion of it something like organization. So they came on, armed with spears, axes, bludgeons and muskets, dragging cannons and carrying hammers, a fierce, wild, terrible crowd, thundering at the outer gates like a besieging army.

The draw-bridge which led to the Cour de Gouvernement, was closed against them; its massive timbers barred their progress, as rocks drive back the waves of an ocean. But this only swelled their numbers and inspired their courage. Every hour made their power more formidable. The governor had been summoned, and refusing to give up one foot of his fortress, retreated into the deeper security of the prison itself. Thuriot, commissioned by the city authorities, was allowed to pass in alone. Directly he was seen by the insurgents on the battlements of La Bazinière, a lofty

tower that overlooked the arsenal and the whole vast length of the Faubourg St. Antoine, which was black from end to end with human beings, wild, fierce, terrible! whose menaces rolled and gathered like thunder, around the tower on which that doomed man stood. The cannons, pointed and ready for action, ranged upon the towers and guarding the entrance, drove the people mad. When Thuriot came down and addressed the crowd from a window of the governor's house, the general rage turned on him, and he barely escaped with his life. The Bastille was wholly surrounded; every foot of ground was covered. The outward pressure drove those before it forward, with irresistible force; there was no retreat and no wish for retreat, but to advance seemed impossible.

Before them was a lifted draw-bridge, a double row of sentinels, and two guard houses crowded with soldiers.

Some small houses were to be seen close to the walls of the outer court; their windows choked up with wrathful faces—their roofs black with human beings, who swarmed over them till their rotten timbers threatened to give way.

All at once, a wild shout rang up from the crowd. Two men had dropped down from one of these roofs to the wall, which joined the guard-house, and creeping cautiously over it, leaped into the court. One of these men was Monsieur Jacques, whom the people recognized.

Two old soldiers followed these bold men, and directly a yell of delight answered the reverberation of four ponderous axes, crashing against the chains of the draw-bridge.

The great mass of iron-bound timbers fell with a thundering sound, and the crowd rushed over it, trampling each other down, like wild beasts, in their furious haste.

A volley of musketry was poured in among them. Some men fell dead—others were wounded, which completed the rage of the insurgents, who filled the Cour de Gouvernement with cries for vengeance.

The French guards were now in motion. A detachment of grenadiers and fusiliers hurried toward the Bastille. With them came thousands of workmen, and bourgeoisie, headed by Pierre August Hullin, who fought, and looked like a gladiator. With them came two pieces of cannon, dragged from the Place de Grève.

When the soldiers, followed close by this fresh relay of insurgents, poured into the Cour de Gouvernement, the governor's residence, the barracks and guard houses, were in flames. A great mass of burning wood and straw raged in front of the second drawbridge, and the people were shouting for oil and phosphorus that they might burn the very stones.

Now flames and volumes of turbid smoke rolled around that grim old fortress, among which the insurgents worked like dragons. But its massive strength defied them. Those black towers,—the moat, deep, stagnant, torpid as a gorged anaconda, coiling around their base, sending up a fetid odor as that serpent does when suddenly aroused—the immovable draw-bridge, all defied the multitudinous strength that assailed them. They stood in the midst of this awful tumult, grim, gaunt and silent; save when the cannons belched forth fire, or a rattling storm of bullets came hissing across the moat. Near the drawbridge two cannons were pointed, threatening destruction to any one who attempted to break its chains.

The thwarted people grew desperate. Was all that mass of brute strength nothing against those giant towers, whose cannons still defied them?

From the house tops, from the windows, from every point of command, men, women and children fired wildly.

Five hours went by, and the maddened people seemed fighting in a whirlwind; citizens, soldiers, priests, women and children, struggled in one dense mass around the old prison whose walls they had scarcely grazed. At this time, a dep-



utation from the city authorities raised a white flag in front of the draw-bridge, over which came a volley of musketry, killing three men.

Now the rage of the besiegers arose to madness.

"We will choke up the ditch with our dead bodies," they cried, "and pass over them."

"Let us begin here," shouted a man who came from the burning residence of the governor, dragging a young girl with him. "She is Delaunay's daughter! drag her to the foot of the fortress and let us burn her alive, if he does not surrender." They dragged the poor child along the pavement, they heaped straw about her, and were applying the torch when a young man leaped from the crowd and struck the dastard down, with the burning torch in his hand.

"It is St. Just, it is St. Just!" shouted the crowd. "Let the girl live. He has a right to her."

Within the Bastille the governor entrenched himself like a lion at bay. During five hours he had seen that great human ocean swell larger and larger, till its black waves stretched beyond his vision. With merciless bravery he had hurled death from tower and platform, till his heart sickened within him. But up to this time he had no thought of yielding. Now a portion of his soldiers came into his council-room, and besought him to surrender. They had scarcely spoken, when an officer from the Swiss guards rushed in.

There was no sign of being relieved from without. The cannon of the insurgents was pointed against the second draw-bridge. The Swiss were waiting for orders. Must they sweep the avenue?

"Surrender! surrender!"

Half the garrison joined in this cry. The Swiss guards with equal force urged a more desperate defence.

Delaunay answered nothing; his face was white as death, his eyes shone with some terrible resolve. He seized

a burning match and hurried with it towards the powder magazine. The Swiss officer seized him by the arm, thus preventing the awful death he meditated for them and himself.

Delaunay flung down the match and trod upon it.

"I had forgotten that there were more lives than my own," he said. "Wait."

He sat down by his council-table and wrote,

"We have twenty thousand pounds of powder; we will blow up the garrison and all the quarters if you do not accept the capitulation."

The officer took this note and held it through an opening of the timbers. A plank was laid across the moat, and one of the insurgents attempted to span it, but was shot down; another took his place, and brought back the note which was read aloud.

When the French guards pledged themselves that no harm should come to the garrison, the drawbridge was slowly lowered, and, following their leader, a furious crowd rushed over it.

The governor, pale, firm, and strengthened by the heroism of despair, came forward and received their leaders bare-headed and resting on his sword. A ruffian from the crowd menaced him with an uplifted dagger, which was wrested from his hand.

Hullin and some of his followers volunteered to escort the Governor to the Hôtel de Ville, and pledged themselves to protect him from the mob. He surrendered himself to these men and left the Bastille forever.



## CHAPTER LX.

## THE PRISONERS FREE.

A STRANGE thing happened as the insurgents poured across that draw-bridge and entered the vast gloom of the prison they had conquered. Silence, like that of death, fell on them all; the pallor of ghosts settled on that sea of faces. They felt the awe of four centuries gathering around them. It was like rushing suddenly into a vast charnel house.

With mingled loathing and dread they lifted their faces upward, where the ponderous rope ladders coiled down the towers and swayed heavily into the darkness forever sleeping below. They stirred sluggishly against the walls, and took an appearance of awful life, like great serpents writhing there, and the crowd watched them in ominous silence.

Then an awful scene arose. A man flung himself over the battlements and snatching at one of these weird ladders, attempted to escape some danger from above.

Before he was half way down, the body and most evil face of another man, leaned over the stone-work, and, with an awkwardly held hatchet, began to hew the ropes.

One after another the strands gave way, till only a single rope was left. A blow of the hatchet upon this, and the rope began to uncoil, swifter and swifter, whirling the poor wretch with it, until the last strand tore apart, and he fell, with a dull, heavy crash, to the court below.

That poor body was so broken upon the stones, that no one could have told the bruised face as that of Christopher, the head keeper.

For one awful minute, the crowd had been held dumb with suspense; but, like wild beasts, those awe-stricken men grew ferocious with the sight of blood. A shout of triumph from the men overhead, drove them on to action.

Once more the tumult raged all the fiercer, from this hush of passions. A hoarse cry rang through the prison,

"To the cells—to the cells! What are we doing here, while a prisoner remains to be set free? Down to the depths! Down to the depths!"

This cry threw the crowd into fresh tumults of rage. A wild rush was made for the cells.

Borne forward by the torrent of people, two women kept together, clinging to each other, and making frantic efforts to come up with a man, who carried a heavy ax in his hand.

Pale, eager, and panting for breath, the youngest of these females, a fair delicate girl, was guiding her mother toward a low door, in one of the towers.

"That is the door; I know it again! Keep close, mamma; Monsieur Jacques is just before us. He will break it in with his ax. Come, come! Oh God! help me, they have tore us apart!"

It was true. The woman, in her wild desire to push through the crowd, was unconscious that Marguerite was not still by her side.

A man passed her bearing a lighted torch. She snatched it from him, saying sharply. "I have the greatest need."

The tumult raged louder and more fiercely. Men and women remembered their hatred of the place, and they roamed through it like tigers. The doors of the prison began to crash under their axes, while the maddened crowd rushed downward into the bowels of the earth, burning with passion, but awe-stricken and silent as an army of ghosts.

The first man who entered the lower corridors was Monsieur Jacques; he was followed by a woman with a face of marble, who carried a burning torch in her hand. Three times his ax circled around the head of Monsieur Jacques,

and each time the iron-studded door resisted the blow. Another, and the mass of oak fell in, scattering splinters over a man, all trembling and white, with eyes gleaming through the long, silver hair that fell over them, who stood up in the center of the cell, holding out both hands imploringly.

When the flame of the torch fell upon his face, he uttered a sharp cry, and shielded his sight with both hands.

Then a voice, hoarse and broken, thrilled the air of the dungeon.

"My husband! Oh, Henry! will you not look upon me?"

A slow shiver ran through the prisoner, the hands fell downward. His eyes turned wistfully on the eager face bending toward him.

"Henry!"

Again the poor man was seized with a shivering fit. He put the long hair back from his eyes, looked in that troubled face, and motioned with his hand that the woman should speak again.

"My poor husband—my own, own Henry!"

He looked around, smiling, and nodded his head.

"That was my name!"

The words fell from his lips at intervals, as if he were counting them; but the sound pleased him, and he repeated over and over again,

"That was my name!"

"Ah, Henry! try to remember mine. Therese, your wife!"

"My wife! My wife! That was *her* name!"

He looked at the woman again shyly, and touched her with his finger. She was crying now, and seeing this, he took up a long tress of his hair and attempted to wipe the tears from her face; but his hand wandered wide of its intent, and fell upon her shoulder. She took the pale hand

up tenderly and kissed it, while her tears fell thick and fast.

Something in the touch of her hand, or the mournful look in her eyes, awoke that dormant soul. He clung close to her hand, his eyes looked steadily into hers, a soft tremor stole over the gentle whiteness of his face.

"He knows me," she said, claiming sympathy from Jacques, who had taken the torch from her hand. "I think he knows me."

Jacques nodded his head, great tears were rolling down his cheek, and he held the torch unsteadily.

"Therese was my wife's name," said the prisoner, with the plaintive wail of a child.

She bent toward him, a smile beamed on her face, one arm stole around his neck, she pressed her lips upon his.

That instant all strength left him, and he fell into her arms, murmuring incoherent words.

Had some sweet link of affection drawn that poor soul back to its old life? The woman thought so, and laying his head upon her bosom, wept over him.

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## CHAPTER LXI.

### THEY THREE MEET AGAIN.

WELL might Marguerite Gosner cry to her God for help; for with the force of a whirlwind she was swept back toward the draw-bridge and in danger of being trampled to death. Her plaintive cry for the mother she had lost, was answered by a rude hand which grasped her by the shoulder.

"Ha! I have reached you at last," hissed the fierce voice of a woman in her ear. "Citizens, here is the

daughter of old Doudel, who has been twenty years torturing prisoners in this accursed pile. Which of you want a dainty morsel for his hatchet? Take her while I pick off the old fox. I see him on the ramparts now."

With a powerful swing of her arms, Louison Brisot hurled the helpless creature back upon a group of young men who followed her like a pack of fiends, shrieking and howling as they went.

As she fell at their feet, the woman who had flung her there, snatched a musket from the nearest insurgent, and leveled it at Doudel, who was steadily pacing the ramparts up and down, as if no work of death were going on beneath him.

"Oh, my God, spare him, spare him," cried Marguerite, struggling against the rude hands that had lifted her from the earth.

A young man heard her cry, and knew the voice. With the bound of a panther, he sprang upon Louison Brisot and dashed down the musket, with which she was coolly taking aim. Then he turned, and tore Marguerite from the ruffians that held her.

"Are you men, or brutes?" he thundered, dashing the foremost back with his disengaged hand. "When women turn fiends, can Frenchmen be found to do their evil work."

The sharp crack of a rifle mingled with these indignant words. Down from the nearest tower a human form plunged headlong, and fell in an awful heap at Louison's feet. The woman coolly returned the musket that had done this fearful work, and strode up to the young man who had so bravely attempted to prevent it.

"The women of France can do their own work, Monsieur St. Just, and by the looks of that white face, I should say that my shot had killed two birds."

St. Just looked down upon the deathly face on his bosom and, in his terror at its whiteness, forgot the fiendish

laugh of the woman whom he believed to have killed an innocent girl. Gathering the lifeless form in his arms, he carried it across the thronged draw-bridge, and finding an empty bench in the Cour de Gouvernement, laid her upon it.

There seemed no hope of getting restoratives in that fearful place, which was still crowded with the mob, and dark with rolling smoke. But as St. Just laid his burden down, a man came reeling up from the cellars of the governor's dwelling, which the fire had not reached, carrying a bottle of wine in his hand, which he flung about ferociously. St. Just caught this man by the arm.

"Citoyen, give me some of the wine, here is a poor girl dying for want of it."

"Is she one of us?" answered the man.

"Yes, yes."

The ruffian glanced at Marguerite's humble garments, and was satisfied.

"Oh, yes, I see; too young for the work. There, citoyen. What is your name?"

"St. Just."

"Long live Citoyen St. Just! Down with the Bastille!" shouted the man, striking the neck of his bottle against the stone bench, and giving it, all dripping with red wine, to St. Just.

"It is some of the governor's Burgundy; don't fear to use it. He will never want it, our people over yonder have taken care of that."

"Dead, great Heavens! they have not murdered him," exclaimed St. Just, filled with new horror. "We promised him safe conduct."

"It seems our friends thought better of it. I saw him half an hour ago on his way to the Hôtel de Ville. He was bareheaded then, and looked brave enough, with all our people hooting at him. Hullin was at his side, and did his best to quiet our patriots; but somehow, his foot stum-

bled, and when he got up again, Delaunay's head was on a pike, dancing over the crowd."

"It was a dastardly act, treacherous to him and to us," said St. Just sternly.

"For my part, I think the fellow fought bravely enough for his life to have kept it," said the man. "But Down with the Bastille! Down with the enemies of France! I will get another bottle of his wine; keep that, citizen; the girl needs it more than I do, especially as I can get more. Take some yourself. It will bring the color back to your face, which looks like a ghost through the smoke. Bah! it stifles one."

St. Just did indeed look pale, and his hand trembled, as he held the wine to Marguerite's lips. They did not move, and he was compelled to force the wine between them. Still, she did not stir. These two persons were quite alone in the crowd now. No one observed them, no one cared whether the girl lived or died. St. Just bent over her, greatly troubled. His breath bathed her cheek, his hand pressed hers, his voice of agony pursued her sleeping spirit.

"Marguerite — Marguerite, for Heaven's sake, for my sake, open your eyes. Do you wish me to die, Marguerite? One word—one look—one breath, only let me know that you are alive."

His voice reached the girl's soul, wherever it was. Her eyelids began to tremble, her lips parted and grew red with a soft, gradual color.

"Marguerite, my Marguerite!"

"I hear, I am coming," murmured the girl; "oh my beloved, I hear you."

But for the crowd St. Just would have fallen down upon his knees and wept over her such tears as men like him alone can shed. For the first time, in that half unconscious state, she had confessed her love for him.

Marguerite came to herself at last, and opening her

great, dreamy eyes, answered back the smile that glowed on St. Just's face.

"I knew, I felt sure of it," she said, quite unconscious that any words had escaped her lips before. "When I come out of my dreams that face is always near, but it fades away."

All at once the girl was aroused out of her dreamy weakness—a new gang of insurgents swept by the bench where she lay, shouting, howling, and brandishing their pikes in the air.

Marguerite started up wildly.

"What is that?"

"A fresh outburst of the crowd, Marguerite, but have no fear, you are safe."

"Safe! oh yes," she answered, and a soft smile stole over her face; but, all at once she started up.

"My mother, my mother! oh, how could I forget her! Who will say that she is safe?"

"I will, Marguerite. Look yonder."

Marguerite sat up on the bench, and saw her mother with Monsieur Jacques; between them, half walking, was an old man, who strove to hide his face from the light.

"It is my father," she said, almost in a whisper. "He has not seen the light since I was a little child."

St. Just went forward, and supported the prisoner toward the bench where Marguerite rested. Madame Gosner came forward sadly, and took the girl in her arms.

"It is your father, Marguerite; but he does not know me. They have killed his mind."

Marguerite took her mother's hand, and kissed it tenderly.

"He will remember, mamma. God never can kill so sweet a thing as love in the human soul. Oh yes, he will remember."

"Marguerite saw that her father was drawing near, and

the tremor of a great expectation shook her frame; her eyes grew misty, and the faintness again crept over her, as she turned them upon him.

The bench on which Marguerite sat was in the deep shadow of a wall. She saw the wind blow that white hair back from the old man's face, which had been covered till then. It was the most benign and gentle face that human eyes ever looked upon. She left the bench and moved timidly toward that angel-faced man, who held back his hair with both hands, that he might look upon her. She sunk to her knees at his feet, for great suffering had made him sacred to her. A single holy word trembled on her lips.

"Father!"

A look of touching bewilderment came over that gentle face; the prisoner looked from the beautiful girl at his feet to the face of the mother.

"This is Therese," he said.

"This is your child," said madame, keeping back her tears. "She was a little thing when you went away."

"A—yes—I remember! So small—so small! But this one— This is Therese!"

"Father, will you not speak one word to me?"

"One word? There was something I used to do;" he seemed troubled with thought a moment, then bent down and laid his hand on her head, "God—God bless them!"

He turned his pleased face upon his wife.

"These words I kept close—here, here!"

While his hand was on Marguerite's head a great tumult came surging through the court. Some women, driven frantic by continued resistance at a second draw-bridge, had gone in a body to the Place de Grève, from whence they dragged another cannon and were now wheeling it furiously onward, determined on firing it themselves in rebuke of the men who, more patient and less ferocious than they, had waited to negotiate.

When they saw the draw-bridge down and their fellow insurgents swarming over the prison, a yell of triumph rent the smoky air and, rushing forward, they met Louison Brisot surrounded by a mob of blackened ruffians, who bore the keeper Doudel's head upon a pike.

Through all the fiendish noise that followed this horrible encounter, one shrill cry pierced like an arrow, and a little old woman, who had anxiously followed the fiendish gang rather than join it, fell lifeless on the pavement.

It was Dame Doudel, the murdered man's widow.

"Take her up and carry her home," cried Louison Brisot. "One man is not much to give to France, besides, her's was a traitor."

For one dread moment there was silence in the crowd. Those women were not all fiends, and Dame Doudel was popular among them. Deep and bitter murmurs rose up against Louison. The crowd was ready to turn and rend her where she stood.

The woman, who was audacious, but hardly brave, saw her danger and trembled; but a flash of courage saved her.

"Behold, there stands the prisoner Gosner. Women of France, it was I that set him free. Let us bear him home in triumph."

Murmurs of rage were now turned to a wild shout of approval. Those mad women swarmed around the prisoner and his family. They recognized Madame Gosner, and smothered her with hot kisses from lips that tasted of gunpowder. They lifted that poor old man to the cannon brought for another purpose, and prepared to drag him through the streets of Paris as a proof of their victory.

Madame Gosner clung to her husband till fragments of his tattered garments were torn off and left in her hand.

"Mount, mount!" cried the women, poising her upon the cannon, where she threw both arms around her husband and kept him from falling.

Louison Brisot snatched a red cap from the head of an insurgent, and throwing it over the white locks of the prisoner, flung herself across one end of the gun, astride, as if she had been mounting a war charger.

"On, on!" she shouted, tearing the flame-colored scarf from her shoulders, and streaming it through the circling smoke. "Let the people of Paris see how the king deals with them!"

A hundred hands, grim with dust, blackened with powder, quivering and eager as the claws of hungry vultures, seized upon the rope and hurled the cannon forward. The crowd was torn apart, or trampled down. Thunders of applause followed this army of women, which was engulfed in the black masses of the streets, as a stormy ocean swallows up the ships tossing on its waves.

Marguerite Gosner saw both father and mother thus forcibly swept away without the power to speak, and found herself quite alone with Monsieur Jacques and St. Just.

"Oh, take me home," she pleaded, reaching forth her arms to the younger man, "it is terrible, I shall die!"

St. Just gathered her close to his side, forgetful of the other presence, and bent his face to hers.

"Have no fear, my beloved. Am I not with you!"

Jacques heard these words, and saw the glance of tender gratitude which shone from those uplifted eyes. Saw it, and the great heart in his bosom gave one leap and was still, like an eagle shot through the breast.

"Oh, take me, take me with you," pleaded an old voice, quivering with pathetic pain. "Let me go with you, Marguerite, for I have no one else in the world now."

It was Dame Doudel, who had come out of her fainting fit, and crept toward the only faces she knew.

"Take care of her, she needs help more than I do," said the girl, withdrawing herself from the arm that supported her

"I will do that."

Monsieur Jacques' voice was harsh with agony as he said this, but he saw Marguerite draw back to that beloved shelter, and gave no other sign of the war within him.

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## CHAPTER LXII.

### THE PRISONER AT HOME.

THEY were together at last, that weary old man, his wife and child. That crowd of women had brought him to the door of his home, and set him down on its threshold. When he saw the steep flight of stairs, stretching darkly upwards, a look of bewilderment and dismay came to his face. He had forgotten their uses. So those triumphant furies carried him up in their arms and would have laid him on the bed, but he struggled away from them, and creeping into a corner, laid his face against the wall, as if he felt some comfort in its coldness. Then the women went away in search of better work than the caring for an old, worn out man.

Madame Gosner aroused him; she carried a plate of soup in her hand, and when he sat up on the floor, held a spoonful to his mouth; but lifting his terrified eyes to her face, as if she were something to dread, he refused it, with a look of gentle repugnance.

"He is dazed with the noise, they have killed him with their violence," said Marguerite in a passion of grief. "Oh father, will you eat nothing?" She brought him fruit and wine. He seemed pleased with their rich colors, but refused to touch them.

All at once the girl bethought herself and got an earthen pitcher full of water and some black bread. His eyes

brightened. He looked at this food wistfully, and when she turned her back, began to eat.

Marguerite sat down on the floor beside her father. She broke his bread and held the water to his lips. Then he began to smile and lying down by the wall again, dropped into a broken sleep.

Once or twice during that night Madame Gosner bent over the sleeping man, but even in his dreams her presence made him shrink. She had clasped him in her arms, and held him to view in that awful crowd. The wretched man had lost many things in that dungeon, but his sensitive delicacy nothing could destroy. It was a part of his soul. A dawning consciousness that she was his wife had struggled in his brain for a little time at their first meeting, but that rude scene on the cannon obliterated it entirely. From that hour he recognised Marguerite as Therese, who had no other embodiment for him.

The next day a crowd of women came forcibly in, and demanded that feeble old man for exhibition at the Place de Grève, where his presence was intended to enflame the populace, and prepare it for deeper revolt and still more awful scenes.

Marguerite protested against this coarse outrage, and would have defeated it had that been in her power. But the wife, given up heart and soul to the spirit of anarchy, joined with her fierce compatriots, and placed the wronged man by her side on the platform from which she harangued the people.

Was it strange that a being so true and gentle, refused to recognize in this amazon the sweet and loving wife from whom he had been torn in his youth?

One night, when everything was still in the house, the prisoner got up from the floor, and wandered about in the darkness, which he had learned to love in those long years, when it became second nature to him. Marguerite heard him, and left her bed.

"Father!"

"My Therese! I know the voice."

Marguerite, guided by the glad tone in which her father spoke, crept toward him, and put her hand in his.

"What is it that troubles you, my father?"

"I want to go back, Therese; this is not home. Everything is so warm and dry here; I cannot hear the water whispering to me. I cannot find my friend. Ah me! I want to go back, life is so full of noises."

"Your friend! had you a friend in the Bastille, father?"

"Hush, Therese! they did not know it. I used to hide him when they came. They would have killed him else. Ah me! he may be dead now. My little friend who never left me, cannot know that they forced me away from him!"

"Father, of whom are you speaking?"

"Hush, hush; I will not tell, only I must go back: say nothing, Therese; but let me go back. I cannot rest here. The stars keep me awake; you know where to look for me, I remember how you came there with Doudel."

Marguerite shuddered at the sound of that name.

"Dear father, try to rest," she pleaded.

"Rest, Therese? there will be no rest for me, or any of my race, until that ring of old Egypt is found. Oh! where is it—where is it?"

"What ring, father?"

"What ring? that which gave to the possessor of our blood the power and wisdom of a god. The ring which was wrested from my hand, on the day I was torn from the light."

"Tell me about it, father; I have heard my mother speak of it as an ancient relic, such as comes out of the tombs of monarchs, and once I saw one like the thing she described."



"Where? when—who had it? tell me its form and color. There was but one such in the world; treasures of wisdom are locked up in that ring! Therese, Therese, the ring is gone! It is gone! The Talisman, which gives happiness to me and mine, but misery to all others! Alas! until that is found, I am nothing. Worse than that, worse than that. I know full surely that it will bring sorrow and death to any hand that wears it! Describe to me, Therese, the ring you saw."

"It was a serpent of twisted gold, father, holding a beetle, cut from some green stone, in its coils. The beetle was covered with strange characters."

The prisoner started forward in the darkness and grasped Marguerite by the arm.

"It is my ring—It is my ring! tell me where you saw it!"

"Father, I saw it on the hand of Queen Marie Antoinette."

The prisoner gasped for breath. Even in that dim light Marguerite could see the glitter of his eyes.

"She wears it and it is cursing her. All France is in mad rebellion. Ah, now I understand how the poison has been working! Therese, where is the queen?"

"At Versailles."

"I know where that is—she is there—and the ring? Go away, Therese, I want to think. I want to be still."

Marguerite went back to her bed and had hardly closed her eyes, when that shadowy old man crept softly down the stair-case and was gone.

## CHAPTER LXIII.

## SEARCHING FOR THE SERPENT RING.

THE Queen of France nearly lost her courage when news reached her of the storming of the Bastille, but she kept bravely up in presence of the court, and only indulged in sad forebodings when a moment of solitude was given her.

One evening as the sun went down, she escaped from her ladies and went alone into the park. Finding a secluded seat she fell into a painful reverie, and gave way to it until the new moon dropped down among the purplish whiteness of the clouds, from which all the scarlet and gold had died softly out, and hung there like a golden sickle, waiting for a harvest of stars. Then Marie Antoinette remembered the hour, and how far she was from the palace, with a little thrill of fear. She gathered the shawl over her head, and, holding its shadowy lace to her bosom with one hand, went out into the Park, and walked swiftly away.

Everything was still as death; the birds had ceased their soft fluttering among the leaves; and all the pretty animals had crept away to their coverts among the ferns and undergrowth.

All at once the queen paused, and stepped back with a faint shriek. The shadow of a man fell across her path—the man himself stood in her way. The moon had just traveled through an amethystine cloud, and came out clear as crystal, illuminating that strange face, the bright blue eyes, the ivory forehead, and that long, white beard, which waved down the man's bosom.

"Lady," he said, "you look kind and good; tell me how I can gain access to the daughter of Maria Theresa."

The voice was low and broken, but sweet with humility. There was nothing to fear from a man who spoke like that.

"You speak of the queen?" said Marie Antoinette, with gentle dignity.

"Yes, I speak of the queen; that fair, brave woman, whose mother, a saint in heaven, was once my friend."

"You have seen my mother?" cried Marie Antoinette, surprised out of all prudence.

"Your mother? Oh! that I do not know. It was Maria Theresa, the good Empress of Austria, of whom I was speaking; and it is her child, the young queen of France, I wish to see."

"The young Queen of France! Alas! she is no longer young," said Marie Antoinette, with a pathetic recollection of the silver threads that were creeping into her hair.

The man shook his head, and lifted one hand to it with an air of bewilderment.

"You mistake, lady; I saw her twice, and she was young and fair, like the lilies—so fair, so beautifully fair!"

"Was that in Austria, old man?"

"Yes, it was in Austria. She stood by the side of her mother, a grand, princely woman, dauntless as a lion—but I saw her tremble. It is awful to see such terror in the eyes of a brave woman; but it was there, and I had done it. Ah, me! there is a power beyond that of monarch's—a fearful power. They wrested it from me—they wrested it from me; and I am only a poor, weak old man."

"Who are you? I cannot make out by the tones of your voice to what nation you belong; they carry the accent of no country with them that I can discern."

"That is because I have been born again; buried, you know, and risen from the grave."

Marie Antoinette looked anxiously about her. This was the talk of a madman. How had he come there? By what device could she escape him?

"You cannot understand me," persisted the man, plaintively. "You are afraid of a poor, helpless old man, who has but one wish in the world."

"And what is that?" inquired the queen, reassured by his meek earnestness.

"To see Marie Antoinette, to take the serpent from her hand, and the curse from her destiny."

Again the queen recoiled; these words seemed to her the wild talk of a madman.

"Can you tell me how to reach her, lady?"

"That is impossible. The queen admits no strangers to her presence."

"Ah, me! and I am a stranger to every one now. They all seem afraid of the creature they have dragged up from his grave."

"Who are you?"

"No matter; you would not care to know; a great many do not love the queen; but I think you are something to the daughter of Maria Theresa, or you would not be in this place. It is strange, but at first I thought it was the queen walking by herself—as if she ever did! It would be dangerous, I can tell her that—very dangerous; for there exist people over yonder who hate this fair young queen. But I pity her; oh, yes! I pity her from the depths of my heart!"

"Why—why do you pity her?"

"Because I know. Because they have taken the good from me and turned it into evil for her. Ah! if I could see her; if she would only believe me!"

"Believe you in what?"

"In the thing I would ask of her."

"What would that be?"

"No matter. I can tell no one but herself."

"Tell me, and if the thing you want is reasonable, I will ask it of her."

"Do you see her? Are you one of her ladies? You should be, else how came you here?"

"How came you here?" demanded the queen.

"Oh! I accomplished it at last. Days and days I have waited and watched; but this morning I saw a man go warily through a gate. He left it unlocked. I dared not follow, but lingered near, for the temptation was strong upon me. I waited patiently. Oh, lady! I have learned to be patient; to wait, and wait, and wait——"

The man broke off dreamily. His hand waved to and fro in the air, as if grasping at the moonbeams.

"But you have not told me?"

"Told you about what?"

"About the man."

"About the man—I have seen a great many people since then; and they all talk before me, thinking that I, most of any one, must hate the man they call Louis Capet, and his wife. Poor thing! Poor thing! Why should I hate her or him! He was not to blame for the cruel acts of his grandfather. But about the man, he went out of the gate without locking it, then I crept in. What if I had been an enemy? but I am not. No one shall ever make me that."

"Well, no harm is done," said the queen.

"Not yet; but, lady, if you see the queen, warn her about the gate. I would, but that my business with her is so much more important."

"I will warn her," said the queen.

"That is kind. Oh! if I could only see her, and undo the evil thing which is sure to carry a curse with it, when a minute could turn it into a blessing. You could not ask her?"

His great, wistful eyes were turned on her face imploringly; he grasped the lace of her shawl with his eager hand. She stepped back nervously, and wrenched the lace from his grasp. In doing this her hand flashed out from its covering; the moonlight struck the great star-like diamonds on her fingers, and dimly revealed a serpent of twisted gold, with a green beetle in its coils, twined around one finger.

The old man uttered a cry so sharp and wild that it rang through the park.

"Give it me! Give it me! It is mine! It is mine!" he cried, snatching at the hand on which he had seen the serpent-ring. "Oh, my God! it shall not escape me again! All the fiends themselves shall not keep it from me!"

The old man caught the hand, which again buried itself in the black shawl; but he trembled so violently that the lace tore in his grasp, and the queen broke from him in extreme terror. This insane violence convinced her that the man was mad. She darted away, and ran for her very life, not daring to cry out, but rushing on, and on, till the breath left her.

The old man followed the flying woman, calling after her with pathetic cries, and beseeching her to stop. She looked back, a hand grasped at her shoulder, but she swerved aside quickly, and the old man fell headlong.

The queen uttered a quick cry of thankfulness, and sped on, and on, till she came in sight of the palace.

The old man, who had fallen headlong on the turf, lay insensible for a few minutes; but after a little he lifted himself up, and looked around for the lady who had almost reached the private door.

"Gone! gone! gone!" he cried out, with pathetic mournfulness. "How near I was! My hand touched it! I felt the thrill and the power flash through me like an arrow, and then it was gone! Who was the lady? How did that ring come on her finger? Does she know that to her it will bring nothing but curses, to me power, strength, the blessedness of memory—spring of youth. Ah! why does she escape me!"

He stood awhile with his clasped hands uplifted, his eyes full of tears. The agony of his disappointment quivered in every mild feature. Then he tottered on, muttering to himself.

"Oh! how they baffle me! How long am I to wait! Are the fiends forever to have mastery? Oh, me! I could bear it if no evil came to others, while good is withheld from me. How long am I to wait?"

There was no madness in the old man's voice, but unutterable disappointment, the very mournfulness of despair. His step was slow and feeble; tears dropped from his eyes, and fell upon his beard, where they trembled like jewels. His lips quivered, and gave out soft murmurs of distress, as he followed after the queen, who fled from him.

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## CHAPTER LXIV.

### DOWN IN THE LEAFY SHADOWS.

THE old man who had so terrified Marie Antoinette, followed her with piteous entreaties, until she reached the private door, which had been carefully left open for her. He even tried to enter by the same passage, but she had drawn the bolt inside; and he turned from it in meek despair, muttering to himself, and smoothing his silvery beard in the moonlight. Another man would have gone home, perhaps, spending the whole of that beautiful night on his way to Paris; this weary pilgrim had lost all ideas of home that were not connected with his cell in the Bastille, which now lay a heap of ruins in the heart of the city. During the days in which he had been at liberty, this broken being had refused to take up his old habits of civilization; his limbs had never pressed a bed; and his food was always the same, a crust of black bread and a cup of water. The free air of a bright day oppressed him; but when the clouds lowered, and the rain fell, a sense of enjoyment awoke in his bosom, and

he was sure to wander into the streets, and search with mournful fascination for the ruins of his old prison.

A bright sunshine, and even moonlight, clear and broad as that which lay around him, oppressed and bewildered this poor wanderer, who had spent nearly half his life in utter darkness. Below the palace was a thickly-wooded path, filled with shadows, through which he could, from time to time, see the sparkle of waters leaping up to meet the moonlight. As I have said, imprisonment had made darkness a second nature to this man; so he stole away from the soft radiance that fell around him, and went into the deep shadows. Here the moist atmosphere, to which all his frame had become habituated, cooled the fever in his veins, and the soft tinkle of falling waters lulled him back into the dull monotony of his prison days. He sat down at the foot of a tree, where the earth was cushioned all over with emerald-green moss, and leaning his head against it, grew tranquil under the languid sense of solitude that crept over him. To be alone was now the great luxury of his life, as it had formerly been its punishment.

As the old man rested against his pillow of rugged bark, a shadow broke the moonlight that quivered on the edge of the path, and the footsteps of a man coming down the broad avenue leading that way startled him. With a thrill of fear he drew closer to the tree that sheltered him, and waited for the man to pass; but the path that led close to him was darkened; and after a minute or two a gentleman stood within three paces of his retreat. The old man could see enough of the face to read it clearly, for a break in the tangled boughs overhead let in a stream of radiance, which the surrounding darkness increased, and this lay full upon the intruder.

The stranger took off his three-cornered hat, and sighed gently as the moist air swept across his forehead. Then he

moved a step forward, and seemed about to rest himself on a seat opposite the elm, against which Gosner was leaning.

The old prisoner, seeing this, arose to his feet and stood before this man like a ghost; his soft, white beard sweeping to the wind, and his frightened face etherealized by the light that struggled down to it.

"Forgive me; I was but resting," he said, in the low quivering voice with which he had been accustomed to address his keeper. "The air down here was so cool; and I love the sound of dripping water—it is such company!"

"Who are you, old man, and how came you here? Have you not been told that no person is permitted to enter these grounds but the household of the king?"

"No one told me; but I felt that it was wrong to be so near the palace, so I came down into this dark path, quite out of the way. Is there any harm in that?"

"I cannot think that harm of any kind need be apprehended from a person who speaks with such gentle humility," answered the stranger. "But tell me, what brought you here?"

"I was sent! I was sent! But for that I had not come."

"But how did you gain an entrance?"

"God opened the gate for me!"

"What? I do not understand."

"I was waiting on the highway, thinking that our Lady, to whom I had never ceased to pray, might, by a miracle, open some gate, through which I might pass to the palace. Well, at last the blessed Virgin answered me. A man came through a little gate which led to the gardens, and left it ajar. I crept after him holding my breath, and went in among the flowers, which covered me with perfume, which I do not like—that which comes from sleeping water, green at the top, is best—the breath of flowers is so subtle it makes me dizzy!"

"But you have not given his name?"

"Why should I? That is—I know—"

"Well, speak out. I wish to know who it is that I find at night in the private grounds of Versailles."

"Are you a friend to the king?"

A sad smile came over the stranger's face, and he answered with feeling,

"If the king has a friend, I am one!"

"Then caution him—there is some harm intended him by the people of Paris."

The stranger drew a deep breath.

"Ah! I understand; you speak wisely and kindly; the king shall hear of it."

"No, no! Why should he, after all? They are right, I ought not to warn this king, whose grandfather slew my youth, and turned my manhood into this!"

Here the old man grasped the end of his white beard, and held it up in the moonlight.

The stranger stepped back, and stood for a moment gazing with astonishment on the old man's face.

"Who is it that has wronged you so? What is your name? once more I ask it."

"The man who wronged me was Louis the Fifteenth. Once people knew me as Dr. Gosner."

"Gosner—Gosner! You were a prisoner in the Bastille?"

"Oh, yes! A prisoner of the Bastille!"

"Whom the present king pardoned?"

"And then cast into a deeper dungeon, while his minions gave forth that I was dead!"

"Was the king guilty of treachery like this?"

"There was treachery somewhere; but what matters it now that you and I should ask where it rested? The people's hate has fallen with awful heaviness on one man—that one who so oppressed the sufferers placed under his despot-

ism. When they led me forth from my dungeon into that carnival of blood, the head of Delaunay went before me on the point of a pike. If vengeance had not died out of my soul years before, it would have sickened and perished then."

"How, you a prisoner of the Bastille, and do not hate the king?"

"Hate him? No! Come closer, and I will tell you. An evil thing fell upon him and the fair girl he married on the day I was cast into prison."

"What was that evil thing?"

"A blessing and a curse; the blessing was taken from me and turned into a curse for the daughter of Maria Theresa. Ah! If I could see her—if I only could!"

"You speak of the queen?"

"Yes, of the woman who was wronged and wounded worse than myself, when they buried my youth in the Bastille."

"But how?"

"Ah! that is my secret. I will tell it to no human soul—not even to her."

The stranger looked earnestly at the singular old man whom he began to recognize as mildly insane;—a poor wanderer, who had strayed into the Park through some carelessly closed gate;—possibly a victim of the Bastille, whose mind had gone astray in his dungeon; but, in any case, worthy of infinite compassion.

"Would you like me to show you the way out from the Park?" he said, gently, as if he had been addressing a child. "In a few minutes the gates will be closed, and the guards doubled."

The old man shook his head.

"No. I will rest here till daylight comes; then, perhaps, I can see her again."

"Whom would you see? Tell me, perhaps I can aid you."

"The woman who was out yonder to-night."

"The woman—did you know who she was?"

"No."

"Did you see her face?"

"No. She gathered her veil over it and fled. Oh! if she had but waited! I would have wrenched it from her hand, if she had not given it up; but only to save her—only to save her. Fate has done its work with me."

There was something mournfully pathetic in the old man's words; his thin, white hand trembled visibly as he clenched it in his beard; his eyes shone in the moonlight, which now and then came down fitfully through the branches, and seemed to cover him with alternate smiles and frowns.

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## CHAPTER LXV.

### THE PRISONER AND THE KING.

THE stranger laid his hand in gentle compassion on the old man's arm. There was something so sweet and kind in his lunacy, that he could not resist the pitying impulse which possessed him. What if this gentle old man had, indeed, been a prisoner of the Bastille—a terrible place, which the nobility had used with such fearful recklessness, without pausing to understand what awful sins they were committing against human rights.

"Sit down," he said, "you tremble, and seem very old; while I rest here, tell me something of that prison—of your life there. Was it, indeed, so horrible as the people say?"

The old man sat down as bidden, for he had learned to obey until submission had become an impulse. The stranger leaned against the trunk of a willow that drooped over him a perfect cataract of leaves, and prepared to listen.

"What would you have me say?" asked the old man, lifting his meek eyes to the thoughtful face of his questioner. "There is much suffering in twenty years—where shall I begin?"

"Tell me everything. It is well that I should know how far men can suffer and live."

The old man shook his head.

"Ah! it is all a dream now, a dull, heavy dream of darkness, and hunger, and awful rest. At first I yearned and struggled for the freedom which despotism, not crime, had torn from me. I raved in my cell; I beat my hands against the great oaken door, which answered me with the mockery of hollow noises; I beat my head upon the stone flags of my cell, hoping thus to end the torment of my longing. I cried aloud for my wife and child. Oh, my God! my God! how I suffered then—I, who had done nothing that was evil, but always sought out the right; I, who had kept myself humble, and loved the poor with affectionate brotherhood, who had nothing on earth but my sweet young wife and her little child!

At first I said this outrage against an innocent man cannot last. In a few weeks they will let me out, and I shall flee on the wings of love to find my wife and child; they will have suffered, but my coming will bring back all the old joy into their lives. Monsieur, do you know what it is to have such dreams die out of the soul?"

The old man clasped his hands, bowed his face down to his bosom, over which the white beard flowed, and began to sob. The tenderness of a most affectionate nature had come back to him so far that a swell of self-pity heaved his breast when he remembered the pangs of anguish with which he had given up all the hopes of his youth.

"Go on," said the stranger, in a broken voice; "it is well that I should hear this."

"In the darkness of that dungeon," answered the old

man, "I felt my soul going from me, I struggled hard to keep it—but it went, it went; the cruel wants of the body conquered it. Hunger, cold, the eternal drip of stagnant waters drove me mad, I think, for days lengthened into black years, and years grew into eternity. To me there was neither heaven or earth, nothing but that dungeon and its four dripping walls. As the memory of my sweet home among the vineyards died out, I began to love those walls; my eyes transformed themselves for the darkness, and learned to watch the creeping things that came and went into my dungeon; the bright-eyed toads, that sat hour by hour looking into my face, as if they wondered what manner of animal I was, sitting there so inert and helpless; or, hopping from place to place. They never felt the closeness of those four walls. After a time these creatures, so loathsome at first, became dear as children to me. I watched their coming with eager longing, and out of my scant food saved a little for them, that they might not be tempted to leave me. I would sit hours together holding one of these creatures in my hand, counting the spots on its back with my fingers, and smoothing its soft throat with gentle touches, while his bright eyes shone on me through the darkness.

"Sometimes these pretty reptiles would creep into my bosom as I slept at night. Then I dreamed that the little hand of my child was caressing me. You understand, monsieur, as my sight had shaped itself to the darkness, so my heart, closed in by despair, found something to love even in that loathsome cell."

"Go on! go on!" said the stranger, sharply, "I am listening!"

"Sometimes a keeper was harsh and cruel when he came to my cell, but oftener he was grim and silent, refusing to speak or answer one word of the questions which at first almost choked me as they crowded up from my heart. By



degrees I did not care—what was the outer world to me, sitting there in the darkness of my tomb. Sometimes this man brought a lamp, and let me cut off the long hair which flowed over my shoulders like a woman's. At first it was soft and golden, then it grew whiter—whiter—whiter; and by this I marked the time. When I came out the other day, it was drifted snow like this.

"One day the people rose like a great tidal wave, and swept over my prison. A woman plunged down into the bowels of the earth, and fell upon my neck, crying out that the people had won back my liberty. I did not understand her—I did not know her; her eagerness wearied me. She talked of things I had never heard of. She said that she was my wife. My wife, with those bright, eager eyes; those curling lips; that free speech, often sharp with denunciation. If she was my wife, too much light had changed her more completely than darkness had worked on me. While her arms were around me, I thought of the fair, meek creature I had left in that cottage among the vineyards, and mourned for her as we mourn for the dead. Then they brought a young creature to me, so like my first wife that I stretched out my arms with a cry of joy; but they told me it was my daughter. Wife and daughter had both gone. The old king had dug a chasm of years between them and me. I could not cross it—I could not cross it!"

The stranger took a handkerchief from his bosom, and wiped away some great drops that had gathered on his forehead.

"No more to-night," he said; "I cannot bear it."

"Then I will go, since you will not let me rest here; but the road to Paris is long, and suffering has made me an old man."

The stranger reflected a moment.

"Not here," he said, "the air is moist and the earth damp."

"Ah! but I learned to love this dampness in my dungeon," said the old man, plaintively.

"Still it is no safe resting-place. I must not turn you upon the highway in the night; besides, the guard might treat you ill. Come with me; there is a place where you can be safe, and more comfortable."

The old man picked up his staff and followed the strange person, who had taken this singular interest in him, with docile obedience.

The two mounted upward from the secluded path, and walked toward another portion of the park, where a tiny summer-house was embowered.

The stranger opened the door and let a flood of moonlight into the pretty place.

"Here are easy-chairs and cushions, you can make out a resting-place from them," he said, kindly, addressing the old man.

"No; I will sleep on the marble floor—a bed suffocates me."

"Have no fear, then; no one will molest you."

"Fear! What has a prisoner of the Bastille to fear—death? How many of us prayed for that every hour of our miserable lives," answered the old man with a gentle smile. "You are kind, and I thank you. Gratitude, I sometimes think, is the only feeling imprisonment has left me. I am grateful to you, sir."

"Grateful to me! Do you know that I am THE KING?"

## CHAPTER LXVI.

## ON TO VERSAILLES.

MADAME GOSNER had done the true work of her lifetime when she saw her husband set free from the Bastille. Then if all the sweet womanhood of her nature had not been embittered by the radical fury of the times, her own reward would have been assured. But, instead of a wife suffering and toiling for a beloved husband's freedom, this woman had become an avenger—a patriot—that most loathsome thing, a female demagogue. It was painful but not strange that the husband for whom she had toiled, suffered, and almost died, should have failed to recognize in this woman the sweet young wife he had left in that vineyard home.

Marguerite was to him now what the wife had been then. His tortured memory could neither associate this amazon with his wife, or the lovely girl with the child he had left with her. He knew that each represented the other, but could not feel it. To him Marguerite was the Therese of his memory; the little child haunted him like a dream, nothing more. As for the woman, he was afraid of her. In her enthusiasm she had become his persecutor. It was she who forced him into crowds, and turned the fierce eyes of a clamorous mob upon him. It was she who called down a storm of curses on the sovereigns of France whenever his white hair was seen. It was she who filled their humble apartments day and night with red-capped men and hideous women, who swarmed around the sensitive old man like birds of prey. So oppressive and terrible did this become at last, that the old man crept from his home with cautious stealth, and sometimes remained away for hours, no human creature knowing where he went. More than

once he remained out for days, and search the streets as they might, no one could find him.

Madame Gosner was baffled and defeated in her wild ambition. Neither her husband or daughter entered into her projects or her hatred of the royal family. The life this perverted woman led bore with equal force upon her daughter Marguerite, who gladly escaped from the confusion in her own home, to the sad quiet of Dame Doudel's apartments. This kind old benefactress gave her in all tenderness the love and protection which springs so naturally out of mutual sorrow.

But the time came at last when both Marguerite and her helpless father were forced to appear among the insurgents.

Months had swept by swiftly, as time goes when nations plunge onward to rebellion. Paris was once more in open revolt. Her people, with one of those popular impulses that shake the foundations of a government, had resolved to besiege the Assembly in its halls and the king in his palace.

The Court and the Assembly were at Versailles, wrangling together. The people all this time had been busy hunting down the king. Now they were marching upon him in one huge mob which left the lanes and streets of Paris empty, and its vast market places silent as tombs. The rain was pouring down in torrents, the mud was ankle deep; yet that vast concourse of people kept steadily on, wheeling cannon through the mud—throwing out banners to be soaked by the rain, shouting, grumbling, hurling curses on the king, the queen, and the court.

In the midst of the rioters Madame Gosner was conspicuous, riding a heavy cart horse and carrying a spear in her hand. Close by her on a smaller and more gentle animal rode the prisoner of the Bastille, with a red cap upon his head, which hung limp and dripping over his white locks.

Whenever this man appeared, shouts long and loud,

followed him, at which his brow would contract gloomily and his eye gleam underneath them. In the crowd, mounted on horseback like her mother, but with no emblems of rebellion, came Marguerite, pale, dejected, and forced sorely against her will into the heart of the mob, as her father had been.

About midway between Paris and Versailles, the crowd halted at a village where it was thought bread for the hungry crowd might be obtained. In the confusion which followed this movement, the old prisoner tore off his red cap, flung it into the mud, and in its place drew the hood of a friar's cloak, which some priest had cast over him when the rain came down most violently—then he turned his horse and pushed his way out of the crowd unnoticed. In half an hour he left that vast crowd behind him and made the best of his way to Paris, which was still and deserted like a city of the dead.

In the suburbs, the old man dismounted and turned his horse loose. He was weary and very feeble; the mud clung to his feet, and the rain poured upon him with cruel steadiness; but he moved on, and at last turned into the ruined court of the Bastille, crossed the drawbridge, and went out of sight among the unshapely heap of stones beyond it.

When the army of women went back to Paris, Madame Gosner was among those who conducted the royal captives to the very entrance of the Tuileries. Now her triumph seemed almost complete, her enemies were trampled almost into the dust. Her name was received with shouts wherever she turned. She forgot the husband who had disappeared in the crowd, and the child whom she had with despotic force urged into an act of open rebellion. The madness of ambition was upon her. She had begun now to rival Theroigne and the coarsest of her sex in a struggle for popularity. So she went into the thickest of the mob,

while Marguerite sought her home with a heavy heart, hoping with terrible misgivings that she might find her father there.

The rooms were empty. No human soul was there to meet or comfort her. No sign of the hunted man met her in the building.

Where could she go? In what place had that helpless man hid himself? Two nights he had already been absent; had he perished in the street, or wandered off into some village of the open country?

All at once a thought struck the girl. The Bastille had some weird fascination which carried that lonely man back to his dungeon, as birds return to the cages from which they have been set free, feeling the broad, blue dome of the sky too vast for the trial of their worn and crippled wings. This thought was scarcely more rapid than the action that followed it.

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## CHAPTER LXVII.

### LOUISON BRISOT IN THE RUINS.

LOUISON BRISOT had been foremost among the women who brought the king and the queen almost prisoners from Versailles to the Tuileries. Flushed with her triumph, weary with excitement, a few nights after this outrage she found herself in the street, doubtful whether to make her way to the Cordelier Club, or find some church in which she might listen to vespers, and, perhaps, seek other religious help; for this woman, who was devoid of the first principles of morality, gave herself up at intervals to superstitions, which she absolutely believed to be religious. She did not turn toward the club, but walked on at random, threading one street after another until she reached the

Bastille, which lay under the pale moonlight, heaped in ruins. The moat, half choked up with fragments of the broken walls, still coiled around the old foundations, lapsing the huge stones, and seeming to writhe under them like a wounded serpent, with a slimy, green back, on which the calm moon was shining in fitful glimpses.

It was a scene of wild devastation. Here and there patches of white plaster gleamed against the blackness of the broken stones like ghosts crouching in the shadows, and a part of the drawbridge loomed up, as yet unbroken, from which huge chains were dangling like fetters from a gibbet.

Weird and terrible as the scene really was, Louison regarded it with feelings of wild satisfaction. She had helped to tear down those mighty walls with her own hands. Her voice had led a phalanx of women on to that awful attack, when despotism received its first fatal blow. She felt keen delight in roaming about this ghostly ruin, which was so fearfully typical of the fate which impended over the nation. In those disjointed stones she saw the real power which lay in the people, and the weakness of kings when that power chose to exert itself. If the people of France were strong enough to wrest this stronghold from the crown, what could prevent them from tearing away the very foundations of the throne itself?

Louison asked these questions of herself as she wandered among the black masses of rock that had once been a prison, so grim and awful, that the very children had run away terrified by a sight of its walls. A wild craving for liberty had hitherto filled her being; a blind ambition to be the leading spirit of any tumult that might spring out of the starvation and discontent which filled all France with tears and menaces. But now another and more bitter feeling possessed her; personal hate mingled itself with the fanaticism which had lifted liberty into the semblance of a god, at whose feet both religion and common sense

must be hurled. She longed to crush the beautiful queen as she had helped to cast those stones down from their ponderous hold in the prison towers. She had no object in coming there but that of feasting her eyes on the ruin, which was a proof and a pledge of the greater overthrow yet to come. The time was near when crowns should be trodden under foot, and thrones hurled from their base as those rocks had been.

In this place the demons of envy and hate entered that woman's soul, and she called them patriotism. Among the gaunt shadows that filled the ruins of the Bastille, there was one spot more dreary than the rest, hollowed out like an exhausted volcano, and partly choked up with rocks, black and rugged as consolidated lava. The moonbeams penetrated into this abyss, and played whitely around its jagged edges. Louison could hear the trickle of water, as it filtered from the moat, and crept downward among the stones. This sight more weird and dismal than anything she had seen, fascinated the woman, and she paused to look upon it. Above the slow trickle of waters she heard a human voice, utterly at variance with the place, for its tones were low and sweet as the murmur of a south wind when the flowers are budding, but plaintive as that same wind when it sighs among autumn leaves.

What could this sound mean? Had some prisoner been left among the subterranean dungeons, unable to make himself heard when that multitude of spoilers swept over the prison?

Louison was fearless; and this thought stirred all the humanity in her bosom. She sprung from the fragment of rock on which she stood, and leaped from point to point down into the chasm. She came at last to a platform, which had once been a corridor far beneath the level of the moat. This was partly filled with the rubbish of broken doors and rusted iron, rent from the walls when the mob

were raging like wild beasts through the foundations of the prison, making impossible efforts to annihilate the space which could only be filled up by the ruin going on above. More than one black hole in the wall revealed to her where a cell had been; and her progress was again and again impeded by the links of some broken chain, coiling like a serpent in her path.

At last she came to an open cell, into which the moonlight penetrated dimly; for the rubbish directly before it had been cleared away, and some yards along the corridor were open to the sky. From this cell she heard murmurs; a soft voice, tremulous with the tender weakness of old age, was talking there, expostulating, caressing, murmuring fondly, as aged women caress their children's children.

Louison held her breath and listened, stricken with wonder and vague compassion.

"My pet, my little friend! and did you wait for me? Did you know my voice when I called out? Were you glad when I caught so many flies for your breakfast? Yes, yes! I found you waiting for me in the corner, wondering at the light, I dare say; but neither that, or the awful thunder of falling rocks could drive you from the old place. Did you hear me at work, day after day? Could you understand that I was in search of you, and that every stone I lifted took a load from my heart? They would not listen to me, our wild, fierce friends, and shouted with laughter when I told them I had a friend that must not be left, if I went. How could they understand that it was tearing my heart to leave you? But their kindness frightened me, and by force I was carried up, up into the sunlight, that struck me blind; into a home that was strange as a grave; and into a bed that tortured me with its softness. It was not home—that was with you, my darling. You shall have the sunlight

as I do, and look out with me on the calm, white moon. It will seem strange at first, as it did to me; but you will not feel more afraid of it than I was."

Louison listened to the plaintive fondness of these rambling words, till they died away in soft cooing murmurs. Then she stooped a little, and passed into the cell, where, by a few faint gleams of the moon that trembled downward even to that depth, she saw a man sitting on the dungeon floor, his black garments trailing around him, and a beard, white as silver and soft as snow, sweeping down to his waist; his head was bent, and he was looking at some dark object in his hand.

When this man saw Louison, he laid his right hand over this object, lifted it to his bosom, sheltering it under his flowing beard, and turned his bright eyes angrily on the woman.

"Have you come again?" he said, querulously. "I know you. It was you, and the like of you, that dragged me into the hot sunlight. Have you come again?"

"Who are you, and how came you here?" demanded the woman, struck with wonder and something like dread.

"I was a man they called Dr. Gosner once, years and years ago; but they give me no name since then. Here it was No.—oh, I forget!—out yonder, where the sun shines, they call me '*The Prisoner of the Bastille*.'"

"Ah! Are you that man? But I thought you were cared for, that you had a comfortable home with your own family. How came you here?"

"This is my home; it is shady and quiet. I have a friend here."

"What friend? Your wife? Surely she does not come here."

"I had a wife once, bright as a flower, and they told me I was going to her; but when I cried out for her, a woman of the people came,—proud, grand, noisy. It troubled me, it troubled me!"

Here the man pressed both hands to his bosom, and his beard shook passionately.

"But your wife is still living? I know the whole sad story," said Louison.

"My wife! She called herself that. I saw her carrying a flag in her hand, and wearing a cockade on her bosom. There was fire in her eyes, and specks of foam on her lips. She looked straight at the sun, and cried out, with a host of fierce, angry women, 'Bread or blood! Bread or blood!' Then I knew this woman was *not* my wife."

"Ah! I know well who it is—you speak of Madame Gosner. There is no voice at the clubs more powerful than hers. She leads the women and half the men of Paris with her enthusiasm and her force of will; Theroigne, of Liege, is not more powerful."

"My wife was young, sweet, gentle. She desired no power; but only asked for the pleasure of leading our child."

"But your wrongs have made her a patriot—a leader among down-trodden women and great men."

The old man shook his head sadly.

"The greatest wrong that can be done to any man is to deprive him of a wife he loves."

"But you are not deprived of this great woman. She is still your wife."

"Then let her go back to the vineyards which grew around our home, out of this turmoil, where human happiness has no root."

"But that would be to cast away her power, and darken her own glory."

"Power over the vile passions of madmen; the glory which bathes itself crimson in blood! What has any man's wife in common with such things as these?"

"Then you scoff at a revolution in which women go breast to breast with brave men?"

"Scoff? No; it is long since I have forgotten how to scoff. We learn more humility in prison."

"But who sent you there? The king! Who was it that promised freedom, as a return for her own vile life, and then gave forth that you were dead? Marie Antoinette, the Austrian!"

"The king who buried me is dead. God has long since judged him for the crime!"

"But the woman who ruled that weak, wicked man is still living."

"Let her live."

"But your wrongs belong to the people. They speak louder than the clamor of a thousand tongues against the man and woman who call themselves merciful, yet kept you a prisoner in this horrid place years and years after the original oppressor was dead."

"Hush! Speak lower, you disturb my little friend. It is always so quiet here."

Louison shook her head.

"Poor man, his mind is disturbed."

"No; it is my heart which shrinks from the strife going on up yonder. They dragged me into it; *she* did, the woman who calls herself my wife. She dragged me to her side on the cannon that day, where hordes of frantic women might whet their rage over my broken life. Had that woman been on the guillotine, they would have found me by her side; but not there—not there. France has better uses for her women."

"Then you denounce the women who are ready to die for liberty; you side with royal tyrants?" said Louison, fiercely.

"Woman, if you are one of them, go away and leave me in peace."

"No, old man, I will not leave you. In these times the life and peace of every man and woman in France belongs

to the nation. It is given some to fight, some to speak, and others to plan—you shall not sit here musing in silence. There is eloquence in your wrongs, power in your white hair—glory to crown it when this government is overthrown. You are needed to inspire the people who have given you freedom. Old man, I charge you to join those who will have 'Liberty or death! Liberty or death!' These were the words of a great American patriot, who did more by that one outburst to win the freedom he pined for, than the swords of fifty common warriors. Your words may be equally powerful."

The old man shook his head, but made no answer. Louison grew fierce, for his meek opposition excited her to rage. She moved a little on one side, and the motion let in a gleam of moonlight, which fell on the old man's face. She spoke again with bitterness.

"Old man, you are dreaming."

"Dreaming? Yes! One learns to dream when light and speech are forgotten; but this dream brings tears to my eyes—and they come with such pain now! Would it offend you, madame, if I ask to be alone with my friend?"

"With your friend? What friend? I see no one here."

"No matter; but I am used to being alone. Would it please you to leave me? In this place, company seems strange."

"Yes, old man, I will go, but on one condition. When the patriots want you, in order to deal out vengeance where it has been so foully earned, there must be no faltering—your wrongs belong to the nation. You were dragged forth from this dungeon that the people might learn something of the tyranny that oppresses them. All the remnant of your life belongs to them, and they will not be defrauded of it."

Again the old man shook his head with pathetic mournfulness; but Louison grew implacable and stamped her foot on the broken stones of the floor.

"Are you thus ungrateful to the patriots who saved you?" she exclaimed, so fiercely that the prisoner shrunk within himself, and looked up frightened. His hands trembled so violently that the object they held fell down upon the folds of his black cloak with a tiny shriek, as if its gentle life were also disturbed by the presence of that angry woman.

"What is that thing you are caressing?" demanded the woman, as Gosner laid his hand tenderly over a bright-eyed mouse that was trying to hide itself in the folds of his cloak.

"Oh! do not hurt it! Do not hurt it!" cried the old man, reading danger in her fierce glance.

The woman interrupted him with unutterable scorn in her face and voice.

"And it is for a reptile like this you creep away, and refuse to show your wrongs to the people, when every white hair on your head would pierce the tyrants of France like a sword? Old man, I despise you!"

As she spoke, Louison gave a vicious snatch at the old prisoner's mantle, shook the frightened little creature that sought covert there to the floor, and dashed it against the wall with her foot.

With a cry of mingled rage and pain the old man leaped to his feet, seized the woman by the throat, and held her till she grew crimson in the face. Then he cast her suddenly away, fell upon the floor, and taking up the wounded animal in his hands, bent over it in pitiful misery, while tears ran down his cheeks in great, heavy drops. Not a murmur left his lips; but you might have seen by the faint shiver of his beard that his mouth was trembling violently.

A thrill of human pity seized upon Louison when she saw this anguish. Forgetting her own injuries, she bent down and reached forth her hand to make sure if the old man's pet were living or dead; but that sharp cry again drove her back, and she retreated from the ruined dungeon grieved for the misery she had wrought.



When the old prisoner knew that he was alone, he gathered up the folds of his mantle, and laid his little favorite down with such tender handling as a mother gives to her only child when she puts its little shroud on. He touched its silken sides with his fingers; breathed upon its eyes and sobbed aloud when all his plaintive efforts failed to lift those tiny lids, or stir one of those slender limbs.

That which all his wrongs, and an imprisonment of years had failed to accomplish, the heartless woman who had just left him found the power to do. The old man stood up in his cell, and lifting his clasped hands to heaven, called for vengeance on his enemy, and besought God to check the evil spirit which was filling France with demons in the form of women. After this outburst, he sat down in a corner of the dungeon, and shrouding his face, moaned over the little animal which had been his sole companion, year after year, in that dismal place.

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## CHAPTER LXVIII.

### MARGUERITE COMFORTS HER FATHER.

WHILE his eyes were shrouded, and his head bowed low in utter dejection, a young girl darkened the moonlight which streamed into the dungeon, and settled down by the old man with such delicate stillness, that he was not conscious of her approach until her hand was laid on his shoulder.

"What is it that troubles you, father?"

Her voice was sympathetic and full of sadness. He heard it and all the gentle sweetness of his nature flowed back upon his wounded soul. The very touch of a kind, good woman stilled the wrath which a bad one had enkindled there.

The old man took both hands from his face, and pointed downward at his poor, little friend, upon which the moonlight was lying.

"Look there, Therese!"

"Oh! how cruel, how hard!" cried the girl, taking the little animal in her hands. "Dead, poor little marmousette—is it dead?"

"Yes, it is dead; a woman killed it," said the old man, with a thrill of the old anger in his voice.

"A woman? No, no! What woman?"

"One of those who call themselves women of France. They have hunted me down like wolves, hoping to make my sorrows the instruments of their vengeance."

"Oh! I understand," said the girl, mournfully. "It was one of those women who pointed poor Doudel out, as he stood guard upon the tower, when the Bastille was assaulted. The mob had seized upon me, but I would not cry out, from fear that he would come down to rescue me, and thus expose himself; but she saw the agony in his face, and pointed the carbine upon him. I saw it, and flung up my arms to warn him; but at that very moment he fell, with a crash, to the pavement. Oh it was fearful!"

These words left Marguerite's lips with a cry of despair that found a weird echo in the ruins. Then she fell into shuddering sobs that died out at last, and only murmured,

"Never will the face of that woman leave my memory. It was that of a beautiful fiend."

"Alas!" said the old man. "How much innocent blood was shed that I and a few others might be set free."

"Poor Doudel was not to blame. He put no man in prison; but only did a guard's duty. Why did the mob murder him?"

"It was for me that your friend lost his life."

"Then let us thank our blessed Lady that he did not die in vain," answered the gentle girl.

The old man did not answer, his head was bowed down, his hands moved restlessly. No subject could take him long from a remembrance of the desolation of his loss.

All at once the young girl uttered a little cry.

"Oh, my father! have some hope."

The old man started.

"Hope! hope! What for?"

"It is warm! Yes, yes! It moves!"

"What, what? Ah! it would be so cruel to deceive me!"

"Look, look! its pretty eyes are open."

"Oh, my God! is this true?"

"It is trying to stand up in my palm. Poor little thing, how it quivers."

"Let me look—let me touch it!" cried the old man, trembling with eagerness. "My pet! my life! my little darling!"

The old man's voice broke into tears. He held out his hands, but they shook so that the mouse fell back when it attempted to climb them. Marguerite caressed it against her cheek; then laid it softly into the outstretched palm of the old prisoner, answering back his smile when he hid the creature under his beard.

"There, you see our Lady has not altogether forsaken us," said the girl, drawing a basket from under her shawl. "I was sure that you would be here, and brought something for both you and marmousette to eat. Poor, little thing—does it tremble yet?"

"Yes; but I think it is not so badly hurt."

"Dreadfully frightened, I dare say," answered Marguerite, "and all its little breath knocked out against the stones. I saw that odious woman pass, and hid myself in the ruins. I saw her face—that face. It was the woman who pointed the carbine at Doudel. But we will think of her no more. You will go home with me now, papa."

"Not yet—not to her—that woman who calls herself Therese; as if I did not know. She will drag me again into the clubs and along the streets that men may gaze on my white hair, and curse their king. I will not go; they shall not force me to harm him. Therese! Therese! do you understand that I think the king a good man?"

Marguerite flung her arms around the old prisoner.

"I did not expect to hear you say that, my father, because you have been so cruelly treated; but I love the king, and the queen, too. Yes, if they tear me to pieces, I will love her to the end."

"That is a brave, good girl. I love them; I pity them—but what can we do? You, a young girl, and I an old man, broken down in body, and confused in brain. What can we do but give them love and pity?"

"This we can do; it may not be much, because the lives of a young girl and an old man are of little value where the great of the earth are swept down and trampled under foot; but we can pray for them, watch for them, and give up our poor lives, if that will do any good. I will tell you a secret, my father. There was a time when this mob of coarse women and cruel men almost made me one of them, because of the awful wrong that has been done to you; but I had seen the king, and knew better than they did, how little right we had to condemn him. The queen had taken me in her arms; wept and pleaded for me. How could I turn against them? There might have been deception, but not there!—my heart always told me that."

"That is well, that is very well, my Theresè. Listen now, I also have a secret; I have spoken with the king."

"You, my father? It could not have been on that awful day when they dragged us to Versailles with the mob?"

The old man laughed a gentle, childish laugh.

"No, no; I escaped them. You could not, but I did."

Their cries deafened me. They were not women but demons, so I fled from them; most of all from *her*."

"I saw it, father, and strove to follow, but the crowd hemmed me in and dragged me onward. Women frantic to hurl themselves and their troubles against the queen, forced me to obey them. Oh, it was fearful! How the rain fell—how the mud flew—how the women howled!

"In the midst of the storm we reached Versailles. Some of the leaders, fierce, handsome women, followed my mother into the assembly. The great mob poured in after them, clamoring for bread, for they were half famished. They demanded a sight of the baker and his wife."

"The baker and his wife," repeated the prisoner, wondering.

"By these names they insulted the king and queen," said Marguerite, "as if they could help the barrenness of the earth.

"The Jacobins would have forced an entrance for them; but more moderate men strove to quiet the mob. Twelve women were selected from the crowd, deputed to lay their grievances before the king.

"Count Mirabeau insisted that I should go with these women and speak for them, because of my youth and innocence, he said; because of my father's wrongs, the women cried out. My mother commanded me and I went.

"These women, so audacious among the enemies of the king, trembled to approach him. With his mild, earnest eyes upon them—they were struck dumb. That was perhaps why a young girl, who had no evil purpose to conceal, was selected when these people were called upon to test their courage.

"We went. Out of the bosom of that seething mob, we entered the grand stillness of the palace. King Louis was ready to receive us. The deputation of women crowded into the saloon, sullen and dumb; the presence of that

good man appalled them. They pushed me forward, whispering that I had a sweet voice and persuasive ways. I approached the king with reverence; my friend had died for him, I, too, could have died for him then and there. I longed to tell him so; longed to fall down at his feet and embrace his knees, imploring of him only one thing—bread for the hungry people in exchange for my father's sufferings.

"The king recognized me, and a look of trouble came into his benign face. He held out his hand, saying in a low voice which was heard only by myself,

"'Poor child, it was not the king who withheld your father from you.'

"I forgot all that the women had said to me; one cry arose to my lips—bread! bread! With that cry I fainted and fell at the king's feet. He lifted me up with many kind words, which I heard as if they came back to me in a dream. Then I whispered, 'Sire, my father never blamed you, neither do I. I came to ask bread for these poor, starving people, in his name!'

"The king listened and understood all I wished to say. When I looked up, his eyes were full of tears. He kissed me here upon the cheek. No man on this earth shall ever take that kiss from my face—it was the consecration of a vow that I made then and there."

The old prisoner became greatly excited as he listened; his eyes kindled, his lips began to quiver, and he spoke with energy.

"It was this man! It was the daughter of my old mistress, the Empress of Austria, they would have assaulted through me. Listen, little one.

"I have seen the daughter of my old mistress, Maria Theresa."

"The Queen of France, do you mean that?" said Marguerite astonished.

"Yes, the Queen of France. Some one told me that she wore my Egyptian ring on her finger. That ring holds my soul, my brain—your destiny. To her it is a curse, to me everything. I went in search of it. You all thought I was lost. No, no, I was waiting and watching for her to come forth from her palace.

"A lady did come forth at last. I thought she might bear a message from me to the queen, and followed her. This lady was proud, thoughtful, and imperious, and I approached her timidly; still there was a look that brought back the fair young princess whom I saw once standing side by side with my imperial mistress,—young, slender, beautiful, with eyes soft and bright as a pretty child's. Ah, how well I remember them both! They tell me the empress is dead; but her daughter, the lovely girl that came to France, her destiny is yet to be accomplished. Ah me!"

The old man broke off here, and fell to shuddering. A wild, mournful look came to his face, and it was some minutes before he spoke again.

"I spoke to the lady and she listened kindly. All at once she lifted her hand; the scarabee ring was upon it. Then I knew it was the queen, and uttered a cry that frightened her, and she fled from me. I followed, pleading for my ring, entreating her to listen. But she only fled from me all the faster, carrying the curse on and on.

"Then I saw the king. He came to me in the calm of the moonlight, and we talked together in the stillness of the hushed leaves. He knows all that I have suffered, and pities the poor man no will of his ever harmed. He gave me a place to sleep in. He came to me in the morning and deigned to explain that the governor of this prison deceived him as you were deceived. He thought truly that I was dead."

"I knew it, I was sure of it," cried Marguerite, with enthusiasm; "both the king and queen were blameless."

"It was for that I fled hither from the mob," said the old man. "These women meant to set me up before the Assembly and call for vengeance in my name, but I defeated them."

"It was then that you came back here. Oh father, you little know how we have mourned and sought for you, day and night."

"Yes, I found the ruins and slept here the next night.—Slept soundly for the first time since the mob carried me away. Then I began searching for my poor little friend. It was in vain that I called for him; in vain that I stretched forth my hands in the darkness, and listened for some faint sound of his approach. Oh! that was desolation!

"Still, I dared not quit the ruin. I was afraid that the mob would force me into their evil work again. I understood then that my presence in the clubs, my harmless walks in the streets, every word I spoke, was a spear leveled at the heart of the king—a man who was guiltless as a babe where I was concerned—a man who loves his people and deserves their love. Here I hide myself and keep safe from doing harm. It is my own home; here I can sleep tranquilly; boards are too soft, I want the hard rock.

"More than one morning came, and I had not tasted food. I should not have cared for that had my pretty friend been with me; but I had called him so often, searched for him so long, that hope gave out. It was worse than a prison now, he had left me and the light came into my cell. This was indeed solitude. Then I thought of you, Therese, and wondered if you would not come to me."

"And I am here. It was I that thought of the ruins, I, who have found you sitting here alone and half-famished," exclaimed Marguerite. "But I have brought you plenty of food. There will be enough for the marmousette as well; poor little fellow! He came back at last to comfort you."

"Yes. I awoke in the night and found him nestled in my bosom. Let him have a crumb first, I can wait."

The girl opened her basket, and drew forth some bread and a flask of pure water. The old man crumbled some of the bread into his hand and tempted the pet-mouse with it; but the poor little thing had been too severely hurt, and, instead of eating, closed its eyes, and lay down in the palm out of which the prisoner had made a nest for him.

"To-morrow," said the girl, answering the startled look of the old man, "to-morrow I will bring white bread, then it will eat. But you are hungry, take some of the bread."

"I cannot, I cannot," cried the old man. "When he eats I will."

The mouse seemed to understand these words; its tiny limbs moved, its little head was uplifted, and when Marguerite held the crumbs toward him, he crept forward and began to nibble them.

Then, with tears of thankfulness rolling down his cheeks, the old man fell to eating also.

## CHAPTER LXIX.

### QUEENLY STRUGGLES.

MONTHS passed, and each day widened the gulf that yawned between the people of France and their king. Marie Antoinette began to lose courage. More than once Monsieur Jacques had been summoned to the royal workshop, but he always passed from that to the queen's cabinet.

One day, after the Court had removed from its forced residence at the Tuileries to St. Cloud, a horseman came riding along the highway which led from Paris. A lady

stationed at one of the palace windows leaned out and looked keenly after the man, as if trying to recognize him with certainty. He rode slowly, his head was turned toward the chateau, and she saw his face.

There was no mistaking those features after seeing them once. The great leonine head, with its shock of heavy hair; the seamed cheeks, and massive chin, could only belong to one man, Count Mirabeau.

The lady drew away from the window, and directly entered the presence of Marie Antoinette, whose friend and confidential attendant she had been for some dangerous years.

The queen was walking up and down the room in a state of unusual agitation. You could see by the light in her fine eyes, and the compression of her mouth, that she was about to undertake some task utterly distasteful to her. She turned sharply as her confidant came in.

"Well!"

"He is here, your highness. He has just passed."

"Alone?"

"On horseback, and quite alone!"

"Look again, and tell me which way he goes."

The duchess left the room, and Marie Antoinette resumed her impatient walk up and down the floor. There had been a terrible struggle before that proud woman and brave queen could prevail upon herself to give that reprobate count the special and private meeting that he had come to St. Cloud that day to claim. Now, in the sore strait to which royalty, in France, was driven, she had come to this sad humiliation, and was about to meet Count Mirabeau, the renegade from his class, the coarse noble, the eloquent leader of a riotous people, in private, and utterly alone.

But time wore on, and her confidant did not return. Had she been mistaken? Had the man passed them, in the coarse mockery so natural to his character, thus flinging

back years of contempt upon her, and scoffing at the concessions she had been compelled to make.

The proud blood of Maria Theresa burned in her veins as the thought flashed across her brain. She clenched her hand in an agony of shame, and stood in the centre of the room, listening with the breathless eagerness of a girl waiting for her lover. Yet she hated this man with a thorough revolt of her whole nature. He was utterly disgusting to her taste as a woman, and she thoroughly despised the means by which he had obtained the power she dreaded, and was ready to conciliate.

The lady came at last. She had gone to one of the topmost windows of the palace, and from thence had seen the count ride along the highway toward a distant grove, where he had evidently left his horse; for directly he came forth again, and passed into the Park, where he was now loitering, apparently, but making quiet progress toward the place of rendezvous.

Marie Antoinette drew a deep breath; at least she had escaped a possible insult from the man she loathed. He had been faithful to his appointment. She must meet him.

The beautiful woman and the proud queen went hand-in-hand with Marie Antoinette. It was not enough that she could command homage by her state; in order to make it perfect, she must win it by those womanly charms, which few men had ever resisted. In order to bind this man to her chariot-wheels, she must win him to her side, body and soul. There must be no appearance of dislike in her manner to him. All the force of her beauty and genius must be brought against him. He was not to be convinced by argument, but won in spite of himself.

No woman that ever lived — save, perhaps, Mary of Scotland, who was not more lovely in her person than this unhappy Queen of France — could better have performed the task before her. She was still beautiful.

What she had lost of youth came back to her in the dignity and assured grace of ripe womanhood. The necessities of her life had brought tact and keen perception with them. But she knew that all these qualities would be strained to their utmost. The man she had to deal with was brilliant, keen, unprincipled; but she knew that with such men there is sometimes a feeling of chivalric devotion where women are concerned, which, once enlisted, amounts to honor.

These were the thoughts that made Marie Antoinette so earnest and so restless. She hated the task allotted her, but for that reason was the more resolved to accomplish it. Her dignity as a queen, and her supremacy with the sex, demanded it.

"Yes, I must go now," she said, drawing a shawl of black lace, which her lady brought, over her head and shoulders. "It will not be prudent to keep this man waiting. Ah! it is hard when the Queen of France is brought to this. Wait for me, and watch that no one follows."

"How beautiful you are!" said the confidant, as she arranged the shawl. "I never saw a finer flush of roses on your cheeks!"

"It is the shame breaking out from my heart,—shame that my mother's child should be so humbled."

Perhaps it was; but the woman was triumphing in her talent and her beauty all the time, else why had she put on that exquisite robe, with its silken shimmer of greenish gold, or arranged the black lace so exquisitely over the red roses on her bosom? She had made many conquests in her life; but never that of a human animal, so brilliant in his coarseness as this Count Mirabeau. Away in the park was a little temple, or a summer-house, in which members of the royal family, sometimes, rested themselves after a fatiguing walk. It had been arranged



that the count should await the royal lady in this pretty building. Marie Antoinette walked away from the palace so quietly that no one of the household heeded her departure, for it had always been her habit to walk alone, or with attendants, in the Park of Versailles and St. Cloud, as the caprice might come upon her. So she sauntered on quietly enough while the palace was in sight; but the moment it was shut out by the trees, her step became rapid, her breath came quickly, and she moved forward in vivid excitement, as if preparing herself for an encounter with some splendid wild animal.

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## CHAPTER LXX.

### ENEMIES RECONCILED.

THE Queen of France reached the summer-house just as the sun was pouring a flood of crimson and gold into the violet shadows that lay among the trees which sheltered the little temple. The windows, where they were visible through the clustering ivy and flowers, blazed with the arrowy light that broke against them, and the soft grass that lay around grew ruddy in the rich glow.

This seemed a good omen to the queen, who stepped lightly over the turf and entered the temple where Mirabeau was standing, so swiftly that he had hardly time to turn from the window, where he had been watching for her, before she stood face to face with him.

Marie Antoinette had never been within speaking distance of this magnificent demagogue before. She was astonished by the wonderful power that lay in supreme ugliness. His face had the fascination which some wild animals possess, and his large eyes dwelt upon her with the half-sleepy,

half-pleading look which these animals have when but half aroused.

She came forward, radiant from her walk, fresh from the soft breeze that had swept over her, but with some shyness, real or apparent, such as a woman of sensitive modesty feels in meeting a stranger. When Mirabeau saw her face, and the light that shone in those splendid eyes, he sunk upon one knee, and bent his head, but not so low as to conceal the smile that transfigured all his face.

"Ah, madame! how long I have pined and prayed for this hour," he said, lifting his eyes to her face with an expression that made her breath come fast, for it changed the whole aspect of that face like a miracle, and drew her toward him with irresistible fascination. This troubled her; for hatred of the man had been to her a sure safeguard, and she began to tremble lest it should pass away. She expected audacity, but looked down upon a strong, powerful man, who had thrown himself at her feet with the docility of a Newfoundland dog.

"Arise, Monsieur Count," she said, smiling upon him; and she was astonished to find how naturally the smile came to her lips. "If we have not been friends before, it is rather our misfortune than yours."

"Ah! if your highness could have thought so! But my enemies prevailed against me until it is now almost too late."

"Nothing is too late for a man like Mirabeau," said the queen again, motioning that he should arise. "You, who have taught the people of France to hate their king, can, with the same powers of eloquence, convince them that he is their best friend."

Mirabeau arose to his feet, and again that smile flashed upon the woman, who could not turn her eyes from the marvelous brightness that transfigured his face.

"Ah! if I had the power your highness awards me, and



you would deign to use it, no slave of the thousands who have knelt at your feet would be so grateful as Mirabeau."

The queen seated herself on a divan that curved in with the walls of the temple. Mirabeau followed, and stood near her; but she swept the folds of her dress together, and motioned that he should take the place by her side.

"This is honor, better still, happiness," he said, accepting the seat. "How often, fair queen, have I wondered why you kept me from you. Never in the world had sovereign a more devoted subject."

Marie Antoinette sighed heavily; she began to comprehend how much power had been flung away in keeping this man from the court. She could appreciate now the wonderful influence he possessed with the people.

She answered him graciously, "cannot the past, with its mistakes, be forgotten? Of all people in the world, a sovereign is most likely to be deceived with regard to those who surround him. We were led——"

Mirabeau forgot that it was the queen who spoke, and with the same impetuous roughness which made his popularity with the people, broke in upon her half-finished sentence.

"You were led to believe me wild, unprincipled, selfish; a man who belonged to the people only because he was rejected by his own class. Part of this is true, but more false. Had you deigned to call me to your aid, madame, a more devoted slave would not have lived."

Marie Antoinette sat in supreme astonishment. How was she to reach this man—through his greatness or through his sins?

For the first time in her queenly life this woman doubted herself. In Mirabeau she saw the two contending elements which already distracted France—the refinements of the court and the fierce strength of its antagonists, inordinate self-love and ready self-abasement. She knew at once that

her intellect, clear and acute as it was, could not cope with his; but in those soft flatteries of look and speech, that undermine and persuade, she was more than a match for any man or woman of France. Men who do not like to be convinced are the most easily persuaded.

"They have, indeed misled us," she answered, leaning gently toward the man, who turned upon her for the instant with the gleam of a wild beast in his eyes; but the look softened beneath her glance, and the upright form bent imperceptibly toward her. "I will not say how many cruel things have poisoned the ear of my august husband, or wounded my own self-love."

Here Mirabeau started to his feet.

"Have they dared to hint that I ever whispered one word against your highness as a queen, and the loveliest woman in Europe?"

"Perhaps I have heard worse than that."

"Worse than that? Nay, then, I should have been the brute they call me. Tell me, your highness, who my traducers are?"

"Forgive me if I withhold all such knowledge. If Count Mirabeau is to be our friend, he must not exhaust himself in private quarrels."

"If I am to be your friend, madame? Who ever knew Mirabeau war against a woman?"

"But when that woman is a queen, the wife of a king, and the daughter of an empress, the weight of her royalty may overpower every thing else."

Marie Antoinette said this in a tone of apology, as if she longed to make some excuse for the thrice regal power that might weigh against her loveliness.

Mirabeau was struck by this sweet humility; a soft protesting smile stole over his face. The queen lifted her eyes to his, and held his gaze in fascination.

"Madame, turn those eyes away. Ah! I was told truly;

a man must be brave to audacity who could refuse anything to that glance. Mirabeau is your slave already, only tell me how I can best begin my service."

The heart of Marie Antoinette leaped to her lips, but, no look of the triumph she felt came to her eyes, they were moist with sweet thankfulness, nothing more.

"It is not for me to say how you can best serve us. The genius that has struck us so deeply will know how to reassert itself. In the Assembly, no voice has been so eloquent against royalty as that of Count Mirabeau."

"I know it! I know it! But how am I to unsay that which the people have accepted as gospel?"

"Tell them that they are mistaken in their belief about the king. Oh, monsieur! you have no true knowledge of that brave and good man. You heap the sins of all the previous kings of France upon his head. You have made him odious with the people, when they have no better friend on earth. Tell the people this; as you alone can express a noble truth. Wing it with your eloquence. Enforce it by the profound respect which you must feel when the heart of Louis the Sixteenth is really known to you. I say to you, Count Mirabeau, there is not a man in all France who has the good of his people so close at heart. Has he not forgiven much—granted more? Do the people who malign him never think of the great outrages that have been perpetrated against him? Are not the ruins of the Bastille before their eyes? A kingly fortress so completely identified with the royalty of France, that it was like tearing out the jewels of her crown when the people razed it to the ground. Yet no man has been punished for the traitorous deed. The king forgave what was an insult to his power and a wrong against himself. Nay, since then, has he not heaped concession on concession to the people—opened the very barriers of royalty, that they might rush in; changed his ministers, and disgraced his best friends at their insolent bidding——"

## CHAPTER LXXI.

## MIND SWAYING MIND.

MARIE ANTOINETTE stopped suddenly. The passion in her voice, and the quick flash of her eyes were fast undoing the sweet impression she had made upon this singular man. She saw this by the changed expression of his face, and made haste to retrieve herself.

"It is of my husband, I speak," she said; "and that makes me forget myself. A kinder sovereign never lived, or one more willing to make all reasonable concessions. If I am earnest in saying this, it is because those who wish to serve Louis must understand all his goodness, all that he is willing to grant and to suffer. Believe me, I do not speak thus, Monsieur Count, because he is my husband—that would be a weak reason, when dealing with a statesman of France; but in this I only think of him as a sovereign and a Frenchman, loving his country and his people with more than the affection of a father.

Mirabeau looked upon the animation of that beautiful face with kindling admiration. He could appreciate the bright intellect which broke through all her sweetness and most feminine wiles. She was, in fact, a woman above all others to seize upon his imagination, and touch his wayward heart.

"I would rather tell the people of France of their queen," he said.

Tears rushed to Marie Antoinette's eyes. She clasped her hands in her lap.

"Ah! they will never, never believe anything good of me; and I loved them so well—so well!" she said.

"They shall be made to think everything that is good of you, or Mirabeau will have lost his power to carry the peo-

ple with him," cried the count, with enthusiasm. "Henceforth the man who does not worship Marie Antoinette is to me an enemy."

"Oh! I do not ask worship, only a little justice. Why will they distort every thing I say or do?"

She was weeping in a soft, womanly way, that touched the heart of that man like the innocent cry of a child.

"Why will the people of France not look upon their queen as a French woman. I came among them so young, so earnest to make them love me; but it is always the Austrian! the Austrian! As if it were a sin to be the daughter of Maria Theresa!"

"Sweet lady! the people do not know you; their leaders do not know you. Up to this hour I have myself looked upon Marie Antoinette as the enemy of liberty—a stranger to France and her people."

"How can I help this? How can I undeceive a people who are determined to think ill of me?" cried the queen.

"By letting them see their queen as I do; by granting all that can reasonably be conceded to them."

"But concession belongs to the king."

Mirabeau smiled more broadly than was becoming in the presence of his sovereign; but, during this whole interview, there had been so little of courtly ceremony, that the queen scarcely heeded it. The very act of her meeting any man in the solitude of that place, put court etiquette completely aside.

"The king must be unlike inferior men, if he were not guided in most things by so fair and sweet a counsellor."

"That is hard," answered the queen. "I can no more control the monarch of France than I can make the people love me."

"The people shall love you, or hate me!" exclaimed Mirabeau, with enthusiasm. "Do not speak so sadly; do not despair of a just appreciation. When Mirabeau says

to the people, 'I have seen this lady whom you call the Austrian; she is fair, she is wise, her heart yearns toward the people of France,' they will believe me."

"Heaven grant it!" said the queen, clasping her hands more firmly, while her tears dropped upon them. "Give us back the love of our people, and there is no honor, no influence that shall not be yours. Ah! I remember well when I first came to France, so young, so trusting—a child given up to them wholly by an imperial mother. How they loved me then. When I entered the theatre, they arose in one body and filled the air with joyous salutations. If I drove through the streets, they cast flowers in my path. Oh, what have I done? What have I done that they should change so terribly, now that I have lived so long among them, and am a mother to the children of France—the wife of the best king they ever knew? What *have* I done?"

Mirabeau reached forth his hand to take hers; in her tears and her helpless sorrow she was only a woman to him; but he bethought himself and drew back with a heavy sigh. Had he, indeed, the power he had boasted of? Could he, with all the force of his wonderful eloquence, bring back the popularity which had once followed this woman, as if she had been a goddess? Would not the people question his motives, and ask a reason for his change of opinion? Dare he arise in his place, and say to the world that he had just come from an interview with the Queen of France, and was henceforth her friend and advocate? Would he have the courage to confess that even his glowing ideas of liberty had yielded to the tears and reasonings of a beautiful woman? Yes, he dared do even that—the people would still have faith in their leader; that which he had taught with such ardor could be softened, moulded into new forms. He would bring the royalty of France into favor with its

subjects by apparent concessions, which should all seem to spring from the queen.

Marie Antoinette read his thoughts, and her face grew anxious. "Had she humbled herself for nothing? Was this man's power already exhausted against her? Would the people listen when he came out in favor of a court which his eloquence had done so much to destroy?"

He read her face also, and answered it as if she had spoken.

"That which I have pledged myself to accomplish shall be done, if it cost Mirabeau his fame, and his own life. Have no fear, madame; these people are like children, they want strong men to think and act for them. Who among all their leaders has my strength, or has ever so thoroughly controlled them? With my pen, with my voice, with every power of my soul, I will work to bring these people in harmony with the court. Can you trust in me, lady?"

"I do trust in you, and I thank you for myself and for the king. Nay, in time the people of France will look upon you as their saviour also. But what can we offer in return?"

A flush of hot-red came into Mirabeau's face. He remembered thoughts that had clung to him as he rode along—terms he had intended to make, and advantages that would relieve the necessities that were ever following the lavish extravagance of his habits. All these he had absolutely forgotten; and when the queen, in her gratitude, brought them back to his memory, all the pride of his manhood recoiled. Why was he forced to be so grand, and so mean at the same moment? He cast his eyes on the ground, while the swarthy color surged in and out of his face. At last he looked up so suddenly that the thick locks were tossed back from his forehead, like the play of a lion's mane.

"Nothing," he said, with the proud air of a Roman Senator. "When we have saved France and her king, the consciousness that Mirabeau has done it for Marie Antoinette, will sometimes win a smile from her, and that shall be his reward."

The queen was greatly moved. She had seen the struggle in his mind, and partially understood it. The same thoughts had occupied her before leaving the palace. She had heard of Mirabeau's extravagance, and of his proportionate greed. It had seemed to her an easy thing to purchase his help with gold, which, in the terrible difficulties that had fallen upon her, she had learned how to use as a sure political agent. But there was more in the man than she had been led to believe; and the hot flush of shame that rose to his face, when she spoke of reward, made her shrink from what might seem an offered insult.

"Those who help the king are the king's friends always," she said, with deep feeling, for this strange man had won his way to her gratitude. "But those who help us must have the means of helping."

Again Mirabeau's face flushed; but it was with pleasure that the queen had found an excuse for accepting some future bounty which had escaped him.

"One thing," he said, with touching earnestness, "one thing there is which Mirabeau may accept from the Queen of France, and be exalted by the favor."

"Name it," answered Marie Antoinette, gently.

"Favored courtiers are permitted to kiss the queen's hand when they give their lives to her service."

The queen smiled, blushed, and reached forth her hand. Mirabeau took it, bent his knee to the ground, and pressed his lips upon it.

"Madame," he said, standing erect, with the hand in his clasp, "madame, the monarchy is saved."

"God grant it!" said the queen, with solemn emphasis.

"The monarchy is saved, or Mirabeau's life will pay the forfeit," he repeated, with solemnity.

The queen believed him, for there was no doubting his sincerity in the matter. Never in her life had this beautiful woman made so great a conquest, not only over the man himself, but over her own prejudices. She had come to the summer-house detesting the count; she left it impressed with his genius, flattered by his homage.

Mirabeau still held her hand. To approach this lovely woman, and win her into admiration of his genius, had been the ambition of this erratic man for many a year. It was accomplished now. He knew by the light in those magnificent eyes how great his conquest was. She was still Queen of France—even his fierce eloquence had so far failed to bring her down from that sublime height. He saw in her the only woman he had ever met whose intellect reached his own, and whose position, at the same time, taught him to look up. Henceforth it would be his supreme object to keep her firmly on the throne; to enhance her influence, and guide it for the benefit of the people. It was a delicate task; but nothing seemed impossible to the proud, audacious man while that splendid woman stood with her hand in his.

"Now, farewell," she said. "I need not tell you to keep this interview a secret; it would be misunderstood, and might do much harm."

"It would be my glory that the whole world should know of this condescension, and of the grateful respect it has inspired; but those who lead a people must know how to be secret, and when to speak. That you have done me this honor, madame, shall be the one secret that will go with me to the grave."

With these words, the count bent low with a lofty grace that might have befitted the state-chamber at Versailles, and walked backward to the door, where he bowed again and

disappeared, moving swiftly through the glowing purple of the twilight.

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## CHAPTER LXXII.

### SPYING AND WATCHING.

A WOMAN followed Count Mirabeau when he went to St. Cloud—a young woman, some three or four-and-twenty years of age, but looking older from the stormy passions that had swept across her youth, and the corroding jealousy that consumed her now. Louison Brisot had ridden behind him all the way from Paris, but took good care not to come near enough to that imposing figure to give him a glimpse of her person, or allow him to hear the tread of her horse. When he halted in the grove, and tied his horse to a sapling, she drew behind a clump of beech-trees, and watched him as he passed through the gate; then she dismounted, fastened her own horse, and taking a circuit among the undergrowth, came out by the gate, which she tried cautiously and found unlocked.

By this time Mirabeau had disappeared, and the young woman was at a loss to guess which way he had taken. At her left, she saw the roof of St. Cloud rising in irregular glimpses among the embosoming trees. If his business was with the king or queen, she argued, he would take that direction. If he came to seek some meaner object, there was not a tree in the vast Park which might not shelter him and the rival she came to discover.

Which way should she go? Not toward the palace; Mirabeau, the orator and friend of the people, would never venture there unless he was, indeed, a traitor to his party, and led on by some passion which in her arrogance she con-

sidered as treachery to her. More likely he had sought a building, or covert place in the grounds, where some person connected with the royal household would meet him. Nothing but political or social treason could have brought him there.

As the young woman wandered slowly on, meditating in this fashion, a sound of quick footsteps and the rustle of shrubbery startled her. She drew back of a huge tree that stood near and watched for the cause. It was a lady passing swiftly forward through the purple twilight, her head enveloped in the shadowy blackness of a lace shawl, her dress half uplifted by her right hand, half trailing on the grass—a rich dress that glistened in the light which trembled over it.

The lady turned her head and stood still a moment, listening—a slight disturbance in the shrubbery near by seemed to have aroused her apprehension. Louison, concealed behind the tree saw a lovely face and a splendid figure stooping a little, as if arrested in some unlawful or dangerous step. It was but a momentary glance, but she recognized the queen, and the sight threw every passion of her most passionate nature into revolt.

“Traitor!” came hissing through her shut teeth; “double-dyed traitor! For that face he will sell us all!”

The queen passed on swiftly, moving through the green foliage and the purple atmosphere of the Park like a beautiful spirit. After her, creeping forward like a panther, stole the other woman, her eyes gleaming, her lips in motion. She came in sight of a little temple built on high ground, sheltered under drooping elms; from its windows the last golden light of the day was falling back like a sheaf of broken arrows, and a soft luminous haze quivered among the branches that swept over it.

There was too much light for the woman to venture forward, even when she saw the door open, and the person

she had followed pass into the temple. Then through the still blazing windows she saw the shadows of two persons standing together. As she looked, they sunk away and disappeared from her eyes; but she was in a position to hear the murmur of voices.—One, deep, sonorous and impressive, the other, clear, low and sweet; but no words uttered by these voices reached her. She could only guess at their meaning, and a vivid imagination lent poison to her conjectures.

Panting with rage, burning with curiosity, this woman stood in her covert, afraid to pass the stretch of open sward that lay between her and the temple. It seemed to her hours on hours before the two persons in that little building darkened the windows again; but at last two black shadows rose up in the gathering darkness; for, by this time, all the purple and gold of the sunset had merged into the light of a silvery moon, and through the opposite windows came its pale radiance, in which the man and woman stood between darkness and light. She saw him bend and sink downward as if kneeling. She saw the lady stoop her beautiful head. The sight maddened her. She leaped forward with the spring of a tigress to glare through the window, and see Mirabeau's lips pressed upon the hand of Marie Antoinette.

The two persons in the temple separated then, and the watcher saw that they were about to depart. She had seen enough. He must not find her there! If Mirabeau could prove secret and deceptive, so could she. If the fatal charms of the queen had ensnared him, they had set her whole being in opposition.

As the door of the temple opened, Louison sprang away; and while Mirabeau lingered to cast one more look on the queen, who had fascinated him as no other woman on earth could have done, she went swiftly toward the park gate.

Louison Brisot left the park in a state of fierce ex-



asperation. She was absolutely afraid of herself. She panted to stop then and there on the highway, and in the fury of her jealous passion, rebuke that proud demagogue for his double treason.

The women of France, who first entered upon the revolution, possessed two powerful qualities, violent passions and a wonderful power of self-restraint. It was seldom that any of these women plunged into the awful scenes that have revolted the whole world without being led there by the hand of some fierce demagogue, who called himself a patriot. Such men had no use for weak or vacillating women; but mated themselves, legally or illegally, with creatures of their own calibre, using them as political instruments, and casting them aside by mere force of will, or the mockery of a divorce, as the wild beast forsakes his mate in the jungles of a forest.

Louison Brisot was one of these women; born in the middle classes, gifted by nature with strong animal beauty, thirsting for knowledge, full of that keen vitality which demands action, and must have excitement, she had followed Mirabeau into the very heart of the revolution. Haughty and imperious to others, she had always been subservient to him. In her idolatry of the man, and her vanity as a woman, she believed herself to be his sole confidant, and the supreme object of his love. She knew that the queen had, over and over again, refused even to see this man, who was to her a demi-god, and hated her for thus scorning him. In her heart she rejoiced, perhaps unconsciously, that royal pride kept the man she loved away from a court, where so many had been won over to the king, by the beauty and eloquence of his wife.

The two great passions of Louison Brisot's life were thrown into a wild tumult by the scene she had just witnessed; still she found power to control herself. Plunging

into the thicket where her horse was tied, she attempted to unknot his bridle from the sapling; but her hands shook with passion, and were so long in doing it, that she fairly stamped down the earth with impatience before she could mount to the saddle, and ride away toward Paris.

The young woman was but just in time. She heard the tread of Mirabeau's horse following close upon her as she dashed by the palace, and on toward Paris with increasing speed. She must reach home before him. It was possible that the count would call upon her that night, for he was a man who paid no respect to time, and cared nothing for the received usages of society. At her house much of his leisure time had been formerly spent, and she believed herself the depository of all his secrets. But he had been deceiving her. This thought wounded the woman through her hard heart, and leveled her evil pride to the dust. She had hated the queen before, now that hatred settled into bitter detestation.

These two persons traveled home so near together, that the beat of hoofs sent back by her horse more than once struck the ear of Mirabeau, as he approached the rising ground which she was passing. Of this he took no heed. Though a demagogue and a profligate, this man had pledged his support in good faith to the queen, and his quick brain was even then forming plans, by which he hoped to unite her cause with that of France, and harmonize all contending elements into a constitutional monarchy. There was enough in all this to tax even his great brain to the utmost, and he had no time to observe the fall of those hoofs in the distance, which, perhaps, carried his destiny with them.



## CHAPTER LXXIII.

## FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

THE old prisoner still haunted his cell in the ruined Bastille, which he had barricaded with loose stones, and made so difficult of access, that no one but himself and Marguerite was likely to find it out. His irregular habits and frequent wanderings had ceased to excite much interest in his home. It was always understood that Marguerite could find him when she desired, and Madame Gosner was by far too busy working out the downfall of her enemies to give much heed to the childish old man, who could not be made to remember what she had been to him.

Marguerite guarded her father's secret well. When he was missing from home, she alone knew where to find him, and a sweet companionship grew up between the father and child in the ruins of his former prison. The gentle pity of a truly feminine nature drew her to those gaunt ruins almost every nightfall, for she knew that among them would be found that patient and gentle sufferer, who felt more real companionship with the tiny animal, which had been the sole comfort of his unjust imprisonment, than the tumultuous life of the streets had afforded him. The desolate loneliness of those heaped up stones was a safe place for the young girl, as it proved a secret shelter for the man, and both felt a mournful pleasure in meeting where they could be entirely alone.

Perhaps some stray gleam of insanity had crept out of those dark years of solitude into the brain of the old prisoner—but it was of a kind so dreamy and gentle that a poet would have called it inspiration. He loved the little animal that had loved him with childlike idolatry, and the sweet face of that young girl was like that of an angel to

him, for she alone had the power to link his present dreamy state with a heavenly remembrance of his young life in Germany.

True, he could not even yet recognize her as his own child, because that pretty creature had banished out of his life, but he loved to hear her call him father, and gave her the name of Therese, which, from first to last, was obstinately withheld from his wife.

One night, while the moon was at its full, Marguerite crossed the shattered draw-bridge of the old Bastille, and found her way down among the disjointed stones in which the old prisoner's cell had been. He was there sitting in a patch of moonlight, that lay like a silver flag across the entrance, talking softly to his little favorite, who was creeping up his garments and clinging to his beard, or sheltering itself under his hand, flitting hither and thither like a wingless bird.

The old man started up wildly, and uttered a faint cry as Marguerite broke up the silver of the moonlight.

"Don't be afraid, father, it is only Marguerite," said the girl, in gentle haste to reassure the trembling man.

"Oh, yes! I—I thought it was the other," he said, "some one from the great city. Would you think it? They follow me—they suspect."

"Suspect what, my father?"

"That I find shelter somewhere—for I do not sleep in their beds; I cannot live among such noises. So they follow me, and spy upon me, and think I go among the enemies of the people. I, who have no life out of this place; no friend but this little creature and you—and you, my Therese."

Marguerite sat down by the old prisoner, and took his hand in hers.

"I, dear father, am better than a friend, your own dear child. Did I not come to you in the prison when every

door was locked? Did I not persuade poor old Doudel and bribe the governor with my flowers? Do you remember how I crept in under the good keeper's arm when your eyes shone on me through the darkness, and sat down by your side on the cold floor? He wanted me to stay outside; but your dear, old face looked down on me so pitiful, and I would not go. Have you forgotten it, my father?"

"Forgotten it, sweet one! How could I forget? When God sends his angels to spirits in torment, do they forget? My eyes were used to darkness, and your face dazzled them, dazzled my soul! Did you know it, I thought at first that my wife had come. She was so like you, the same golden hair, the same eyes. I could not speak from the joy that seized upon me."

"I remember—I remember! You lifted your hand—how long and white it was. You laid it on my head, and looked down into my eyes so sadly with such pitiful love that I began to cry. Then I remembered you stooped down, your beard swept into my lap, and your face touched mine—you were gathering up my tears with your lips."

The old prisoner nodded his head and smiled.

"Yes, yes, I remember—I remember."

"Doudel got impatient, sat down his lantern, and attempted to lift me from the floor; but I would not go. You remember that?"

"Yes, yes! You clung to me, and wanted to stay there in the dark. Then I thought of the angels that visited Peter in prison, and wondered if they were lovely, like you."

"Was it like that? But you were hungry, and I had only a crust of bread and some figs to give you."

"Yes, yes! Your tears and that look, they were food for the soul."

"Do you remember how you ate the bread, while I sat on the floor and peeled the figs for you? while kind old Doudel held the lantern and looked on?"

The old prisoner nodded his head, and laughed just above his breath.

"It was against the rules, you know, and I had to beg and implore poor Doudel to let me in, with my basket of flowers. How the tears ran down your cheeks when I took them out. Wasn't that a feast?"

The girl looked up as she spoke, and saw that great tears were coursing each other down the old man's face, and falling drop by drop upon his hand, where they trembled and melted away like mist upon marble.

"Now I am making you sad," she murmured.

The old man turned his face toward her, and a smile broke over it. This was the second time within an hour that the gentle sadness of his features had given way. It was like the breaking up of ice under swift gleams of sunshine.

"Sad!" he repeated, "sad! In all the years lost to me, the sight of your sweet face was the one joy. God sent it! God sent it, that I should be kept human!"

"He pitied you. When we went away his eyes were full of tears. I saw it by the light he carried."

"I think he did pity me, for he always spoke kindly, and never attempted to hurt my little friend."

"He was kind as a child, my father," said Marguerite, weeping; how I loved him. They could not have known how I loved him, or his poor life might have been spared."

"Poor child! Poor child!" said the prisoner, smoothing her hair with his white and withered hand. "If I could only comfort you; but I am old, and so helpless: we are but children together, you and I; our little marmousette is almost as strong. See how it sits upon my sleeve, with its bright eyes watching us. It knows, it knows! Hush! Hush! there is a footstep."

Marguerite held her breath and listened, for in that weird place, so laden with murderous traditions, the least

sound brought apprehension with it. There was, indeed, a noise of footsteps wandering among the disjointed stones overhead.

"Hush!" whispered the prisoner; and Marguerite could see that his limbs shook in the moonlight. "It may be that fierce woman. She who says that I and my sorrows belong to France."

"No, it is not the step of a woman," answered Marguerite, under her breath. "I—I think I know it."

That moment a jagged fragment of stone came rushing down from the pile of rocks which encompassed the place where they were sitting, and crashed down upon the pavement, so close to the old man that a portion of his coarse garments were torn and buried under it.

The girl thought that he was killed, and her wild shriek rang upward like the cry of a wounded night-bird. Then she fell upon her knees, and throwing one arm around the old man, drew her hand over his face, shuddering with fear that it would be bathed in his blood. He was alive and struggling to get up, for the strain on his garments had drawn him prone upon the floor, and for a moment he was stunned. "Is he hurt? Has it crushed him?" he demanded, turning his eyes upon Marguerite's face with a look of painful entreaty. "He was so little, poor thing! they need not have hurled a mountain of rocks down to kill him."

"I think not, I hope not," answered the girl, eager to comfort him. "It was creeping up to your shoulder just before the rock fell."

The old man made a desperate effort to free himself, and tore at his dress with vigor, wrenching it in tatters from under the stone; then he rose to his hands and knees, and shook that portion of the loose robe or cloak that fell over his bosom.

"It is not here! It is not here!" he cried out, in anguish.

"Not there; but look, look!"

Marguerite pointed to the rock on which the moonlight fell, and there the little creature sat, alive and safe, with its bright eyes sparkling like diamonds.

The old man reached out both his trembling hands, and the mouse crept into them, shaking like a leaf.

"My poor friend! my dear little one! Will they never let us alone? Hush! hush!"

The steps which had dislodged the stone were coming downward with quick, sharp leaps. Marguerite's cry had evidently made itself heard, and startled the wanderer, whoever he was.

The old man gathered himself up, and retreated into the darkest corner of his cell. Marguerite saw his terror. Placing one foot on the fragment of rock, she leaped over it, and began to climb upward with such swift excitement, that she absolutely seemed floating to the man, who paused half-way down, and watched her with astonishment.

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## CHAPTER LXXIV.

### LOVE.

"DID the rock strike? Is any one hurt?" called out a man's voice, which shook with terror.

"No one is hurt, monsieur; but I was frightened, and called out like a coward," answered Marguerite, coming swiftly up to his level.

"But you were in danger?"

"Yes; the wind which the rock brought with it, took away my breath; that was all."

They stood together now on the same platform, and the moonbeams fell upon them with all its spiritualizing

brightness. A face more sweetly grand was never bowed over one more beautiful. "Marguerite! in this dreary place. In Heaven's name, what brings you here?"

"My heart, Monsieur St. Just. Nothing else could. Some one that I love was lost, and I came in search of him."

"But are you not afraid?"

"No. It is over yonder that I am afraid. Stones do not hurt one; men and women do. Besides, it is here that I should be grateful—not afraid!"

"Grateful! why?"

"Up yonder, I can see the spot where a crowd of men, with red caps on their heads, and weapons in their hands, seized upon a poor girl, and—and——"

"I remember. Great Heavens! it was a terrible danger!"

"It was a terrible murder, when that poor man was shot down only for being faithful to his king."

"What, the man on guard at the tower?"

"He fell at my feet. Oh, monsieur! I know that you would have saved him. It was your hand that struck up one carbine; but even then another more fatal did the cruel work. God forgive them! God forgive them! he is all merciful; but, oh! I never can!"

"My sweet Marguerite," said the young man, reaching forth his hand as if she had been an infant whom he was ready to lead out of peril, "do not be unforgiving. True, it was a horrible moment!"

"It made a widow of my best friend," answered Marguerite, with pathetic simplicity.

"That is hard," said the man, "but the time must soon come when France will be the mother of widows made in her behalf."

Marguerite shook her head. The voice in which this man spoke was deep and sweet with sympathy. That she

could recognize; but his words partook of a cause from which she recoiled. They seemed to excuse the murderers of her friend. She drew her hand from his clasp, shuddering. He saw the change that came over her features, and smiled.

"Marguerite, you do not trust me."

"Trust you, oh yes. Were you not my saviour? You tried to spare him too, but could not."

"But the thing I did was nothing. Any gentleman would have done as much."

"Where crowds meet only to pull down and murder, one does not expect to find a gentleman," answered Marguerite, unconscious of the sarcasm that lay in her innocent words.

The young man seemed tempted to argue the matter but checked himself, saying,

"You must not give me too much credit. But tell me what are your friends doing that they permit these lonely night walks?"

"They are full of other thoughts. All except two—an old woman whose husband you saw murdered, alas! tears kept her from watching me; and my father, who is more helpless than I am. Oh, Monsieur, I sometimes think it would have been kinder had you left those hideous men to kill me, and never opened his dungeon. He was used to the prison."

"Poor old man, is he too suffering? Where can I see him?"

"He does not wish to be seen. They have forced liberty upon him when it was too late. He loves nothing but solitude."

"Perhaps not; but a man so wronged must hate the tyrant who persecuted him."

"That king is dead. Besides, the good old man hates no one."

"Not the king?"

"Least of all, the good king."

"And you, little one—how is it with you?"

"My best friend died serving the king, so would I."

The beautiful face of the girl kindled, her eyes flashed like stars as she said this. Then bethinking herself how dangerous such expressions of loyalty might prove, she said, half timidly,

"They tell me it is dangerous not to abuse the king; but you ask me for the truth, and I forget to be prudent. Besides, I think you also love the king."

"How can you think that?"

"Because you would not let those ruffians kill me, and tried to knock down that murderer's gun, when you must have known that honest guard belonged to the king."

"But what if I loved France more?"

"I heard some one say, when I was a little girl, that the king *was* France."

The young man broke into a low laugh, which began bitterly and ended in good-humor. What man, he thought, could burden a creature so innocent and sweet with political prejudices. It seemed like dragging nightingales out from the sheltering roses, and hurling them into a maelstrom.

"Well, Marguerite, I will not quarrel with you for loving the king; and you must permit me to worship France just a little," he said, smiling. "But you have not told me why it is that you come to this dangerous place alone, and at night? It cannot be, certainly, the old home-feeling that brings *you* here?"

Marguerite's head drooped, and if the light had been sufficient, the young man might have seen a blush steal over her face.

"It is partly that I have memories, and some one else comes here that I care for."

"Some one that you care for, and come to meet?"

The young man spoke sternly, and he drew back from the drooping young creature a little, as if something had stung him. She lifted her eyes to his in shrinking astonishment.

"Who is this person?" he asked.

"I—I must not tell. He does not like people to know."

"*He*? Did you say *he*?"

"Yes, I said *he*; but that was not speaking his name."

"And you come here nights to meet this man?"

"Yes, but he does not wish any one to be told."

Marguerite saw that something had offended her companion, and answered his questions with timid hesitation; but her eyes pleaded with him all the time.

"You steal away from home, Marguerite, when the streets of Paris are full of dangers, and come to this lonely spot only to meet a man whose name you dare not speak? Is this the truth?"

"Yes, but—but I have another reason."

"Another reason, Marguerite?"

Marguerite's voice sank almost to a whisper, as she answered,

"The memory I spoke of, Monsieur."

The young man started, and his eyes flashed.

"You mean this, Marguerite—you have not forgotten that one hour when your heart beat against mine?"

"How could I forget?"

"Yet you come here to meet another man."

A little joyous laugh broke from the girl. St. Just could see her eyes sparkle in the moonlight.

"Why not?" she said, "since the man is my own father."

"Your father—the prisoner?"

"I can trust you with his secret; perhaps you will even help me to protect him for there *is* danger."

"Especially when heedless wanderers send rocks crashing down upon him," said St. Just.

Marguerite shuddered. "I couldn't help screaming, it frightened me dreadfully," she said.

"Not more than it frightened me," answered the young man, whose good-nature had entirely returned. "It was a loose stone that gave way under my boot, and almost carried me down with it—a blessed stone I shall always think; for it brought you out of the darkness, the only lovely thing, I do believe, those walls ever gave forth."

"But for that I should have kept out of sight, and gone home heavy-hearted."

"Why heavy-hearted, Marguerite?"

"Because it was impossible to see you where I sat. I never should have found courage to come into the light, and should have missed a great happiness, without knowing what it was."

The young man bent his eyes upon her with a look of tender admiration, that brought the blushes to her cheek, and weighed down her soft eyes till she stood before him like a child rebuked.

"Then it was not altogether that other person, whom I was almost jealous of," said the young man, after gazing upon that sweet face in silence.

"You saved my life, and tried to save him!" faltered the young creature; and gratitude is a sweet feeling that haunts one so."

"True, Marguerite—but there is a sweeter feeling yet that haunts me all the time. I only hope that you know what it is."

Marguerite gathered the frail drapery with which she had ventured into the night air, softly around her, but even through that St. Just could see how her heart rose and fell.

"I—I must be going now," she said.

"But not alone—I cannot permit that; the streets of

Paris are not safe for you. Come, let me help you over these stones."

Marguerite had passed over them once that night swiftly and safely as a young chamois on some mountain peak; but with those eyes upon her she grew timid, and held out her little hand, touching the stones daintily with her feet. He took her hand with a firm grasp, and led her over the rugged masses of stone, which was so broken up in heaps and chasms that every footstep brought its danger. At a jagged hollow, which the girl had sprung lightly over an hour before, she paused, and began to tremble. The youth reassured her with a smile; then threw his arm around her waist, lifted her over, and sat her down on the other side, bathed in blushes, which seemed shadows in the moonlight.

At last these two young people reached the broken draw-bridge, crossed over its shaking timbers, and entered the dark court beyond.

Here St. Just paused close by the stone bench where Marguerite had rested that day.

"Here on this spot your dear lips told me the sweetest secret man ever learned," he said, throwing his arms around the startled girl, and straining her to his heart. "Repeat it here—repeat it, my beloved. I love you, oh Heavens, how I do love you! Say—out of your dreams—be sure that it is out of your dreams—say that you love me."

Marguerite tried to speak, but the sweet words died on her lips as she gave them up to his kisses for a single instant. Then her voice came back, and she said with the innocent frankness of a child,

"How could I help loving you?"



## CHAPTER LXXV.

## CRAFT MEETING TREACHERY.

It was three nights after Mirabeau's visit to St Cloud, and Louison Brisot had not yet seen him. She waited with burning impatience, hour after hour, until a keen desire to reproach him got the better of her prudence; and she went at once to his residence.

That day Count Mirabeau had absented himself from his seat in the Assembly. Filled with such dreams of love and ambition as had made his youth one wild season of political and social riot, he kept himself in the solitude of his own library, thinking out the programme of action which was to make him at once the saviour of the monarchy, and the favorite of the people.

It was a wild, and almost chaotic realm, over which this man hoped to rule; but he had infinite faith in his own genius, and built great hopes upon his immense popularity with a people who, in their passions and their prejudices, were changeable as the wind. To a man like Mirabeau, bold to audacity, gifted with marvelous eloquence, and made great by a will strong as iron, to guide this changing element and mould it as his own ambition might direct, seemed the easiest thing on earth.

All that day the man spent lounging upon the silken cushions of a low couch, dreaming of the greatness before him, and of the royal lady whose white hand had touched his lips for one instant in the little summer-house at St. Cloud. At last he had conquered his way to that proud, beautiful woman, who still sat upon the tottering throne of France. In her need she had been compelled to stoop to the fascinations of his voice, and blush under the ardent devotion of his eyes. In this he had triumphed over all his

compeers—true, it was a triumph, secret as it was sweet. He who had been tried almost as a felon in the courts; imprisoned for rude violations of the law; hunted out of society like a mad dog, was now president of one of the most powerful clubs in France, a leader in the Assembly, and the secret friend of the beautiful queen, who had for years kept him from her presence, as a man too vile for the countenance of a pure wife and highly born lady.

No wonder this man lay supinely on his couch, with his arms folded over his head, and his eyes wandering dreamily over the Cupids that peeped at him with laughing eyes from the flowers that clustered and glowed on the frescoed ceiling overhead.

Mirabeau had reached that age when ambition becomes a power, and love an intense passion; from that day he turned with loathing from the thing which he had called love in past time. The exalted rank of Marie Antoinette, her superb beauty and brilliant intellect had fired his imagination so completely, that his whole being, for the time, flung off its coarseness and became chivalric.

The door opened softly as Mirabeau lay with his large eyes wandering over the flowers, and a pleasant smile on his lips. He cared little what might happen in the Assembly that day; but would go forth to his Jacobin club in the evening, and there exert all the powers of his mind to moderate the ferocious instincts of his compatriots, and lead them to the moderation of his own views so lately inspired by the queen.

A woman had been waiting with her hand upon the door for a whole minute, and Mirabeau, in his pleasant preoccupation, knew nothing of it. Louison Brisot stepped across the room, and came close to the couch on which he lay, and spoke to him.

Mirabeau started, flung down his arms with an impatient movement, and rose to a half upright position,



dropping one foot to the floor, and sinking his elbow deep into the cushions on which his head had rested.

"Ah! is it you, Louison?" he said, wearily. "How did you get in? I told my people to admit no one."

Louison laughed with some bitterness.

"They do not regard me as 'any one,' my good friend; or dream, perhaps, there will ever come a time when I shall be excluded from Count Mirabeau's presence."

"But there may arise times when I am busy."

"Those times have arisen again and again; but you were always glad to have me by your side, especially when there was work to accomplish. Shall I sit down now? Or has my presence, all at once, become troublesome?"

The girl seated herself, as she spoke, upon the foot of Mirabeau's couch, and sat gazing on him with an expression in her great black eyes that disturbed him. This woman had frightened away all his pleasant dreams.

"You are never troublesome," he said; "but in the lives of all hard working and hard thinking men there is need of rest. This craving was upon me when you came in."

"Indeed!"

"I have been giving the day to thought, and sunk down here to rest awhile before going to the club. Had you delayed coming a little longer, I should have been gone."

"Ah! you go to the club, then!" exclaimed Louison, brightening. "There you will meet Robespierre and Marat, your brother journalists; those two men who love France, and hate the queen."

"Ah, ha!" said Mirabeau, sharply; and his massive features contracted with quick suspicion. "How did you learn so much of Robespierre, and that animal who calls himself Marat?"

"I know that they are patriots and true Frenchmen," answered Louison. "Be careful, Mirabeau, that they do not prove the serpent, that may bite your heel."

"What, those reptiles!" exclaimed Mirabeau, with careless contempt. "How can they hurt a man so much above them? They crawl, I soar!"

The magnificent demagogue made a circle around his head with one large, white hand, as if he were crowning himself, and repeated, "I soar! I soar!"

Louison understood that look of triumph, and smiled with bitter irony when she saw the gesture. "This man," she said to herself, "seems to feel the glory of a crown upon his head, since he has kissed the Austrian hand with those perfidious lips;" still she answered him calmly, looking downward with half-closed eyes, like a slumbrous panther.

"But, you and these men have a common object—love of France and hatred of her oppressors."

Mirabeau turned his eyes quickly upon that handsome face to read the hidden thought that lay under these words. He saw a gleam break through the drooping lashes, and suspected that something was wrong, but could not understand what. He had no wish to disagree with Louison, for her talent had been of great use to him, and it was through her that a large portion of his popularity among the rabble of women, who were the worst disturbing element of the nation, was maintained.

"We must talk of this matter when there is more time," he said. "I often think we are allowing the coarse minds of a few brutal men to carry the revolution beyond its proper limits. What, for instance, can be more vicious than these constant attacks on the queen?"

"Ha!"

His words ran through Louison's heart like an arrow; her eyes opened wide, and flashed a look upon him that checked the breath on his lips.

"You speak of that Austrian woman," she said, controlling herself, "Louis Capet's wife?"

"I speak of Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, Louison; a woman who has been cruelly maligned and basely persecuted."

"By whom?"

Louison spoke calmly, but her lips closed with a firm grip as this simple question left them, and she held her breath, waiting for his answer.

"Perhaps we have all done too much of it."

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## CHAPTER LXXVI.

### CRIMINATION AND INDIFFERENCE.

LOUISON BRISOT, with all her secretiveness and self-control, felt her heart burn, and her cheeks grow hot, when Mirabeau insulted her solicitude with a rude answer. She arose and walked to a window; a pretty goldfinch, which had been taught to fly out of his cage at will, fluttered downward and settled upon her shoulder. She seized the tiny thing, wrung its neck, and flung it down to her feet.

Mirabeau had settled back upon his couch, and his eyes were again wandering among the frescoed flowers. So the woman appeased her wrath by taking this little life before the poor thing could utter a breath of pain; and he only knew that his favorite was dead after she was gone.

While the pretty thing was quivering on the floor, his murderer had sunk down by Mirabeau's couch, and took his hand in hers, where it lay indolently, not once offering to return the grasp with which she clung to it.

"Mirabeau!"

"Well, Louison!"

"You have ceased to love me?"

"Ceased to love you! Well, what then? To be good patriots we need not be lovers."

The woman turned deadly white, and her hands wrenched themselves away from his.

"You confess it."

There was a cry of pain in her words. All this time she had been actuated by a forlorn hope that he would contradict her.

"No! I confess nothing! How should I, not being quite certain myself?"

"Great heavens! you dare say this to me!"

Mirabeau started up fiercely and shook back his hair like a roused lion.

"Dare! Woman, is that word intended for Mirabeau?"

The man was fully aroused now, his light gray eyes flamed, his sensuous mouth took a haughty curve; he had risen to his elbow, and his massive neck was laid bare almost to the bosom, where the delicately-crimped ruffles of his shirt fell open, revealing the blue veins that swelled over it, inflaming his face to the eyes, which suddenly became bloodshot.

"The man who offends Louison Brisot dares everything," answered the woman, in a low voice.

Mirabeau laughed, for all the evil daring of his nature was getting uppermost.

"So you threaten me?"

"Cowards threaten!"

"And brave souls act. Well, Louison, you certainly are no coward; and yet your speech had a threat in it. Tell me why?"

"Ah, Mirabeau! It is only a little thing. During some years—that is, ever since I was an innocent girl, who never committed a greater sin than plucking a few clusters where the grapes first ripened into purple—I have loved you. It

was not much, only a human soul flung at the feet of a man who has not yet trampled it under his heel. But this soul was all I had—and you took it. For your sake I worked hard, studied, learned all those arts by which women gain influence in the world; gloried in my beauty, and in that keen wit which is a weapon of power in these days, all because they might make me more dear and more useful to you. In the scale of your glory I flung my life. Is it strange that I ask something back; that out of the whole of an existence I lavished on you I ask a ray of light; only that which the moon takes from the sun, and feel defrauded when it is withheld?"

The smile broadened and grew brighter on Mirabeau's face as the young woman made this passionate address. He loved to be adored; and the intellect of this woman gave piquancy to her homage; without that she would have been nothing to him, with it she had a hold upon his interests and his vanity stronger, by far, than any woman had ever possessed over his affections. No man living had greater talent for turning the genius of other people to his own account than Mirabeau. Men and women were alike made available to his popularity. He had no desire to quarrel with the handsome young female, whose words, taking the form of passionate pleading, were sufficient to convince him of the power he still possessed.

Louison saw the self-satisfied smile, and it stung her. She broke forth with passionate vehemence.

"But love like mine must have full love in return; faith like mine must meet answering faith. If I have been strong as a woman, I have also been trusting as a child. Deceive me once, and you open my eyes forever; cease to be my entire friend, and you make me your bitterest enemy. Keep no secrets from me; if you attempt it, I will find them out, and then they are my property. I warn you now, in right or in wrong, make me your confidant."

It would have been well for Mirabeau had he then and there taken the woman at her word; but, like all social traitors, he had no faith in the sex, and so only turned on his side and gazed on her flushed face in wonder that any one would believe him weak enough to trust one woman with the secrets of another.

"Upon my word, Louison, you are a remarkably beautiful person, and have a power of eloquence I never dreamed of before. They tell me Theroigne de Mericourt is to appear at the Cordeliers; we must have you at the Jacobins. She is beautiful—so are you; she is eloquent, but in that I have just discovered we can more than match her. I have a thing on my mind which must be brought before the club with great caution—a woman can do it; for we accept and excuse anything from beautiful lips—and yours are blooming as roses, Louison."

A faint sneer curled the lips he praised. Did he think to use her as a blind instrument in behalf of the lady whose hand she had seen raised to his lips with such reverence? There was bitter satisfaction in the thought that she had this man's secret in her keeping, and by it could read the very changes of his mind. She had come there to upbraid him, but the secretiveness of her nature rose uppermost, even in her jealous wrath; it prompted her to watch him, and if he proved treacherous, to fight her battle with his own weapons.

"The time has come," said Mirabeau, "when the women of France must make their influence felt in the nation. Theroigne will be received like a goddess by the Cordeliers."

If the demagogue thought to inspire Louison's ambition, he only succeeded in uniting with that passion one more dangerous still.

"It is said that this Maid of Liege has something

besides the wrongs of France to avenge," she said, dreamily. "Among the minions who swarm around that Austrian woman, is the man she loved—a noble, who plucked the soul from her life, and flung it away in haughty disdain. Yes, yes! it is time that the women of France should test their power. Let Theroigne lead with the Cordeliers; as for me, in life or death, I stand by Mirabeau!"

"That is a brave girl; and now let me tell you a secret."

Louison's heart leaped in her bosom. Would he tell her all that she had learned? If so, that interview with Marie Antoinette might have only a political meaning. She listened breathlessly for his next words. They came to surprise and disappoint her.

"Before the year is out, my friend, Mirabeau will be president of the Jacobin club; then Louison Brisot shall test her powers against those of the amazon of Liege."

"Yes," said Louison; "she will test her powers then."

"The women of the markets are ardent and ignorant; they need leaders of their own sex. These women in their hearts love the queen."

"Ha!"

"Did you speak, Louison?"

"No, I did not speak, but listened. You think I might control these women?"

"You have the power; they would look up to you as they never have to the queen. She is so far above them that they cannot understand her. But you——"

"Oh, yes! I can make them understand me. I, too, am of the people," said Louison, interrupting him.

"But still, education and great natural talent has lifted you nearer to her."

"You think so? Well, perhaps it is true."

"You are brave."

"Yes, I am no coward."

"With a warm, earnest heart."

Here Louison sunk down to the foot of the couch, and bowing her face to her knees, began to sob. Mirabeau took her hand.

"Why do you weep, my friend?"

"Because I once had a warm, earnest heart, that is all," cried the girl, lifting her head, and sweeping the hair back from her face. "Women who aspire for love or power should have no hearts."

"You are wrong, my friend; a warm heart is necessary to true eloquence. Without that, the magnetism which thrills crowds would be wanting. It is because you can speak clearly and feel intensely, that I predict for you a glorious career among the women of France. That which Mirabeau is to the men, Louison shall be to the women of this nation."

"And this is all you have to tell me?"

"All. If I have nothing more to confide, it is because my heart is always open to my friends, most of all to you."

"Traitor!"

The word was not spoken, but it hissed like a serpent in the woman's brain. She dashed the tears from her eyes and stood up.

"I will go now."

Mirabeau fell indolently back among the cushions of his couch.

"Must you go?" he questioned, dreamily. "Well, well, think of what I have said."

"I will."

## CHAPTER LXXVII.

## AMONG THE FLOWERS.

WHEN St. Just and Marguerite left the ruins of the Bastille, a man came out of a half destroyed building near which they had stood, and followed them at a distance. His step was heavy, his head drooped, once or twice he pressed a clenched hand over his heart as if the pain there was intolerable.

This man was Monsieur Jacques. Every evening when Marguerite sought the ruins he had followed in sad solicitude, but faithful as a dog. She had never seen him nor dreamed of his loving vigilance. Indeed, he seldom sought her now, and seemed to have forgotten the suit he had urged or the promise she had made.

Sometimes she thought of this with thankfulness, but never guessed the cause, or dreamed of the suffering which locked that noble heart in silence.

This evening he saw the lovers pause in the Cour de Gouvernement, and by the glorified light in their faces knew what was passing between them. Then the last hope went out of that strong heart.

But Monsieur Jacques knew how to suffer and be strong. He watched that couple from a distance as, in the sweet silence of contented love, they slowly approached the humble dwelling, which was the only home the poor girl could claim in the wide, wide world.

He saw them hesitate a little at the door and pass in. Then he turned away into the darkness.

The passage was dark which St. Just and Marguerite entered.

"You will not leave me yet!" pleaded the girl, unconscious of wrong as a child; "no one is home; it will be lonely waiting for them."

The young man had no heart to leave her, and they went up the dark stair-case together. Marguerite opened a door under the roof, and led her guest into a little room with one window, neat as a flower, and tasteful as only a French girl could make it.

"I was sure they would not be home," said Marguerite, striking a light, which fell pleasantly on the muslin curtains at the window, looped up with knots of rose-colored ribbon, which shaded a plant or two in rich leafiness. "Dame Doudel will come up here the first thing—till then I hope you will wait."

The young man seated himself and looked around the room, which contained two flag-bottomed chairs, a small table, and in the furthest corner a little cot-bed, white as a cloud, and fragrant with the breath of many flowers. Directly at its foot stood a basket crowded full of bouquets ready for the market, from which a scent of heliotrope, violets, and jasmines, would have perfumed the atmosphere too heavily but for the open window, through which a soft current of air was floating.

"You see that all my work was done before I went out," said the girl, pointing to the basket.

"Not a hard task, I should think," said the young man smiling.

"Hard! No one ever gives me anything hard to do. It is only play to make up these little bunches; and who would think of harming me when I go about to sell them? Dame Doudel is like a queen in the market, and she lets all the women think that I am one of them though I cannot be made to hate the king. I wish you could know how good the dame has been to me."

"But she leaves you here alone to wander about in dangerous places. Is that kind or wise, Marguerite?"

"Oh! but she knows why, and is ready to help me; the dame has a heart as soft as dew."

"And have you found it safe?"

"Oh yes; no one speaks to me in the street. I hold my mantle close over my face, and walk on without looking to the right or the left. Then I come to the Bastille, but find it all alone. May I ask, monsieur, what takes you there?"

The man's eyes sparkled as he answered,

"I go because that mountain of ruins is the first battlefield of liberty in France. When those old towers fell, the very heart in my bosom was unchained."

Marguerite looked at him a little wildly, and her eyes filled with tears.

"*Mon Dieu!* Is it that you belong to them?" she said, dropping into the only chair her visitor did not occupy. "How can it be?"

The young man instantly repented of the ardor in his speech. It seemed to him like frightening a singing bird with fire-arms, and he reassured her with a smile.

"Believe me, I shall never be anything that you fear or dislike. Heaven forbid that I should bring the turmoil of the street into this quiet place!"

Marguerite drew a deep breath, and wiped the tears from her eyes.

"Forgive me, monsieur," she said, in gentle penitence; "but since that day I weep so easily. Sometimes, as I sit here weaving the flowers together, the tears will drop in among their leaves like rain; but that is when I am thinking of him."

But you must shed no more tears."

Not if I can help it; but when I thought of your belonging to those fierce men, I could not keep the tears back. Forgive me, but I could not."

"But I do not belong to those fierce men; if anything they belong to me," said St. Just. "Come, come, let us be friends. Some loose flowers are lying on the table there—while we wait for the dame, let me see you work."

"I did not know that one was left! She must have brought them after I went away," said the girl, starting up and drawing her chair to the table. "How stupid; but it will only take a little time."

While Marguerite was busy assorting her flowers, the young man drew his chair to the table, and watched her slender fingers as they twined the stems together; then, as if unconsciously, he took up the blossoms one by one, and held them for her use. He saw that her little hand trembled as she took the flowers, and a smile stole over his face as he remarked the color come and go in hers. Something was evidently on her mind, as she arranged one bouquet with wonderful care—a tiny thing, in which a half-open blush-rose was laid softly in a nest of violets. Marguerite tied this with a delicate bit of ribbon taken from her neck, examined it critically, with her head on one side, as a bird sometimes coquets with its food, then laid it away with a sigh, lacking courage for the purpose that had dawned in her mind.

A noise below—some one coming up stairs.

"It is the dame," said Marguerite, pausing to listen, "and coming up here. I knew she would."

The door was flung open, and a little woman, in a broad-bordered cap, tied around the head with a black ribbon, stood on the threshold with a half-uttered sentence on her lips.

"I find you here, little one—so much the better."

Her words were cut short by the utter astonishment that possessed her on seeing a strange man in the room.

"Oh, my friend, it is the gentleman who saved me; who tried——"

"Ah, I know," faltered the little woman, pressing a hand quickly to her bosom. "He would have saved me from being the poor widow I am.—Ah, monsieur! I have nothing but gratitude here."



Dame Doudel sat down on the white bed and began to weep.

St. Just arose to go. The tears of this poor widow pained him. They brought back that awful scene in the Bastille too vividly. Marguerite saw the movement. She took the tiny cluster of flowers from the table, and stood hesitating, with one foot advanced.

A faint smile crept over the young man's lips, for he lost nothing of this; and when she came swiftly toward him, he held out his hand for the flowers.

Marguerite gave him her little bouquet, and turning to Dame Doudel, said, in modest apology for what she had done,

"It took only a few, and he saved my life."

Dame Doudel nodded her head, and waved her hand, thus signifying her approbation, and followed the young man down stairs, while Marguerite stood gazing after him in wistful silence.

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## CHAPTER LXXVIII.

### THE MARKET WOMAN.

"Ah, citoyen," said the widow, pausing on the staircase, "how shall I ever thank you for that kind attempt to save him?"

"I deserve no thanks, dame, so give me none. I but hurled half a dozen ruffians back as they seized upon that poor girl, but was altogether too late, so far as your husband was concerned. He died at her feet, poor fellow!"

"Poor fellow! You may well say that, monsieur. A better man never lived; had he been spared, Marguerite would want no better protector."

"Why, surely, a creature like that, innocent and lovely as a child, can have no enemies."

"I cannot tell that. More than one person saw her face that day; and heard her cry out that my poor husband was her friend."

"But in all that tumult who could recognize her?"

"One person did, I know; Marguerite heard a voice call out 'Strangle her! Shoot her! Strike her! And you bring that tall guard down from his post.' It was a woman's voice."

"A woman!" repeated the young man, and his fine lips curved with disdain. "Say a fiend. I wish we had no such aids in our great cause."

The vicious power which a few talented and infamous women had begun to wield in the revolution, had inspired others with a reckless idea of their own importance; and, spite of her sorrow, Dame Doudel grew angry that any one should doubt the power of her sex to wrestle with national wrongs, or step from a market-stall into the duties of statesmanship.

"Monsieur, then, does not think the women of France worthy to work for him?" she said.

"I think," said the young man, who seemed rather amused than offended by the lofty air which the market-woman assumed, "I think that when the men of a great nation cannot redress its wrongs, and protect its women, that nation is hardly worth saving."

"Indeed!" answered the dame, sniffing the air like a war-horse, and breaking at once into the language of the clubs. "Who was it that urged on the attack, and led the way, when that huge monster, the Bastille was taken?—the women. Who cheered the state's general on to tear down the king from his high horse?—the women. Who surrounded Santerre, and forced him to lead them to Versailles, to confront the king and his Austrian wife, but the



women of Paris? Who brought the royal family out from their palace, and forced them through the storm and mud into the city? The women—the women, I tell you. Ah, monsieur! I have suffered—I am a widow. They tell me a woman did it. Still women have done brave work for France.”

“But it was also a woman, as you have just told me, who urged on a pack of brutal men to assail mademoiselle whom you seem to love.”

“Ah, there! Yes, I am with you there. It was an awful cruelty. Oh! it was heart-rending! but even that, one must endure for the sake of liberty; besides, the woman was not one of us. She has had her training among the aristocrats, and yet dares to come down among us, the real patriots, and make speeches to us, mounted on our own stalls; for my part, I want nothing of the sort. Only she always pretends that Mirabeau, our great Mirabeau, speaks through her, as if he felt above coming to us himself—not at all, I tell you. *He* does not scoff at the help which comes from us. The women of Paris adore Mirabeau. It is a pity, though, he sends a creature like that to tell us our duty and kill our husbands.”

“But you have not told me who the woman is whom you seem to both fear and hate.”

“Fear! Oh! there is not a woman, or, for that matter, a man living, who could make me fear for myself. Ask Marguerite—ask my sister; perhaps you know her, Dame Tillery, landlady of the Swan, at Versailles, if Margaret Doudel was ever terrified by mortal face. But, about this girl, I confess to you, monsieur, that I sometimes do feel a trembling about my heart. If any harm come to her, I think it would kill me; and it is true that the woman prowls about the neighborhood asking questions, like a mean, vicious cat, creeping up to a bird’s cage.”

“Ha!”

St. Just uttered this sharp exclamation with unconscious force. He was evidently disturbed.

“Yes,” answered Dame Doudel, “I have noticed one thing,—we dames of the market have sharp eyes. This woman, to whom I used to sell flowers and fruit, when she carried her head high, as if she were Du Berry herself, contenting herself with a salad, when things turned against her—this woman is neither of the nobility nor the people, flesh nor fish, but may go with one, and then the other; I, for one, trust no such person. The women of the market are honest; but this woman is not one of them. She means to be our leader, but we want nothing of her. She does not love France half so much as she hates the queen. As if we could not win our rights without the help of such a creature as that. Oh, citizen! the less you patriots harbor with such chaff the better.”

“I will try and profit by what you say, dame, when I know who it is you warn me against; the more especially as you tell me that she bears some malice against Marguerite.

“Malice! I should think she did. And why? This is the reason. When we were in the midst of that glorious day at Versailles, our pretty Marguerite was chosen to go with the committee of women, who were sent to lay our wrongs before the king. This creature, whom I warn you of, wanted the honor, and appealed to Mirabeau, who had the power to send her if he would; but the count only laughed, and said that it was intended to petition the king, not insult him. The person chosen to make the address must be a child of the people, innocent, frank, honest, therefore it must be Marguerite Gosner. Then it was that the venom of this woman’s bad heart broke out. Marguerite was chosen against her, — our Marguerite, whose modesty and innocence touched the king with the most tender compassion. He kissed her on the cheek and prom-

ised well. Mirabeau had done this, and Louison Brisot loved Mirabeau. Was not this a good reason why she should hate our child?"

"Louison Brisot!" I shall remember the name, good dame," said the young man as he stepped out into the darkness.

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## CHAPTER LXXIX.

### THE WOMEN OF FRANCE.

LOUISON BRISOT went from the presence of Mirabeau with a tumult of contending passions at war in her bosom. Ardent, vindictive, and egotistical, she guarded herself with a power of secretiveness and sharp cunning so completely, that it was not wonderful a man so reckless as Mirabeau should have misunderstood the depth and danger of her antagonism. He had no idea of the powerful self-control which curbed her fierce passions, and gave double force when she allowed them to break forth in all their fiery strength. Her coarse nature had mated itself so vehemently with the eloquent demagogue, that he was sometimes startled to find himself completely duplicated in the form of a woman—so completely that he began to dislike himself in her. This feeling often broke forth mockingly, as he was apt to scoff at himself when the worst traits of his own character forced themselves on his intelligence. Mirabeau forgave himself for thus reviling his own rude nature—but the woman forgave nothing.

Men like Count Mirabeau are often the most fastidious beings alive, regarding delicate shades of propriety in their friends, and almost invariably look for objects of affection above their own level. In order to create a real impression

upon this man, it was necessary to enlist his imagination, and that always lifted itself to the grand and beautiful, not to say the unattainable. Mirabeau held his immediate compeers but lightly, as, in his better moments, he often despised himself.

Louison Brisot was ambitious; and in the riot and turmoil of the Revolution, now growing formidable, she found scope for all her evil passions, and all her intellect. In this Revolution she saw but one leader, Mirabeau. His eloquence inspired her; his stubborn will held all her own powers in thrall. She saw strong, fierce, brave men yield to his invincible force of character. If he moved, the people went with him; if he spoke, they held their breath, and listened as if this man, with the blue blood of France soiled in his veins by all the baser passions known to themselves, were, in fact, a being to worship and follow with clamorous praises. With women like this, love is a score of baser passions disguised under one name, which they desecrate. Mirabeau knew this, and took no pains to deceive the woman regarding the amount of respect that he felt for her. Had he known from the first that she had witnessed that dangerous interview with the queen, his audacity would have tempted him to brave her.

Louison felt this, and gave him no opportunity, being one of those extraordinary women who could wait, though every fierce passion of her soul were at a white heat. Two words broke from her lips as she left the house, and those were,

"Double traitor!"

For a day and a night Louison shut herself up in her own apartments, and strove to organize some plan of operation for herself. Should she make it known to the clubs that Mirabeau had held a private interview with the queen, whom they all hated with fiendish detestation, and turn the force of public indignation on him at once; or should

she wait, watch, and gather up facts that would ensnare him completely, and see the lion pant and struggle in the net her hands had cast over him.

Louison's nature, which was at once fierce and crafty, led to the quieter course. With all her courage, she thought of openly assailing this powerful man with thrills of terror. She knew him to be unscrupulous as herself, and far beyond her in influence. Would the clubs, in fact, believe her if she ventured to stake her unsupported word against his? As yet that meeting had no results. If Mirabeau had sold his influence to the queen, money would be forthcoming; and no fear would prevent the count from lavishing it with dangerous prodigality. For money he must change his course in the Assembly; let him do this ever so adroitly, she could connect the change with his unusual expenditure, and thus sustain a charge it would be dangerous to make on her own unsupported assertion.

This terrible woman had, at last, gained control over her disturbed passions, so far as was necessary to the hypocrisy and treason by which her vengeance might be carried out. She was not the only woman in that dark epoch, who hurled her own personal wrongs and evil passions into the general anarchy, and called them patriotism. Patriotism! The amazons and butchers of France made this grand word so hideous, that liberty turns from it with distrust, even to this day; like the holy religion of Christ, it is used to cover a thousand sins—and treason is never so dangerous as when it cloaks itself under a name that true men hold sacred.

If ever a time has been on earth, when women could possess all the power of men, it was during the French Revolution. How did it end? Who among those females has left a trace in her national history which is not written in blood, and in acts more atrocious than men would have dared perpetrate, had not the cheers of blood-thirsty women

urged them on. While there was no law, men and women stood on a level—anarchy made no distinctions of sex. When women become immodest, men sink to their lowest level. What a fearful level was that to which the proud old nation of France was brought when assassination took the mockery of law, and indiscriminate murder became a national amusement.

A few great and true-hearted women certainly were drawn into this awful maelstrom; but it was to sicken in the sea of blood that overwhelmed them, and perish under the heels of an enraged multitude, whose fiendish acts their own enthusiasm had aided to inspire. Who among all the army of women that marched to Versailles, on that gloomy day, has an honored place in the history of France now? Of the hundreds who mingled their voices with those of Danton, Robespierre, and Marat, at the clubs, is there one who has not been consigned to the blackest infamy by all historians? Madame Roland, who gloried in writing her husband's letters, and was in character and position lifted far above the infamous rabble of women who made demons of the men they influenced, died on the scaffold, bravely as she had lived; but the last words on her lips were a bewailing cry over the atrocities perpetrated in the name of her ideal god.—Liberty.

Louison Brisot possessed all the crafty and unscrupulous qualities that made leaders in those horrible times. Like most of her compeers, who were not blindly led, she seized upon the evil-passions of others to work out her own desires and crude ambition. With a sharp intellect and depraved heart, she had flung herself at the feet of Mirabeau, partly in homage to his undoubted genius, and partly because he was the brightest power in that Assembly of demagogues. But the count had never even pretended to give her, in return for her adoration, anything like respect. Sometimes he deigned to accept her as the instrument of

his ambition, as he always used the talent of others for his own advancement, whenever it came in his way; but for all she could do for him he gave no return, save that careless acceptance which exasperated while it enthralled her.

So long as Mirabeau loved no other woman, Louison contented herself with an ostentatious exhibition of her fancied power over him. This won her the notoriety which so many women coveted; but when she knew that the queen, a woman she hated more than any other in France had cast the charm of her high position and personal loveliness over this powerful man; when she saw the tender reverence with which his lips touched that white hand, the passion of her love blazed into fury. She saw herself hurled down from the position which had been assumed till it was recognized as one of power, and laughed to scorn by the person whose very contempt was more valuable to her than the purest love of a meaner man.

Louison gave no sign of the agitation that had at first overwhelmed her, but watched and waited with feline patience for any movement that might bring the haughty man she both loved and hated, within the grasp of her vengeance.

There was no social rule by which the agitators of France governed themselves in those days, and there was no association so debased that these men dared not glory in it. With them there was nothing to conceal, because there was no shame; they worshiped excess in a goddess called Liberty; they crowned her with roses; and while defying all decency, called on the whole world to witness their orgies and share in them.

In a state of society like this, it is not strange that a woman like Louison could find access anywhere, or that she had made herself almost an inmate of Mirabeau's house, and entered it at any time that suited her pleasure.

One evening Louison called at Mirabeau's residence; but

it was closed, and she was told that on the day before Mirabeau had left his lodgings, and taken a house in the Chaussee d'Anton, which he was fitting up with great splendor. Louison turned away from the lodgings, which had been deemed far too sumptuous for a friend of the people, with a heart on fire again, and the bitterest word she knew of escaped through her clenched teeth.

"The aristocrat!" she hissed, rather than spoke. "He has done this with money from that woman—the meeting in the Park was not their first. His soul is poisoned with her gold. I will look upon this new palace myself, but not till I have walked off my rage. He must not look upon me while this fire burns so hotly."

The woman pressed both hands upon her heart as she turned from the door, and was herself terrified by the fierce struggle going on there; the very breath, as it rose panting to her lips, seemed to strangle her. What better proof of Mirabeau's utter subjection to the court did she want than this removal to an aristocratic quarter and luxurious dwelling? No one knew so well as herself that Mirabeau had no income from property, nothing but his talent and influence to sell. He still retained so much of the habits of his lordly birth, that the squalid penury affected by Robespierre and Marat revolted him. He had never yet been able to throw off the tastes of a gentleman in his mode of living, and in this lost all the independence which was so necessary to statesmanship.

A new thought came into Louison's head. Mirabeau had taken money from the court. Might not this be his sole motive for asking or accepting that interview with Marie Antoinette. Had he ever hesitated to cajole or deceive a woman in the pursuit of any object? And what reverence would his audacious nature feel for the queen, merely because she was seated on a throne which already shook to its foundations?

This idea came with force upon the angry woman, the thought that money, instead of love, had taken her idol to St. Cloud, swept away half the jealousy that tortured her. She began to feel a bitter triumph in the supreme duplicity of which she suspected the count guilty.

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## CHAPTER LXXX.

### TAKING AN OBSERVATION.

WITH no hesitation or fear, Louison turned toward the Chaussee d'Anton. The thoroughfares were full of people, men and women, conversing together in knots, and fraternizing with the municipal guards, in coarse and equal companionship. More than once she was hailed by some person in the crowd, who received a sharp or witty reply in return, which often sent shouts of laughter after her. Now and then she stopped to speak with some patriot, whose notoriety gave him a claim to her attention, but moved on again, laughing and flinging back jokes and jeers as she went.

As Louison turned a corner, with a feverish laugh still upon her lips, a man came suddenly around the angle, whom she recognized at once. This man she knew to be the secret and most bitter enemy of Mirabeau, and at another time would have avoided him; for his small, lean figure, fantastically arrayed in a well-worn coat, and buff small-clothes, brushed thread-bare, was well calculated to inspire contempt and ridicule from a creature so reckless in her liking as Louison. But she paused in her swift progress, and spoke to the man now.

"Ah, citizen Robespierre! is it you that I was almost running against? Have the Cordeliers become so strong that they can spare you from the club so early?"

The man hesitated, occupied himself a moment with the buttons of his olive green coat, and passed his hand over the plaited ruffles that fluttered in his bosom. Louison had never addressed him so familiarly before, and he was by nature a timid man—so timid, that he was disconcerted by the abrupt speech of a woman who had hitherto avoided him. Before he was ready to reply, Louison relieved his embarrassment by a new question.

"It is well to look modest, citizen, and keep in the background. Only great men can afford to retire into the shadow; but I know what spirit inspires the club, and the women of Paris are as well informed. Surely you must be aware of that?"

Robespierre answered her now, for vanity gave him courage.

"I did not think that a friend of Mirabeau would find any merit in a man who has so little hold on the good will of the people," he said, in a low, rasping voice, while a faint sneer stole over his lips, which was the nearest approach to a smile any one ever saw on his face.

"How modest we are!" exclaimed Louison, showing her white teeth, as she smiled upon the little man, whom it was the fashion to ridicule even in the Assembly, where his terrible force of character was, at the time, but imperfectly known. "A true patriot, citizen, sees merit in every one who loves his country and hates the king; but what is the homage of a poor girl like me worth, compared with Theroigne, of Liege? Was it not you who introduced her to the Cordelier, and called out, that was the Queen of Sheba?"

"No; that was Lacos. Theroigne is a woman for poets to adore, and she inspired him."

"But they tell me that Robespierre is himself a poet, and that great genius fires his patriotism."

The sneer so natural to Robespierre's lip melted into a simper, and the lids drooped over the greenish gray of his eyes.

"I do not know who has overrated my poor ability," he said; "but if a spark of poetry ever inspired me, mademoiselle would enkindle it. Why does she so entirely confine herself to the Jacobins? Is it because Mirabeau reigns there as a god?"

"Not so, citizen. A true woman of France claims perfect freedom to think and worship where she pleases. I have been at the Cordeliers many a time, and listened to the eloquence of a man whom the nation will yet learn to know as one of its greatest orators, and most potent leaders."

Louison bent her stately head, thus enforcing her compliment, and prepared to move on; but Robespierre followed her.

"Mademoiselle, I speak in the Assembly to-morrow. Will you come?"

"Does Mirabeau speak?"

"Yes, and I oppose him; for that reason you will not come?"

"For that very reason I will come. The man who possesses power enough to defeat any measure urged by Mirabeau, must be worthy of adoration."

"Ah! if I could inspire such homage from women, and such power among men!" said Robespierre, with a sort of bitter sadness. "Count Mirabeau carries the heart of France with him."

"But it may not be forever," said Louison, almost in a whisper. "What would Mirabeau be if the faith of the people fell from him?"

"You ask this question, mademoiselle?"

"Why not? All men should be watched. The price of liberty is eternal vigilance. Some American said that; or, is it my own thought? I cannot tell; but some day the place of Mirabeau will be vacant. Who is ready to fill it?"

"Mademoiselle, you suggest an impossibility."

"There is but one man in France. Others may not see it; but to me his destiny is plain. That man, shrouded in modesty, stands before me."

"Mademoiselle!"

"That man is Maxamillian Robespierre."

Louison moved swiftly away, as she spoke, and left the man standing quite alone, so amazed, that he did not move till she was out of sight. Then he turned from the course he was pursuing, and went to his sordid lodgings, inspired by new ambition. Louison had divined the one great weakness in his character, and, while inspiring his vanity, aroused a more powerful ambition than she dreamed of. Still, she had spoken something of the truth, and with her quick intellect saw more in this lean, little man than those who sat with him every day had yet discovered.

"That is well done!" said Louison, as she walked toward the Chaussée d'Anton. "This man is becoming a favorite with the people. He is shrewd, cold-hearted, indomitable. Sooner or later he will stand in the path of Mirabeau, perhaps undermine the foundations of his popularity; for, much as Robespierre loves France, he hates the count. Yes, yes; I did well to flatter the man. My next effort shall be with Marat."

Louison fairly started with surprise when she reached the residence of which Mirabeau had just taken possession. It was a grand structure, that had been abandoned as it stood, by some noble emigrant, who was now safe upon the borders. The eloquent demagogue had rather seized than hired the building, with all its luxurious appointments; and, even at that early day, was entertaining a party of riotous friends in the grand saloon.

A servant, out of livery, but still richly dressed, opened the door, and let a flood of light upon Louison where she stood, with calm audacity, waiting for admission, as if the



place had been her own home. The servant had belonged to the noble family by which the house had been deserted, and recognised the woman in her real character. When she asked for Mirabeau, he answered, with something like a sneer in his voice, that the count was entertaining his friends, and must not be disturbed.

Louison laughed, gave her handsome head a disdainful toss, and, passing by the astonished servant, entered the hall, which she surveyed with tranquil curiosity, lifting her face to examine the exquisitely carved corbel of the ceiling, and giving a general survey of the statues and antique ornaments which surrounded her. After her curiosity was satisfied, she took the scarf from her shoulders, and, untying the gipsy bonnet from her head, hung them both on the arm of a mailed statue that stood near the door, gave the bright, crisp ringlets on her head a vigorous shake, and, guided by a riot of voices, walked toward the saloon, with all the easy confidence of an invited guest.

The picture which this woman intruded upon was something wonderful in its splendid incongruity. A Venetian chandelier, whose heavy pendants of flat, half opaque glass swayed to and fro in a sea of radiance, shed a broad blaze of light upon a table gorgeous with exquisite china, malachite and crystal vases, running over with flowers, glittering with gold and silver plate. Crystal goblets, sparkling with wine, amber-hued, ruby-tinted, and of purplish darkness, swayed to and fro in the hands of half a dozen loosely-clad women, who were busily wreathing them with flowers, in imitation of the ancient Greeks, themselves looking like heathen goddesses, rather than Christian women.

A group of men in full dress, worn awkwardly, except in one or two cases, leaned upon the table in various attitudes, and watched the women as they proceeded in their classical work, now and then rifling the vases, and tossing their blossoms across the table in aid of the growing garlands.

Everything that the light touched was warm with rich coloring. Masses of frescoed flowers glowed out from the ceiling. Each panel in the wall was an exquisite picture. Broad mirrors were sunk deep in frames carved in masses of delicate golden foliage, broken up by clusters of white lilies, devised at the royal works at Sevres. These lilies seemed to be cut from luminous pearls, and shed their own light upon the mirrors; for the stamens were of perfumed wax, and burned like a star, while a perfume, like that of the natural flower, stole out from each tiny flame.

All this splendor Louison took in at a glance, which filled her soul with fiery indignation. Who were these women whom Mirabeau had invited to his new home without consulting her? By the immodest splendor of their dresses they might belong to the court or the theatre. Her lips curved and her eyes flashed as she regarded them. She stood unobserved, with one foot advanced on the Gobelin carpet, searching the group with indignant curiosity. Growing calmer, she recognised some of the men as among the most talented and dissolute of Mirabeau's companions. They were arrayed in court dresses, and disguised by wigs of long, curling hair, that floated in love-locks over the glowing velvet of their coats; while the women had combined the loose scantiness affected even then by the Jacobins, with rich materials hitherto known only to the nobility. The brilliant crimson of their rouged cheeks, the black patches scattered on forehead and chin, masses of hair, piled roll upon roll, and curl upon curl, would have deceived any person not born of the court, into believing them of noble birth and breeding.



## CHAPTER LXXXI.

## THE MIDNIGHT REVEL.

ONE by one, Louison made these people out, even before she heard their voices. In the first she saw her great political rival, Theroigne de Mericourt, of Liege, one of the most influential, audacious, and beautiful women of the revolution.

Louison recognized this woman with a pang of bitter jealousy. What right had the Queen of the Cordeliers in the house of Count Mirabeau?

Another woman lifted her face from the goblet she was wreathing, and demanded more flowers for her garland. Two or three eager hands were outstretched to a vase, and some one flung her a handful of lilies, among them was a purple *fleur de lis*. The woman turned pale through her rouge when she saw the flower; gave a quick, half-frightened glance at the man who flung it at her, then cast it upon the floor, and trampled it into the carpet with well simulated indignation.

"I wonder that you dare give me a flower that has become hateful to all France?" she said, stamping once more on the poor broken blossom. "Nay, I marvel that it can be found under the roof of so true a patriot as we all know the count to be. Give me roses, heart's-ease, anything that will take this perfume of royalty from the air."

Louison knew this woman also. She was Madame Du Berry, who, once lifted from the dregs of the people by the favoritism of a bad king, had gone back to her original element, taking a certain queenly air even in her fallen state, which lingered around her as she trod that poor emblem of royalty under her feet.

"Ah, madame! that is ungrateful in one who owes so much to the protection of that poor flower."

"But I owe more to France, and I belong to the people. Do not make me blush that I ever left them!" cried the hypocrite, busying herself with the pansies and roses that lay upon the table before her.

Louison watched that face keenly, and read something there which aroused a vague suspicion of the woman's sincerity. She caught one brief, quick glance of the eyes turned upon Mirabeau, and understood at once that there was some understanding between these two persons. Slowly she drew back into the shadow of the hall, and watched them, unseen, as the revel went on.

Mirabeau was sitting at the head of the table, leaning back in his cushioned seat, with an air of a lord entertaining his vassals. His dress bore no marks of the foppery which seemed so unnatural in his guests; being noble, he cared nothing for the appearances of high birth. Knowing himself powerful, he gloried in a certain individuality that distinguished him alike from the nobility to which he had belonged, and the people he had adopted. His massive head wore its own thick, tawny hair, swept back from his temples and forehead in waving rolls; his coat of plum-colored velvet, without lace or embroidery, fell away from a snow-white vest, carelessly buttoned half-way up. Here it revealed the broad plaited ruffles which shaded his bosom, and fell so carelessly apart at the throat, that the massive curve of his white neck was clearly exposed until it swelled into the broad chest. In his powerful strength and sublime ugliness this man made the grandest figure in that gorgeous scene. That which the others simulated he felt; and a smile of pleasant scorn came and went around his mouth, as he sat watching the awkward assumption of his guests, who, for once, were masquerading as noblemen.

At first Louison had intended to show herself before these people, and confront the man who had so suddenly disenthralled himself from her influence; but the glance

which she saw pass so swiftly between him and Du Berry, changed her mind. She resolved to find some method of listening to all that passed, and thus make herself mistress of any secret that might have brought them together.

As she stood within the shelter of a mailed statue, near the grand stair-case, Louison saw a side-door open, and a little figure steal softly into the hall, as if afraid of being seen. His face was darker by far than any shadow could make it, and he moved stealthily across the floor till a good view of the supper table was obtained; then he crouched down in the shadow of the stair-case and seemed to disappear. That moment the door of the saloon was closed.

The mailed statue stood between Louison and this creeping object. She felt sure that he had not observed her; but a faint light streaming into the hall through the door he had left ajar, made her position a difficult one to conceal. She cast wistful glances at this little stream of light, which came, she was convinced, from some apartment adjoining the banqueting-saloon. At last, keeping within the shadow of the statue, she glided toward this opening, and found herself in a small apartment, lighted only by the faint gleams that came from the hall, and broke through the side of a panel, which evidently was used as a concealed door connecting with the saloon. Some antique tapestry fell apart just before this panel, and under it the woman concealed herself, drawing the tapestry so close as to obstruct all light from the room. Through the crevice she commanded a full view of everything that transpired in the saloon, and could distinctly hear each spoken word. Never had a jealous woman and a spy better opportunities of observation. Directly in the line of her vision sat Mirabeau, leaning back in his chair with an expression of broad, animal enjoyment on his face.

Near him, with the delicate whiteness of her garments clinging around her superb form, and her bare arm uplifted,

stood Theroigne de Mericourt, waving the goblet she had crowned with flowers over her head, as she called out,

"To Mirabeau, the god of the people! The man who flung his title underfoot that the *canaille* may trample on it. He did not wait for the people to tear off his coronet."

A dozen goblets flashed in the air as she spoke, so quickly that the flowers fell from them bathed in a rain of wine-drops.

"To Mirabeau! Life to him! Destruction to all tyrants!"

The mingled voices of men and women went up simultaneously in this shout. The crystal light of the goblets rippled around a dozen heads, while Mirabeau sat still, smiling like a sultan, to whom homage in any form was an inheritance.

After this riotous toast was given, Theroigne remarked that the host was drinking pure water instead of wine. Then kissing her goblet, and bathing her red lips in the perfume of its flowers, she leaned over the table, and bade them drink to the toast, which should be a crowning one of the festival.

Mirabeau took the goblet and swung it around his head, as Theroigne snatched another from the table, and cried out,

"Fill! fill with red wine now! and drain each glass to the dregs, as we will yet drain the hearts of Louis and his Austrian wife."

A shout followed, a crash of glasses, and the mellow gurgle of wine, as it flowed down the thirsty throats of the company.

Theroigne drained her goblet; and drew a deep, long breath; with her tongue, she lapped the wine from her lips, and muttered in a low voice, but loud enough for all to hear,

"It has a rare taste of blood!"

Louison from her concealment, saw that two persons in

the company lifted their goblets, but tasted no drop of the wine. Mirabeau touched his lips to the flowers, but dashed the wine over his shoulder; and while the rest were drinking, it sunk with a broad, red stain, into the snowy ground of the carpet.

Du Berry lifted her goblet also, but turned so deadly white that the rouge upon her face stood out frightfully from its general pallor. Dropping the glass, she put her hand to her throat, as if a spasm of pain had seized her, and would have left the table but for a commanding look from Mirabeau, which warned her of danger.

"They understand each other," thought Louison; "this is not simply a carouse. Du Berry and Mirabeau share secrets together; and these idiots, swaggering in the cast-off garments of some cowardly nobleman, cannot see it."

She was mistaken. Theroigne de Mericourt was quick-sighted as herself. Du Berry had affiliated herself with the revolutionists—but the extremists always held her in distrust. She was still a beautiful woman, and a certain prestige lingered in her history, which would have been a recommendation to the powers that were rising on the waves of the national revolt, had it not been connected with the old king, whose memory was hated.

"Turn down your goblets," said the young amazon, shaking the last drops from her glass, and tossing the flowers into the face of her *vis-a-vis* at the table. "I hold the man or woman who has not drained every drop as an enemy to France."

Before Du Berry could reach forth her hand, Mirabeau had pushed his empty goblet toward her, and seized upon hers.

"If I did not drain my glass at once, it was because admiration is sometimes more powerful than the love of liberty. Having drank to the death of royalty, let me pour out a libation to the goddess, who knows so well how to teach Frenchmen their duty."

Here Mirabeau poured the contents of his glass into a malachite vase that stood near him, half choked up with flowers.

Theroigne's dark eyes flashed. She had brought half the leading patriots of the clubs to her feet; but Mirabeau, up to this time, had kept aloof from her influence, and she felt her power incomplete without his subjugation. It was a great step that he had invited her to his house; but other women were equally honored. Du Berry sat at his right hand—was there a preference in this?

Du Berry took Mirabeau's lead and sprang to her feet.

"The women of France are the soul of her revolutions," she said; "and Theroigne is their leader. Fill up once more to the first woman of France."

"To Mirabeau alone belongs the pleasure of proposing this homage to the great spirit of the revolution," answered the host. Amid the confusion and riot that followed, Du Berry escaped further notice of her imprudence in refusing to drink to the death of a man and a woman who had been forbearing and most kind to her when she had deserved so little consideration at their hands.

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## CHAPTER LXXXII.

### THROWING OFF DISGUISES.

THE evening wore on, and Mirabeau's guests came out of the awkwardness of a sumptuous masquerade, where they had been aping the life they professed to despise, and their coarse natures revealed themselves amid flowers, jewels, laces, and silks, with ludicrous incongruity.

Mirabeau enjoyed the scene with keen zest. In his heart he despised the paltry display which only made his plebeian

friends unnatural and awkward; but the whole scene amused him, and, with his usual forethought, he had arranged it for his own advantage. In this adroit way he hoped to mingle such elements together as would render his projects, regarding the royal family, less open to observation.

Louison understood the whole scene. One by one she began to recognize the men who figured under those splendid garments; and even in her anger she smiled as the coarse hand of Marat protruded from the ruffles of gossamer lace that fell from under his coat-sleeve, in a rude attempt to wave kisses across the table to Theroigne, who received his advances with a disdainful laugh, which Du Berry joined, more covertly. She was no stranger to the splendid objects that surrounded her, and took some pride in the ultra refinements which she had brought out of her former grandeur.

Marat, whose vanity was extreme, drew back from the ridicule of these women with a growl of anger; low born and humbly bred as himself, they had easily adopted the careless self-possession which he aimed at in vain. But this man was already making his influence felt in the clubs, and no one present felt strong enough to ridicule him openly.

Du Berry laughed behind her fan; and Theroigne turned her face away and made signs of disgust to Mirabeau, who leaned back in his chair and smiled upon them all.

Marat witnessed all this reflected in a mirror upon the opposite wall, and he never forgot it.

Louison saw his coarse face darken, and knew that she could depend on him when her hour of vengeance came.

Marat, as if to assure her of this, started to his feet.

"Come, citizens, we have played at this folly long enough," he said, coarsely. "Why should we ape that which we despise, and will yet trample into the earth? I, for one, am sick of this farce. True patriots only grow

strong in their own elements. Bah! these perfumes suffocate me!"

With these words, the brutal man snatched off his wig and sent all its powdered curls flying across the room, thus more completely exposing all the coarseness of his features. Then he threw open the velvet coat, and attempted to draw it from his shoulders, cursing its tightness, and making vicious threats against the more slender aristocrat to whom it had belonged.

Theroigne burst into a peal of laughter as he tugged at the sleeves, and distorted his shoulders in a fruitless effort to free himself from the splendid garment; for in his fury he had torn open the laced ruffles on his bosom, and revealed to the whole company under garments of his own, coarse, dingy, and scarcely fit for a beggar.

"Let me help you, citizen!" cried the amazon, springing to her chair, placing one foot on the edge of the table and leaping across it. "Upon my life, you have hard work not to look like an aristocrat. There, now, the coat is off, and you have torn all this lovely lace to tatters. So much the better. Marat is himself again. You cannot chain our lion of the revolution with ribbons or ropes of flowers.

"See! see!" cried one of the guests, "what mischief one woman can do! Theroigne, in her zeal to take Marat out of his trappings, has deluged herself with wine. See how it trickles down her dress!"

Theroigne cast a glance at the table, which was scattered with broken crystal, that glittered like fragments of ice in a red flood of wine which her foot had spilled. Then she shook out the folds of her white dress, which were dabbled red as the table; and, turning to Marat, cried out recklessly,

"We are friends now and forever! I have only taken your colors, Marat, in advance!"

"All France shall wear them yet," Marat muttered, as he spurned away the coat he had taken off, with his foot.

"So be it!" cried Theroigne. "Like you, I detest anything an aristocrat has touched. Let us be ourselves."

The amazon tore a garland of roses from her head, and trampled them down with the coat Marat had flung off.

"Oh! if it were but the crown of France!" she said, fiercely.

"And the woman who wears it," growled Marat, who had drank wine enough to render him more than usually ferocious.

Mirabeau caught the ruffian's scowling glance, as he muttered these words under his breath, and guessed their meaning.

"It is, doubtless, a noble sentiment which the citizen utters; but he speaks too low. If it promises good to France, let us all join in it."

"You shall all join in it before I have done," answered Marat, sullenly; "but there must be a baptism first. You, Mirabeau, are not prepared as yet. If some one would draw the blue blood from your veins, our patriots would trust you, and ask no questions."

"As it is," said Mirabeau, laughing, "the people trust me, and with that I am content."

"There speaks out the audacious pride of the aristocrat," was the bold answer; "half noble, half plebeian—one eternally fighting against the other. Who can trust either? Not Marat, for one."

Mirabeau's face, grand and powerful in its supreme ugliness, darkened like a thunder-cloud for one instant, then cleared away with a laugh.

"The air of this mansion does not agree with Marat," he said.

"No!" cried the ruffian; "it stifles me."

"Come, come!" cried Theroigne, "we must not quarrel with each other. It is the garments and the place. When Mirabeau gave us permission to ransack the mansion, and

use what pleased us, he did not remember that the very atmosphere of luxury sickens a true patriot. Come, one and all! let us be ourselves again. We had a fancy to see how a nobleman, who grinds his luxuries out of the poor man's labor, enjoyed his monopoly; but the whole thing surfeits me."

As she said this, Theroigne left the saloon, swept across the hall, and up the grand staircase, followed by the whole party, except the host and Madame Du Berry, who had not joined in the harlequin frolic of the evening, having no curiosity to gratify regarding the usages of the aristocracy.

When the last of his guests left the room, Mirabeau turned a somewhat anxious face on Du Berry.

"Did this man terrify you, mademoiselle?" he said.

"A little; he seems to regard me with peculiar spite."

"It is his nature; besides, he had been drinking too much wine!"

"His very look made me shiver."

"But you must have more courage. It is with such men that you can have the influence we need."

"And this person from Liege?" questioned Du Berry doubtfully.

Mirabeau smiled.

"Now tell me," said Du Berry, "what this strange scene means?"

"Only this," answered Mirabeau. The house that I occupy, not long since belonged to a member of the court who very wisely emigrated, leaving all its appointments behind,—even, as you see, a portion of his wardrobe. He was a favorite with our friend at St. Cloud: and I received an invitation that my residence here might save it from pillage. I took possession. It was a dangerous experiment, for these people watch me with the vigilance of hounds. To-night I gave them a supper, inviting the most violent of the clubs. They believe, and I permit it, that I have

taken a brigand's possession of this house, and insisted on ransacking it from top to bottom. In the wardrobe they found some rich dresses, which the owner feared to encumber himself with ; and at the instigation of Theroigne, of Liege, got up the scene you have witnessed. It is wonderful how eagerly our Jacobins seize upon every opportunity to lift themselves, if it is only for an hour, into an atmosphere of luxury, while they pretend to despise it."

"Hark!" said madame, under her breath, "it seemed to me, as if some one stirred."

"No; it is only our friends casting off their nobility. Was anything ever more absurd than the scene they enacted?"

Madame burst into a hearty laugh.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* I never shall forget Marat in that dress. It was a hyena in the silver fox-skin. How his eyes peered out from under the curling wig. It was superb!"

Again madame broke into a mellow laugh, and mimicked the awkward pose of Marat in his aristocratic dress, with inimitable humor.

Mirabeau laughed till the tears came into his great, bold eyes. Then madame gave a comic imitation of Theroigne.

"Oh!" she said, between the acts of her little comedy "it is not often that a woman, taken from the *canaille*, can glide gracefully into the manners of the court."

"That," said Mirabeau, with a meaning smile, "is only reserved to women of wonderful talent."

Madame laid her white hand with a graceful motion on her heart, thus acknowledging the compliment.

"Oh, count! what a charming courtier was lost when you turned patriot."

"Madame, is it not possible for a man to be a courtier, and yet love his country?"

"I begin to fear not. Mirabeau, these people distrust me. That woman——"

Mirabeau interrupted her with a laugh.

"That woman — well, what of her? Can she forgive your arch wit, your superb beauty?"

"Hush, hush!" said madame, with a touch of mournful regret. "I am no longer beautiful, and these fearful convulsions have frightened all the little wit I ever possessed out of my brain; but, through it all, I have one feeling which nothing can destroy, gratitude to the king, and that gracious lady who would not countenance insult or spoliation against a fallen woman. It might have been half counterfeit, I know; but in the season of my bitter humiliation I was spared. I say to you, Count Mirabeau, I would rather perish than see harm come to them."

"We will both perish before that shall happen!" said Mirabeau, earnestly; "but let us beware of revealing a sentiment in their favor."

"Guard yourself, my friend. They are coming," cried madame, catching her breath.

True enough, a tremendous rush of feet came down the broad stair-case, and the superbly-dressed company, that had left the table in regal splendor, came back a rabble of riotous people, carelessly dressed, reckless in demeanor, and ready to blaspheme, or assert any wild theory that came into their heads, without regard to the decencies of language, or the presence of women. Indeed, respect for the sex had long ceased to be a restraint upon men who had trodden everything pure and beautiful under the cloven hoofs of an impossible idea.

Louison knew that nothing of interest to herself would be gathered from the noisy arguments these men fairly hurled at each other over the fragments of a feast that had satiated them. She was about to withdraw from her hiding-place, when she became conscious of some object crouching on the floor. It was so hidden by the tapestry, that she would have gone away unconscious of a companion



in her spying, had not her foot touched the little creature whom she had seen glide from that very apartment, and conceal himself in the hall, earlier in the evening.

"Imp, what are you doing here?" she whispered, grasping the shrinking creature by the arm. "Spying upon your own mistress?"

The dwarf wrenched himself from her grasp, and darted from the room.

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## CHAPTER LXXXIII.

### THE DOUBLE SPY.

Louison had lured the dwarf to her own lodgings. That moment he was attempting to force himself from under the powerful hand which she pressed upon his shoulder.

"Tell me, little wretch, or I will inform your mistress that you spy upon her!"

"No, no! I pray you."

"Spy upon her, and for what?"

"Nothing. Oh, madame! it is for nothing. Zamara has all his life had the habit of listening. He loves to know everything; that is all. He never betrays."

"Unless it is for his interest," said the woman, laughing maliciously, as her threatening eyes read the little, aged face that had grown dark and wrinkled, like a withered prune, during the progress of his servile life. "Of course, in these times, secrets are commodities that sell for good prices. You have many to sell, and I wish to buy. Is there anything that Zamara loves better than gold?"

"No, no!" cried the little Indian, and his eyes struck fire. "Nothing but madame, my mistress."

"Do you love her better than this head?" exclaimed

the woman, burying her hand in the crisp hair, which was now more than half white, and shaking the head her words threatened till the creature's teeth chattered. "Answer me that, jackanapes."

The dwarf threw up both his long, thin hands, and held on to his head, seized with sudden terror.

"My head—my own head? No, no! There is nothing on earth that Zamara loves better than that. Take your hands away, you hurt me!"

"Well, there, you are free. I don't mean to hurt you; but understand this, if you wish to keep this worthless head upon your miserable little shoulders, you will forget that any mistress exists to you in the world, except Louison Brisot."

"And who is Louison Brisot?"

"Look in my face."

"There, I do," faltered the dwarf, lifting his heavy eyes to the bold, handsome face bending down to his level.

"Then do not forget it, for I am your mistress. It is for me that you must watch, and spy, and listen."

"But why for you?"

"Because I can have your head cut off if you don't—cut off and stuck upon a pike. Have you never seen such things?"

"Yes," gasped the dwarf, and his dark face turned livid. "I saw them carried along the road from Versailles. It was terrible."

"You saw women carrying them?"

"Yes; I saw it."

The poor dwarf shuddered, and wrenched himself from the hand that seemed to burn his shoulder.

"Those men were strong, powerful, full of life; but they offended the women of France. While their huge trunks lay in Versailles, you saw their heads dancing over that army of women. Look at me. It was I who lifted this



hand, and in the twinkling of an eye those great, shaggy heads fell."

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* let me go. Let me go!" cried the poor wretch.

"No; there is no such thing as letting go. You must obey me, or——"

Here the woman drew her finger across her throat with the slightest possible action, and uttered a short laugh as the dwarf winced in cowardly fear.

"What is it that you want of me, madame?" he gasped.

"That you report everything to me. A little thing, but it is all I ask in exchange for your miserable life."

"But about what?"

"About your mistress; about Count Mirabeau; and, above all, about the queen."

"The queen! I—I know nothing about her. How should I?"

"How should you, little craven? Who is it that carries letters from Mirabeau to the Austrian?"

"It is not Zamara! Upon my life, upon my soul, it is not Zamara!"

"But you know who does take them?"

"No; I am not trusted so far. She doubts me—me, who stood by her when all her friends fell off, who went with her into exile among the detestable English, where the skies forever weep rain, and one is chilled to the soul. All this Zamara did, yet the mistress will not trust him."

"But he can find out?"

"Yes; Zamara knows how to do that."

"Well, listen. Some one takes letters from Count Mirabeau to the queen, and they pass through the hands of your mistress."

"No, no; she would not be permitted. She never sees the queen—never!"

"Still, it is through her these letters pass. I know it from words that fell from the count—careless words, which he fancied I did not heed. That much I know—you must find out the rest."

"If I do, what then?"

"Why, that paltry life of yours will be safe. I have the power—I have the will. No one, great or small, shall touch it."

"And my mistress?"

"Do not trouble your little head about her. She professes to belong to the people—she, who came from its dregs. Let her prove herself their friend, or be proven their enemy. You have nothing to do with that."

"Ah! but she has been kind to me—only that sometimes she suspects."

"Not so kind as I will be, if you prove sharp and faithful."

The dwarf bent low and kissed the hem of that woman's garment, in token of submission, as he had often kissed the almost regal robes of the countess, his mistress.

"I shall remember that madame has the power to kill," he said, abjectly.

"A safe way of insuring honesty," laughed the woman.

"I am not afraid that you will venture to trifle with your own life."

The dwarf took his cap from the floor, where it had fallen in the first tremor of his fear, and cast a furtive look over his shoulder, longing to escape from that dreadful presence; but Louison seemed to find pleasure in tormenting him.

"*Mon Dieu!* how pale you look through all that blackness!" she said. "There is wine. What you have to do requires more courage. Drink, drink!"

The dwarf seized upon the goblet which Louison filled, and drank off wine enough to have intoxicated a strong man before he relinquished his hold on the glass.

"That is good wine," he said, drawing a deep breath, and kindling into something like courage. "One does not fear so much with that in his veins. Now will madame, or mademoiselle, I do not know which she is, inform me exactly what she wishes of Zamara?"

"Sit down here," said Louison, placing herself on a couch, and tossing one of its cushions to her feet, on which the Indian crouched like a dog. "I will tell you just what you are to do—and make sure you do it."

"Zamara listens," murmured the dwarf, feeling a warm glow of wine burning through the duskiness of his cheek.

Thus, with his great, black eyes half closed, and his features relaxing into something like repose, he sat inertly, while Louison went into the detail of her plans, in which he was to act the part of a traitor and a spy upon the only real friend he had ever known.

Persuasion or bribery might have failed to turn that pampered creature into the foul ingrate he became. But Zamara had seen awful deeds during the riots of Paris, that the very thought of danger from that quarter made a craven of him. His own poor life was the only real possession that he had on earth; when that was threatened, all that was good and honest in his nature gave way. He arose from the cushion the abject slave of the woman whom he regarded with crouching fear and deadly hate.

"You will know where to find me, for this is my home."

Zamara looked around the room with contempt in his heart. The flimsy curtains, knotted back with tufts of faded pink ribbon; those poor plants in the window, pining for want of a little water; the table, littered over with Jacobin pamphlets and rebellious journals; the pictures on the walls, those mirrors in tarnished gilding, the faded silk of the couch, dead flowers in the vases, all bespoke the reckless desire of their owner to ape the luxury she pretended to despise. Zamara saw this, and his miserable

little heart filled with contempt of the woman he feared. He had lived too long in the regal splendor of the little Trianon not to sneer in his soul at the vulgar mockery of elegance affected by this woman of the people.

"You will know where to find me," said Louison, again, looking around her room with great satisfaction. "It is not likely that you can forget, having once been here."

"No; I shall never forget," answered the dwarf, with a gleam in his eye, and something almost like a sneer in his voice, "never!"

Louison had been terribly wounded in her vanity by the position in which she discovered Theroigne de Mericourt and Du Berry. Those two women, both almost as worthless as herself, had become her bane since the night she had seen Mirabeau smiling on them as guests of a table to which she was not invited. She had heard of the elegance which Du Berry still kept up, and knew that Theroigne was following her example, with the fearless audacity of a bold, beautiful woman, ready to risk her power rather than sacrifice one iota of the personal luxury which she considered as her right.

"These women would thrust me aside," she reasoned, with vindictive hate. "They have already taken my place in the clubs, and now crowd me away from Mirabeau's table. If they can ape queens with safety, so can I. But let them take care, I have one almost in my grasp. She thinks to play double, and win on both sides. We shall see! We shall see!"

These thoughts swept through her mind as the dwarf stood by, longing to go, but afraid to move. She had noticed the incipient sneer on his face, and it wounded her self-love.

"This is not a palace," she said, sharply. "I know that; but who can tell what may happen. I am far more likely to—but no matter. There is no knowing what ship

comes in first when the ocean rages. Remember this, either Count Mirabeau, or your mistress must not meet or communicate, without all the particulars coming to me at once. Your life depends on that. Now go, I think you understand me."

"Yes, I comprehend," answered the dwarf, crushing his cap nervously with both hands as he edged toward the door.

"And you will not forget, I make sure of that," said Louison, waving her hand as a signal that he might go.

Zamara took the hint and glided through the door.

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## CHAPTER LXXXIV.

### LOUISON AND MARGUERITE.

DAME DOUDEL held a letter in her hand. "It is from my sister Tillery," she said. "Just as usual, she wants you. As if there was no person in the world but herself."

"I should like to go. Dame Tillery is always kind, always glad when I come," said Marguerite, flushing with pleasure. All at once a thought chilled this sweet enthusiasm. If she went to Versailles then, perhaps *he* might come in her absence, and never take the trouble of calling again.

Dame Doudel saw the change in Marguerite's countenance without comprehending it.

"Do not be troubled, little one," she said. "You shall go, if it disappoints you so much. My sister has no children of her own, and I would not stand in the way of any good fortune that might come to you for all the world. So brighten up! brighten up! and get your work done. She will not be here to-day or to-morrow—you have plenty of time."

Still Marguerite's pretty face was clouded, and her bosom swelled with a sigh, soft and quick as the bland air that shook the snow-white curtains at her window. Two days! Perhaps she might see him in that time. Surely, if he cared about coming again, there would be time enough."

"Now fill your basket, Marguerite, and come with me to the market. If you are to have holidays with my sister, we must work hard now."

Marguerite sighed. Her own share in the business had grown very dull since so many courtiers had been driven from the kingdom. There could be scarcely a market for flowers, when the people of the nation were starving for bread. Still she said nothing, but gathering up the garlands and bouquets that lay heaped on the table, prepared to go out.

These two females, as they came out of their humble domicile, formed a strong but by no means unpleasant contrast. Dame Doudel, with her thin features, sharp, black eyes, and prompt action, was the very embodiment of those national traits which have rendered the women of France among the most brilliant and practical in the world. Marguerite, with her sweet, young face shaded by a straw gipsy tied under the chin with a knot of blue ribbon, and the outlines of her slender person scarcely concealed by the thin mantle of white muslin that floated over her dress, seemed pure and innocent as the flowers she carried on her arm. Even in that busy and riotous season, when all France was in a state of agitation, people turned in the street to look at this pretty creature as she stepped daintily along, tapping the pavement with her high-heeled shoes, and looking down with loving fellowship on her flowers, as if each bud were akin to her.

When Dame Doudel and her protégée reached the market, a little tumult arose among the women, most of whom

recognized Marguerite as the person who had with one word so effectually represented their cause to the king on that memorable day at Versailles.

"It is the child our Mirabeau brought to us when he said that the market must be represented by a girl pretty and innocent; for nothing less can speak well for its devotion to France. From that day we have made her the child of the market. We are all her mothers. When the king made her a promise, it was for us. When he kissed her forehead, it was a seal of good faith to us. The king is good! The king is good! If he breaks faith with us, it is because of the Austrian."

With these words, accompanied with ardent caresses, the women of the market swarmed around the girl as if each one had some proprietorship in her innocence and beauty. They loaded her with fruit; they added to her lovely burden of flowers, and embraced her as if she had been a goddess.

Marguerite received the homage with faint blushes, almost crying as she thought how little she had done to deserve so much affection. In vain she strove to convince them that she felt like an impostor. They would not permit even herself to diminish one virtue in their idol; would not believe that anything less than perfection could rest in the being whom Mirabeau had chosen to represent them before the king.

At last Marguerite shrunk away from all these demonstrations, and bursting into tears, cried out,

"Do not praise me! Do not love me so much! I did nothing! I used no argument; nay, I was worse than a coward, and could only cry out for bread, bread for our famished people. Then a panic seized me, and I fainted at the king's feet!"

"Yes, yes! but he lifted you in his arms; he kissed your forehead while the Austrian was looking on. His

heart would always go out to the people if she would let it. What was the need of words. He saw our wants in your face; he heard them in that one word—*bread!*"

Marguerite was standing by Dame Doudel's stall, around which the women of the market had assembled, forgetting their traffic, and filled with enthusiasm. Their praises went to the young girl's heart. With a love of royalty deep-seated in her nature, she felt her present position among these ardent women as a fraud which she had no right to maintain.

Dame Doudel, while she rejoiced in the scene, watched her protégée closely, fearing that some imprudent word might extinguish the enthusiasm which was exalting her into something scarcely less than a goddess. All at once, Marguerite burst into a passion of tears, and retreating from the crowd of her admirers, caught Dame Doudel by the dress.

"Oh! tell them—tell them that I love the king, the queen, and everything that belongs to them! Tell these good women they are breaking my heart with praises that I do not deserve, never can deserve!"

"Hush, child! Hush, I command you!" cried the dame, breathless with terror. "What is it to them? Who asks you not to love the king—we all love him!"

"What—what does she say? Who is it among us that has made her cry—tell us that!"

"It is nothing. She is a tender-hearted little thing, and weeps with joy. Cannot you see that yourselves? Hush, my darling! let me speak for you. I know these women; they wish no evil to the king. Hush! hush!"

Still Marguerite's tender conscience was not pacified. She was timid, but by no means a coward. Those women evidently believed her heart and soul one of themselves, while she shrunk from all sympathy with them. How could she make them understand this without wounding her benefactress.

"Let me speak! Oh! let me tell them!" she pleaded, clinging to the frightened dame. "It need harm no one but myself."

"I cannot. I have already told them you were one of us. Would you prove me a liar, and have me hooted out of the market?"

"No, no! I did not think of that."

"Then be quiet."

"I will—I will. Only tell them that I deserve nothing."

"Very well; but look up. Wipe your eyes, and try to smile."

Marguerite tried her best to obey. She wiped her eyes with a fold of her muslin mantle, and made a pitiful attempt to brighten her face; but just before her, or rather above her, as she looked up, stood a young woman mounted on one of the stalls, who was regarding her with the keen scrutiny of an enemy. Marguerite gave a faint cry, and clung to Dame Doudel in sudden terror.

"Do not speak—let them all go; but take me away—take me away from that woman!"

The words died on those white lips, leaving them parted till the teeth shone through. The great, blue eyes of the girl widened and glowed with kindling horror. She knew that the woman who stood there, so fiendish in her beauty, was, in fact, a murderer. A sick faintness settled down upon her, and she sunk to a market-stool perfectly insensible.

Then the voice of Louison Brisot broke forth in clear, ringing tones, that fell from her lips hot with the seething anger of a jealous woman.

"My friends—women of France, tell me, if you can, who it is that you are worshipping?" she demanded, looking around upon the crowd which was now increased by a rabble from the streets. "Have you grown weak enough to pay homage to a child like that? What could she do

for France? See how she sinks down and withers like a dead lily, at the first sound of my voice. Is it of such material that freedom is moulded? Is she a creature to represent the liberty of a nation? Why the first trumpet blast would frighten the life from her body. What has she done that you gather around her so!"

"She is goodness itself—a child of the people, innocent as an angel. It was she who stood before the king that day at Versailles!" cried a dozen voices. "Why should you come here, Louison Brisot, to assail her? What can one like you know of a blameless child like her?"

"But who is she—I demand that? Who is she?" cried Louison, trembling with rage; for this was the first time her opinions had been questioned among the women of the market.

A broad-chested, keen-eyed woman, seated among the vegetables on her own stall, with both arms bare to the elbow, folded over her bosom, answered this question promptly.

"She is the friend of Mirabeau. He chose her to speak for us before the king. What more do you want, Louison Brisot!"

"The friend of Mirabeau! Let me look on her face!"

Louison Brisot sprang from the stall, where she had been accustomed to harangue the women, and forced a passage to the spot where Marguerite lay insensible, half supported by the arms of Dame Doudel.

"Let me look on her face, I say. Mirabeau has no friends that are not mine."

The deathly pallor on Marguerite's face was white and cold as it had been when Doudel fell at her feet on that awful day when the Bastille was taken. Had she seen the young creature blooming, and with smiles upon her lips, it is doubtful if she would have known her again. As it was, a triumphant smile lighted her face when she turned upon the crowd.

"This is an aristocrat, and no friend of Count Mirabeau's."

The market women laughed, some with good-natured, mellow laughter, others bitterly, and casting menacing glances at Louison.

"As if we did not know," said the woman, who had from the first, answered Louison so boldly. "I, myself, went with her before the king. Count Mirabeau put her especially under my care—the lamb! Who will have the face to gainsay me in that? Not you, Louison Brisot, who never saw her."

"But I have seen her," almost shrieked Louison; "and as I tell you, she was trying to save one of the king's guard at the Bastille."

"And why not?" called out the portly dame who had spoken before. "Who among us was not at the taking of the Bastille? I was, and she went with me."

Louison's outstretched arms fell to her side. She was not convinced; but this evidence coming from the market, baffled her. She looked around on the crowd of faces uplifted toward her, some were angry, some drawn with sneers; but most were laughing at her defeat, in careless good humor. The stout woman who had, in fact, been one of a committee to wait on the king that day at Versailles, swung herself down from the stall on which she sat, and began to arrange her vegetables in high good humor. Another, as she held up a splendid fish for the inspection of a customer, asked Louison if she thought that fine fellow was an aristocrat, too; and shook her sides with laughter when a sharp glance, but no answer, came in reply. In less than ten minutes the excited throng around Dame Doudel's stall had dispersed, and the whole market was given up to business, made a little brisker by the time that had been lost.

## CHAPTER LXXXV.

## MIRABEAU BUYS FLOWERS.

THE crowd settled back, chaffering for fish, sorting out vegetables, and running up accounts, while the business of the day went on, and Louison Brisot made an ignominious retreat, for the first time, from the people she had almost ruled by her eloquence and fierce beauty; for those market-women had become almost men in their tastes, and looked upon youth and beauty with the admiration of another sex.

A few of Dame Doudel's nearest neighbors hovered around the fainting girl; but Louison had disappeared from the market before Marguerite came to herself.

The moment she opened her eyes, these warm-hearted women began to encourage and console her. What had she to fear? Why did she faint? Was it because of Louison Brisot? That was foolish—no one minded Louison now. Since it was known that Mirabeau had put her aside, when a proper person was wanted to lay their troubles before the king, she had been of little account. The market-women were wives and mothers, honest women, who wanted to earn bread for their children in an honest way; and Mirabeau knew best how they should be represented. If he had wanted Louison Brisot, or Theroigne, to lead them, would he not have said so? But he did nothing of the kind.

"Take this young girl," he said; "you go to entreat the king, not to insult him. Liberty is grand, it is pure; when she pleads, it should be through innocent lips." That was what our Mirabeau said—and he was right. You have spoken for us, little one, and we will let no one wrong you, much less Louison."

"You are kind, I feel your goodness here," said the poor girl, pressing a hand to her heart, which was still

heavy with pain. "I only wish it possible to deserve the trust you place in me."

Marguerite spoke wearily, and her mournful eyes filled with tears. The shock that face had given her brought back that awful scene at the Bastille. The girl had a vivid imagination, and for a time the market, with all its gleaming fish, tinted vegetables, and crimson meat-stalls, vanished from her sight—she stood under the shadows of the Bastille, its grim towers shook to the foundation as a vast horde of human beings raged around them, men and women, soldiers and citizens, all crying out for some human life. A human life—whose was it? What was that which came crashing down from the tallest of those towers? The horror of the reality was scarcely more dreadful than the memory that woman's face brought back upon her with a suddenness that struck the very life from her heart.

"Let me go," she said, appealing piteously to Dame Doudel; "I have stood here too long. They are all kind; but the air stifles me."

Marguerite took up her basket of flowers and left the market, followed by kindly words and pleasant looks from the women through whom she passed. With a slow, weary step she wandered away into the street, not once offering her flowers, but walking on dreamily, unmindful where she went, or whom she met. Indeed, she was so utterly heedless of everything around, that a woman was following her all the time, keeping a little way off, and she quite unconscious that the enemy she most dreaded was on her track, bitter and vindictive as a she wolf.

"Will you sell me some flowers?"

Marguerite started, looked up, and saw the strong, ugly face of Count Mirabeau bending over her.

"Some flowers—some flowers!" repeated the girl.

"Yes—yes. If—if you want them."

"Of course, I want them. Let me select, but with your help, though. Shall it be roses, or myrtle?"

"Myrtle, I think," said the girl, too sad for a choice of the brighter flowers.

"But roses, too, and some of those sweet-smelling things."

"Here is a bunch in which they are all tied up. Will you take this, monsieur count?"

"You know me again, sweet Marguerite?" said the count, taking the flowers and fastening them among the ruffles in his bosom. "Know me well enough to blush like your own roses; while I have seen that lovely face too often for my peace of mind."

"Do the flowers please you?" said Marguerite, dropping her eyes under the bold stare Mirabeau fixed upon her.

"Please me? Of course they do. Here is a likeness of the king, if you can forgive the head for the sake of the gold."

"A Louis d'or," said Marguerite, hesitating—"a Louis d'or?"

She held the coin a moment, and gave it back again, with a gentle shake of the head.

"What, my little Jacobin, do you hate the king like that? My foster-brother told me a far different story."

"Hate the king? Oh, no! I love the king, and am no Jacobin, though I do sell flowers, and in some sort belong to the market."

"Love the king, and refuse to take his likeness, even when stamped on gold, that is beyond belief."

"It is not that; but you offer me too much. The flowers you have are worth only a few sous. I will take that, but no more."

"But if I insist upon it?"

"Dame Doudel would not permit me to accept gifts even from monsieur."



"Dame Doudel! Oh! she sits in the market—I know her well. But what has she to say in this matter? When Mirabeau sees a pretty girl, and she pleases him with her merchandise, or her face, all the old women in France shall not limit his generosity. Take the gold, child—take the gold."

Still Marguerite shook her head.

"I cannot take it, monsieur count. Dame Doudel is only a good, kind woman, who loves me; but she would never let me receive alms and call it selling."

Mirabeau was looking earnestly at the girl's changing face as she spoke.

"You were the girl I sent to the king that day, and a more lovely little embassadress never was chosen."

Marguerite blushed, but a bright smile flashed over her face.

"I was honored. It frightened me; but I was so grateful that you permitted me to go."

"There was another person grateful, I doubt not, and that person was the queen, who dreaded something much worse, I will be sworn! I heard all about it, and have never repented the choice we made, though there was some fierce anger among the grand army of women at the time. You stood in the way of more than one whose brazen ambition would have confronted angels with satisfaction."

"Yes, I know," answered the girl, lifting her earnest eyes to the count, and speaking with gentle confidence. "There was one in the market, this morning, who reviled me before all the women, as if I had been to blame in something."

"Indeed! And who was it?"

"They called her Louison."

"Louison Brisot?"

"Yes, that was the other name—a tall, handsome woman, with eyes like fire."

"Oh, yes! I recognize the description. So she dared to assail you. My favor has driven the creature mad, or she would not have found the courage to attack any one Mirabeau has exalted by his notice. This shall not happen again, I will answer for that."

"Oh! I am not afraid. It is only the sight of her face that can hurt me."

"Her face? Why it is bold enough, but one of the handsomest in Paris."

"Oh, it is terrible!" cried the girl, shuddering. "If I could only forget it."

"Why, what can distress you so in Louison's face? Surely, it has done you no harm."

"I saw her kill a man with her own hands, only because he was faithful to the king."

The poor girl trembled as she spoke; her sweet, young face grew cold and white; and the eyes that she lifted to Mirabeau were full of the anguish she could not speak.

"Louison Brisot has much to answer for, and she shall some day give a strict account," said Mirabeau, sternly; "but let her pass now—I have something else to talk of. This man, was he your friend, and did he love the king?"

"Better than his own life, or he would have joined the insurgents and been saved," answered the girl, promptly.

"And you? Remember, child, it is an unpopular, if not a dangerous thing, to speak well of Louis, or his wife."

"I know it—Mother Doudel has warned me; but I sometimes think it is cowardice not to say the truth. My father suffered wrong from the old king, but loves Louis and his queen well enough to die for them. In that I am like my father."

"You are a brave girl!" exclaimed Mirabeau, reaching forth his hand, which took hers in a firm clasp. "I did not expect this. So you would serve the king. Well, well, it may be that the chance will be given you. If it should, what then? Would all this bright courage fail?"

"You ask this because I fainted that day at Versailles. I was so young—so very, very young, and all that crowd of women terrified me."

"But are you so much older now?"

"Yes; years on years. It is a long, weary time since then—every day a year."

"But can you be silent?"

"If silence will serve the king, I can be dumb."

The pallor had left her face now, and it was kindled up with a generous glow that spoke well for the courageous soul within.

"But if Dame Doudel should not approve?"

"In this I would not ask her; that which my father approves I will abide by. His first lesson was duty to my God; his next, duty to my sovereign—loyalty with him is sacred as religion."

"Strange girl," muttered the count, who gave that forced respect for conscience and religion, which simple truth wrings even from infidels. "Strange, brave girl!"

Perhaps the man was contrasting his own mixed, and, to a certain extent, ignoble motives, with her pure heroism; for his eyes sunk abashed from the earnest purpose kindling in hers, and he began to pick the flowers to pieces which had just been fastened in his bosom.

"Don't!" she said, with tender pathos in her voice. "Don't! you will hurt them!"

"Hurt them!" repeated the count; "hurt them! Would to heaven I had never done worse things than that. But tell me where you live, in the old place?"

Marguerite gave Dame Doudel's address.

"I shall not come myself, perhaps, but you will hear from me. Remember, my name should not be mentioned. No one must be informed that we have met. If you wish to serve the king, it must be cautiously. Some friends of his have need of a trusty messenger, who can pass in and out of the palace unsuspected; you would not hesitate?"

"No."

"But neither your mother nor Dame Doudel must know."

"I will not tell them."

"It may prove dangerous in the end."

"I am not afraid of any danger that comes only to myself; but that which I do must not harm Dame Doudel or my mother."

"Of course. It is for their safety that they should know nothing."

"Then, if danger comes, it will only reach me."

"Be cautious, and there is no danger."

"It is hardly worth while to be cautious for myself, so few people would miss me if I were to die before night; there is my father—and one other."

"And who is this one?"

"I had better not tell—he might not like it."

"He! Well, I must not ask. But perhaps Jacques could tell me."

"Monsieur Jacques, no, no. He seldom comes near us now."

Marguerite did not see the smile that passed over that mouth, or the laughter that sparkled in the eyes that Mirabeau bent upon her. Her mind had gone back tenderly to the prisoner of the Bastille, and she wondered in her heart what he would do if any harm should take her away from him.

"Oh, yes!" she murmured; "there is good reason that I should be careful."

"The best reason in the world," answered Mirabeau; "for, without caution, you can do nothing for our friends at St. Cloud—with it, a great deal."

"Then you also are friendly to the king?"

Mirabeau looked into the girl's face with a strange, puzzled expression in his own. The simple truth that he read

there was enough. One element of this man's power lay in his almost intuitive knowledge of character, and in the prompt selfishness with which he seized upon the talent and labors of other men, adapting them to his own genius so completely that even to himself he seemed to make them entirely his own. The firm resolution which lay in her heart was made known to the man. As a gentle, truthful girl, he would not have trusted her, but he saw more than that, and spoke out frankly.

"Yes, my girl, I *am* friendly to the king. I am so friendly to this great nation, too, that the one grand aim of my life shall be to bring the people and the court into harmony."

"Oh! if you could! If you only could!" cried the girl. "It is the work of an angel you undertake."

"That is why Mirabeau seeks an angel to help him," he said, bending his head toward the flower-girl, as if she had been a duchess.

"Do not mock me, monsieur. I am only a poor girl, with so few to care for in the world, that I can afford to take a little danger on myself. When you want me, I shall not stand back."

"I am sure of that, and say, good morning! knowing that I have one true friend more."

As Mirabeau said this, he lifted his hat with a courteous bend of the head, and swept down the street, forgetting to pay the sous which Marguerite had named as a fair price for her flowers. In this one act the nature of that little, great and most wonderful man, betrayed itself. He was ready to toss away gold for a tuft of flowers, but forgot entirely the trifling sum which was their just value. Prodigality has always a germ of meanness lying at the core. All this time Louison Brisot had been watching them.

## CHAPTER LXXXVI.

## ANOTHER CUSTOMER.

"WILL you sell me a flower?"

Marguerite started, with a thrill of surprise. "Was it Count Mirabeau come back with the money he had forgotten? Or was it—"

The girl lifted her eyes to the face of her questioner. It was the man who had twice told her of his love in the ruins of the Bastille—who had helped her wreath those pretty garlands in her attic-room, which, since that day, had been the brightest corner in Paradise to her.

"Will I sell flowers to you?" she faltered, blushing brightly as her own roses. "Yes! No! Pray help yourself! Dame Doudel would be angry if I took money."

"And I should hardly know how to give it—so we will arrange that with the good dame. Only you must make up my little bouquet with your own hands."

Marguerite slid the handle of the basket back on her arm, and went to work robbing different bouquets of their choicest flowers.

"Dear me! how my hands shake, the basket is so heavy," she said.

"Let me hold the basket."

"What, you? Well, there, hold it, I will not be long; but my hands have got such a trick of trembling."

With an amused smile St. Just watched those fluttering hands as the girl plucked the most fragrant flowers from her store, robbing her prettiest merchandise for his sake.

"The dew is all off them," she said, regretfully. "If I had only known this morning; but the jasmines are all gone; and I had some lovely white roses, pink at the heart, as if a red rose had left its shadow there; but I put the last into Monsieur Mirabeau's bouquet."

"Who? What name was that?"

"Monsieur la Count Mirabeau!"

"And you know *him*?"

"Know him? Oh, yes! It was the count who would have me go before the king and queen."

"And you gave him flowers to-day?"

"Gave? Well, I suppose so, for he forgot to pay my poor little sous."

The young man laughed.

"Yes, yes; there is no doubt of its being Mirabeau. He usually does forget to pay!"

"But he meant to. Only I would not take the Louis d'or he offered, for that was worth more than I had in my basket."

"So he offered you a Louis d'or; the last he had, I dare say. Oh, yes! it was sure to be Mirabeau; there was no necessity of telling his name. So he ran away with your flowers, thinking his pretty speeches payment enough. Oh! you blush. May I ask—— But no, that would not be quite fair."

Marguerite stood before him, downcast and blushing with the unfinished bouquet in her hands.

"You seem to know citizen Mirabeau better than I thought of," said the young man, so coldly that the girl looked up with a guilty and startled expression in her eyes.

"But I know him so little," faltered the poor girl, thinking guiltily of the conversation she had just held.

Still the young man fixed his eyes on Marguerite's face, where it was not difficult to read the restless secret which disturbed her. He saw those frank blue eyes sink under his scrutiny. In order to hide her embarrassment, she searched with both hands among the flowers.

"Oh! here is one left. See! it blushes clear through the heart."

"Yes, I see it blushes," said the young man, coldly.

Marguerite twisted a bit of grass around the little tuft of blossoms she had arranged, and held it up timidly.

"Does it please you?" she said, with a glance of love-light breaking through all her timidity.

No one on earth could have resisted that look. Before he was aware of it, this young man had the blossoms in his hand, and was smiling down upon the sweet face, turned with such childlike appeal to his.

"I think you are good and honest," he said, speaking his thoughts aloud.

"You should not doubt me," answered the girl, drawing herself up with the grace and dignity of a queen.

"I never do—I never will," he answered, fixing his deep earnest eyes upon her.

She smiled, and took her basket from his hands.

"Now I must be going. Good-day."

The young man was hiding her little bouquet in the snowy frill on his bosom, taking from there a tuft of dead blossoms, which had been concealed next his heart.

"See, I have not parted with this," he said, blushing almost as rosily as the girl had done. "Even now I do not like to throw it away."

"Oh! do not throw it down — that is, people might trample on it, you know."

Marguerite, unconscious of the action, held out her basket, and the young man laid his tuft of dead flowers among its blossoming contents. She looked into his face with a sweet, grateful smile, and buried the treasure he had given her deep down in her basket, for those poor dead blossoms had spent their breath on *his* bosom, and were more dear to her than a whole wilderness of breathing roses.

They parted then. The young man moved away in one direction, sighing dreamily as the fragrance of those flowers stole up from his bosom, and the girl wandered off into

elysium, feeling as if every step she planted on the pavement sunk into the mosses of fairy-land, and wondering in her happiness why all the faces she saw looked so haggard and careworn. Could they not comprehend that *he* had cared enough for her flowers to let them perish on his heart?

Louison saw Mirabeau when he paused to speak with Marguerite, and watched him with a glitter of hate in her eyes, as he placed the little bouquet in his bosom. There was something in his air and manner that enraged her more than an insult would have done. She could understand the homage which even a bad man unconsciously pays to entire innocence, and felt with bitterness that it could never, on this earth, be hers. In every way this young creature had thwarted and disappointed her. When she struggled, with fierce ambition, for a place on the committee of women, sent before the king that memorable day at Versailles, this girl had been selected in her place by Mirabeau himself. This was her first accusation against him. But he had neither feared her anger or cared to appease her reproaches; on the contrary, treated both with careless laughter and annihilating contempt.

While the count tolerated, in any degree, Louison's ambition or caprices, she put up with this, and smothered the resentment smouldering in her bad heart, for she knew well enough that all the power she had, and more that was adroitly simulated, sprang entirely from the favor of this man, whose popularity with the people was unparalleled. But of late, even this frail hold had begun to slacken. While swerving warily round from intense radicalism to a limited monarchy, he had made few confidants, and among them Louison found herself completely ignored. But what he refrained from telling her, she had in many underhanded ways discovered for herself, and was weaving all her threads of information together, in hopes of meshing this lion in per own net.

This girl *was* in the Bastille, and *not* of the people. Some one among the men who fell that day was near to her, I can swear! Did I not see her wring her hands and cry out when that guard fell, headlong, from the tower? I wish it were possible to get at the man's name, then I might trace her; but old Doudel would lie her through anything, and swear that she was her own child, if one attempted to find her out. There is no use in quarreling with these market-women, they cling together like bees of one hive. Why this morning they almost hooted me from the market—me, whom they would flock around, open-mouthed, when I came to them as a messenger from Mirabeau. When I denounced that girl, they protected her. Why? That scene in the street answers one.

Louison went home with bitter jealousy in her heart that swept aside her wonderful patience. Mirabeau had avoided her pointedly of late. She would endure this no longer. Women of every grade and class were preferred to her, from the queen, whom it was rank treason to know, down to the fallen Du Berry; every one, any one, could claim consideration from Mirabeau rather than herself. Yes, yes, but she was not quite ready. Some tangible proof of Mirabeau's treason to his party must be obtained before she might dare accuse him, even to his enemies.

For days and nights Louison kept herself in-doors, brooding over these thoughts, afraid to trust herself at her usual haunts, lest she should again betray her cause, as she had done in the market-place. At last this restraint became irksome. Louison was a person who craved excitement of some kind so keenly that it was necessary to her life.

## CHAPTER LXXXVII.

## THE SEALED LETTER.

ONE day just as Louison was about to break loose from her self-imposed solitude, Zamara, the dwarf, crept into her lodgings, and placed a letter in her hand. She knew the handwriting, and questioned the dwarf sharply.

"I was told to watch for a flower girl who goes to Dame Doudel's stall every morning for her flowers, the little wretch said in reply to her eager questions.

"So, so! He is writing to her! He finds something in that milk-and-water face to admire. I thought his choice was something more than a wish to satisfy these clamorous fish women who call themselves wives and mothers, as if there lay some great merit in being one or the other. Bah! how I hate their pretensions! But when it comes to that strength is every thing in these days, and the market women are strong."

Thus the woman reflected as she held the unopened letter in her hand. Zamara stood apart, regarding her earnestly. He had brought the letter from craven fear of the woman who had threatened him, and was anxious to propitiate her further, if the occasion presented itself.

"Is madam in doubt how to open it safely? Zamara can tell her; he learned that art at the Grand Trianon, years ago. It gave him many secrets worth knowing."

Louison started out of her angry thought, and tossed the letter toward him.

"Open it, then, and see that those impish hands leave no mark. It may be that the girl will get her letter."

Zamara went to the window, turned his back on Louison, and in a minute came forward with the letter open in his hand. It contained an inclosure, carefully sealed, and addressed, to "Her Royal Highness, the Queen."

Again Louison recognized Mirabeau's handwriting, and the hot blood rushed in torrents to her face.

"It is the dagger that shall pierce his traitor heart," cried the woman, fiercely. "Open this! Open this, carefully! The wax that bears his arms, the aristocrat, must not be broken. Ha, ha! I have him now!"

Louison reached forth her hand as she spoke, clutching and unclutching her fingers like a bird of prey, eager for his food.

"There it is, without a scratch of the seal, or a break in the paper," said the dwarf, fawning upon her. "Nothing is easier than to fasten it again."

Louison did not hear him; she was searching the contents of that letter too keenly for any thought beyond it. Four closely-written pages were devoured by her eyes, which flashed and burned beneath the lashes that drooped over them as she read. Once, twice, three times she went over each line, reading more carefully at the last. Then she began a fourth perusal, but paused in the midst, holding the paper firmly, and biting her lips till they burned blood-red under her white teeth.

"What can I do," she muttered, "to make the evidence complete? That Austrian woman must have the letter, and answer it."

"That can be done," said Zamara, softly, for he entered into the evil spirit of the woman with the keen zest of a rogue who had been long out of practice.

"But how?"

"Let the pretty demoiselle carry a letter, not that, but something so like it that no one will ever guess it is not the same."

"But who can make anything like it?"

"I can, madame—give me pen, and paper like that. Why, lady, before now, Zamara has affixed the king's name to a *lettre-de-cachet* when his mistress had an enemy that

she did not care to trouble old Louis about. She always kept plenty of blanks in her *escritoir*, and Zamara has a swift, steady hand. Will you trust him with the letter?"

"Not to take from the house—I will not let it go out of my sight."

"Of course not; Zamara never expected that. Madame may sit by while he does his work."

"If you can—— Well, well, begin."

Louison laid pens and paper before the dwarf, and drawing her chair to the table where he placed himself, watched his dusky little hand as he spread the original letter before him and proceeded to duplicate it, smiling to himself as he watched her astonishment with sidelong glances now and then, while helping himself to ink.

"You see, my lady, the countess could trust no one but Zamara. Even at the height of her fortune she needed some person who had the learning and knowledge which she lacked terribly; for ignorance, you know, madame, comes with low birth."

Zamara stopped suddenly, for a hot red flashed over Louison's face; and the dwarf remembered that her origin was quite as low as that of Madame Du Berry; but he recovered himself instantly.

"It is not often that a woman who rises has the genius to lift her mind with her good fortune. When that happens, it is always because she keeps with the people, disdaining to fritter her greatness away among aristocrats, who laugh at her always when they dare. This was the case with my lady, the countess, who depended only on her beauty and the old king's favor."

"And now," said Louison, with a sneer, "both the old king and her beauty, if she ever had any, which I do not believe, are dead and gone."

"Dead and gone," repeated Zamara, shaking his head. "It is only genius that lives."

The little wretch made a low bow, with one hand upon his heart as he spoke, and Louison fairly blushed with pleasure, for such flattery was both new and delightful to her, even from that miserable dwarf.

"Now go on with this work," she said, smiling broadly in return for his grimaces. "I am impatient to see it done."

Zamara took up the pen again and applied himself to his task with avidity. It was a long time since his natural talent for evil had been called into action, and he enjoyed this new indulgence with wonderful zest.

Louison watched his little withered hand as it crept, like a mouse, across the paper, and congratulated herself warmly on the good fortune that had cast this strange creature in her way. At last the letter was finished, and Zamara laid it side-by-side with the original. Louison examined it with an exclamation of pleasure. It seemed to her impossible that Mirabeau himself could detect the forgery.

"But the seal," she said. "How are we to obtain that?"

Zamara smiled, his craft was equal to everything; and he had only waited for Louison to discover this difficulty that he might be prompt to meet it.

"Wait a moment," he said; "it is easily done."

The dwarf seized his hat and disappeared. Directly he came back with a roll of wax and some white plaster of Paris in a paper, out of which he mixed a paste, and impressed the seal upon it, thus forming a mould from which duplicates might be taken. No artist ever handled his clay with more dexterity than this little traitor accomplished his work. In half an hour two missives bearing Mirabeau's writing and seal, so nearly alike that nothing but an expert could have distinguished them, lay side-by-side on Louison Brisot's table. True, the seal which Zamara had duplicated was somewhat blurred, while the other had a clear impres-



sion; but no one acquainted with Mirabeau's habits would have wondered at this; in fact, a neatly arranged letter was scarcely to be expected of him. He had been especially dainty about this as Marie Antoinette was the only woman in France whom he was doubtful of pleasing.

"Now," said Louison, delighted by all her fellow conspirator had done, "we keep back this letter, written by Mirabeau's own hand, while the other goes to the queen by his agent. The Austrian will suspect nothing — who could? She will answer him. That answer once in my hands, and I hold that audacious traitor, and all his party, in my power. This service you have rendered me: I shall not forget it."

"Madame may be sure of Zamara's good faith."

"I *am* sure," answered the woman, with haughty self-reliance; "but our first object is this letter. How are we to make it certain that the queen's answer will reach us first?"

"Trust me; this girl is told that I am faithful and true to the queen. She will go first to the stout landlady at Versailles, who has charge of her majesty's dairy at *la petite Trianon*. I learned this much about her movements, and know that the woman can at any time gain access to the lady in waiting, and through her to the queen. Thus Mirabeau's messenger will penetrate to her majesty unsuspected; and is deemed the safest bearer of a correspondence, fearfully dangerous both to Mirabeau and the queen."

"This will ensure the delivery of his letter to the queen; but how will the answer reach me?"

"Zamara will bring it to you if he lives."

"I think you will," Louison said. "At any rate, I have no better means of securing it. Now go at once, and good speed."

Zamara left the house carrying the forged letter in his bosom. He went directly to the domicile of Dame Doudel, and found Marguerite keeping house, busy among her

flowers. Without a word he gave her the package. She turned very white at the first glance, and cast a frightened look at Zamara, astonished and repulsed by his strange appearance.

"Who are you?" she asked, holding the package in her hand. "Who are you, and what is this?"

"I am Count Mirabeau's messenger, and know where the package is going. He trusts me as he trusts you. We are all friends of the same illustrious person."

Marguerite turned whiter than before. The dwarf seemed like an evil spirit forced into perilous association with herself. She answered nothing, but hid the package away among the folds of her dress, after reading the portion intended for herself.

"When will you be ready to start?" inquired the dwarf.

The girl hesitated; some intuition keener than any process of the mind, possessed her. She shrunk from this strange creature as if some reptile had crept in among her flowers.

"That depends——Tell the Count that I will redeem my promise."

A crafty smile crossed the dark face of the dwarf. He saw that the girl was not disposed to confide in him.

"I asked," he said quietly, "because the count will trust no one but myself to come here for the reply. He is not willing to seek it himself."

"No, no! He must not do that."

"And it is impossible that mademoiselle should go to the *Chaussée d'Antin*."

"Impossible! Oh, yes, quite impossible!"

"So you understand the count was wise in making so insignificant a person as I am his messenger."

Marguerite answered only with a troubled smile.

Zamara was puzzled how to continue a conversation that was so entirely on one side. By listening industriously

when Mirabeau was with his mistress, he had learned the arrangements made between them, by which a safe correspondence might be kept up with the court; but he could obtain no information from this gentle girl; all his craft was lost upon her innocence. He lingered awhile in the room; but Marguerite had taken up her flowers, and was too deep in her fragrant work for any thought of him, save that his presence was annoying her. So he took himself off, a good deal discomfited, while the poor girl sat trembling among her flowers, full of apprehensions because this strange creature had possession of her secret.

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## CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

### DAME TILLERY PROCLAIMS HER HEIRESS.

SCARCELY had the dwarf been gone an hour, when a loud voice was heard in the passage. The door of her little room swung open, and Dame Tillery, landlady of The Swan, came sailing into the room like a ponderous, full-rigged Dutch vessel making port with all her canvas up.

"Marguerite, my child, I am glad to see you; get up and embrace me, little one. Oh! that is delicious!"

Marguerite started from her seat, scattering all the blossoms from her lap, and embraced the dame with such affection that the word "delicious" was repeated over and over again.

"Have you come for me, my friend, as your letter promised?"

"Come for you? Of course, I have! What else could have brought me to Paris? Are not all my duties at Versailles? There is enough of them, let me tell you, since her majesty has enrolled me among her ladies of honor."

"Her ladies of honor? I did not know——"

"Yes, yes, I understand. There was no place at the palace exactly; but the queen is a woman, and grateful. I had saved her life—what could she do? The Duchess de Polignac held on to her place though she has gone abroad like a coward. No woman of the people had been given a position at court, which was a great mistake, but true, nevertheless. I said position, little one, and you will observe that my language generally has improved since I became one of her majesty's ladies, to say nothing of my appearance and manner of dressing."

"I see that you are splendid!" said Marguerite glancing at the gay dress, which made the stout woman look doubly ponderous.

"Ah! this is nothing, little one. Your own eyes saw me that day when I went to court, after the one great act of my life, when with my own hands I held an infuriated beast by the horns, and flung him to the earth just as it was plunging upon her majesty, and about to gore her with two horns curving so, and sharp as swords. You have heard the story, I dare say?"

Now as Marguerite had been present and heard the thing magnified at least fifty times from Dame Tillery's own lips, the question seemed a little superfluous. But she answered "Yes, yes, every one who knows you has heard of that."

"But not of my presentation at court the day after you saw her majesty—that was the crowning glory of my life. You should have seen the queen standing there among her ladies, longing in her heart to embrace me, which she would have done, no doubt, but we were out of doors, in the royal park—a special grace, understand. So I went up to her myself, and would have knelt, which was my duty, only I was a little troubled about getting up again, and so made a curtsy instead. At which all the court smiled approval, and looked at each other in amazement, as if a woman of the people was not expected to be polite."

"Even the queen smiled, feeling my triumph, I dare say, as if I had been an arch duchess, and her own sister. That was a glorious day; something to remember, and to be remembered by my grandchildren. Only there is an impediment—never having had any children of my own is a drawback when one thinks of grandchildren. This depresses me sometimes; but then I think of sister Doudel and you, and feel sure that all will come right. I shall propose to my sister that you take the name of Tillery, and carry me down to future ages. This is what brings me to Paris now. I mean to make you my heiress, Marguerite. You shall inherit The Swan from roof to cellar, my place at court, the dress that I wore—everything. In fact, I mean to make a lady of you."

"And will you do one thing?"

"My child, I will do everything."

"Will you take me to St. Cloud?"

"Will I? Of course."

"Very soon?"

"The moment I get home. Twice each week I send butter for her majesty's own table from the dairy at *la petite Trianon*, for that was the department the queen gave me when Polignac persisted in remaining first lady of honor. Blind as a bat; had she given me her place, all the women of France would have felt it as a compliment to themselves, and drawn nearer to the court, if it were only for my sake."

"Do you think so?" inquired Marguerite, innocently, for the order of things had been so deranged in France, and she had heard so much about the power of the people, that Dame Tillery's grand boast made a profound impression upon her.

"Do I think so? Of course, I do. What is it makes the women down yonder think so much of you? Why, it is because our friend Mirabeau sent you up with that com-

mittee of women. How much greater the effect would have been had the queen chosen me for a place near her majesty's person. Why, child, look at me! I could make three of you any day, and hold my own with the balance. Just observe this for a presence."

Here Dame Tillery shook out her dress and sailed across the room, exhibiting a person that would, indeed, have outweighed four of the slender girl who looked on.

"You see," said the self-satisfied dame, returning to her old position, "you see what a chance has been lost. This Duchess de Polignac would keep her place, and their majesties let her selfishness have its way. Then what does she do? When the king and queen get more and more unpopular; when all their friends should have stood by them like rocks, this Polignac emigrates, flies from the palace like a thief; while all France finds me at my post, making the best butter in the world for the royal table, as if nothing had happened. There is the difference, little one, between loyalty and that make-believe thing, which drove Polignac into a foreign land."

"I know that you are true to the queen," said Marguerite, greatly impressed, yet somewhat amazed by Dame Tillery's pretension. "Sometimes I fancy Mother Doudel does not think the less of you for that."

"Perhaps not. I think, at heart, my sister is loyal. Only she does not know the queen as I do. How should she, not being a member of the household? But you and I, little one, understand each other, we have stood side by side at court. Now tell me what it is you wish to see her majesty about."

Marguerite blushed and looked a little startled. She had promised to keep her mission a profound secret—and with this pure girl all pledges were sacred.

"I love the queen."

"That is enough!" exclaimed the dame, waving her fat

hand; "that is enough. I ask no more. I shall say this pretty girl is my adopted daughter, and will, sometime, be heiress of The Swan—she was with me, your majesty will remember, on that glorious day when I saved your majesty's life. Receive her well for my sake. It will be done."

"But I shall ask for nothing. The only favor I want is an opportunity to serve the king, and die for him, if that will do him good."

"But it wont. Running away and dying isn't likely to help either the king or queen. It wants brains, brains for that."

Here Dame Tillery tapped her forehead with one finger, and nodded significantly.

"All you want is a guide, and one is always at hand."

Marguerite drew a deep breath, and uttered a silent thanksgiving that her way to the queen promised to be made so smooth.

Having thus given vent to the self-importance that consumed her, Dame Tillery took off her outer garments, and, seating herself in the cosiest chair the little room contained, watched the young girl.

Then Dame Doudel came in from the market, light, sharp, and active as a bird. She saw the landlady of The Swan leaning back in her chair, flew towards her, and in an instant was buried in her bosom.

"Sister, my dear, dear sister!"

At first the good landlady forgot her dignity, and gave her sister a hearty embrace; but remembering herself, she put the little woman gently away.

"Dame Doudel, I love you dearly; but you are a Jacobin."

"Sister Tillery, you are a royalist."

"Yes, heart, soul, and body; but one of the people, too."

"Carrying water on both shoulders is dangerous in these days," answered Dame Doudel, sharply.

"It is just that which will yet unite the people with their king. These cries of fraternity, equality, liberty, are an insult to us of the court."

"But the court itself must adopt them before the people will be satisfied, I can tell you that."

"Dame Tillery—Dame Doudel, why are you talking so sharply? This has never happened before. It makes my heart sore to hear you. Forgive me, I cannot help speaking."

Both women turned from the heat of their dispute and looked kindly on that girl, who sat like a troubled angel amid her flowers, regarding them with tears in her eyes.

"Why should dissension have crept in here?" she said, gently. "We all love each other."

"True!" said Doudel, reaching forth her hand.

"True!" answered Tillery, forgetting her dignity, in an honest burst of affection, in which the smaller woman was gathered up in a cordial embrace. "We both love the people!"

"And the royal family. Our blessed Lady give them wisdom!" said Doudel, yielding a little on her part. "Heaven forbid that their enemies should increase!"

Marguerite arose, wiped her eyes, and kissing them both with angelic fervor, went away, leaving the sisters together. They were not so far apart, after all. The very last persons who gave up their love for the king were the *Dames de la Halle*, to whom Doudel belonged.

"Think what it would be if this child should prove a bond of union between the people and the court," said Doudel, after the two had conversed together half an hour. "The dames have great faith in her since she came home with the king's kiss upon her forehead. She has the wish to serve her country. Keep her in it, for you can. Shall I tell you a name—the name of a person who has seen her more than once in this very room. Bend your head."

Dame Tillery bent her head, and Doudel whispered a name in her ear.

"A stern Jacobin," said the landlady, shaking her head in disapproval. "Altogether given up to those false doctrines which threaten to drag down the throne of France. But does he know who she is?"

"Yes; she told him herself. Sister, I have an idea that he loves our little girl."

"Then it is high time that I take her away. She must have nothing in common with these agitators."

"Not even if it were Count Mirabeau?"

"Count Mirabeau!"

"He came into the assembly one day, with a flower she gave him from her basket in his bosom."

"And flung it away afterwards, as he would put her aside in a week. Sister, I know Mirabeau. When the States-General assembled at Versailles, he staid at The Swan. I liked him then, but afterwards, when I took my place at court—not that I wish to boast, sister—it came to me that her majesty, the queen, hated this man, and would not endure him in her sight. So, if you hope for any preferment for our child, keep aloof from Mirabeau."

"The poor child wants no preferment. We can take care of her, Madame Gosner and myself. She is given up to France, I look to the girl. I have not set in the market so many years for nothing; and you have no children."

"That is true—that is true! But this Mirabeau is a dangerous man. The girl is safer with me just now."

"But you will let her come back again?"

"Will I? Of course, sister. Exaltation, you will find, has not hardened my heart. But just now you must not stand in the way of her advancement."

With these sisterly feelings and amiable words the two women decided that Marguerite should go to Versailles for a time; thus unconsciously aiding in the important mission with which she was charged.

## CHAPTER LXXXIX.

### MARGUERITE SEEKS THE QUEEN.

SLOWLY and sadly Marie Antoinette walked up and down one of the most secluded avenues in the Park at St. Cloud. Not yet forty years of age, in fact, lacking some years of that, she was beginning to look worn and anxious. The brightness of her smile was gone, and in its place came a mournful tremor of the lips, which sometimes betrayed a stern resolution, not always just, and seldom wise, which sometimes locked her sweet mouth as with iron. With all the ability of Maria Theresa, her august mother, she had neither the experience, the cool patience, or indomitable perseverance of that great and most womanly sovereign.

Born to the imperial purple, the empress grew up with a notion which she understood, and anchored her power in the love of her people; but Marie Antoinette, from first to last, was a stranger in France, and for many years almost a stranger to her own husband. Scarcely had this woman begun to find happiness in her domestic life, when the shock of a great moral earthquake, which vibrated from its center in France over the whole world, begun to make the earth tremble under her feet. For this woman there never had been an hour of absolute peace. As a wife, she had for years been subjected to deep and bitter humiliation; and her first maternal joy was dashed with a terrible disappointment. The heir which she gave to France was distorted and imperfect as her own happiness had been. Alas! in everything which fills the measure of a mother's pride, and a queen's ambition, she had met such sharp disappointment as wrings the heart of a true woman—and this Marie Antoinette undoubtedly was.

The queen walked alone, as I have said, so weary, and

broken-hearted that, for the moment, she longed to lay down her burden and die. The crown, which her husband had inherited, was so full of thorns that her head was wounded by them. In the throes of a great national convulsion, the very friends for whom she had sacrificed so much, had crept from her one after another, like frightened animals from a burning mansion; and in that regal old palace she found herself more lonely than the meanest woman who clamored for bread in the streets of Paris.

The queen thought of these things as she moved along. Being alone, and only human, her eyes filled with bitter tears. She came in sight of the temple, in which Count Mirabeau had sought an interview, which was of momentous importance to her; but it seemed as if even there she had sacrificed her pride for nothing. Either this man had no power to help his struggling king, or he was inert in using it. It seemed to her that no one in France was active but the men and women who most hated their king.

"Madame, your highness!"

The voice that uttered these words was sweet and timid, like that of a child pleading.

"Lady—your highness, I mean!"

Marie Antoinette wiped the tears from her eyes, and walked on a step or two, afraid to turn her head lest some inferior might see her weeping, and report her weakness to those who hated her. But the voice went to her heart, and after a struggle she turned.

A young girl stood before her, blushing, panting for breath, and with her head bowed down as a beautiful devotee might bend before a picture of the Virgin.

"Is there some mistake, or did you wish to speak with me?" said the queen, gently.

"I—I came on purpose. I promised to give that which I carry in my bosom only to the queen."

"That which you carry in your bosom! Are you a messenger, then? Are you from Paris?"

"Your highness, I came from Paris three days ago. One day I was on the route to Versailles; another I took for rest; and this morning I came here with Dame Tillery."

A faint smile crept over the queen's face.

"Dame Tillery is your companion, then—a kinder could not be found; but you have something more than she knows of to say, I trust?"

"Oh, yes! I have a letter!"

"A letter! From whom?"

"Your highness, it is from Count Mirabeau."

"From Mirabeau! Hush! Speak lower. Even here spies creep in. Surely, the stout old dame whom you speak of knows nothing of this?"

"Your highness, the letter was intrusted to me. I told no one."

"That was wise—that is truly loyal. Turn down this path and follow me."

Marie Antoinette turned into the path which led to the summer temple, where she had met Mirabeau, and hurrying up the eminence, entered the building. Marguerite followed her into the little retreat, and, looking around to make sure that no one was watching them the queen closed the door and locked it.

"Now," she said, in nervous haste, "give me Count Mirabeau's letter."

Marguerite took the letter from her bosom, and dropping upon her knees, held it up.

It was a heavy package, containing two or three sheets of closely-written paper. The queen attempted to control herself, but constant anxiety had shaken her nerves, and she sat down on a low couch, which circled half the temple like a Turkish divan. She broke the seal in trembling haste, for she had heard nothing of her new ally for weeks, and, giving way to her old prejudices, had begun to distrust him.



Marguerite leaned against the opposite wall, and watched the queen as she bent over the closely-written sheets. Once or twice she saw that face in all the rare beauty, which humiliation and constant dread had failed to kill. Bright smiles kindled it into youth again, and for a moment, it was exultant; but most of the time anxious frowns swept the white forehead, and the red lips worked in an agony of proud impatience. She read the letter twice. Once, hurriedly snatching the pith from each sentence, and again with grave thoughtfulness. At last she folded the paper, and grasped it between her fingers with nervous violence. It was hard to guess whether it had given her most pain or pleasure. She seemed to have forgotten that Marguerite was looking at her, but murmured whole sentences together, as if arranging them in her memory.

"A grand federation in Paris. So they wish us—us to join the people in a carousal over the downfall of the great stronghold of the monarchy. He advises it. This man, who claims to be ours at heart, advises me to urge this new humiliation on the king. Is this friendship, or subtle treason?"

She unfolded the letter again, and read a portion of it with evident repulsion. "This assembly will draw many people from the provinces, whose loyalty will be enkindled to enthusiasm by a sight of the king and his family joining in a celebration, which may yet be made to win him a triumph over his enemies. Do not be surprised when you hear that Mirabeau has gone into this idea with all his heart. There may be danger in it; but leave that to him, and out of these threatening elements shall be moulded a new foundation to the throne of France. Take the advice of one who knows the people; show yourself and your children at the——"

Here the excited woman broke off, and crushed the paper in her hand with passionate vehemence.

"Never! Never!" she cried. "How dare this man advise me so? Are we to grovel on our knees in order to keep the shadow of power they have left to us. Great heaven! has it come to this?"

The haughty woman flung herself forward on the divan, and writhed in her tortured pride, feeling in her soul that she would be compelled to accept the advice her whole nature revolted at. Then she began to sob, and, covering her face with both hands, wept and moaned in piteous distress.

Marguerite stood watching her, filled with gentle compassion. She saw that the poor queen wept like any other woman, and wondered at it. Then her timidity gave way to the flood of pity that swelled her heart, and, drawing close to the divan, she fell upon her knees, and touched her trembling lips to the white hand, which still grasped the paper, as if it were strangling a serpent.

"Oh, lady! sweet, sweet lady, do not cry so! It breaks my heart."

Marie Antoinette had been too cruelly wounded in her troubles not to feel the genuine sympathy conveyed in these words. She lifted her face, all flushed and bathed with tears, and let it fall on the girl's shoulder. It was sweet to know that some one, pure and good as an angel, could feel for her. So, in her womanhood, she forgot all sovereignty, and clung to the girl, still weeping.

"Who are you?" she said, at length, looking wistfully at the fair, young face. "Oh, I remember."

"Only a poor girl, who loves you, and would die for you. Oh, madame! if a drop of my best blood could fall for each of those tears, you should never weep again."

Marie Antoinette smiled through her tears.

"They try to persuade us that we have no friends among the people," she said. "Yet aid and comfort comes to me through a young creature like this. But how came Count Mirabeau to trust you?"



"He knew that I was to be trusted."

"Do you know this man well?"

"No, madame. I scarcely know him at all; but he trusts me. It was Count Mirabeau who chose me from among so many to speak for the women before the king that day at Versailles."

"Ah! now I comprehend the whole. Poor girl, poor girl! Your father in prison—alas! alas! how much we have permitted you to suffer. How much you have forgiven!"

"We have suffered, your highness, but there was nothing to forgive."

"The same sweet voice, the same honest face. I will accept both as a good omen. I see now, you came with Dame Tillery and so escaped suspicion. Does the dame know that you are with me?"

The queen asked this question with some anxiety; for her faith in Dame Tillery's discretion was small indeed.

"No, lady; it was not my secret to tell."

"Brave girl!"

"The Court wanted a messenger who would be safe and silent. He asked me to come and place that in the hands of our queen. I had nothing else to think of, and thanked our blessed Lady that even in that little I might do some service to my sovereign."

"A great service, child—a great service; more than you dream of."

Marguerite's face brightened.

"I wish it had been less easy," she said, with gentle humility.

"Nay, but I am glad that your coming was without suspicion or danger."

"But I should like the danger; then it would seem as if I had done something."

The queen sighed and answered with a faint wave of her hand; then her thoughts seemed to turn to the letter.

The cloud of trouble swept over her face again, and she fell into thought, not wild and passionate, as at first, but heavy and harrassing doubts, doubled the traces of age on her face. At last she arose with a weary air, and prepared to leave the temple. In her deep preoccupation she forgot Marguerite and going through the door, closed it on the girl.

Marguerite, neither spoke nor moved, but stood patiently waiting. She heard the queen pass swiftly around the temple, then all was still again. Was she really left there without directions? What was she to do, how act? Her heart slowly filled with misgiving, she was almost afraid.

"She will come back. In her trouble she forgot."

With these thoughts the girl seated herself on the divan, folded her hands, and waited, trembling a little as the utter loneliness crept over her. She had been seated thus, perhaps, ten minutes, when quick footsteps came around the temple again, and she had scarcely time to start to her feet, when the door was pushed open, and Marie Antoinette stood on the threshold.

"Ah! you have waited—that was right. Sit down and rest awhile until I come back again; it may be an hour, perhaps two—but wait."

With these words the queen disappeared as swiftly as she had done before.

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## CHAPTER XC.

### A BITTER HUMILIATION ACCEPTED.

MARIE ANTOINETTE walked rapidly toward the chateau, revolving the subject of Mirabeau's letter in her mind. The advice he gave was bitter as wormwood to her; and

had she stood first in power, it would have been trampled under her feet. But now she felt that all its gall would be forced upon her. In his fear of bloodshed, Louis was sometimes almost pusillanimous. His kind heart was filled with infinite pity and love of the people, who were hunting him down like bloodhounds, and with his own hands he sometimes tore away those barriers of dignity which should have been his defence, and trusted to the magnanimity of a people who could not comprehend the word.

Would he submit to the humiliation prepared for him? In her heart of hearts the queen knew that he would; not that he was a coward—no braver man ever lived; but because he really wished to act rightly, and was willing to make great sacrifices in atonement for the wrongs his ancestors had heaped upon a people who had at last been driven frantic by oppression. She remembered, with a pang of shame, that in a contest with the people Louis had always been forced to yield, and that yielding only increased the audacity of their demands. This thought wounded Marie Antoinette like a poisoned sword. The blood burned hotly in her cheeks. Oh! if she only had the power to act out the imperial thoughts within her! The monarchy of France might fall, but it would be with her husband and herself at the head of a struggling army, and amid the clash of unsheathed swords, as her mother had fought when she took her child in her arms and appealed to her Hungarian subjects on the heights of Presburg. But she was only a woman, and must eat her heart out with vain wishes. Her mother wore an imperial diadem, while her head ached under a crown which only gave the power of suffering.

On entering the chateau, she went directly to the cabinet of the king—this was his work-shop, where he filed iron and made locks with the assiduity of a blacksmith's apprentice, for in every palace he inhabited, a room of this

kind was fitted up as a refuge from the perils and tumults that tore his kingdom like the first heave of an earthquake. Louis was at the forge, with one hand on the bellows, in the other he held a spike of iron in a blast of burning coals, where it was reaching a white heat. The queen laid her hand on his arm. Her face was pale, and her lips trembled. Was this work for a monarch whose power was threatened? How calm and serene he seemed toiling there at his useless locks. If they were only swords, now!

"Louis, leave this heat and smoke awhile—a message has come from Paris."

The king heaved a deep sigh, dropped his hand from the bellows, and left the red-hot spike to cool in the embers in which it was buried. Then he shook the black dust from his hands, and drenched them in a silver bowl that stood ready, from which they came out delicately white, and heavy with jewels.

"Come, I will attend you now," he said, with the voice and look of a martyr. "Ah, me! if there were no Paris, and no statesmen to annoy me, I might, perhaps, finish one lock in peace."

"Sit down here," said the queen, finding a chair for herself, and motioning that he should take a seat beside her. "This is the most private place we can find in a palace haunted with spies."

Louis declined the seat, and leaned against his work-bench in a weary attitude.

"Nay, read it to me; I can understand it best so."

The queen began to read in a low, trembling voice, for the subject was hateful to her. Once she broke down altogether, and flung the letter from her in bitter passion.

"I cannot read it," she said. "My lips refuse to frame the hideous thing these people demand of us."

Louis took up the paper, folded it neatly, and laid it on his work-bench.

"Tell me, for I see you have read the letter. Evil tidings can be told in a few words," he said, tenderly. "Is this some new outrage from the Assembly or the people direct?"

"From both. Louis, they band together in offering us nothing but insult. This letter is from Mirabeau."

"Then he, too, forsakes us."

"No. He professes to be firm in our cause, and I think he is; but his advice is terrible."

"In a word, tell me what it is?"

"It is settled that a grand festival will be held in Paris, celebrating the taking of the Bastille."

"Ha!"

"Deputies are to come from every district in the kingdom. This hideous blow, which made the throne totter under us, is to be made the subject of a grand jubilation."

A red flush shot over the usually calm features of the king; a little of that indomitable pride which gave the title of Grand to his great-grandfather kindled in his bosom.

"These people dare to thus openly insult their king, after all he has yielded to them!" he exclaimed.

The queen looked up; her eyes kindled. This sudden outburst of energy gave her hope.

"That is not all; they will demand more."

"More? Is there no end to their insolent exactions?"

"There never will be an end, so long as you yield, sire."

"You are right; I have already yielded too much."

Marie Antoinette shook her head, and sighed heavily.

"In yielding that which is just, sire, you have opened the way to fearful exactions."

The king looked down; his troubled eyes sought the floor.

"Tell me," he said at length, "what do my people clamor for now—more than you have spoken? I see there is something beyond that."

The queen arose, pale and trembling with indignation.

"There is to be a carousal—a great national orgie—in Paris, at which all the traditions that have made France the foremost government in Europe, are to be trampled under the heels of the *canaille*, and you, sire, you are selected as high-priest of the occasion. You will be invited to preside at a celebration which is to bury all the traditions of a long line of kings under its ashes. This is the news which Count Mirabeau sends."

The hot blood of outraged royalty rose, and burned over the king's face.

"They will not dare ask this thing of me. It is impossible!"

"It is already decided. The clubs have united upon it. The demagogues of the Assembly snatch at the idea as a means of increasing their popularity with the people. Mirabeau assures us that he is compelled to go with the current, but hopes to guide and direct while he seems to yield. In less than two days a deputation will be here to demand your sanction to the hideous insult, and your presence while it is perpetrated."

"But I will not go."

The queen's eyes flashed like diamonds.

"Great heavens! if we only had a loyal army this moment on the frontier, these traitors might be taken at their sacrilegious work, and crushed like bees in a hive!"

Louis, who had for a moment stood upright and kingly, settled down to his original attitude, the color left his face, and he answered despondingly,

"That would be to spill the blood of Frenchmen. Anything but that! Anything rather than that!"

"Where a people rise in revolt against a lawful government, there must be bloodshed, sire, or submission."

Louis took up Mirabeau's letter, and began to read it. Marie Antoinette watched him eagerly, the proud blood

burning over her face, and a look of defiance in her eyes. She dreaded the persuasion, the eloquent reasoning which divested this gathering of the people of half its repulsive features.

The king read slowly, and with thoughtful deliberation. In her passion the queen had hurled all the odious features of this popular design before him at once; but Mirabeau softened them almost into an intended concession and compliment to the court. It might be made, he urged, a means of great popularity throughout the country, while opposition would be sure to deepen the general discontent. The extremists, he urged, were already terrified lest the appearance of the royal family at a festival dedicated to liberty, should undo the slanders so industriously circulated against it. They only hoped that, by a refusal to preside at the people's festival, Louis would embitter the populace more thoroughly against him.

Mirabeau wrote eloquently and in good faith. Every word made its impression on the king. Marie Antoinette saw it, and tears of bitter humiliation rushed to her eyes.

"You take his advice, sire?" she said, almost with a cry of despair.

Louis looked at her a moment, and laid down the paper. It was not in his character to decide so promptly as that.

"It requires thought."

"Requires thought for the King of France to resent an insult?"

Louis shook his head, and a low moan broke from his lips.

"Alas! this trouble is great, and I am but one man!" he said, with pathetic gentleness. "After all, the power of a king lies in the love and faith of his people."

Marie Antoinette knew then that the crowning humiliation, against which her soul had risen so hotly, would, in the end, be consummated. Without a word she turned away

and left the room, pale as a ghost, and bowing her proud head downward. After a little she remembered that her manner had been abrupt and lacking in respect; touched to the heart, she turned back and softly opened the work-room door. The king had fallen forward upon his bench, and with his face buried in both hands, lay writhing in silent anguish.

"Ah!" she thought, mournfully, "he has the power to endure, but not the will to act." So, with sweet forbearance, she smothered the clamorous pride in her own bosom, and stealing up to the work-bench, wound her arm around her husband's neck.

"Louis!"

The king looked up, and turned his heavy eyes upon the tearful face bent so lovingly to his.

"Ah!" he said, gently. "An evil fate made me king when France was falling into convulsions. You should have been the leader, my beloved."

"Not so," was the kindly answer. "What have I done but make the people hate me? I, who would have given my life for their love."

"For that we must both be ready to make great sacrifices. Oh! if I could only lay my heart bare before this concourse of Frenchmen, and let them see how honestly it is theirs, the thing with which they threaten us would be a blessing."

The king spoke earnestly, and his eyes filled with tears.

"Shall I write this to Count Mirabeau?" said the queen, touched by this gentle despondency, and forgetting her first wrath in the intense sympathy which she felt for her husband.

"I think he is faithful!" said Louis, wistfully. "Let us at least consider his advice."

Then the queen knew that she must submit, and without

another word of protest, she went forth to accept the thing she loathed.

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## CHAPTER XCI.

### THE BAFFLED SPY.

AN hour after this, Marguerite sat beside Dame Tillery in the little donkey cart which had brought them from Versailles. She carried a letter in her bosom directed to Count Mirabeau. The girl was very silent and thoughtful, and Dame Tillery managed her donkey in sullen dignity, for long after she was ready to start home Marguerite had kept her waiting.

At last curiosity overcame the good woman, and she began to ask questions.

"Well, Marguerite, did you get a sight of her majesty, or was it a mistake when they told me that she was walking in the Park. It was a great favor if they let you in. Nothing less than a member of the household could have done that for you; but, passing as my heiress, you have privileges. I hope you understand."

"Oh, yes!" answered Marguerite dreamily. "I understand that you are very kind to me."

"But about her majesty; did you get a glimpse of her?"

"Yes, I saw her."

"But not too near. I hope you did not take a liberty like that?"

"No, I think there was nothing wrong in what I did. You are kind to bring me here; and the queen is very beautiful—a grand, noble lady."

"Beautiful! I should think so. No one but a born traitor would dispute that."

"But troubled. Oh, how troubled!" resumed the girl, as if speaking to herself.

"And reason enough," answered Dame Tillery. "Her enemies grow keener every day; as for her friends—I never boast, Marguerite, you know that, being more modest than most women; but if half her friends had been like me, earnest and capable, this miserable tumult would end. Instead of that, half the court has slunk away from her, and St. Cloud seems more like a prison than a palace."

"It does, indeed," sighed Marguerite. "Poor lady! Poor, wronged queen!"

Here Dame Tillery heaved a portentous sigh, and taking the reins in her left hand, drew forth a huge pocket-handkerchief, and wiped her eyes.

"If you feel her wrongs so much, what must they be to me, a member of her own household, and like a mother to her ever since the great empress died."

Marguerite made no answer to this pathetic appeal. She had fallen into deep thought, and was wondering how it would be possible to get back to Paris, and safely deliver the letter hidden away in her bosom.

The good dame talked incessantly of her own greatness, and the influence which her devotion had secured in the royal household; but, as her companion had heard it all over and over again at least fifty times, it had no more effect on her thoughts than the rush and gurgle of a brook. All at once Marguerite started out of her reverie, and laid her hands upon the reins with which Dame Tillery was guiding her donkey.

"My friend, you must not be angry, but I do so long to be in Paris, if it is only for a night. Every step we take the other way, seems to draw a drop of blood from my heart."

"What, homesick—and with me!" exclaimed the dame, drawing up her reins in blank astonishment.

"If you would only go with me, your sister Doudel will be so pleased."

"Oh, yes, I dare say! Now that you have had a look at her highness, you are dying to tell all about it. Well, well! since the court left Versailles, there has not been so much custom at The Swan that its mistress cannot go away for a night, and no great harm done. So, if you have set your heart upon it, my child, we will just take the road to Paris, and give my sister a surprise. Poor soul! she has not had our privileges, and will be delighted to hear that her protégée has been introduced into the heart of the palace.

Dame Tillery entered into a severe struggle with her donkey. At this point that respectable animal objected to being forced from the road which led to his own stable, and took the journey to Paris with sullen protest and most unequal speed, sometimes creeping like a snail, sometimes going sideways, and occasionally pushing backward, as if determined to reach home by that process. But the good dame held her own in the contest: and at last drew up at her sister's door, in high spirits, having brought the vicious animal into complete subjection.

As Marguerite hurried toward the entrance, a little figure glided out from the shadows cast by a neighboring building, and seizing hold of her dress, checked her swift progress. It was the dwarf who had given her the letter which Mirabeau sent to the queen.

"The letter," he said, in a whisper; "I have been waiting for it. Count Mirabeau is impatient. Give me the letter."

The dwarf spoke eagerly, and clung to her dress. She saw the steel-like flash of his eyes and drew back, warned by an intuition which checked her first impulse to give up the precious document.

"Come, come, be quick. He waits."

"Where is the count?"

"In his own house. Come, now, the letter!"

Marguerite withdrew the folds of her dress from Zamara's grasp, and moved forward.

"But you will not go without giving up the letter?" pleaded the little wretch. "I shall be blamed. Oh, mademoiselle! give it me!"

"Tell Count Mirabeau that it shall reach him by a safe hand," said the girl, growing more and more resolute.

"But how are you to judge? Why choose another when I am here by his order?" pleaded the little traitor, stricken with terror.

"Because I was directed to deliver all that was given me into the count's own hands."

"And you will?"

"Yes, I will."

"But to-night? Will you give it to him this very night?"

"Yes; this very night."

Here Dame Tillery came on to the doorstep, almost sweeping the dwarf away with her skirts.

"Come, come—what are you waiting for? Surely, they have not locked the door so early."

Marguerite, finding herself thus set free, glided into the house, and Dame Tillery followed.

The dwarf drew back into the shadows again, grinding his teeth with impotent rage. He dared not return to the woman who had kept him day after day upon the watch for Marguerite's return. His errand had been a failure, and, cowering with dread, he reflected that his very life was at stake, for Louison Brisot's threat had chilled his soul with dread of her vengeance. So he slunk away, and, leaning against the wall of a neighboring house, waited in terror for Marguerite to come forth. After awhile the door opened cautiously, and a street lamp cast its momentary light upon Marguerite, who, shrouded in a cloak, and with a hood drawn over her face passed into the street.

The dwarf followed her in sheer desperation. He had no doubt that she was on her way to Mirabeau's residence,

where the letter she carried would pass out of his reach forever—that the wretched creature knew would be death to him. So, without any definite object, and actuated only by a wild desire to save himself, he followed on, keeping at a safe distance. Marguerite walked rapidly, gliding like a shadow along the street, until she came in sight of Mirabeau's dwelling; then she paused a moment to gather courage, and pushing back her hood looked around, to be certain no one was in sight.

That moment a young man passing along the street, stopped short in his rapid walk, and cast a sharp glance at the young face momentarily exposed to his view.

"Great heavens!"

This exclamation had hardly left his lips, when the girl entered the building, which he knew to be occupied by Count Mirabeau.

"The villain! Poor, foolish child!"

Muttering this through his clenched teeth, St. Just drew back into the shelter of an arched passage, and watched the house with a wild hope that another minute would bring the girl into the street again. As he stood with his eager eyes fixed on the opposite door, something that seemed like a crouching dog stole up the steps, and pressed itself against the door, which swung partly open, letting a gleam of light into the street. Then he saw what had seemed a prowling animal lift itself to an upright position, till it took the statue of a child, and pass through the hall beyond.

## CHAPTER XCII.

## THE VIPER TURNS.

"At last! at last!" exclaimed Louison Brisot, springing forward like a panther, and seizing the dwarf, Zamara, by the shoulder as he came through the door of her apartment. "I began to think you had been playing me false."

"Because I was late? That is hard. I can watch, not hasten the movements of others," answered the dwarf, snappishly.

"What, getting savage? That looks well. You have got the letter—I understand that. Success always makes cowards audacious."

"Yes, I have got the letter; but only by creeping, like a thief, into Mirabeau's house. Now, what am I to get for it?"

"Get for it? Why, your life, craven—your own precious life!"

"But I want more. The life of a dog—a slave, is not worth having, unless there is enjoyment in it."

"Enjoyment!" cried the girl, laughing boisterously. "Why, what can a little withered thing like you want of enjoyment?"

"What can you want of it?" questioned the dwarf, fiercely. "I am human."

"Scarcely!" answered the woman, with brutal sincerity; "but you shall have your enjoyment. I have been so much from home that my cat is getting ferocious. You shall tame him for me; he killed my dog in a hard fight. You may have better luck."

A fiendish scowl convulsed the dwarf's face.

"I do for madame what no one else can, and for that she taunts me. I will not bear it."



"Indeed!" drawled the girl, delighting in the creature's futile rage. "How will the marmousette help himself?"

"Easily!"

"But how? The creature makes me laugh."

"I will not give you the queen's letter to Mirabeau."

"You have got it, then?"

"Yes."

"How? From the girl?"

"No. She would not part with it; but delivered it to the count with her own hands."

"Delivered it to the count! But you have it?"

"Yes. I followed her into the house, hid in the room you know of, and stole it from under his very hands while he leaned back with shut eyes to ponder over it. You see there is an advantage in being small. I went in and out like a shadow."

"And the letter! Give it up. I am burning with impatience. The letter! Where is it?"

"Why should I give the letter to you for the privilege of taming your fiend of a cat?"

"The letter, insolent—the letter, or I will have you hung at the first lantern."

Zamara turned his back upon the excited woman, and was leaving the room.

"What is this? Where are you going?"

"To give Mirabeau his property, with a full account of all you have done to get him in your power. He has money to reward, and power to protect those who serve him."

"You would betray me, then, poor, miserable traitor?"

"If I were not a traitor how could I be of use here?" answered the dwarf. "Traitor, if you will; but no one has yet called Zamara a fool; and I do not intend to give reason for it. I know the value both of love and hate. You ask the greatest luxury on earth at an unfair price. I refuse to sell it while better customers can be found."

Louison Brisot was struck dumb by the creature's audacity. In her arrogant self-conceit she had fancied that terror made him her slave; but he turned upon her at the critical moment, when she had proofs of Mirabeau's complicity with the queen almost in her grasp. She had taunted him a minute too early.

"You shall not leave the room. I will have the letter," she cried, darting before him, and placing her back against the door. "Give me that letter, man, or I will find it for myself."

The dwarf almost smiled in the face of that beautiful fiend. He drew back and cast a sidelong glance toward the window, which was not very far from the ground. Louison saw his intent, and prepared to spring upon him. Still half-smiling, he thrust one hand into the bosom of his dress, and she cried out,

"That is right. What folly to think of playing the traitor with me!"

But, instead of the package she expected, Zamara drew a poniard from his bosom, and, with the sheath of embossed gold in one hand, and the sharp, slender blade quivering in the other, stood ready to receive her.

Louison burst into a mocking laugh. Even with that weapon the puny creature could be no more than a child in her grasp. She sprang forward, determined to wrest both the poniard and letter from him.

Zamara stepped sideways prepared for her, his black eyes gleamed living fire, his mouth was set like a vise; the poniard shook and flashed in his hand.

"Have a care," he said, in a low, sharp voice. "The point is poisoned with carroval; if it touches you, that black heart will never beat again."

Louison had heard of that fearful poison, which only the savages of Darien know how to prepare. One drop of which, penetrating the flesh, strikes death through the heart

in a single moment—half an inch deep the point of that glittering blade was dulled by this resinous poison. The girl drew back horror-stricken, her lips bloodless, her cheeks white as snow.

"Fiend!" she muttered, trembling in all her limbs.

The dwarf laughed. "You see there are things more powerful than brute strength," he said; "this one drop of resin makes the dwarf a giant. Now we can talk on equal terms. You want the letter in my bosom, and I am not unwilling that you should have it."

"Then why not give it to me at once?"

"Because you are insolent—because you have treated me like a dog."

"It was but a jest," said Louison, almost humbly.

"Such jests do not suit me."

"Well, well, they shall not be repeated."

"Then I cannot work like a cur because I am told. My mistress was always munificent."

"Doubtless," answered Louison, impatiently. "But I have no King of France to scatter gold at my feet; besides, in these times, safety is better than gold."

"But how is one sure that you can give safety? Let it be known that she is working in opposition to the great Mirabeau, and Louison Brisot will be more likely to want protection than the dwarf she dares to insult."

Louison seemed struck by this speech; for a moment her eyes fell, but directly her courage came back.

"You cannot understand," she said. "There is no man in the Assembly has so many bitter enemies as Mirabeau. One grave charge fastened upon him is enough to hurl him from power and blast his popularity."

"But who will you find more powerful? The next leader may not care to bend his will to that of a woman more than Count Mirabeau."

"You are sharp, Zamara, and wiser than I thought.

Listen now. I do not wish to injure this man, but to—no matter what I wish."

"It is power through him, or revenge that you cannot get it. I understand," said the dwarf, while a look of slow cunning stole over his swarthy face.

Louison regarded him with astonishment. She had fallen into the mistake of measuring the creature's intellect by his size, and thus thrown off her guard, had given him an insight into her character and motives, which might prove dangerous.

"Zamara," she said, with abrupt frankness, "I do not wish to use that letter against Mirabeau, but to secure him more firmly. Will you give it to me now, and for that purpose?"

"No," answered the dwarf, with a cunning smile. "I will keep it for the same purpose."

"Wretch!"

"Stand aside, I wish to go. You have sneered at and insulted me so often that this blade quivers in my hand—a touch of its point and you are dead."

Louison stepped aside, for the gleam of a serpent was in the little creature's eyes, and she knew that he had a serpent's longing to strike her down.

When Zamara was gone, Louison sat down utterly confounded. Her instrument, her slave, the creature whom she had depended on for help, had openly defied her. What would he do? Show the letter to Mirabeau's enemies, and thus make it useless to her? Or would he go to the count himself and tell him all that she had done?

## CHAPTER XCIII.

## THE QUEEN'S LETTER.

It was getting late, but Louison cared nothing for that, the exactions of society had long since been thrown away in her wild life. She hastily arranged her dress and went into the street. She had intended to seek Mirabeau that evening, ready for a contest, with two letters,—that which Mirabeau had written to the queen, and the answer which she had failed to obtain. As it was, she went forth half armed, but feeling sufficiently secure. After all, it was of less importance what the queen had written to Mirabeau, than what this revolutionary leader had written to the queen. Like a good general mustering his forces after a partial defeat, this woman arranged her thoughts as she threaded the streets of Paris. When she had reached the Chaussée d'Anton, her courage returned with that supreme audacity which no misfortune or rebuff could conquer.

A subject of bitter anger met Louison at the very door of Count Mirabeau's dwelling. The porter denied her that free admission which she had always commanded. She was requested to wait in the hall till Count Mirabeau's pleasure could be learned. "He did not receive now as formerly, and no one was admitted, unannounced, to his presence."

Louison was white with sudden wrath; as she turned upon the man specks of angry foam shot to her lips.

"Is this a rule for all?"

"Yes; all but very intimate friends, of whom I have a list."

"See if the name of Louison Brisot is on that list."

The haughty confidence in her tone rather startled the man, who drew a memorandum-book from his pocket, and turned over the leaves in nervous haste.

Louison possessed neither fear nor delicacy. While the man was glancing over some names written in his book, she drew close and read them for herself. She saw two names that kindled her wrath to a white heat—Madame Du Berry, and lower down Marguerite.

"No, madame—or, I beg pardon, mademoiselle, the name is not here," said the man, closing his book.

"That is because there should not be a servant in this house so ignorant as to ask my name. I will find Count Mirabeau myself."

Louison waited for no protest, but made her way at once into the library, where Mirabeau was writing. He lifted his eyes as the woman presented herself, and looked at her from head to foot with a stern, questioning glance, still holding the pen in his hand. She gave him back a look of reckless defiance. Then Mirabeau laid down his pen, and touched a silver bell that stood upon the table.

The porter had followed Louison, anxious to exculpate himself, and was instantly at the door.

"I gave orders that no one should be admitted. How is it that they have not been obeyed?" said the count.

"Pardon, monsieur. I am distressed to say it, but the lady was informed, and still she came in."

"Very well. You may go!"

Mirabeau took up his pen as he spoke, and went on writing as if Louison had not been in the room. The insulting coolness of the act drove Louison beside herself. She went to the table, and bent her white face close to the calm, massive features of this strange man.

"Are you afraid of me that your man has such orders?" she whispered, for her voice was locked with intense anger.

Mirabeau looked up and smiled as he uttered the single word,

"Afraid!"

"Yes, afraid!" she said, with biting scorn.

"No, only tired," answered the man, leaning back in his chair, with a slight yawn, which drove the woman mad.

"Tired! Tired of what?"

"Of you, I think."

His insolent calmness struck the woman dumb. She could neither speak nor move. Her consternation amused Mirabeau, to whom a woman's anger was generally a subject of ridicule or philosophical speculation. Just now he rather enjoyed the rage of his visitor; it was picturesque, sweeping thus over the stormy beauty of her face.

"Count Mirabeau, this is an insult!"

Mirabeau smiled.

"An insult for which you shall pay dearly."

This fierce threat brought a faint color over the man's face. She saw it and exulted. At least, she had the power to stir the blood in his veins. A little more, and she would make a tiger of him. Oh! for words bitter enough! They would not come. If she could have coined bullets into insults, they would been too weak for the need of her seething anger.

Mirabeau took up his pen and began to write. A half-completed letter lay before him, and he went on with it calmly. All at once he felt her white face droop toward his shoulder, and her breath bathed his cheek. She was reading the letter over which his hand moved. With his fist dashed down on the paper, and his frowning face uplifted, he thundered out,

"Begone, woman! Begone, I say!"

In his anger, Count Mirabeau was terrible. Sometimes he concealed it beneath smiles, and sharp, witty jeers, holding himself under firm control, as he had done during this unwelcome interview; but Louison had, in fact, worn out his patience—and he was not a person to bear threats tamely from man or woman. Now the coarse nature broke out, and once more he bade his tormentor begone, as if she had been some repulsive animal in his path.

As often happens, one powerful passion silenced another. Mirabeau's rude strength subdued the woman's wrath till it came within the level of words. In bitter, stinging taunts, that man, with all his eloquence, was no match for the girl, who, for the moment, hated him.

"Where shall I go, to that temple in the park of St. Cloud, where a vile traitor meets a——"

Mirabeau started up, his face crimson, his large hand clenched. It was Louison's turn to laugh—and her voice rang out in one long, mocking taunt.

"You look surprised. Those eyes start from your head. You order me to begone, but forget to tell me where. If that temple does not please you, perhaps Madame Du Berry——"

The girl broke off appalled. She had brought the tiger in Mirabeau's nature uppermost, and even her courage shrunk a little under it. The man turned upon her like a wild beast, but even in that supreme moment restrained himself. Her words surprised him. He could not fathom the extent of her knowledge, and was too proud for questions; but doubt and keen anxiety broke through the storm on his face. How much did that evil creature know?

"So you dared to level me with the crowd of silly women whose hearts you have trampled on," said Louison, encouraged by his fierce agitation. "You thought a few curt words, and unmanly insults, would send me whining among their ranks. With your lips on the hand of a queen, you could afford to scoff at a woman of the people. But I will give you proofs of your mistake. The people shall know of this treason before the night is an hour older."

With a mighty power of self-control Mirabeau sat down at his table, took up the pen, and went on writing. He would not let the woman see that she had shaken his nerves by a single thrill of apprehension.

"You do not believe me. Well, what if I tell you exactly how much gold has been drawn from the royal treasury to gild the treason of Count Mirabeau?"

The pen in Mirabeau's hand gave a sudden leap upon the paper, then glided on evenly as before.

"What if I tell you what fair girl it was who brought a letter from St. Cloud this very evening?"

"Even then," said Mirabeau, at last, pausing a moment in his work, "what would the word of Louison Brisot be against that of Mirabeau? Foolish woman! you are wasting time! Go, carry your bundle of falsehoods where you will, they only weary me, and I am busy."

"I will," answered the woman. "Henceforth there is war between us two."

Again Mirabeau smiled; though startled, and full of keen apprehension, he would not let the woman see how terribly her words had disturbed him. Still they were but words, and an accusation, without evidence, could easily be borne down, especially as it would seem to spring from the jealousy of an angry woman, whose vindictive character was well known at the clubs.

Louison stood a minute pale and silent, waiting for him to speak; but the proud man would have perished rather than show, by word or look, the wound she had given him. His calmness hurt her worse than his anger had done. He did not believe her; before the hour was over she would convince him.

"The clubs are still in session, before they close your treason will be known there."

"And you will have done your worst. Come and tell me how the news is received. It will be interesting. I shall wait for you," said Mirabeau, without lifting his head.

"Yes, I will come, if it is only to be the first who shall tell you that your power in France is at an end. Count

Mirabeau, you stand from this night exposed to the world as a demagogue and a traitor!"

"Be sure and come. You shall have no trouble in reaching me this time."

Louison left the room and the house. When the door closed upon her, Mirabeau flung down his pen, and resting his head upon his two hands, gave way to the terrible shock her words had brought upon him. She was right; let France once know that he had been in treaty with the court, and his great power would melt away like a snow-wreath. All that he possessed on earth was his influence with the people. In the clubs and the Assembly he had almost as many enemies as friends. The extremes both hated him and feared him. They would seize upon anything which promised to injure him.

Would Louison go to them with her charge? It was more than likely. Her keen wit and vindictive thirst for vengeance would find the shortest way of reaching him. But she had no evidence; his letter reached the queen, and her answer was safe in his own possession. What, then, but unsupported suspicion, had the woman to offer his enemies. Such evidence he could afford to scorn. After all, why should he care for the threats of a woman like Louison Brisot—a creature who would never have been heard of but for the notice he had given her.

Mirabeau remained a full hour thinking over all that threatened him. Then he remembered the queen's letter and, rendered cautious by anxiety, resolved to burn it after another careful perusal. A deer of lapis lazuli, with hoofs and antlers of burnt gold, crouched upon a small block of agate at his elbow. Under this dainty toy he had placed the queen's letter after reading it. Mirabeau reached forth his hand, lifted the deer, and found nothing underneath. He gazed in consternation at the empty space, then searched

among the papers on his table with a hand that began to shake violently. Had that evil creature stolen the letter?

No, that was impossible; she stood on the other side while looking over his shoulder, in that position the deer was beyond the reach of her arm. But the letter was gone, and he had not, for a moment, left the room after it was placed in his hands by that fair girl. Where could it be? Why had it left his hand for a single moment? Mirabeau ground his teeth, and cursed his own carelessness as he tossed the papers to and fro on his writing-table; but it was of no avail—the queen's letter was gone.

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## CHAPTER XCIV.

### LOUISON BRISOT VISITS ROBESPIERRE.

A LITTLE man sat alone in his lodgings where he led an existence of austere economy, such as many of the most noisy patriots only affected. This man was sincere in his simple mode of life, and honestly rigid in the self-denial, which had become a habit within him. The only gleam of vanity that broke around him lay in the showy color and cut of his clothes, which were unlike those of any other man in his class of life. With this exception, Robespierre cared nothing for his surroundings. He was proud of a very insignificant person, and ambitious for power, but had not thought of gain as a means of working out his ambition. Indeed, Robespierre, like many of his compatriots, was proud of his poverty, and used it as a stepping-stone to the influence he craved.

"A woman wishes to see citizen Robespierre."

These words from a slatternly servant aroused the man from a pamphlet which he was reading, and he started up

surprised, and a little nervous, for it was getting late in the evening, and in order to read in comfort, he had thrown off the only coat he possessed, and unwound the voluminous cravat from his throat, both of which articles lay across the back of his chair.

"A woman—a lady? Who is it?"

"Don't know."

"Well, what is she—young or old, beautiful or ugly?"

"Beautiful, I dare say the citizen will think."

"Well, well, keep her waiting till I get my coat on."

Robespierre ran to a little mirror hanging on the wall, and folded the soft, white cravat around his neck, caressed the ruffles of plaited linen that had begun to hang limp, and a little soiled upon his bosom, into something like their original crispness. Then he thrust his arms into a coat originally of bright olive-green, from which the nap had been considerably worn by constant brushing. Scarcely had he settled his slight figure in these garments when the door of his room opened, and Louison Brisot made her appearance. She had evidently been walking fast, for a warm, bright color glowed in her cheeks, and her bosom heaved and fell with her quick breathing.

Robespierre had seen this young person before, and received her with a feeling of disappointment. Notwithstanding the honied flatteries she had bestowed on him that night in the street, he distrusted her. Louison was known as the devoted friend of Mirabeau, and Robespierre regarded her with something of the dislike which he felt toward that powerful man, whose greatness had so overshadowed him both in the Assembly and with the people.

"I am fortunate in finding you alone, citizen," said the girl, who scarcely heeded the confusion into which she had thrown the little man, whose character and ability had not yet found full recognition in France. "We are not known to each other much, but shall be better acquainted, I hope,

after my errand is explained. Have I your permission to sit?"

Robespierre came forward and placed one of the two chairs his room contained, for the accommodation of his visitor. Then he stood up, leaning one hand on the table, and waited in grave silence for her to speak. She did this suddenly.

"You know Mirabeau well, but do not like him," she affirmed rather than questioned.

"Yes, the count has made himself well known in the Assembly."

"Where he overshadows more able members than he ever can be, and tyrannizes over the true patriots of France by the force of his own brutal character."

"Mirabeau is a powerful man," answered Robespierre thoughtfully. "This day he stands with his foot upon the neck of France, and the people sustain him."

"Because they think him a true patriot."

"Yes, he has attained a marvelous hold on the people."

"But if those who worship him now could be made to see him false as he is—a traitor to their cause, a parasite of the court, a double-sided villain—what then? Would they cling to him still?"

"Cling to him? No! The people are great; the people are just!"

"One question more. Who is there among the patriots who could take his place?"

For the first time, a slow, dull crimson came into Robespierre's face, and his eyes shone with inward fire. The ambition that consumed him flashed out with an irrepressible illumination of the face that a moment before had seemed so parched and void of all expression.

Louison answered the look as if he had spoken.

"You are right, citizen. The man is Maximillian Robespierre. I, of all the women of France, have known

it. While others reviled him, I have seen the elements of greatness rising and growing in this man. While Mirabeau trifles with his power, plays with his popularity, and loses his triumphs, this man hoards his strength and bends his energies to one great purpose—the liberty of the people."

Robespierre gazed on the woman in amazement. He believed himself to be all that she described, felt the indomitable spirit, which she understood so well, burning in his soul, and replied to her as if she had been talking to another person.

"You are right. The man who is to lift France out of her chains must have but one duty, one idea—to that humanity itself must bow; for her sake life should be as nothing. The purposes of other men must bend to his will. Count Mirabeau is not that man. His soul wanders away from its wavering object back to his grosser self. He wastes his life in projects that have no issue. He loves himself rather than France. The aristocratic blood in his veins is forever leading him back to our enemies. He coquets with a great nation as if it were a woman."

"Yet the people love him, and follow him blindly—most of all, the women; and of these, with blind persistence, the women of the market, who wield a wonderful power over the starving multitude who come to them for food."

"I know. I have seen their devotion. This man does not arise in his place without a crowd to cheer him on. His speeches are broken up with acclamations, and carried to the world on a thousand lips, warm with his praises. Yet, I declare to you, this man stands between these very people and their liberty—he blocks the way more earnest men are eager to tread. But why have I spoken thus, and to a woman known as his warmest admirer?"

"Not so, citizen. While Mirabeau was honest, I adored him. Now——"



"Now? What have you discovered? Why are you here? Not because I am known as his friend? That is impossible. I look upon him as a stumbling block in the way of all true patriots."

"And I look upon him as a traitor!"

"Ah! I know men say that; but the proof? Where is the proof? No one has been able to find it; and every futile charge only makes him the stronger."

"What if he were known to visit the queen privately?"

"To visit the queen? No, no! He is not rash enough for that."

"But if he had?"

"That would be a strong lever in skillful hands; but the proof must be clear, and the witnesses trustworthy."

"What if he had taken money from the court?"

"Money! Why, that would kill him with the people."

"Where does the money come from with which he keeps up princely state in the Chaussée d'Anton? Has any one put that question home to him?"

"As for that, it is understood that Mirabeau is reconciled with his father, a wealthy man in the provinces."

Louison broke into a laugh.

"So that is the way he accounts for it; and the people are fools enough to believe him. Credulous idiots, have they no eyes?"

"But suspicions are not proofs."

"Is this a *proof*?" cried the girl, losing all patience with these lawyer-like questions. "Is that Mirabeau's handwriting? Will his besotted worshippers stand firm against a paper like that?"

Louison cast down Mirabeau's letter to the queen as she spoke. Robespierre took it up and read it carefully. He was a cool, wary man, slow of conviction, impossible to move when his opinion was once formed; but the woman who watched him saw that hard, dull face light up with almost

ferocious satisfaction, and his gray eyes were absolutely black with excitement as he turned them upon her.

"This letter; how came it in your possession, citoyenne?"

"I bribed Mirabeau's messenger to give it up."

"It is genuine! It is genuine! Louison Brisot, you have done wonderful service to those who love France. I will lay this letter before the Assembly."

Louison turned white. This prompt action, which would sweep all power of retreat from her, took away her breath. As yet she had made no terms for herself.

"When Mirabeau is dethroned, and another sits in his place, then what of Louison Brisot?" she said.

"She will have the gratitude of all France," answered Robespierre, looking up from the letter, which he was perusing a second time. "What more can a true patriot want?"

"That which Mirabeau has, and you seek for—power!"

"Power?"

"The man who controls all others must share his power openly, or in secret, with Louison Brisot."

A faint, hard smile crept over Robespierre's face; it disturbed the woman who gazed so fixedly upon him. Had she done well to exchange the insolent forbearance of Mirabeau for this iron man?

"At last we can lay his black heart bare before the people he has duped. Nothing can save him. The man who arraigns him is immortal."

Robespierre was speaking to himself. Louison listened. She saw that he had no thought of her—that keen, selfish ambition possessed him entirely. She drew toward him softly as he pored over the paper, reached over his shoulder and took the letter from his hand.

He started and uttered a faint snarl, like some wild animal when its food is torn away.

"Why have you taken it?" he said, "I was getting his treason by heart."

"But I have scarcely read it myself. Besides, there are others who love France."

"No, no! Let this rest between you and me. Robespierre must strike the blow himself."

The sight of this man's eagerness to crush his rival made Louison doubly anxious to keep the power she possessed under her own control. What, if in ruining Mirabeau, she only acted as the instrument of a harder man's ambition. After all, had she not been too hasty in allowing the jealous feelings of a woman to hurry her so completely into a combination with Mirabeau's enemies? Had she been wise to threaten this man, to whom defiance, in any form, was like flashes of scarlet to an enraged animal?

She looked at Robespierre in that olive-green coat, with its high rolling collar, under which his spare, angular figure seemed to shrink away into insignificance, and a smile of derision almost curled her saucy lips. She remarked with an inward jeer, the striped vest, in which lines of warm buff predominated, whose broad lapels, opening wide upon the bosom, gave place to a profusion of twisted muslin and clustering ruffles, from which that contracted face, lean, dry, and hard, rose in grotesque contrast.

Louison almost laughed at herself for the thought of lifting this man into the seat of Mirabeau, whose brutal strength and dashing elegance came back upon her mind with the sudden force of contrast. She remembered how grandly the broad ruffles rolled back from his massive throat; how imperial was the poise of that haughty head, with its shock of tawny hair, and wonderful mobility of countenance. Even the supreme insolence of his bearing had its charm for this woman, who was ready to adore the man whose ruin she was planning, while she solemnly believed that it was hate which led her on. She turned

away from the contemplation of Robespierre's meagre figure, wondering at herself that she had even so far put a creature like Mirabeau into his power.

After all, Louison Brisot was a woman, and capricious even in the wild patriotism and burning jealousy, which led so many of the women of France into acts that seemed to unsex them. She began to scorn herself for the idea of casting a grand, leonine creature like Mirabeau into the power of a man, whose appearance was so utterly insignificant.

No, Louison would not do it. Mirabeau should have another chance. It was like chaining a lion that foxes might torture him. No,—no! That letter once given up, and where was she? Simply an informer, to be used for that eager little man, who could not even smile frankly.

Louison put the letter in her bosom, while Robespierre was gazing on it with eager longing.

"But you are not going? You will not take it away?" he exclaimed, sharply.

"It belongs to me—I shall not harm it. When all is ready you know where to find it."

"But, citoyenne, that paper belongs to the people."

"And I am one of the people," answered Louison, laughing.

"Leave it—leave it with me."

"Yes, when I like you better than myself."

Robespierre measured the woman with a keen, hungry glance. He was not altogether a brave man, but crafty and cruel enough to have killed her with his own hands, if that would have given him possession of the paper; but Louison, a handsome, bright woman, was, in fact, powerful enough to have defended herself against two such men as Robespierre. He glanced at her tall, subtle person, her strong, white arms, and burning eyes, that seemed to read the craven purpose that was creeping through his brain

and felt how useless any struggle would be against her. So he slunk back into the chair, from which he had half-started, with a feeling of abject defeat.

"But you will keep it safe? It will be forthcoming when the patriots of the Assembly call for it?"

"You have seen it—and who doubts the word of Robespierre?"

"But I must have the proof—too many unfounded or unproved charges have been made against this man. They only make him more defiant and more powerful."

"But the letter will be in my keeping—you can find it at any time."

"Then you will not leave it?"

"No!"

"But promise me that you will not part with it to another."

"Well, I promise. Good-night, citizen."

Robespierre followed the woman with his keen eyes, longing to spring upon her and wrest the document from her bosom. His thin hand clutched and opened itself on the table with an impatient desire to be at work.

At the door of Robespierre's lodgings Louison met two men, whom she knew and recognized. For one moment she paused. If her design was carried out, these were the very persons whose aid she wanted; but she only hesitated a moment, then passed on, saying,

"Good-evening, citizen Marat. Good-evening, St. Just."

Marat answered her with a careless jest. St. Just simply bent his head, but neither smiled on her, or at the wit of his companion. Louison stood a moment in the passage, and watched these two men as they mounted a flight of stairs leading to Robespierre's room.

"Shall I go back," she thought, "and settle the whole thing with these men at once? No, not yet. By to-mor-

row I may have the other letter, or it may be—it may be——"

Louison hurried into the street with this half-uttered sentence on her lip, and walked rapidly toward the Chaussée d'Anton. When she came opposite Mirabeau's house her face lighted up. She had said to herself, "If I find it dark, then it shall be Robespierre; if not, Mirabeau shall have another chance. I will not give him up to these hounds without that." Womanhood was strong within her that evening. She panted to conquer this great man, but not destroy him. When she thought of that, a feeling of terrible desolation fell upon her. She shuddered to think how near the scaffold was to a political offence.

The porter made no objection to her entrance this time, but waved his hand toward the library, as if she had been expected.

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## CHAPTER XCV.

### THE FRAUD OF FASCINATION.

AH! you have thought better of it—I knew that it would be so," said Mirabeau, receiving the woman he had parted with in such bitter anger, with a broad, frank smile. "Why will you degrade yourself with miserable threats, my beautiful friend?"

"Threats! Only threats! Nay, it was something more. I am not to be defied with impunity."

"Defied! No. With me, it was confidence, not defiance."

"Confidence! How?"

"How? Not even yourself, Louison, can make me believe you capable of a mean action."

"A mean action! But you had concealments with me."

"Only for a time. In a few days you would have known everything."

"You made a confidant of that woman, Du Berry, who is worse than an aristocrat, and only claims to be one of us when all else reject her."

"On the contrary—I made her my tool."

"You invited that insolent woman, Theroigne de Mericourt, to your table, while I was almost driven from your door."

Mirabeau laughed till the ruffles on his broad bosom shook again.

"Ah! you heard of that! Why, the whole troop of rioters forced themselves upon me—these two women with the rest. Robespierre, Marat, and some others, members of the Assembly, all came in a little mob together. I could but entertain them. Such men resent neglect."

"But Madame Du Berry! I was here—I overheard your conversation with that woman."

"Then you only learned one fact, that I considered her a useful instrument, by which a great end might be attained. She still has friends at court. I wished to draw myself into communication there."

"Yes, I know," answered Louison, with a bitter laugh. "You wished to visit a little temple in the grounds at St. Cloud."

Mirabeau winced, but the smile never left his lips as she went on.

"You desired, above all things, to kneel at the feet and kiss the hand of the queen. For a citizen of France, sworn to make her people free, it was a glorious ambition."

"Go on," said the count, leaning back in his chair—"go on. What more have you learned?"

"What more? Why, that the kneeling was done—the kiss given. I saw your perjured lips on the Austrian's hand with my own eyes. The whole base treason was

made plain to me then, as it is now, when I have your letter at command."

Mirabeau's eyes flashed. She had the letter still in her possession. His greatest anxiety was laid at rest.

"Then," he said, with a pleasant, mellow laugh, "you have been playing the spy upon me all this time. Quite unnecessary, my friend. When my plans were matured you would have had them all. These others were my instruments; you had a grander and higher role to play."

"Yes, I understand, that of a cast-off garment when the fashions change, or an orange when the juice is exhausted," answered the woman, tartly, but wavering a little in her bitter unbelief.

"Mon Dieu! how thoroughly you play the jealous dame, Louison. I had hoped better things of you; but it is folly, I suppose, to expect broad confidence and a clear understanding of great aims in any woman."

Louison flushed angrily. It had been her pride to mate her own bold spirit with that of Mirabeau.

"Wise men or women do not act blindly when nations are at stake," she said, in a tone that was becoming more and more apologetic. "Deceive me in ever so little, and you deceive me in everything."

"But I have not deceived you, my beautiful tigress!"

"You have met the queen?"

"Granted."

"Taken money from the queen?"

"That is false—a wicked slander that would blister honest lips," cried the count, sitting upright, and flashing a storm of fierce wrath upon her.

Louison looked around the magnificent room, and bent her splendid eyes upon him in silent unbelief. He understood the expression of her face, and answered it.

"All this costs me nothing. It is the property of a refugee, and I seized upon it as a servant of the people."

"To ape the manners of an aristocrat," answered Louison, with a faint sneer.

"To win the power which shall hurl down aristocrats to a level with the people, or lift Mirabeau and those he loves above that of any monarch. Tell me, Louison, how will France be served best, by destroying all fixed laws, or by placing a man who has a genius for government in control of a weak and yielding king? The time may come, girl, when Marie Antoinette will find the woman who aids Mirabeau in carrying out the broad designs which fill his mind, lifted above herself in power, while she has only the name of queen, another——"

"But that woman?"

"Need I name her?" cried the count, taking Louison's hand in his, and lifting his face to hers with an expression that made her heart swell.

"Still, Mirabeau, it is useless to say that of late you have ceased to regard me."

"Because I have had momentous plans in my mind; because it seemed to me needful that the world should think with you, that there is neither love nor confidence between us. It is important that I should have one firm and trusting friend among my enemies. I had designed you for the position, Louison. What human being is there who can so readily win admiration and confidence? In their clubs, and in their private committees, I wish you to be the soul. It was this desire that made me seem less cordial than of old. I was willing my foes should think that we had quarreled. In order that you might get your part well it was necessary that you should feel it a reality. When the idea was once established, I should have taught you how false it was by deeper devotion, more perfect confidence. But you felt these preliminaries too keenly and became dangerous."

"Because I loved you. Oh, Mirabeau! it was from my great love which you seemed to outrage."

Louison threw herself upon her knees, and reached up her arms to Mirabeau with a great longing for some return of tenderness, which she had thought lost to her forever. This gesture disturbed the letter which she had thrust deep down in her bosom, and the edge came up through the loose folds of her dress. Mirabeau saw it, and his eyes flashed fire. She caught their light, and grew gentle and yielding as a child under it. Surely the man loved her, or his face would never have brightened like that! How childish and wayward she had been! It was magnanimous in Mirabeau to forgive her so readily; but then his nature was so grand—no wonder the people adored him. Surely, if he could control the monarch of France, all must be well with the masses.

"How could I distrust you so?" she murmured, resting her head against him. "Look on me, beloved, and say that I am forgiven."

He did look upon her with an expression that had made many a heart beat faster to their peril.

"But you have not told me all?" he said, gently. "There was another letter. How did you reach it?"

"Another letter? The queen's answer. I waited for it, hoped for it; but the little wretch would not give it up."

"What wretch? Nay, nay! do not turn your head from me, Louison. Confidence, to be perfect, must be mutual. Tell me what more you have been doing."

Louison told him how she had put Zamara on the track of his enterprise, and confessed, with burning shame, the defeat that wary dwarf had brought upon her.

"So he has the document!" said Mirabeau, carelessly. "No matter; we will soon get it from him. I will force him to give it into your possession before you leave the house, late as it is. Henceforth there shall be no half confidence between us."

Louison smiled, and her eyes shone triumphantly—some

generous impulses always exist in a woman who loves. Mirabeau's forbearance brought all that was good in that hard nature to the surface. She remembered, with a pang of remorse, that the most dangerous action that had sprung out of her jealousy was still untold—her interview with Robespierre. While Mirabeau wrote a few brief lines and folded them, she thought of this, and hesitated how to tell him that which would not fail to stir his anger. The count was occupied with other things, and left her, for a time, unnoticed at his feet, while he touched a bell on the table, and gave some orders to a servant.

Louison started when she heard them.

"Take this to Madame Du Berry, she will send her attendant, the dwarf, back with you. See that the imp speaks to no one. If he attempts to evade you, bring him in your arms; but do not quite strangle him."

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## CHAPTER XCV.

### ZAMARA IS MASTER OF THE SITUATION.

THE man went out somewhat astonished, but resolute to obey the orders he had received. Then Mirabeau leaned back in his chair and drew a deep breath. He was a perfect dissembler, or that keen woman would have detected something in his face that she did not like.

"Mirabeau," she said, almost humbly, "I have not told you all. When I went out from here to-night, my heart was full of rage and fire—I hated you."

"Foolish girl; weak, weak woman! How little you understand the man who loves you. Well, go on. What further mischief has been done?"

"Mirabeau, I took that letter to Robespierre."

"The count started up and almost hurled her to the floor.

"To Robespierre! Fiend! fool! woman!"

He spoke the last word with concentrated scorn, as if it were the hardest and most offensive he could apply to her.

"I took it to Robespierre because of his enmity to you. At that moment, you know, I hated you, and longed for revenge."

"And you gave him the letter? It is no longer in your possession?"

"He read it, and wanted to keep it, but I would not let him."

"Ah! Well, what did he say to it?"

"That he would denounce you in the Assembly to-morrow."

"Then he was to be my accuser, and you were to be ready with the evidence. Was that the understanding?"

How quietly he spoke, scarcely above a whisper, yet there was something in the sound that thrilled her like the hiss of a snake.

"This you cannot forgive," she said. "Still I warned you."

"Forgive? Oh, yes! We must not be hard on each other, Louison."

He spoke quietly, but with an unnatural tone in his voice. Still, if she had seen his face, the look of a fiend was there.

"The mischief can be arrested. Late as it is, I will go to him."

Louison started up, and was preparing to go out; but the intellect of this singular man was more rapid than her movement. Quick as lightning he had discovered in her act a means of confounding his enemies.

"Let it alone," he said, with animation. "Is it likely that he will dare assail me?"

"I am sure of it," answered Louison, hesitating to sit down.

"Your promise to give up the evidence was positive?"

"Yes," faltered the woman, shrinking from his eager glances.

"There, let the whole thing rest. Here comes my man with the dwarf."

The messenger came, bearing Zamara, like a child in his arms. The little wretch was ashen white as far as his dusky skin would permit, and his eyes gleamed like those of a viper when they fell on Louison.

"Let the creature down," said Mirabeau; "and come again when I call you."

The man placed Zamara on his feet, and disappeared. Before any one could speak, the dwarf came close to Mirabeau with one hand in his bosom.

"Guard yourself! Guard yourself! He carries a poisoned dagger there," cried Louison.

Zamara gave her a quick glance—all his color had come back. In an instant his sharp wit mastered the situation. The hand was withdrawn from his bosom; it held a paper, which he placed before Mirabeau with low reverence, as if he had been a slave, and the count an Eastern satrap.

"The woman who leans upon your chair tempted me to take this. When I found that she intended to make a bad use of it, I refused to give it up, being resolved to bring it back again. In the morning Count Mirabeau would have found it under this pretty deer with the golden hoofs. There was no need of sending a tall man after Zamara; he knows what is right, and is not afraid when it is to be done."

Mirabeau took the letter, glanced over it, then leaned forward and held it in the flame of an antique lamp that

burned before him. As the blaze flashed up from his hand, it revealed the lines of that lowering face with a vividness that made the dwarf tremble; but as the light faded, this expression softened into carelessness, and brushing the black flakes from his sleeves, he said, addressing Zamara,

"You can go now. I shall not kill you for this; but try it a second time, and there will be one sharp, little dwarf less in France. Go!"

Zamara needed no second bidding, but left the room, muttering, "She loves that man—she is jealous—his death would kill her. Good!"

After Zamara was gone, Mirabeau drew Louison toward him.

"The little viper would have cheated us both," he said, "but for once we have drawn his fangs. Now for the other letter. When that is in ashes, we shall know how to meet this more venomous creature, Robespierre, and his mates. So they had Mirabeau in a trap, had they! The letter, Louison—the letter! We will send it after the one that is gone!"

"But it is not here," answered Louison. "I went home first, and left it there."

Mirabeau started. Had she, indeed, left that letter with his enemies. He looked keenly in her face, searching it for the truth. As his eyes wandered downward, a corner of the folded paper he had seen before was visible above the short, full waist of her dress. A crafty smile crept over Mirabeau's lips as he drew her downward and pressed them to hers. He was tempted to secure the paper then, but his inordinate vanity prevented it. Dangerous as she was, he would trust her, and thus test his own powers of persuasion.

"Ah, you do love me!" murmured the woman, and tears rose to her eyes.

"How weak, how foolish to doubt it, my friend, my queen!"



This word brought back Louison's distrust.

"Ah, the queen!" she said; "but for her I might not have doubted you. You gave her what Louison never knew, reverence, homage."

"Because there was no other way of winning her to my purpose. Cannot you understand that we gain and rule people by their master passions? Now there is not in all France a woman so proud of her power, and so conscious of her loveliness, as Marie Antoinette. Would you have had me wound while I wished to win her?"

"Win her, Mirabeau?"

"Yes, to those purposes which shall make your friend the ruler of France, and yet give liberty to the people. In order to accomplish this we must not pull down the throne entirely. France loves her traditions, and in some form or another will keep them. The nation is now like a noble ship reeling and plunging through the blackness of a storm. There is but one man living who could guide the helm—that man is Mirabeau."

"And but one woman who has the wit and courage to stand by his side, let the storm rage as it will," said Louison, kindling with enthusiasm. "Ah, yes! this is far better than being a queen!"

Mirabeau took her hand and kissed it, as if she had, indeed, been a sovereign, thus mocking her vanity in his heart.

"We understand each other thoroughly now," he said. "There will be no more doubt between us."

"Never again!"

"And now we must say good-night, my friend. See how late it is."

Louison lingered, not that she was afraid of going into the street alone; but the exquisite delusions of the moment were upon her, and she longed to continue them.

"The day has been an exciting one, and, spite of your

dear presence, I am weary," said the count, reaching forth his hand to take leave.

Louison lifted the hand to her lips and covered it with kisses.

"Ah!" she said, "this is coming from purgatory into heaven."

"But even angels must part sometimes, my friend."

"Yes, yes! Good-night. Ah, Mirabeau! how pleasant it is to be your slave!"

"Slave! No, no! My mate—my friend!"

"Call it by any name you will; but the jealous love which would have destroyed you an hour ago, now crouches at your feet in full submission. Good-night!"

Mirabeau walked to the door and held it open, an act of courtesy seldom vouchsafed to her before. So, with smiles on her lips, she went out into the darkness.

The moment she was gone, Count Mirabeau went back to his room, wild with the excitement he had suppressed with so much effort. Approaching the table, he struck his clenched fist upon it with a blow that sounded through the room, and fell into his chair, wiping great drops of perspiration from his forehead.

Great heavens! the gulf that yawned before me! I can hardly make sure that it is bridged over yet. Another outburst of her furious jealousy between this and to-morrow, is absolute ruin. Fool, fool that I was to feel safe in my contempt of this dangerous woman. Surely few people should know better than myself that there is no fury like a woman scorned; but the fiend within is always tempting me to turn my doves into vipers. Heavens! when I think of the danger, it chills me; but she is tamed now. Mirabeau's spell is upon her. I was tempted to take the letter from her bosom, but better not, better not. She knows too much. One token of distrust, and she would hasten to deserve it. She will not speak—she will not. When

Mirabeau seals a woman's mouth with kisses it is mute, save to obey him. Yes, she is safe—but how the whole thing shakes me! I did not think there was a woman living who could strike Mirabeau with a panic like this. The coward drops lie cold on my forehead even when I know the danger is passed. Oh, yes! it was better that I seemed to trust her—now I can.

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## CHAPTER XCVII.

### BAFFLED AND DEFEATED.

"THE treason of Mirabeau! The treason of Mirabeau!"

Robespierre had made his first attack in a bitter article hawked that morning through the streets of Paris; and the cry rose loud and long, like the howl of wild beasts scenting blood afar off.

"The treason of Mirabeau! The treason of Mirabeau!"

Robespierre heard it while walking toward the Assembly, and his black heart beat with triumph under that olive-green coat.

Marat heard it as he lay in his bath, writing a still more furious attack on the popular idol, and a spasm of delight shook all his restless limbs till the water stirred around them.

At last they had him in a firm grip; this proud demagogue, this popular idol, who loomed over them like a god, was in their power. They had proofs of his treason—proofs written by his own hand; the proof of an eye witness, who had seen him at the very feet of the queen. All this the articles in the journal only hinted at; but when Mirabeau took his seat in the Assembly that day, the storm would

burst upon him. Hitherto he had defied them, and trampled down accusations of which there was no evidence that the people would accept. But now, yes now——

-- No wonder Marat laughed till the water shook and rippled around him as if a serpent were uncoiling in them, then plunged into the bitterness of his article again, storming on the foe that in his mind was already down. Nay, he could not write, the brutal joy within him was too great. Rather would he arise, dress himself, and witness the downfall of the rival he hated and feared.

Mirabeau heard the cry, paused in his haughty progress, and bought a journal, which he read quietly passing along the street, and those who observed him, saw a keen smile shoot over his lips. Surely, whatever the charge was, that man would fight it to the bitter end, and with such weapons as his opponents could never wield. The people still believed in Mirabeau, and cheered him as he moved toward the Assembly, even with those virulent cries of "traitor" on the air. The power of that man was something marvelous.

The Assembly was turbulent that day as the streets had been. Mirabeau's enemies were triumphant, his friends doubtful and anxious. Never had his accusers seemed so assured of success. Even his composure could not abate their joy. That calm seemed to them like depression.

At the very door of the Assembly, the cry of Mirabeau's treason came up. The galleries were full of women who were more tumultuous and eager than the men. Some had brought their work, others carried parcels, in which were bread or fruit, for it was believed that the sitting would be long and violent. Mirabeau would not die easy; they had hedged him in like a lion in the toils, and like a lion he was sure to defend himself. So the women of France flocked to the Assembly, and crowded all its vacant spaces, as the matrons of old Rome went to see gladiators and wild

beasts tear each other. In this mob, which called itself a deliberative body, there was neither decorum, nor an attempt at order. Where all the evil passions are let loose tumult and anarchy must follow.

Mirabeau's enemies were all in their places. Clubs known to oppose him had emptied themselves into the galleries. On the floor his foes gathered in groups consulting together. There the beautiful face of St. Just was contrasted with the austere features of Desmoulins and the hateful coarseness of Danton. Everywhere Mirabeau saw preparations for an attack that was to crush him; but this only shot fire to his eyes, and curled his lips with haughty disdain. Not that he felt himself quite safe, but he was sustained by the natural self-confidence of a spirit that had never quailed before man. At all times Mirabeau was self-sufficient, more so than ever when danger threatened him. There he sat in the midst of his enemies, like a lion waiting for the gladiators to appear, calm from inordinate self-poise.

Of all his enemies, Mirabeau's defiant eyes sought out Robespierre the most frequently. There was something amounting almost to a smirk on the countenance of this little man, which would have been a smile in another; but the dry, parchment-like countenance of Robespierre admitted only of sneers and smirks—a broad, honest smile was impossible to it.

Robespierre, at this time, had scarcely developed the dreadful character for cruelty and fanatical malice which blisters every page of history on which his name is written. His movements had been sinister, and up to this time, were more suggestive of atrocities than active in their perpetration. While Mirabeau was in power, the reptile spirit of this man had not ventured to crest itself, but slowly and with crafty windings was creeping stealthily to the horrible power with which the madness of an insane people at last invested him. Hitherto he had kept in the background,

and instigated others to attack the man whose popularity stood between him and the position he thirsted for; but now that disgrace and defeat were certain, he came forward on the great man's track like a hyena prowling along the path of a kingly beast.

Robespierre was ready to lead the onslaught. Mirabeau saw it in the glitter of those evil eyes, and knowing how relentless and unprincipled the man was, felt a thrill of doubt rush over him. Nothing but certainty could have impelled that coward nature to creep into the light. Had Louison failed him? Could she have broken through the thrall of his persuasions and gone over to the enemy? The night before he felt a sort of pride in trusting everything to the power of his own personal influence over a woman that nothing else could tame or terrify; but now, when he stood face to face with an awful danger, for the first time in his life Mirabeau distrusted himself. What but a dead certainty could give that assured air to Robespierre? Why had he trusted to those powers of persuasion which never yet had failed him with the sex, but might prove ineffectual, for the first time, when his honor and very life depended on them? The night before his hand was almost on that very paper; a movement of the fingers, and he might have drawn it from Louison's bosom, and, had he so chosen, defied her afterward. But intolerable self-conceit had prevented this act of safety. How he cursed the vanity which had filled his mind with all these harrowing doubts. "Whom the gods destroy they first make mad," he muttered to himself. "I was, indeed, mad when I permitted her to leave me with *that* in her bosom."

The galleries were already overrun with women—for that cry in the street had sent crowds to the Assembly. Now they began to fill the floor, and force themselves among the members with a feeling of equality which no one had the courage to resist or rebuke.

All at once Louison Brisot appeared making a passage through the throng, arrayed with a glow and flash of rich colors, and looking proudly beautiful. Her eyes roved around the Assembly, and settled on Robespierre, who was looking at her with the changeful glitter of a serpent in his eyes. Louison met this look with an almost imperceptible bend of the head. Mirabeau saw it, and the bold heart quailed within him.

At last Louison's eyes fell upon his face, which was turned anxiously upon her. She gave him no signal. She did not even smile, but turned her back, and began talking airily with one of his bitterest enemies. Now and then he caught her glance turned on him from under her long eyelashes, as if she enjoyed his anxiety. Then he cursed the woman in his heart, but more bitterly cursed his own folly for leaving the means of his destruction in her power.

The business of the Assembly went on—dull routine business, which no one cared about, and was inexpressibly irksome to Mirabeau, whose bold spirit was always restive under delay, even when action might injure himself. Through all these details he could now and then hear the voice and bold, ringing laugh of Louison, bandying jests with his enemies. The sound made him desperate, but, for the first time he felt some respect for the woman who had so adroitly outwitted him—inordinate self-love would not permit him to despise her after this display of her ability.

At last a voice was heard asking leave for a privileged question; and Robespierre stood up, speaking in low, hesitating accents, but growing stronger as a dead silence fell upon the Assembly after his first words.

Mirabeau turned in his seat, and listened, smiling, while each point of the charges made against him came in terse, bitter words from the man he had, for a long time, despised and ridiculed. How sharply and with what telling simplicity they fell upon his ear.

Count Mirabeau, a member of that Assembly, was charged with betraying the people's trust, inasmuch as he had entered into a secret league with the court to throw the nation back into the power of the nobles. While he professed to seek the liberty of the people, he had all the time been working against their dearest wishes. He was in constant intercourse with the king, and more especially with the Austrian woman, who was known as Queen of France. It would be made clear before the people, that Count Mirabeau had held repeated interviews with the king, and no longer ago than in June, had met the queen privately, in her summer-house at St. Cloud, where he entered into a compact to place the nation in her power. More than this, Mirabeau had, from first to last, been a pensioner of the court, and was in the habit of receiving vast sums of money from the queen, which he expended in such aristocratic and riotous living as no true patriot would indulge in while the people were starving around him.

When Robespierre had done reading the carefully prepared charges, Mirabeau leaned back in his chair and said loud enough to be heard by all around him,

"Is that all? I thought they would have proven that I was plotting to blow up the Assembly, and undermine all France with a pound of gunpowder. The little viper yonder has not half done his work."

There was more of audacity than courage in this speech, and desperate anxiety gave a false ring to his voice as he uttered it. Then, with a slow, arrogant movement, Mirabeau arose to his feet, and asked for the proofs of these charges, which had been so often hinted or spoken that they had lost all claim to originality, and were hardly worth answering, even when brought seriously before that august body. Of course citizen Robespierre did not expect him to answer accusations so loosely made, when unsupported by proof. Even that must be from persons, and of a character

beyond question, if he deigned to notice it, even by a verbal contradiction.

"The proof!" exclaimed Robespierre, in his sharp, disagreeable voice. "Stand forth, citoyenne Brisot, and let the people know how grossly they have been deceived. Answer: Did you not, in June last, see this man, Count Mirabeau, in company with Marie Antoinette, in a temple hidden away in the romantic grounds of St. Cloud? Did you not hear them make a solemn compact together, which was to chain France once more to the throne. Citoyenne Brisot, show to the people and their representatives that letter addressed to the queen, in the handwriting, and bearing the signature of Count Mirabeau, which is now in your possession. Citoyens, there is no time for such forms of investigation as usually follow charges like these; extraordinary circumstances call for extraordinary measures. I move that these proofs are laid before you now—and that citoyenne Brisot have permission to speak."

Mirabeau arose, smiling, and begged that it might be so.

Then, amid some confusion, Louison was called. She came out from the group of women who had crowded around her, somewhat excited, and with a light laugh upon her lips.

"What is it," she said, demurely casting down her eyes, "that citizen Robespierre desires of me?"

"The letter, Louison—the letter!"

The Assembly was hushed; no sound arose but a rustle in the galleries, as people in the crowd leaned eagerly over each other.

Mirabeau turned white in his chair. Even his fierce bravery could not hold its own against the awful anxiety of the moment. His enemies saw this, and murmurs of irrepressible triumph began to arise.

"The letter, citizen Robespierre?" said Louison, lifting her eyebrows with a look of innocent astonishment, "there must be some mistake—I have no letter."

Robespierre fell into his seat, and sat staring at the girl in wild astonishment. Mirabeau leaned back in his chair, drew a deep breath, and laughed. A roar of applause swept down from the galleries. This was answered back by the women on the floor, and carried into the street, where it ran like wild-fire among the people who could find no room inside.

Louison cast one brilliant glance at Mirabeau, allowed a glow of triumphant mischief to flash over her face, and, quick as lightning, veiled her eyes again. Robespierre saw the glance, and a hiss of rage came through his shut teeth. Louison caught his venomous eyes, and shuddered.

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## CHAPTER XCVIII.

### A THANKLESS LOVER AND HOSTS OF ENEMIES.

ONCE more Mirabeau was triumphant. The malice of his enemies had lifted him still higher in the estimation of the people who gloried more than ever in their idol. Louison shared in the popular favor. The fair maid of Liege had never been an object of more admiring attention. She gloried in the act which proved her devotion to Mirabeau, but had made her bitter enemies, whom she believed herself strong enough to scorn. She managed to draw near Mirabeau, who greeted her with a glowing smile.

"Have I done well?" she asked, turning her head.

"More than well," he answered. "Count on something better than gratitude."

"There is but one thing better in the world," she returned, in a low voice; "give me that and I am content."

Before Mirabeau could answer, Marat stood at Louison's elbow.

"Citoyenne," he said, with loud coarseness, "you have at least had courage; but it needs a charmed life to play with vipers. Is yours thus protected?"

Louison laughed in the man's face. Was not Mirabeau more powerful than ever. Had not she made him so?

"I understand," said Marat, nodding his rough head; "but one life does not hold all France. Mad love has made you blind. Citoyenne, for one false man you have cut down an army of friends. Wait, and see."

Louison turned upon this uncouth man, who seemed to have come fresh from a stable, with disdain in her eyes. Just then renewed shouts went up for Mirabeau.

"Hear that, citizen, and tell me if there is one among you the people love so. When there is, let that man threaten me. Bah! How mean and small you are beside him!"

Marat turned his coarse, evil face upon her. There was something more than a threat in that look; but Louison was too haughty in her triumph even to regard it. She saw Mirabeau walking toward his seat, firm, erect, and carrying himself like a monarch. Her eyes followed him eagerly, and her heart swelled as his enemies shrunk away into their places, beaten down by the storm of popular rejoicing that they had failed in bringing anything but baseless charges against the supreme idol of the hour. These men hated Mirabeau with bitter jealousy and unconquerable distrust; but this feeling was nothing to the burning rage and venomous repulsion with which Louison had inspired them. She had dared to lead them into a grave error, cover them with the ridicule of defeat, and scoff at their indignation. But a day of reckoning was sure to come.

Louison cared nothing for this. Her idol was triumphant. By the act of that day she had chained him to her and placed him more firmly than ever in the hearts of the people? In his triumph hers was complete.

That night Mirabeau sought Louison at her lodgings. The peril he had escaped brought a feeling of gratitude even into his selfish heart. In her jealous rage she had thrust him into danger; but a gentle word of affection had brought him out of it triumphantly, honored with double strength, and a victor over the most relentless enemies that ever pursued a man to ruin.

Louison came to meet him, radiant, with both hands extended, and wild triumph in her eyes.

"Now tell me—could the queen have done so much for you?"

"The queen? Nay; she would rather see Mirabeau dead, save that he may be useful. Why speak of her, Louison? I came only to talk of yourself—you have made many enemies to-day."

"Enemies? Yes, I know it. What then—are you not stronger than ever? And I—have I not Mirabeau?"

The count reached out his hand and wrung hers.

"Who will defend you with his last breath."

"And love me till then?"

A soft, pleading light came into her eyes; for the moment this brave, bad woman was humble and tender as a child.

Mirabeau gave an impatient movement of the head. This talk of love from her lips was like a proffer of dead flowers. Anything else he would give her—but not that. Even in his supreme danger, the night before, a semblance of the passion had been irksome—now it seemed impossible.

"Ask Mirabeau how he will act, and he can tell you; but feeling is another thing, my friend."

Louison's eyes filled with questioning disappointment. Was he failing her so soon?

"There, there! I meant nothing that should drive all that light from your face. No woman has ever stood by me as you have done. Mirabeau may be faithless to his loves

—people say that he is. But who ever charged him with desertion of a friend, much less one who has served him as you have done?”

Louison heard him, and her great eyes filled with tearful reproach.

“Ah, Mirabeau! you never loved me!”

“On my soul I did, but that was when——”

Now her eyes were raised to his with wistful questioning, which made him break off in the cruel thing he was saying.

“When?”

“When I looked upon you only as a woman.”

“Only as a woman! When I have done so much for France—so much for you. This is hard, it is ungrateful.”

“Yes, I think it is; but not the less true. Men have strong sympathies, firm friendships, sometimes high reverence, for each other, but no love; that we give to women.”

Louison’s lip curved an instant, but a quiver of pain took all the scorn from it.

“And that you can never give to me? What have I done?”

“Too much, my friend. The pride of manhood revolts at a false position. Had you craved care, Mirabeau would have protected you.”

“Ah! I understand. You aspire to protect the queen. She is ready to be cared for, and, perhaps, loved.”

“I hardly think she would amuse herself with an execution.”

“And you blame me for rejoicing when an enemy of France falls. You call upon us women for help, and then despise us that we listen.”

“No, no! Only I do not usually betake myself to the scaffold when I have love to bestow. Cannot you see a difference?”

“These are dainty distinctions, which a woman of the people is not expected to know. One cannot be a patriot

and helpless,” answered Louison, whose hot temper was beginning to kindle fiercely under the keen disappointment that man had brought upon her. “As for me, I give love for love, and hate for hate.”

“Ah! but you and I will have nothing to do with either, for both are dangerous. I did not come here to talk of such bitter and frail things; but to announce danger.”

“A new one—to you or to me?”

“For myself, I have so many enemies, that half a dozen, more or less, is of little consequence—that would not have moved me in the least.”

“Then it is for me?”

“This was a grand but dangerous day for you, Louison—for it made my enemies yours, and they are counted by hundreds.”

“This morning I did not fear them, having you; but now I stand alone.”

“Not while Mirabeau lives. This is what I came to say—let us have done with all meaner things. We are fellow patriots, given to one purpose—comrades in a glorious cause. A great future lies before France—you will stand by me while I work it out?”

Louison was pale and drooping, all the womanliness in her nature was wounded unto death. He left nothing before her now but a man’s ambition. Well, that was better than nothing.

“Nay, I will not stand by and watch your struggles, but help you as I did yesterday,” she answered, proudly.

“That was bravely done; but such occasions do not repeat themselves often. The strongest woman that ever lived is but a weak man when she unsexes herself.”

Louison turned upon him with a burst of her own fierce rage.

“You leave me nothing,” she said.

“Yes, liberty!”



"But equality is the great war cry here. Is that to be denied because I am a woman?"

"Yes," answered Mirabeau, thoughtfully. "There is no equality between men and women—nature forbids it. They are better and worse than each other. The woman who seeks it loses all the delicacy of her own nature, but never attains a man's strength. No, Louison, there is no equality."

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## CHAPTER XCIX

### FETE IN THE CHAMP DE MARS.

ON the fourteenth of July, 1790, the city of Paris resolved to commemorate the taking of the Bastille, and all France was invited to rejoice with those who had laid this mighty fortress in ruins.

From a surface of two hundred thousand square miles came thousands on thousands of dusty and tired travelers, moving toward the capital, singly and in delegations, shouting hymns to liberty under the burning rays of a July sun.

These men came from the foot of the Alps, crowned with eternal snows; from the deep valleys of the Pyrenees, and the rugged regions of Cevennes and Auvergne; from the low dreary lands washed by the waters of the Atlantic, and from the iron-bound coast of Bretagne. They came from the valley of the Rhone, where ancient Rome has left its imperishable monuments, and the vine-clad hills of Garonne; from the broad bosom of the Loire, and the banks of the Seine; from the forests of Ardennes; from the plains of Picardy and Artois; from every corner in France the people came forth rejoicing to join the grand jubilee at Paris.

The people of the city were making noble preparations for their patriotic guests. The grand ovation was to be given in the Champ de Mars, a large, open space lying between the military school and the Seine. The ground was turned into an amphitheatre by removing the earth from the center, and piling it around the circumference, forming it into seats of turf, tier above tier, until a space was secured larger by many times than the arenas old Rome ever gave to her gladiators.

Twelve thousand men worked day and night in this arena, but the impatience of the people was greater than their efforts. So the Parisians fell to work themselves. Men and women, rich and poor, priests and soldiers, came in sections, with banners and music, spades and barrows, to work while the day lasted. When the signal was given, they returned home singing and dancing by the light of their torches.

Before the day appointed the great amphitheatre was complete. In front of the military school was stretched a noble awning of purple cloth, ornamented with golden *fleur de lis*, and under this glittered the royal throne, with seats for the president of the Assembly and the deputies. In the center of the amphitheatre the people had built an altar ascended by broad steps, from which a great cross rose toward heaven with solemn significance.

At six o'clock on the fourteenth two grand spectacles were witnessed in Paris. The morning was cloudy, and the rain came down in torrents, but this had no power to check the enthusiasm of the people. They filled the streets by thousands on thousands, and the sun, had it shone that day, would have poured its light on more than three hundred thousand citizens seated patiently in the Champ de Mars, waiting for the ceremonies which were to commemorate their first great step toward the freedom they never learned how to use or keep. In the vast space on

which they looked, fifty thousand soldiers were gathered, while three hundred priests, in white surplices and broad, tri-colored sashes, slowly surrounded the altar.

Beyond all this arose a second and more noble amphitheatre, of which the Champ de Mars was the center, Montmartre, St. Cloud, Mudon, and Sevres, swept in grand panorama around the basin in which Paris stands. Nearer yet, the quay of Chailet and the heights of Passy were crowded with eager spectators.

But at the sight of the Bastille a still more exciting scene presented itself. There, federates from eighty-three districts of France, each with the banner of its department, had assembled, prepared to march forth and meet their brethren of Paris, who waited for them at the Champ de Mars. Deputations from troops of the line, and sailors from the royal navy, were ready with drums, trumpets, and banners, to escort them through the city, in all the pomp of a grand military display.

Lafayette, mounted on a superb war steed and surrounded by a brilliant staff, took the lead, and the deputations defiled out from the Place de Bastille, amid the roar of cannon and the clash of military music which thrilled all Paris with expectation. From the ruined strong-hold these guests of the nation poured into the streets and met a wild, riotous welcome as they passed. Black clouds gathered over them like the smoke of a hostile army, the rain came down in torrents, and the streets were ankle-deep in mud; but all this was overborne by the unconquerable enthusiasm of a people who would read no evil omen in a lowering sky, and scarcely felt the torrents of rain that beat upon their heads as they crowded the pavement, the windows, and the house-tops, to cheer their guests as they moved through the city.

At the Place Louis Quinze, the Assembly joined the procession which swept on with this vast stream of riotous

human life, and merged itself, as great rivers seek the ocean, in the crowds already assembled at the Camp de Mars. Here thousands on thousands greeted them with a roar of welcome to which the boom of the cannon was but a hoarse accompaniment.

The king of France, with the queen, the dauphin, and such members of the court as still remained in Paris, entered the tent erected for them, and seated themselves under the purple canopy. They were greeted with a roar of artillery and wild shouts of welcome which must have, indeed, seemed a cruel mockery to a monarch who had been forced there to witness his own humiliation.

It was pitiful to see that forced smile on the proud lip of the queen, more pitiful even than the grave, sad face of her royal husband, who looked around at this vast concourse of people, guided, as he keenly felt, by his enemies, with a thrill of unutterable anguish. There was no sympathy with the scene among the courtiers, who regarded with grave anxiety, or scarcely suppressed scorn, the insane joy of a people whom they had been taught to despise, and were beginning to fear. The scene filled them with mingled apprehension and contempt.

Then three hundred priests in snow-white surplices and broad tri-colored sashes gathered close around the altar.

All was still now, for the Bishop of Autun was performing mass, and the people of France had not yet learned to scoff at all religion; so the voices of prayer, and the smoke of censors, rose up from the midst of that vast multitude in holy union, and for a little time, half a million of tumultuous revelers bowed before the cross of Christ, which arose sublimely in their midst.

When the mass was ended, the bishop lifted the oriflame of France on high, and blessed it with a solemnity that awoke a throb of hope in the heart of the queen; after this he blessed the banners of eighty-three departments, and

laid them down amid a glorious burst of music from twelve hundred musicians, who ended the solemn service with the *Te Deum*.

Now the military crowded up to the altar; both land and sea forces flooding the sacred structure with superb coloring and rich flashes of gold. Lafayette led the staff of the Paris militia, and upon the crowded altar swore, in behalf of the troops and the federations, to be faithful to the nation, the laws, and the king. The murmur of this sacred oath ran from lip to lip till it had been echoed and re-echoed by the great multitude.

Then King Louis arose, pale and firm, with the dignity of a monarch, and the feelings of a martyr. Standing in front of his throne, he swore to maintain the constitution and laws which had already been accepted. As he finished, the queen came to his side, with the dauphin, a fair, smiling boy, in her arms. With a gleam of maternal pride she presented him to the people, and said with touching pathos, appealing to them through her motherhood,

"See, my son, he joins with myself in the oath his father has taken."

These words were drowned by a burst of enthusiasm, loyal at least for the moment; and almost for the last time in her life, Marie Antoinette heard voices from every part of France shouting, "*Vive le Roi! Vive la reine! Vive le dauphin!*" Her heart throbbed, her beautiful eyes filled with tears, her face brightened into youth again. She turned her look upon the king and smiled—the dear old music of popular praise had never touched her so keenly as now. She had taken Mirabeau's advice, and in good faith made an effort to assimilate with the people, who once loved her so well. She wore no jewels, her dress was simple and matronly, but, with that beautiful boy in her arms, she looked more royal than ever.

Then commenced a scene of indescribable hilarity. The

crowd broke up, marching and dancing to wild bursts of music. Men and women defiled before the royal balcony, tossing words of endearment to the queen with airs of intense patronage. They called that beautiful woman by a hundred coarse and caressing names, and hurled advice to her with the gestures of women feeding poultry. Fish-women from the market crowded to the throne, and called her mother, while they insisted upon shaking hands with the little Dauphin.

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## CHAPTER C.

### THE QUEEN GIVES UP HER RING.

MARIE ANTOINETTE bore this tumultuous scene with the spirit of a martyr; nay, her own waning hopes had been exhilarated even by this rude homage, and she was willing to deceive herself into a belief that the people of France might yet be won to do her justice. So she smiled on the gay throng that danced and shouted before her, took the child in her lap, and told him to kiss his little hand to the people who loved him so, and laughed outright at some of the quaint compliments paid to her beauty.

While she was thus occupied, a group of young girls came into the broken procession, carrying garlands in their hands, and loose flowers in their aprons. They were led by a fair and gentle young creature whom the queen regarded with a glance of pleasant recognition. This girl stepped out from her companions, approached the throne, and laid her flowers at the feet of the queen, to whom her great blue eyes were lifted with a look of touching affection.

Marie Antoinette gathered up the flowers and held them in her lap with seeming carelessness, but her fingers had

searched out the letter they concealed, and while apparently admiring the blossoms, she read,

"Have I performed my promise? Is the monarchy saved?"  
MIRABEAU."

For answer the queen gathered up some of the flowers, and fastened them in the lace that shaded her bosom. A flash of light came into the young girl's face. She arose, and her sweet lips joined in the song of her sister flower-girls, who broke into a regular dance, flinging up their long garlands as they waited for her.

"Long live the king! Long live the queen!"

With this shout ringing sweetly from their fresh lips, the flower-girls whirled away, waving their garlands, and tossing back loose blossoms to the steps of the throne.

There was no etiquette in these proceedings; all was wild, and brilliant confusion. The anarchy which followed was already foreshadowed in the shouts, dances, and songs, that turned what should have been an august assembly, into a revel.

After the flower-girls came the federates, full of enthusiasm, and after them the legislative assembly, in which Mirabeau walked with a step more haughty than any king of France ever assumed. His bold eyes fell upon the flushed face of the queen with a look of proud triumph, and the wonderful smile that made his strong face more than beautiful, swept it as he saw the flowers on her bosom. These flowers had a language of thanks that he read at a glance, and felt more keenly than words, for there was a touch of romance in them that fired his imagination.

The deputations and the assembly passed on; then came a change in the music, a hush, as if something of unusual interest were approaching. This dead silence was broken by low murmurs, more thrilling than shouts, while the thousands that still remained in the Champ de Mars surged around the altar and crowded toward the throne.

It was only seven men, bowed, thin, white-haired, and broken, who came slowly forward from a seat they had occupied, and with faltering steps, were about to pass before the throne.

The color fled from Marie Antoinette's face when she saw this pitiful band of men, some old without years to make them so, all with a look of broken-hearted apathy in their eyes, ready to pass before the throne like ghosts calling for judgment. The king turned white, and a spasm of pain shot athwart his face. The nobles, who stood behind the throne, shrunk back, casting glances of sudden apprehension on each other. They need not have dreaded those poor broken men, for grief and privation had made them weak as little children. If any expression appeared upon their wan faces, it was that of vague, wondering gratitude toward the king, who saw them free, and made no protest.

The court of France was gathered, like ghosts, about the throne, upon which a shrinking king and queen sat, while the live shadows of an ancient despotism crept toward them with downcast faces, and steps that faltered in their walking.

Then a look of infinite pity came into the king's face, and clasping his hands, like one who inwardly asks forgiveness of God for sins not altogether his own, he bowed his head upon his breast, and waited for these ghostly reproaches to pass on. But the queen sat upright, clasping her child firmly, as if to shield him from the indignant murmurs of the people, which came fearfully to her ear.

The seven prisoners—for these were all the Bastille contained when it was torn down—paused an instant before the throne, and one of them called out, in a broken voice,

"Thanks, sire, that you have made us free!"

The king lifted his head, and these wronged men saw that his eyes were full of tears. The people who stood nearest saw it, and the vindictive spirit which had forced

this trying scene on their monarch, gave way to bursts of generous sympathy.

"Down with the Bastille! Long live the king!" burst from a thousand lips that had been bitter with curses a moment before.

"Down with the Bastille! Long live the king!" rolled back among the thousands already defiling toward Paris; and that which the extremists had intended as an insult, was rolled into the most glorious events of the day.

"Thank God that you are free!" said Louis, in a low voice, that scarcely reached any one but the queen. She spoke louder, and with generous enthusiasm.

"There are none among all these thousands who grieve for your sufferings, or desire their redress more than the king and his wife," she said.

A quivering shout broke from those feeble old men; some of them tried to smile, others began to cry, and one came forward, tottering feebly in his walk, and with his thin hand outstretched,

"Give it me! If you have pity, give it me! For your own sake, for mine; for the sake of those who come after us, give me the ring upon your finger!"

His eyes shone as he spoke; the white beard upon his bosom quivered with the eager intensity of his words.

The queen hastily took a ring from the star-like jewels that flashed on her hand, and leaning forward, held it toward the old man.

"Ah! if a ring could atone!" she said, with the brightness of great sympathy in her eyes, "there is enough for you all!"

"Not that!" said the old man, impatiently shaking his head. "Give me that other—the golden serpent—the green beetle that has slept in the tombs of Egypt thousands on thousands of years! Give me that!"

"What, this?" said the queen, looking with a thrill of

awe on the tiny, golden serpent strangling a beetle, which was coiled around one of her fingers, looking old and weird among her other shining jewels. "It came to me in a strange way, and I have worn it long. Will no other do? This is of less worth than any."

"Give me that!" persisted the old man. "I want no other! Take it from your finger, lady; the hand is cursed around which that serpent coils!"

How eager he was; how his faded eyes shone and sparkled. He clutched one thin hand in the silver of his beard, and twisted it in an agony of impatience.

"Grief has touched his mind," thought the queen, drawing the ring from her finger. "After all, why should I care for this more than another, only because I found it on my toilet years ago, and could never learn how it came there?"

Still she hesitated and held the ring irresolute. There seemed to be a fascination about the antique gem that troubled every one who touched it. The prisoner's hands began to quiver, and his eyes grew keen as a serpent's. Inch by inch he crept nearer to the throne, with the look of a man who meant to seize upon his prize if it were not readily given up.

"Give it to me! Give it to me! Your mother would not have withheld it a moment!"

"My mother! You speak——"

"Of Maria Theresa—the empress! The great and good empress—my august sovereign!"

The queen reached forth her hand and gave him the ring.

He grasped it; he pressed it to his bosom and lifted it to his lips in a wild passion of delight. It seemed to fire both heart and brain with new life—to lift a weight from his shoulders, and give vigor to his limbs. He fell upon his knees before the queen, and pressed the hem of her

robe to his lips, murmuring thanks and blessings in her native language.

"It may be averted! This was a soul, a life to me, but the most venomous serpent on your hand. It has filled your life with hate and tumult. Be at rest now, the evil has departed from your house, from you and from yours."

The old man arose and stood upright, as if he had been aroused from a long, dim dream. The unutterable sadness had gone out from his face; he turned toward his astonished companions smiling.

"The old man is mad," said Marie Antoinette, leaning toward the king. "Why should he care for that ring more than another?"

Louis smiled. How could he answer? This scene had made but little impression on him; and those around only knew that the queen had given a ring from her own hand to the oldest and most picturesque of the seven prisoners; but this was enough for a new excitement, and a shout of "Long live the queen!" broke through the noise of their revelry.

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## CHAPTER CI.

### ZAMARA IS TEMPTED TO EARN MORE GOLD.

ONE person in that vast crowd had marked the scene well, and crept close enough to hear much that was said when Marie Antoinette gave her scarabee ring to the old prisoner. This was the Indian dwarf Zamara. He had come to the Champ de Mars in attendance on his mistress who sent him into that portion of the crowd that he might bring her intelligence of all that passed near the royal family. He went back to her now with a gleam in his eyes that she had learned to understand.

"What is it, marmouset? I see that something has happened," she said, stooping toward him, as he pulled at the folds of her dress to enforce attention.

"That ring."

"What ring?"

"That which you took from the German doctor before he was sent to the Bastille, and which I laid on the toilet of the queen, that she might wear it and curse herself forever."

"Hush! Hush! You speak too loud!" exclaimed the countess, turning pale with affright.

"The German doctor is one of the seven prisoners."

"Great heavens, no!"

"I saw him myself, and knew him. One does not forget such eyes."

"Are you sure, Zamara?"

"Am I ever mistaken? The man has changed, but I knew him at once."

"But the ring—you said something about the ring?"

"The ring you sent to the queen. Ah! I remember well, madame gave me one hundred Louis d'ors for that; but she would not take my word, she waited to see it on the hand of her majesty—that wounded Zamara to the heart."

"I would give that sum over again to know it had left the queen's hand," said Du Berry.

"Then it is mine, for I saw her take it from her finger and give it to the prisoner."

Zamara spoke eagerly, and his black eyes shone with sudden greed. The one strong passion of his life gleamed up fiercely; deprived of much else that men crave, the thirst of gain had grown to fearful strength in him.

The countess shook her head. She had no great trust in the word of her little slave.

"Ah! the greedy little monster," she said, with a con-

temptuous laugh; "he expects me to believe him, and pay him, too, as if Louis d'ors were as plenty with me now as he found them when we lived at the Trianon."

"But I saw the ring in his hand."

"Perhaps! But I did not."

"But you believe me?"

"Believe you! Ah, marmouset! you and I know each other too well."

The countess touched her slave upon the head with her fan, and laughed provokingly, for she still loved to torment the little creature, it brought back a flavor of her old life.

The Indian ground his teeth and looked down, that she might not see the gladiator-fire in his eyes. She laughed and gave him a smart rap over the ear with her fan.

"Take that, for daring to grind your teeth at me!"

The dwarf gave her one glance, sharp and venomous, that would have terrified a stranger; but madame only laughed the louder, and gave him another blow across the forehead, leaving a mark of dusky scarlet there, which girdled it like a ribbon.

Then, in his impotent rage, the little creature stamped his foot upon the ground, and stooping suddenly, tore her silken robe with his teeth, at which she laughed again, beating him off with vigorous blows, as if he had been an unruly dog. It was not till she saw great tears in his black eyes that she ceased to torment him. Then she held out her hand, still laughing.

But the dwarf drew back in sullen wrath.

"Come, come! I will have no sulking!" cried the woman, half angry herself, for she had no dignity of character to lift her above the creature she so loved to torment. "Tell me more about the ring. If what you say is true, I shall not mind giving you a handful of gold."

"But how can I prove it? You will not believe me."

"Ah, yes! there is a difficulty! Cannot you persuade

the old man to lend it to you for any hour. I should know the ring in an instant."

A gleam of light shot into Zamara's eyes.

"You would like to have it again?" he said, quickly.

"Heaven forbid! Why, marmouset, it was because the ring was said to carry ruin with it to any but the hand of its owner that I had it placed in the way of the queen. She was Dauphiness then, you know, and I had not learned how forgiving and generous she could be. That act has given me many an hour of pain since; and I would gladly give twice the gold you crave to be certain that she is well rid of it."

"And you will yet pay as much?"

"Yes; but I must see the ring with my own eyes."

The dwarf began to rub his small hands slowly together.

"One hundred Louis d'ors. You said a hundred?"

"Why, what a greedy wretch it is. One would think he eats gold."

"One cannot eat without gold," answered the dwarf, with a grim attempt at wit, which came awkwardly through his old anger. "Besides, what would Zamara be without gold if he lost his mistress?"

Du Berry grew red in the face; to her the very mention of death was worse than an insult.

"But your mistress is well. She is not old, but strong, and bright, and young as ever," she said, sharply. "She will outlive you, minion, a hundred years. Hoard gold, if it makes you happy, little wretch, but never tell me again, that it is because you expect to be alone. I could brain you with my fan for the idea."

Zamara laughed; the thoughts of so much gold had restored his good-humor.

"Wait till I have brought you the ring, mistress; but tell me first what it is which makes this twisted gold of so much importance?"



"Why ask me? Have you no memory? You heard this Dr. Gosner say that it was endowed with strange mystic powers, bringing happiness and prosperity to all and any of his blood, but continued misfortune to the stranger that ventured to wear it. From his account it must be a talisman of wonderful power. But you remember it all, for it was not often that any conversation passed at the Trianon which you did not manage to hear."

"I remember what this Dr. Gosner said, and I had the ring in my hand," answered the dwarf; "but there is time enough to find out what it means."

"One thing is certain," said Du Berry, thoughtfully; "the poor queen has had little but misfortune since it touched her finger. I wish we had let it alone."

The woman arose from the turf seat she had occupied and prepared to move after the crowd which had by this time swarmed into the streets, leaving the great altar, with its incense, and the throne, with its rich draperies, desolate and empty.

As the countess and her strange attendant passed out of the Champ de Mars, they came suddenly upon the prisoner of the Bastille, who turned his eyes upon them at first with listless indifference, but directly a quick fire of intelligence shot into them, and he moved forward, evidently intending to address the woman who had so ruthlessly torn the very heart of his life out. But, with the vigilance of fear, Madame Du Berry darted behind a group of revelers passing that moment, and thus evaded the person she most dreaded on earth.

## CHAPTER CII.

## A LOVERS' QUARREL.

STILL many persons lingered, singly and in groups, around the vast amphitheatre, from which the green turf was half trodden away. Among them were two old women and the young girl, who had lavished all her flowers at the feet of the queen. The girl was sitting quietly in her seat, looking depressed and rather sad; something, or, perhaps, some person whom she expected to see, had evidently disappointed her, and she was still reluctant to go, probably from the fact that some little hope still lay unquenched in her innocent bosom.

The two women, Dame Tillery, of Versailles, and Dame Doudel, were discussing some point with great earnestness.

"If you must go, why, of course, I will walk with you as far as the donkey-cart—it were unsisterly to let you set forth alone. But Marguerite is tired, you can see that by her face, poor thing! Let her rest here till I come back."

Dame Tillery, whose generous proportions had spread and bloomed into more pompous splendor since the reader first made her acquaintance, consented to this arrangement, and taking that fair young face between both her hands, kissed it with unctuous tenderness.

"Be a good child, my dear, and never forget what has been done for you. Thousands of people saw her majesty smile upon you from her throne this day, and put the flowers you gave into her own bosom; but they did not know that it was because the person understood to be your friend, once had the honor of saving her majesty from a terrible death, and has since been honored by a place in the royal household. No doubt, child, when her majesty took your flowers, she remembered the golden butter these hands

have prepared for her table. But I am talking here when every hour is precious, if I expect to reach home before nightfall. Come, sister Doudel, I would gladly wait longer, but some of these deputations will be making their way through Versailles; and since the court came to Paris, The Swan has lost so much of its custom that one must look sharply lest strangers pass its door. Do not be afraid, little one, my sister will soon return."

Dame Doudel had been waiting some minutes for this harangue to be completed, and the moment her pompous sister paused for breath, she moved away, leaving Marguerite quite alone.

The moment this young girl felt herself safe from observation, she gave way to the sad disappointment that had been slowly settling around her during the last half-hour. One sweet hope had haunted her ever since she left home that day. She might see that being who had become all the world to her. For weeks on weeks he seemed to have disappeared out of her life. She had haunted the ruins of the Bastille, persuading herself, poor child, that it was only to comfort that old man who still clung to his ruined cell there, but all the time of her sweet ministrations, she had listened for that footstep among the stones, and listened in vain. Then she would go home sadly, with tears in her eyes, creep up to her little room, and think herself grieving over the forlorn condition of that good man to whom liberty had been given when it was only a burden.

If Marguerite went out in the morning with her sweet merchandise of flowers, for an hour or so, her step would be elastic, and her eyes bright with hope. When a stranger spoke to her quickly, she would start and catch her breath, thinking for an instant that it was his voice, for in that unexpected way he had often addressed her. But when the hours wore on, a gentle sadness crept over her childlike

features, and she would turn homeward with a weight upon her heart, wondering if any one on this earth was ever so unhappy before.

Marguerite had seen Mirabeau once or twice, and trusted him entirely, because he was a friend of the royal family which it was a part of her religion to reverence, and he was the foster-brother of Monsieur Jacques. Besides, his age compared to her youth, seemed that of an old man, and he had never shocked her by any attempt to lessen the distance between them.

At this time Mirabeau was occupied both in his imagination and his ambition by the influence he had gained, with so much trouble, over the queen. His indomitable vanity had writhed under her haughty disregard of himself and his power so long, that to win a conquest over her dislike, inspired all his hopes, and rekindled his waning genius. To him Marguerite was only a pretty messenger, whose sweetness and beauty seemed a fitting link between himself and the only woman who had ever presumed to scorn him.

Marguerite delivered Mirabeau's note to the queen, and after that broke away from her companions, for she had no heart for those graceful dances and gay songs. In all that bright assembly he had not appeared. Was he angry? Had he forgotten her? Would they never, never meet again?

As she asked herself these questions her head drooped, her hands clasped themselves in her lap, and tears dropped slowly from her eyes. She did not restrain them; her protectors were gone, and there was no one else who cared to regard her; at least the freedom of grief was hers.

"Marguerite!"

The young creature started with a faint shriek—that voice came so suddenly upon her. Then her face sparkled with smiles, and lifting her eyes she said, with girlish emotion,

"Oh, monsieur! how you frightened me!"

That man had seen the girl before him leave the house of Count Mirabeau, the most profligate man in Paris, alone, and after nightfall. He knew that some mysterious link drew those two people together, yet, looking in that face so fair, dimpling with smiles, bright with sudden joy, how could he think ill of her. The suspicions that had haunted him for weeks, now seemed like poisonous reptiles which it was a relief to trample under foot.

"Marguerite, are you glad to see your friend again?"

A grave, sweet sadness chased the smiles from that sensitive mouth. Those eyes, in all their innocent blue, were turned upon him reproachfully.

"Ah, monsieur! why have you never asked before?"

"I have been very, very busy."

"It is not I so much," answered the girl, with an innocent attempt to screen the secret throbbing, like a pulse, in her heart, "but my father, who loves you so. Night after night you have left him alone—and it is so desolate there; besides, you never come to the house now, and mamma is away so much."

The young man smiled; like a bird which betrays the nest it would protect by its fluttering, Marguerite revealed the fact that she still kept true to the old haunt, and waited for him there, perhaps, unconscious that she was doing so.

"I will not leave him so long again—you must beg him to pardon me. But first, Marguerite, can you forgive me yourself?"

Marguerite shook her head, and her lips began to quiver.

"It was very, very wrong to leave the poor man so many weeks; the thought of it makes me sad."

"But you went to see him every day," said the young man, thirsting to hear the fact from her own lips;—"sometimes he was with you at home."

"Yes; but then I am only a girl, you know—he is old

and feeble. To lead him is the work of a strong, brave man. Ah! he missed you, monsieur! You and I are the only persons who have his secret. We must be very, very good to him."

The young man sat down on the turf seat close by the girl, and looking earnestly in her face, asked a question he almost scorned himself for framing.

"Marguerite, will you answer me one thing?"

"Anything—that is, almost anything."

"What took you to the house of Count Mirabeau on the thirteenth of last month?"

Marguerite looked at him surprised; then a slow, earnest expression came over her face, and she answered calmly,

"That is one of the things I must tell no one."

"You confess to having secrets, then."

"Yes, I confess it; just one or two, which I am to keep sacred."

"Not from Count Mirabeau?"

"There is no need—he knows it himself."

"Marguerite."

The girl started. That voice had never spoken her name so sharply before.

"Monsieur, are you angry with me?"

"Will you tell me what this secret is?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Why, girl, because I love you myself wildly, like a fool and madman."

"Love me, me—love me yet; can this be true? Then why did you keep away so long?"

"I love you, child, and have, since the day we first met. Even then, Marguerite, I hoped that you might return my love with a feeling beyond gratitude, which I had not earned, by a simple act of humanity."

"I—I told you that it was love more than gratitude; but you doubted me after I had said that."

"How could I help doubting? With my own eyes, I saw you enter that man's dwelling."

"Yes, I went in. I saw him."

"And you will not tell me why you went?"

Marguerite shook her head with a faint smile.

"That would be impossible."

"Why impossible? You can have no interests in common with that unprincipled man?"

"Unprincipled!"

"A man stained with every social crime."

Marguerite's eyes opened wide. A look of profound astonishment swept over her features.

"I did not know this—how should I? The people adore this man."

"The people? What do they care for those qualities which make a good man?"

"But the people are great. The people are France, and France is everything."

"You have learned his language."

"No; I learned it from you. That is why it sounds so sweet to me."

"Marguerite, tell me what this secret is. You thrill me with delight, and kindle suspicion at the same moment. Trust me."

"Indeed—indeed, I can trust no one."

Marguerite shrunk back from him, and held out both hands, with the palms outward, as if to protect herself from severe questioning.

He seized her hands and held them firmly.

"One thing—one word. Has Count Mirabeau ever spoken of love to you?"

"To me. No! No, a thousand times no!"

"But you visit him?"

"Yes."

"With the consent of dame Doudel? of your mother perhaps?"

"They know nothing of it."

"And this is all you will tell me?"

"Yes, it is all. Monsieur, a moment ago you said, 'Trust me.' I now say, trust *me*."

"I will—I do!" exclaimed the young man, pressing her hands to his lips; "only say to me one word that my heart is thirsting to hear again, that one word, 'I love you! I love you—and no one else!'"

"Marguerite laid her hands together, and holding them toward him, said, with that seriousness which springs from exquisite truth,

"I love you, and no one else!"

This scene had been passing in that grand amphitheatre, amid the dying music and the tread of departing feet. Still it was a solitude, for no one, so far as they could see, was near the seats they occupied, and the whole world was a blank to them.

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## CHAPTER CIII.

### PERFECT RECONCILIATION.

ST. JUST and Marguerite were so completely absorbed in each other, that they did not observe a group of gayly-dressed women, with bright ribbons streaming from their garments, who came laughing and dancing into the arena, chasing each other up the steps of the abandoned altar, and whirling off into the open space, while snatches of patriotic songs broke from their lips, now in chorus, and again full of riotous discord.

Scenes like this had been too frequent that day for any especial interest to be granted them, and the lovers scarcely heeded this one in the ecstasy of their renewed

happiness. Marguerite, unmindful that she was seen, held out her hands in childlike earnestness, the young man seized them, and covered them with kisses.

One of the dancers separated from the rest, and leaping from one turf seat to another, came softly down behind the lovers, laughing quietly, and with a finger to her lips, as a sign that her companions should keep up their revel, and leave her to the mischief in hand.

The young man, feeling her shadow upon him, looked up suddenly. A frown crept over his face, and he motioned the woman away with his hand. But Louison Brisot was not a person who could be intimidated by a look or an imperious gesture. She gave a leap, and sat down at the feet of Marguerite, laughing.

Marguerite recognized her face, and uttering a cry of dread, clung to the young man, trembling violently.

There was a touch of malice in Louison's laugh now, for she hated the poor girl, whom her voice alone had the power to terrify.

"Ho! ho! citizen St. Just. Are you here with this white-faced cheat? What if I tell of this at the Jacobins to-night?"

"Tell it where and how you please," answered the young man, starting up, and half lifting the frightened girl from the turf. "I answer to no man or woman for the way in which I spend my time."

"Do you know how she spends her time, and where? Ask Count Mirabeau. Watch his door in the Chaussee d'Antin, and see who creeps in and out like a cat."

Marguerite cast a wild, piteous look at St. Just. She knew this woman, and her terror was complete.

"Ask her if she, born of the people, is not an aristocrat at heart; a traitress, a——"

"Hush!" commanded St. Just; and his beautiful face became fierce and stormy with indignation. "With those

foul lips dare you revile the angels? Come away, Marguerite, the atmosphere is poisoned around us."

Louison Brisot started up pale and fierce with the sting of his words. She cast a withering glance, first upon St. Just, then upon the trembling young creature by his side. The laugh was gone from her face, bitter envy made her look fierce and old. She turned from them in silence, more threatening than her most boisterous words, and stepping cautiously from seat to seat, left them.

St. Just turned to the young girl, who saw her enemy disappear with strained eyes and aching heart.

"Marguerite! Marguerite!" he cried, gently disturbed, "how is this? Surely, you are not afraid of that brazen amazon?"

"Afraid? No, no, it is not that," faltered the girl. "It is her words that still tremble in my heart."

"Her words! What harm can they do you or me? They were only insolent bravado."

"She called you by a name. She seemed to threaten you with harm?"

"Yes. What then?"

"Ah, monsieur! you are a member of the Assembly, and she boasts of her power there."

"Yes, the youngest man in that august body, but not young enough to be afraid of this woman."

"She is the friend of Robespierre?"

"Robespierre is an honest man, frugal, moral, a true patriot."

"And of Marat?"

"That brutal man is useful to France, and will not become my enemy."

"Let me go home," pleaded the girl; "my heart aches, I am faint."

"Marguerite, my poor child, do not look so miserably pale. Has that accursed woman driven the smile from your face forever?"

"Forever! Oh, my God! this is hard! You are the queen's enemy if these men are your friends!"

"Marguerite, you drive me wild. What does this mean? I have said with my whole heart that I love you."

"Notwithstanding the secret in my heart?"

"Foolish child, you have no secret. I guess it all now. You love the queen?"

"With all my life—all my soul!"

"And the king?"

"The king also; but you, monsieur, are the enemy of both."

"This is not all your secret. Count Mirabeau has sold himself to the court."

Marguerite was silent.

"He has held communication with the queen, and a little girl that I know of was his messenger."

"Who has dared to say this?"

"I will tell you. Dame Doudel is my friend."

"Ah, yes!"

"Dame Tillery is her sister. Think you she could visit St. Cloud and not tell all the particulars?"

Marguerite almost smiled.

"Besides, this woman Brisot was a spy upon you, and brought her news to Robespierre, who told it to his friends. She denied it all afterward, but that did not change our belief."

Marguerite looked bewildered. St. Just smiled.

"Now where is the secret? Have I not known it and kept silence even when I suspected more?"

"But you are still a Jacobin—still an enemy to the royal family."

"What is the meaning of all you have seen here to-day? Have not the people and their king taken an oath of amity before God and the nation? Even now you can hear the thunder of the cannon scattering this good news to the four winds of heaven."

Marguerite's face brightened.

"Ah! it is so; in my terror I forget that. The people and the king are one. I have not committed the sin of loving her enemy."

Her little hand crept into his, the soft love-light came into her eyes again.

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## CHAPTER CIV.

### A THEFT AND AN INSULT.

THAT night there was a wild, riotous ball at the site of the Bastille. The Cour de Government had been cleared and garnished by a thousand busy hands. Temporary draw-bridges, arched with lighted garlands, were thrown over the half-drained ditch, dimly reflected in its sluggish waters. Around the court nine pyramids of light represented the nine awful towers, which had frowned on Paris more than four hundred years. These pyramids shed their radiance on a circle of tri-colored tents, each surmounted by a streaming banner, all chained together by great garlands of flowers, gorgeous flags, and lights that kindled them like stars. On each side the draw-bridge two noble pyramids rose forty feet from the ground, from which thousands of colored lamps ran downward in rivers of light, quivering, glowing, flinging more than the radiance of noonday on the gorgeous arena, and kindling up the broken ruins beyond, till their shadows grew darker than midnight. Between these noble pillars rose an arch, on which eighty-three flags of the departments of France fluttered to the night wind, and from the centre fell a mat of flowers, on which was written in characters of glowing fire, "Here we dance!"

The tents were full; groups stood on the draw-bridges,

looking upon the brilliant scene, with the ruins of the old prison lying blackly behind them. The arena was thronged with merry dancers; men and women of all grades and every possible costume mingled in that strange scene. From a great central tent came bursts of music, wild, riotous, and revolutionary as the people who danced to it. Rude, half-clothed men, crowned with laurel and oak-leaves, reeled through the dancers; women, whose very presence there was odious, crowned each other with laurel, and wheeled in bacchanalian groups around the blazing pillars of fire.

Late at night, when the revel was at its highest, an old man came through that radiant arch of flowers and flame, and stood for a moment dazzled by the scene that eddied around him. The crowd outside had seized him in its current, and breaking at the entrance, left him stranded there, with the light pouring down upon his broad forehead and silvery beard with the force of an August sun.

Some women, who were chanting the Marseillaise in the nearest tent, flocked out at the sight of this august head, shouting, "The prisoner! The prisoner of the Bastille!" surrounded him in triple rows, and hedged him in with a chain of wreathing arms.

"Bring us flowers! Bring us wine, laurel, and oak-leaves! Let us crown the martyr of the Bastille, and pour a libation to liberty. Liberty and fraternity!"

They forced this old man into the center of the arena, arresting the dancers with their shouts, and crowding them back with remorseless enthusiasm. Some leaped up and tore flowers from the swinging festoons; others snatched laurel from the bacchanalian crowns of their companions. Almost instantaneously a garland was fastened on the old man's head, and a goblet of wine was held to his lips, while the crowd whirled, a human maelstrom, around him, shouting, singing, and tossing their arms upward in a tempest of insane delight.

The prisoner stood a moment bewildered. He put aside the wine-cup, which one of the women held to his lips, but so unsteadily that it reddened his beard, and taking the laurel wreath from his head, flung it from him.

"Let me go," he said, with gentle impatience; "I do not like this."

They would have kept him by force, but some among the crowd saw that he was feeble and grew deadly pale; so they forced a passage for him out of that ring of unsexed women, and allowed the old man to make his own way through the crowd, across one of the draw-bridges, and into the black ruins beyond.

After the first impulse no one cared to follow the old man, and, thinking himself quite unobserved, he crept down into the darkness of his cell, and called in a soft, broken voice for his little companion, to which he began whispering something in rapturous haste, as if he really thought the tiny creature could understand him.

Notwithstanding the old man thought himself alone, there was something hidden there among the shadows, far more crafty and keen of wit than the poor little mouse, faithful as it had been.

Close down by the cell, hidden behind a fragment of rock, crouched Zamara, the dwarf. Hour after hour he had followed the old man with the vigilance of a hound and the cunning of a fox. At last he had tracked him to his lair, and heard the low, pathetic words with which he told his happiness to the little companion, whose sympathy always seemed ready for him.

"Ah, my little friend! I have such news to tell you; that is right, creep close into my bosom. It is a warm heart, you will sleep against to-night. Did I tell you, little one, a great work has been done since morning? Feel the ring on my finger; do not be afraid, it will not hurt you. To you and me it is a blessing always. Years and years



ago it was taken from me and put on the hand of a beautiful, good woman, born to great misfortunes without deserving them. But for this, they could not have kept me here till the old towers were torn down over our heads; but for this her bitter enemies would never have prevailed. But I have it once more, and am strong again—young and strong. See, my hand trembles no longer. You can sit firmly upon it and look into my face. Is it not that of a powerful man? Tell me if the blood does not mount into my cheek? I think so—I think so, for it feels like wine about my heart. To-morrow, sweetheart, we will set about the great work. It is for us to save the daughter of my dear old mistress, how I cannot yet see; but my strength lies here: with this on my finger, I feel it in me to heave mountains from their base. What, restless, sweetheart? Do you hear some one? Be quiet, none of those rude people will come here—with all their floods of light they cannot find us out. What, again? It may be that our Marguerite is coming—but then how could she get through the revel out yonder? Hush now: do not attempt to get away. Surely, you are not afraid of *her*? We must find all this out to-morrow. Now that God has given us back a great power, no one shall be unhappy. We will make sure of that!”

The old man paused here and seemed to listen; then he spoke again, but with soft sleepiness, as if the great fatigue of the day were settling gently down upon his faculties.

“It was nothing. She could not have come to-night, the crowd is so great. That is well; creep into my bosom—happiness makes me sleepy.”

There was a faint, hushing whisper after this, followed by the regular breathing of a man in his first sleep.

Full half an hour Zamara sat in the shadows, waiting for a certainty that the slumber of that old man was profound. Then he arose to his hands and knees, paused, listened, and crept forward stealthily, like a fox upon its prey.

The old man was lying upon his back, with one hand folded over his bosom, the other lay supinely upon the stone floor, just where a gleam of moonlight cut across it, revealing the golden serpent coiled around one finger. Zamara touched the ring. It circled the delicate finger loosely—age and suffering had shrunken that hand almost to a shadow. The fingers were bent downward: another touch and the ring slipped to the floor, with a faint click that took away the dwarf's breath; for an instant, it disturbed the sleeper, who moved a little, leaving the ring entirely exposed.

Softly as a cat stretches out its claw, Zamara's fingers crept toward his prize and fastened upon it. Then he groveled backward out of the cell, drew a sharp breath, leaped to his feet, and fled across the ruins.

A woman sat in one of the tents drinking wine from a horn cup, which one of the *sans culottes* had just filled for her from a cask which stood on one end in front of the tent. A hole had been torn in the top, through which he thrust the cup, and drew it forth dripping. Three times he had filled the cup, yet the woman was thirsty, and held it out for more, with a rollicking laugh, which the dwarf recognized and hated. But the tent was near the entrance and he was obliged to pass her. In his confusion he ran against Mirabeau, whose policy it was to show himself at such popular gatherings, where he usually made great capital by his familiarity with the lower classes. He was talking to a group of workmen, who gathered around him, with some earnestness, though his face bore an expression of intense fatigue, when Zamara was hustled violently against him by the crowd.

Impatient and suffering from the absolute pain of a disease, which was making rapid inroads on him, he seized the dwarf with one hand, lifted him up, pitched him into the crowd, and, turning his back, went on with what he had been saying.

It happened that the dwarf fell just within the tent where Louison Brisot sat, and his sudden advent shook the cup in her hand, spilling the wine upon her; the rest she dashed over him with a rude laugh. The dwarf struggled to his feet, livid with rage. A word, bitter with coarse insult, broke from him, and clenching his tiny fist, he shook it viciously.

"He has not had enough," cried Louison, addressing the *sans culottes*. "Do you know who he is, citizen? Well, you have heard of Madame Du Berry and her *famillier*? This is her imp."

The man thus appealed to seized Zamara, without a word dashed his foot against the head of the wine-cask, and plunged the dwarf in, roaring with laughter as the red liquid surged over the edges, and crimsoned his own legs and feet.

A storm of coarse merriment followed this act. The cask was not large enough to drown the poor wretch, but he was drawn out frenzied with rage, and dripping from head to foot with the wine some in the crowd coveted.

Louison went up to him, laughing till she could hardly speak.

"Go back to your mistress," she said, "and tell her if she lets her imp loose again among the patriots of France, he will be found the next morning hung up at some lantern, like a spider caught in its own web."

Zamara only answered by a look that checked her laughter on the instant.

"The venomous snake," she muttered, "and I have trodden on him."

Yes, she had trodden on him, and so had the proud man whose ambition it was to rule France.

## CHAPTER CV

## THE SECRET OF THE RING.

ZAMARA left the site of the Bastille, burning with rage. Every step he took deepened his bitter humiliation. Keenly sensitive about his diminutive form, he felt the cruel sarcasm this woman had put upon him with double force. To half-drown him in a cask, scarcely large enough to hold a child, was a stinging insult, for which he would, some day, have vengeance—vengeance on her, and on the man who had found out his fraud, and made it of no avail. But he still held the ring, and the thought of the gold it would purchase was some consolation.

Zamara went to his own room when he reached the residence of his mistress. His wine-stained garments were soon changed, and he sat down to examine the mysterious prize that had wrought such fatal consequences, at least to one life. It was an Egyptian scarabee, curiously carved, and of a dull green, around which a tiny serpent coiled itself, fold upon fold, shooting its head clear through the beetle, where it had been perforated for the string, upon which these antique gems were often gathered in a necklace for the monarch whose tomb they enriched. This serpent, Zamara truly guessed, had been attached to the scarabee after it was drawn from the tomb, after a sleep of some thousands of years. The head of the serpent was large in proportion to the body, and flattened, like that of an adder before it springs.

The dwarf examined the mechanism of this ring. He began to comprehend that it might be made terrible without magic. He searched the scarabee cautiously with his finger, and at the extremity found a tiny spring, scarcely larger than a grain of mustard-seed. In breathless trepi-

dation he touched this spring, when the head of the serpent curved downward, the jaws opened, and through them shot a ruby tongue, slender and sharp as the finest needles. One dart of this subtle tongue, and the head writhed itself back into place.

The fire that shot over the dusky face of the dwarf was lurid. He understood the meaning of this delicate mechanism, and the sweetness of certain revenge was already in his bad heart. He went to a little cabinet, and took from a secret compartment a tiny earthenware jar, which contained a morsel of some apparently resinous substance. This he examined carefully, gloating over it with eager satisfaction. Opening a small knife, he was about to take some on its point, but a selfish after-thought seized upon him.

"Not yet," he said; "there must be no danger to *her*, for she alone stands between me and such brutes as nearly murdered me to-night. No, the ring shall first win me gold, and then, oh! such sweet revenge. That fierce count has twice laid his great, strong hands upon Zamara—thrice heaped insult on him. Bulk makes him brave; but wit is stronger than weight, and revenge sharper than either."

With these words, Zamara locked up the scarabee with the little jar, and crept into bed, muttering to himself, and lay in thoughtful wakefulness until the day dawned. Then he arose, and once more examined the beetle, to make sure that no secret of its mechanism had escaped him.

As early as it was possible to see his mistress, the dwarf went to her room, a richly frescoed boudoir, crowded with the gorgeous, but tarnished furniture that had been saved out of her royal degradation. She lay upon a stiff backed, gilded couch, in a loose, morning robe of soiled brocade, and turned her head indolently as the dwarf came in.

"Mistress, I have brought you the ring. You will believe now that Zamara speaks the truth."

Du Berry started up, fully aroused.

"Let me look at it. No, no, no!—I will not touch it. That strange man said it was fatal to every one but himself. The poor queen has found it so. Give it back to the old man. He shall not be despoiled a second time."

The Countess Du Berry spoke hastily, and with shuddering emphasis. She had a nervous terror of the ring, which was, indeed, a proof of her own great crime.

"Take it back! Take it back! I have no wish for it!"

"But, madame would not believe me when I said the queen had given it up. She promised gold if I would let her have a sight of it. Has madame forgotten?"

"No, no! I never forget! But take the thing away! There is the money—count it for yourself. My heart is lighter, now that I am sure that thing can no longer harm the queen. Take your money there."

Madame flung her purse, heavy with clinking gold, at the dwarf's feet, and turning upon her couch, hid her face among its silken cushions, almost as much afraid as if a real serpent had been threatening her; for, with all her reckless audacity, the woman was a miserable coward at heart; and in this case superstition made her abject.

Zamara went out from her presence, weighing the purse of gold in his palm, and gloating over it.

"Ah, ha!" he muttered. "The ring frightens her. It is enough that this poor, harmless beetle has slept so long in a tomb; to her it is saturated with death, but I know how to make it harmless as a dove, or venomous as an asp. It shall be one to my friends, the other to my foes. After that the old prisoner may get it if he can."

Again the dwarf opened his cabinet and took the earthen jar from its hiding-place. This time he opened the jaws of that serpent ring, and filled them with the soft, resinous paste, which he took from the jar with the sharp point of a penknife. Having thus charged the serpent with venom, he laid it carefully away in one of the most secret drawers of his cabinet.

"We must wait," he said, muttering to himself, as was his habit. "They will not let me approach near enough until last night is forgotten. My looks frightened her, I could see that. It needs time and infinite craft—but that is nothing. 'Revenge is a dish that can be eaten cold.' It is locked up there, and I can wait."

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## CHAPTER CVI.

### THE OLD MAN FALLS ASLEEP.

THAT morning the prisoner of the Bastille awoke and felt for the ring, which was like a promise of immortality to him. It was gone. He started up in wild amaze, refusing to believe the evidence of his own senses. He shook his garments, removed them one by one, examining every fold. He threaded the thick silver of his beard with both trembling hands, and interrogated the keen-eyed mouse, which stood looking at him with almost human intelligence from a corner of the cell, where it had fled on being ejected from the bosom of its old friend.

It was gone. When the old man was sure of this he went wild in his passionate despair, and rushed out among the bleak ruins, calling on God to take vengeance on the wretch who had despoiled him.

His cries brought no echo of sympathy from any human voice: for even then the ruins of the Bastille were like the heaped-up lava of a burnt district. Across the moat a few workmen were busy striking the tents, and taking down the blackened lamps which had been stars of flame the night before; but they only paused long enough to laugh at the old man's wild gestures, and went off to another part of the grounds.

Then the poor prisoner, half demented by his loss, began the most patient search that ever absorbed a human life. Day after day, hour after hour, he wandered over those ruins, peering behind the stones, fathoming crevices, searching the clefts of each broken wall, and questioning every person he met, if anything strange had been seen, but in all cases, refusing with meek cunning, to disclose the thing he searched for.

Thus for weeks and months the old man spent half his time in the ruins searching, searching, searching for the ring, which never came back to him. And so he grew weaker and weaker as hope died out in him, sometimes sitting whole days in the solitude of his cell, but always with his eyes roving over the floor and walls, as if he still expected them to give up his treasure.

When her father did not come as usual to the house, which seldom happened now, Marguerite always sought him in his cell, with a basket on her arm, and fed him with bread soaked in wine, or gave him delicate meats cooked by her own hand; for she saw that the old prisoner did not care for anything, and shrunk more and more into his hiding place, as if he longed to evade everything but herself and his little dungeon companion.

One day, when she came upon her gentle mission, the old man looked earnestly in her face a long time, then he shook his head with a sad, wavering movement, and dropped his eyes.

"Change, change—everywhere change," he murmured. "The same face, yet not the same. What is it that fills her with such holy light. Tell me little one, what it means?"

"It means," answered Marguerite, with the rich quietness of supreme content, "that I am beloved—that I love."

"Beloved? Love? Ah! I heard of such things once.

Then, I think, some one loved me; but that was a long, long time ago."

"But you are still loved," said Marguerite, laying her hand on his.

"I should be, if I could find *that!*" answered the old man; "but it is too late, I am feeble, and cannot search further—very, very feeble!"

"Take more of the wine," pleaded Marguerite. "If you would only go home with me."

"No, no; this is my home. I need no other."

Marguerite pressed the shadowy hand clasped in hers.

"But some day, when I have a home of my own, you will bring little marmousette and live with me."

"A home of your own?" questioned the old man. "When will you have that?"

"When France is quiet again. It is a sweet, sweet secret, which you shall know when you care to listen, father."

"Ah, if I could find *that*, you should be very happy, Therese."

"But I am happy, wonderfully happy, father. You understand when a girl is loved, the wealth of the whole world is hers."

The old man shook his head; he was very weak and even this sweet talk wearied him. Marguerite saw it and her heart thrilled with apprehension.

"Oh come with me, father," she pleaded. "I cannot bear to see you sleeping on these damp stones while I have a bed. Come, and you shall know once more what love is."

"Not now. I like the stones; a bed makes me ache in all my limbs. Besides, my little friend likes no place as well as this."

"Poor little marmousette, it must be a small place which cannot make room for him," said Marguerite. "I will make

him a nest among my flowers. And you, my father, oh what can I do that will make you happy?"

"*That* would make me happy, if you could only find it."

"Alas, I cannot. Where could I search?"

"It is here. It will be found by some poor stranger, and work more mischief; but I cannot help it; day and night I have searched among these stones."

"You have worn yourself out, my father."

"Yes, I think so," answered the old man, faintly.

"I cannot leave you here alone."

"Alone! He is here; he never leaves me."

"But you will come with me?"

"Oh, yes! when I am stronger."

The old man's face drooped on his breast after this, and he seemed to sleep.

Marguerite arose to go.

"Adieu," she said. "You are weary, and I keep you from rest."

"From rest? No one can do that," said the old man, gently. "Adieu!"

Marguerite bowed her head; her father lifted his hands and blessed her as she bent before him.

There was something mournful and pathetic in his gestures, which filled her heart with sad forebodings.

The night was dark and cloudy. It was dangerous to be out so late; yet Marguerite lingered near the cell reluctant to leave the old man alone. Twice she went back and listened. All was silent, and, at last she moved homeward through the ruins.

As Marguerite reached the draw-bridge, the shadow of a man fell across it. Her heart leaped.

"Is it you St. Just? Is it you? Ah, I never needed you so much."

"No Marguerite, it is only Jacques. Do not be hurt be-

cause it is not that other. He is not always near to watch you as I am."

Jacques spoke with humility. In all his bitter trouble he had never once swerved from the most perfect kindness to the girl who scarcely thought that he suffered.

"I thought that you did not care to watch me now, monsieur Jacques," she said. "You never come to see us."

There was pain, subdued with infinite patience, in Jacques' eyes as he answered this light reproach. Did the girl know how much it had cost him to keep away from her? Had she absolutely forgotten her promise—forgotten that he loved her?

"Marguerite," he said, with mournful firmness, "you remember a promise made that day before the Bastille was taken?"

Marguerite uttered a faint cry and recoiled backwards as if the man had aimed a blow at her.

"No, no! I have not forgotten; but I thought—oh, Monsieur Jacques, forgive me!"

The girl held out her hands to him now, and the anguish of a new enlightenment thrilled her voice.

Jacques took her hands in his and clasped them firmly. With the struggle of a giant he held down the bitter agony in his heart.

"Such words are not for you, Marguerite. Instead of forgiveness, I give you blessings. I am ready to serve you—die for you. But forgiveness we must not talk of that. There is nothing to forgive between you and me."

"Is a broken promise nothing—for mine is broken. I hardly made a struggle to keep it; yet you gave liberty to my poor father. Is selfish forgetfulness nothing? Am I worthy that you forgive me without asking?" cried Marguerite, stung with keen self-reproach.

"Hush, Marguerite, hush! I cannot listen when you revile yourself. It was not for this I spoke; but I feared

you might remember that promise and be troubled by it. Now you will understand that it is forgotten, utterly forgotten."

A heavy sigh broke from the strong man as these words left his lips, and his limbs shook as if the soul had been wrenched from his body.

"Ah, Monsieur Jacques, can such things be forgotten?"

Jacques knew that she was thinking of St. Just, and wondering in her heart if *he* ever could forget. The idea was but one pang more, still it wounded him to the soul.

Marguerite took consolation from her own absorbing love. "If he cared for me in that way," she thought, "to forget would be impossible. It is because I was so helpless and so miserable. One gets over pity, but love, oh, never—never. That would be death with no Heaven afterward."

With that man standing before her, so brave, so noble in his self-abnegation, the girl could reason thus, and turn her thoughts on the being of her own worship.

Perhaps Jacques felt something of this, for his voice shook when he addressed her again.

"I would still have cared for your safety, and followed you in silence, Marguerite. But the streets are full of dangerous people to-night, and you staid so late I feared that you might need help."

These words turned Marguerite's thoughts back to her father.

"Monsieur Jacques, oh! my friend, I do, I do. My poor father is ill. I can keep his secret no longer. Come with me—together we may persuade him to leave this place."

Marguerite turned to lead the way back to her father's cell. Jacques followed her in silence. The clouds broke and poured watery gleams of moonlight into that prison cell, as these two persons approached it. By this fitful radiance they saw the old man sleeping tranquilly on the

stone floor—so tranquilly that their own hearts stopped beating.

Monsieur Jacques bent over him.

"Does he sleep," said Marguerite, in a low voice, for her heart was chilled within her. "Does he sleep?"

"So sweetly that the angels of Heaven alone can wake him," was the solemn reply.

## CHAPTER CVII.

### THE SCARABEE DOES ITS DEADLY WORK.

MONTHS went by, for a little time the wheels of the Revolution revolved with a slow but steady force. The influence of Mirabeau had made itself felt; his powerful genius held the populace in check. Chosen president of the Assembly, he had inspired that body with some of his own conservative ideas. The queen began to trust him fully. The king saw in him a safe counsellor. For a time the fearful storm that afterward swept France like a simoon, seemed to have passed away. The nation took time to breathe. Mirabeau had triumphed over all his enemies but one, that one found him at the zenith of his power.

On the twenty-seventh of March, 1791, Mirabeau spoke three times in the Assembly. Never had he been more impressive, never had his genius exhibited itself with greater effect. With words of living eloquence on his lips he stepped down from the tribune, passed between double ranks of admiring friends and defeated enemies, and was seen by the people of France no more.

The next day it was known at the clubs, and heralded in the streets, that the great statesman of France was ill.

All Paris sympathized with the sufferings of this strong

and most gifted man. His house in the Chaussee d'Antin was besieged by people, who blocked up the street that no carriage might disturb the rest of their idol. The Jacobin club sent its President at the head of a deputation, to express the profound sympathy of that body. Robespierre, who allowed himself to drift with the current, was found in the sick-room. The king sent every day to inquire after Mirabeau's health.

The great man was ill, but fully conscious of all the homage that surrounded him. He yet believed himself invincible, and gloried in all these evidences of popularity. He was accused of giving stage effect to his sick bed. It may be that he did, for no man knew better how to appeal to the senses of an audience—and he did not believe himself to be dying.

One day, when the street was choked up with anxious inquirers, a swarthy dwarf was seen among the crowd, striving to escape observation, but making constant progress toward the door of Mirabeau's dwelling. He reached it at last, and finding a servant on the threshold patiently answering the anxious questions put to him regarding the state of his master, waited quietly till the man should recognize him.

"Is it possible to see Mirabeau?"

"What, you?"

"Is he ill—very ill? I come from one who wishes to know the truth."

"I know; your mistress is his friend. There can be no harm in saying to her that he is ill, but not so hopeless as his worshippers think. Their terrors but increase his popularity. She will understand."

The dwarf did understand that his enemy was in no immediate danger, and probably would recover. This only made him the more resolute to gain access to the great man.



"I have a message," he said; "not from the lady you think of, but from one so high that I dare not speak her name."

"A message? But so many messages come, that I cannot even listen to them. Such adulation would drive a man mad, though he were in sound health. I can take no message."

Zamara motioned to the man to stoop, and whispered,

"Not if it were from her majesty, the queen?"

The man looked cautiously around. There was danger in the queen's name, which he could appreciate.

"Step in, step in! I will speak to you when the crowd grows less. Sit down and wait. From the Tuileries—did you say that? Speak low, there is danger in it."

The dwarf nodded his head, put a finger to his lip, and sat down in the entrance-hall, close by the bronze statue, which he remembered so well. The man had seen Zamara frequently at the house before, and had no hesitation in speaking freely to him.

"The truth is," he said, confidentially, "our count has overworked himself. Spoke five times in one day. Think of it! And this is a good time to learn how warmly the people regard him. Do not expect him to get well all at once—he is not fool enough for that; but, after a little, his enemies will find him thundering at them from his place again. We do not intend to die just yet; his friends comprehend it all. As for the rest, why, of course, for them he is dying."

"Then he is well enough to be told that I have a message for him directly from the queen—I have brought such things before."

"I will take the message."

"No, I must give it into his own hands. Such were my orders. Ask if he will admit a messenger from her majesty—that is all I desire."

"I will go; but listen how they are swarming against the door again. Was ever a man so beloved?"

Zamara saw the servant depart with a quiet countenance; but the moment he was gone, an evil expression broke into his eyes, and a smile crept across his lips.

"So he would make fresh popularity for himself out of this. Well, he shall. This illness, which is half feigned, shall make him immortal."

The servant came back, and motioned Zamara to follow him. They mounted a broad stair-case, up which heavy balustrades of carved oak wound to the roof, and, opening a door at the first landing, led the way through an ante-room, in which several persons were waiting, into a state-chamber, hung with crimson silk, with a thick Persian carpet on the center of a polished oak floor. On this carpet a great, high-posted bedstead stood, curtained with red, like the windows, on which Mirabeau lay, as it were, bathed in the twilight of a warm sunset.

A pile of snow-white pillows was under the sick man's head, lifting him to a half-sitting posture. The linen that covered his bosom fell apart at the neck, leaving his throat free, and lending a picturesque effect to his chest and shoulders.

Some loose papers lay upon the counterpane near his hand, as if he had been reading, and just laid them down.

"What, is it manikin?" said the sick man, with a good-natured smile. "I thought wise people had done trusting you long ago. What is it—about the person who sent you? There must be some mistake, I think. Come close to the bed, and speak low."

The dwarf came up smiling, and with a strange glimmer in his eyes.

"The queen, through the young person you know of, sent for me this morning, gave me this ring from her own finger, bade me bring it to you, and say that, for her sake,

she insisted that you would wear it, and for the sake of France you must hasten to be well."

"Are these her very words?" demanded Mirabeau.

"Her very words," answered the dwarf, enjoying malicious pleasure in the sick man's excitement.

"And nothing more?"

"She said you would recognize the ring!"

"Give it me! Give it me!"

That dusky hand trembled a little as it reached forth the ring. Mirabeau took it eagerly and examined the design.

"Yes; my lips touched it once. I recognize it," he said, with the exaltation of a man whose brain is already surcharged.

"The design was emblematical, she said," answered Zamara. A serpent, strong and wise, enfolding this emblem of royalty, the green beetle, was buried with some monarch thousands of years ago."

Mirabeau laid the ring on the bed and closed his eyes. The excitement had been too much for him.

Zamara drew back and waited. Until that ring was upon Mirabeau's hand his errand was but half done.

After an interval of some minutes, Mirabeau turned a little on his pillows and opened his eyes.

"Ah, I remember!" he said. "You brought me a ring, and were telling me something about it. I am a little weary now, but in time her words will all come back, like old wine, and give me strength. Tell her this, and say that I only crave life that it may be devoted to her and hers. Ha! I have been wandering—this is no message to send. You have but to give her highness my thanks—understand that, Mirabeau's thanks, and nothing more."

"Her majesty bade me bring her word that I had seen the ring on your finger, Count Mirabeau. Shall I say that you were too weak and had no strength to put it on?"

"What, I so far gone that I cannot thrust a ring on my finger. Where is the serpent? Oh, here!"

Even the little finger of that large, white hand, was too large for the ring, and it was forced over the joint with violence. The keen eyes of the dwarf were upon it. He saw the head crest itself, a single flash of the ruby tongue, and then the ring was twisted to its place: but just above the joint was a scarcely perceptible speck of blue.

"It is small and pains me a little," said Mirabeau; "take it off! To-morrow, I will try it on the other hand. Take it off, I say!"

The dwarf took the hand in his, grasped the beetle by its sides, and drew away the ring with a slow, cautious movement. His hand did not tremble, but the locked firmness of his features betrayed the force he put upon his nerves.

"Lay it in that casket on the console," said Mirabeau faintly, "and call my doctor from the next room."

As he spoke, the sick man's head fell back upon the pillow, his arms settled down, all feeling fled from his limbs, and his breathing became heavy and quick, as if the heart were struggling in mortal agony.

A cry of real terror broke from the dwarf. Half a dozen persons, who waited in the ante-room, rushed into the chamber, but it was only to see a dead man lying under those crimson shadows.

The woorara leaves no signs, Zamara knew that, and remained quiet, while the physician stood horror-stricken over all that remained of his patient. When the tumult subsided a little, he stole out with the ring grasped cautiously in his hand.

"How did you find Mirabeau?" questioned a woman standing by the door, in a low voice, as Zamara went out. The man told me you had been admitted. Is he better? Will he live?"

The woman's face was pale and locked; her voice shook with fear as she asked these questions. A flash of dusky red shot athwart the Indian's face, her anguish was sweet to his ear. He opened his hand and displayed the ring.

"He sent you this, and bade you wear it for his sake. Mirabeau is dead!"

That wretched woman snatched at the ring, thrust it on her finger, and covered it with passionate kisses.

"Woe to France! Woe to France!" she cried out in wild anguish, "Mirabeau is dead! Mirabeau is dead!"

He waited to see her fall; but the poison had exhausted itself on one life, or she had failed to touch the spring.

"Fool that I was," he muttered, gliding out of the crowd, while the sad cry rose from lip to lip,

"Mirabeau is dead!"

## CHAPTER CVIII.

### THE STORMING OF THE TUILERIES.

WHEN Mirabeau died, constitutional monarchy in France lost its strongest support. Slowly, but with steady persistence, Robespierre assumed the place which he could only fill with the iron pertinacity of a fixed purpose. From the hour that his voice became potent in the National Assembly, commenced the fearful rush with which the nation hurled itself into anarchy, assassination, atheism, and such other fearful crimes as history shrinks from recording. Then legislation itself became anarchy, constitutions were made, rent to atoms, and made over again in solemn mockery. Everything grand, beautiful or good, was trampled under the feet of the multitude. Men who had ever worshipped God blasphemed him now. Women who had been devout, forgot even to respect themselves. As anarchy prevailed, morality, justice and religion disappeared. France was reeling like a drunken creature toward an abyss of blood from which an eternity of goodness can never lift her, unstained.

Struggle as she will, explain and apologise as she has, the power of an awful truth is upon her. Time itself will only deepen the ensanguined pages she has given to universal history. Terrified by the danger that surrounded him, the king and his family attempted to flee from the country he had ruled. But the red hand of the people was laid upon him, and he was dragged back to Paris worse than a prisoner. For a time he was insulted, watched and forced to become the very tool of his own enemies. After a martyrdom of humiliation, he was besieged in his palace by a band of marauders still more ferocious than the *Sans Culottes* with whom they fraternized in hideous brotherhood. Privately sanctioned and organized by men who called themselves the government, this fearful riot, intended to drive the king into the arms of his worst foes, was commenced and carried out by a combination of the brigands of Paris with the Marsellaise, a herd of ferocious butchers, which had swarmed up from the lowest dregs of the country wherever a moral monster could be found. Surrounded by this army of fiends who broke into his presence, threatening death wherever they went, the king, to save his helpless family and faithful household from massacre, resolved to seek protection from the Assembly which was in session.

Surrounded by a few friends, girded in by hosts of foes, this unfortunate monarch took his first deliberate step to the scaffold. Followed by his wife, his sister, and his children, he passed from the palace into the grounds that partly surrounded it, hoping to make his way unmolested through the crowd. But the gates had been broken, and even here the mob swarmed around him with cruel taunts and brutal threats.

The fallen monarch walked through the withered leaves that rustled mournfully in his path, submitting to these

scoffs and insults of the furious crowd with a look of infinite sorrow.

Marie Antoinette followed him in dread silence, leading the unconscious Dauphin by the hand, her face pale as death, her eyes burning with the hot tears she would not permit to fall. Now and then, her figure shrank from its queenly bearing as the crowd rained curses and hurled brutal insults on her in the presence of her child. But she uttered neither protest or appeal, when those ruthless hands snatched the watch from her bosom and tore her garments to get at the purse she was supposed to carry.

The innocent child, comprehending little of the horrors that surrounded him, amused himself by kicking the dead leaves about, laughing archly if they fluttered over the band of brigands, and looking up at his mother as if he had done something in her defence.

Among the crowd were many women, keener in their spite and far more ferocious than their fellow butchers, as unsexed women are sure to be, in a scene like that. Among them were several on horseback, recognized Amazons of the crowd, Theroigne de Mericourt, Louison Brisot, and, deeper in the throng, Madame Gosner. These women wore red caps on their heads, tricolored scarfs across their bosoms, while the gleam of unsheathed swords pointed the commands they gave to the crowd. One forced the horse she rode through the mob, pointing her sword at the queen.

"Take the child from her, he belongs to the nation! Hurl him this way, my horse's hoofs are impatient."

The queen had not complained, but a shriek of agony broke from the mother, and snatching the boy to her bosom, she made a wild appeal for help.

"No, no, take me! trample *me* down, but do not touch her or the child."

It was the voice of a young girl, who sprang out of the crowd and threw herself before the queen, where she stood

like a virgin priestess defending the altar at which she prayed.

"Ha, ha!" shouted the woman on horseback, "it is her protégée. I have seen her at St. Cloud, at the little Trianon. It is she who carries letters back and forth, between Dame Capet and the traitors. She dares to stand between the people of France and their vengeance. Fling the boy to me, and toss her to the Marsellaise."

Marguerite Gosner stretched out her arms in wild appeal; her face was inspired, her blue eyes turned black and bright as stars.

"Will no one help me? Is all manhood left among the people of France!"

A man pressed his way through the crowd; a strong man, full of indomitable courage.

Marguerite flung up her clasped hands in an ecstasy of thanksgiving. It was monsieur Jacques.

This brave man snatched the Dauphin from his mother and held him up before the crowd, crying out in a voice that rang out trumpet-toned,

"Frenchmen do not war with children!"

A shout followed this brave act, and the cry ran from lip to lip.

"It is the foster brother of Mirabeau. Let him have his way."

Monsieur Jacques did have his way. Firm as a rock he walked before the queen, protecting her with his person and bearing the child in his arms. Marie Antoinette recognised in this man the person who had once saved her life, and would have imprudently thanked him. He saw the expression in her face, and with rude kindness bade her be silent. So the mournful procession passed on, and the king disappeared into the blackness of an awful future. While Monsieur Jacques was thus bravely occupied, Louison Brisot stooped down from her horse and pointing her

sword at Marguerite, gave this order to a group of her followers.

"Seize her! Take her before the committee—you understand—I will be there; cautiously, cautiously! Neither this man, nor St. Just must know of it."

She was obeyed. A few minutes after, two stout men had seized upon Marguerite, and were dragging her through the tumult, the smoke, and the horrible massacre which followed the king's transit from his palace into the very citadel of his enemies.

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## CHAPTER CIX.

### THE PRISONS.

SUBJECTS exist from which the pen shrinks away shuddering. Of such is the Reign of Terror, now fully inaugurated. The royal family were close prisoners in the Temple. The few friends that remained faithful to the last, had been massacred or were fugitives.

On the second of September, 1792, the Abaye and Des Carmes were forced open by a mob, secretly instigated by the government, and the crowning massacre of those horrible times was perpetrated without check or hindrance. One of these prisons had been a cloistered convent, with a church on one side, surrounded with grassy courts and blooming gardens.

At open noonday, when an unclouded sun looked down upon the horrors of the deed, this beautiful spot was turned into a slaughter-house, where priests were slain at their own altars, in the courts, in the gardens, and kneeling in their cells. All day long the carnage went on, all day long the shrieks and prayers of those struggling victims rent

the air and set the howling mob gathered outside the convent mad with desire to join in the fearful work.

From time to time the gates were thrown open, and carts drawn by noble horses, taken from the royal stables, carried out load after load of dead bodies, leaving a track of blood as they slowly moved along. Hideous men and women, with children in rags, crowded around the gates and followed the death carts howling the Marsellaise.

Night came and this fearful work of death was but half accomplished. The prisoners who had concealed themselves in the thickets of the court or gardens, were driven into the chapel and murdered on the very altars. This was the prison of the priests.

In the Abaye, to the horrors of a general massacre was added the hideous farce of a court of justice. Here twelve assassins constituted themselves judges. Before these men, the wretched prisoners were brought, questioned, insulted and cast forth to the howling cruelty of the mob.

Among these was a young girl, a stranger to every one utterly alone. The president of these mock judges asked her name.

She answered in a low voice:

"Marguerite Gosner."

"Ha, that is the name of our old prisoner of the Bastille!" cried one of the judges.

"He was my father," said the girl.

The judges answered her with a laugh of derision.

"It is the name of citoyenne Gosner, the bravest patriot among our women."

Marguerite cast down her eyes and clasped her trembling hands; her voice was scarcely audible as she said,

"She is my mother!"

"Her mother!" quoth an assassin, who stood near leaning on his dripping sword. "It is a trick to save her worthless life. I saw her fling herself at the feet of Capet's wife; Louison Brisot was her accuser."

"To the prison of La Force!

This was a mocking sentence of death. The door opened. The poor girl was led through, and stood white and dumb with horror among a gang of executioners.

For one moment the fiends were held in check by her youth, her beauty, and the utter stillness of her despair. Then they rushed upon her; but a man, pale, firm and bloodless as yet, pushed through their ranks and seized her by the arm.

"She is mine!" he said. "You have had all the rest; am I to be deprived of everything?"

The assassins gave way, crying out,

"Yes, yes! he has waited till now. Let him have this pet lamb. Our sabres are too heavy for such dainty work. Here comes another. Fall in! fall in!"

"What is this?" cried a woman's voice in fierce wrath. "Who is it that dares to let my enemies free?"

"Nay, nay, citoyenne Brisot, we have but given her up to death; nothing can save her."

"I tell you," answered the demon, "that man is her lover; he but came here to save her."

Two or three ruffians broke from the rest and pursued Monsieur Jacques, who was moving swiftly through the crowd, carrying Marguerite in his arms. They followed him close; they came up with him. The crowd was densely packed; spears were thrust out at random; the assassins were in haste to get back to their awful work, and made awkward thrusts; a spear struck Jacques in the side. It was aimed at the girl, who uttered a piercing shriek. A young man broke his passage through the crowd and dashed the leveled weapons back.

"Bloodhounds, have you no better work than this?"

The ruffians looked at each other amazed.

"It is St. Just! It is St. Just! What has he to do with our vengeance?" they muttered.

"But St. Just is the friend of the people; we must not

anger him; besides, there is plenty of work for us yonder."

The men turned their spears and went away.

St. Just scarcely heeded them; he was bending over Monsieur Jacques, who had fallen upon the pavement. Marguerite knelt by him, pale with the horror she had passed through, trembling with sympathy for the wounded man.

"Wounded! He was dying. He made a faint motion with his hand that the girl should bend down to him. She read the yearning wish in his eyes and pressed her lips to his.

That mournful kiss took the last breath from the great heart which had ceased to beat, loving her to the last.

St. Just lifted Marguerite from the pavement and gave orders that the body of that brave man should be carried to his home.

The crowd had recognised his face, and were ready to obey him.

Through all the horrors of that night, St. Just bore the girl in safety. She was sensible, though silent from exhaustion that seemed like death itself; but with that came a sweet sense of rest and protection. In her prison she had been utterly alone—utterly helpless. A mission of importance had taken St. Just into the interior. Her arrest had been secret; her incarceration was only known to those who had planned it. Even her mother had searched for her in vain. St. Just had reached Paris scarcely an hour before, and rushed to the prison, hoping to check the carnage there.

¶ The cry that broke from Marguerite when that spear struck Jacques, brought him to her rescue. She was in his arms; he could feel the quivering beat of her heart against his own; her arms clung to him with faint spasms of strength, whenever a death cart rumbled by or a fiercer shout than usual rent the air. Still she was alive, and he had saved her.

## CHAPTER CX.

## BOUGHT BY BLOOD.

LIKE a wild beast, France had tasted blood and clamored loudly for more. Her keepers, Robespierre, Danton, Marat and the rest, black-hearted and red-handed as they were, found even their brutal ingenuity taxed by the monsters whose growing appetite for murder they were compelled to feed.

A new excitement was prepared for them. The mockery of a trial, at which the galleries presided; a tumultuous mob, hounding on its friends and intimidating those who wished to be just—the trial of a good king by the most depraved of his subjects.

This infamous parody of justice—twenty-four hours for a last farewell of his family, for prayer, and a sacrament—grudgingly permitted, and the whole world was horrified by an execution at which humanity recoils with shudders of condemnation.

But even this terrible crime failed to appease the thirst for murder which raged among the masses. Their leaders, urged on by the ignorance of fanaticism, began to wage war on themselves. Every member of the Assembly suspected of moderation or mercy was swept into prison, and the people applauded. They were ready for anything but a return to honest labor and thrifty habits. They revelled in the farce of being every man his own monarch.

France had become ready for perfect anarchy; and plunged like a wild beast, maddened with the blood of its own kind, into the Reign of Terror, of which Robespierre, Danton, and Marat, were the high priests.

But the hand of a young girl sent Marat to his black account, and the supremacy of chaos was left with Robespierre and Danton. At the summit of his awful power,

Robespierre was seized with a coward's fear. By what ultra crime could he appease the besotted cravings of his followers, and keep them from turning on himself. Danton had lost all his cruel invention. Denunciations and common-place massacres had ceased to excite enthusiasm; the horrors of the guillotine, which thrilled the community at first, had degenerated into a popular amusement, at which the women held high carnival, and gossiped, joked, brought their knitting and worked, that no time might be lost while the axe was sharpening.

If there was a moment's silence, when some ghastly head fell into the basket, it was instantly atoned for by imprecations, or coarse laughter. The executioner had no longer power to keep their attention. He did not give keen variety enough; to them murder had lost its awful fascination. The nobility had perished, or fled, and plebeian executions had become grossly common. Robespierre, whose genius was sombre and cruel, sought to appease them with another royal head; this might sharpen the palled appetite of the crowd. The sight of a beautiful woman on the scaffold—a queen, and the daughter of an empress, awoke something of the old blood-thirsty enthusiasm. Robespierre saw the effect, and offered another noble princess to the populace, the angelic Elizabeth. These two martyred women went to the scaffold in a cart, with cords girding their white wrists, each with her beautiful hair shorn close by the hangman's scissors.

In this awful spectacle Robespierre had exhausted all inventions of cruelty, but the people demanded something more atrocious still; nothing could satisfy their insatiable thirst. Their clamor found Robespierre helpless. He had talked wildly of liberty till there was nothing more to be said. His ingenuity had exhausted itself in giving new horrors to death: and all he could offer was a repetition of the old crimes, which had ceased even to interest the crowd. Always frugal and austere in his habits, this man was the



slave of no small vices, and looked with scorn upon those who yielded to them. In his weird patriotism he was sincere, but the people began to look upon his austerity as a rebuke. Weary of murder they turned to blasphemy, and there the genius of Robespierre and Danton gave way.

Now sweeping across the lurid path of Robespierre comes the Herbertists, so fearfully depraved, that the Jacobins shrunk away from them, appalled by the mingled blasphemy and jest with which they excited the people to sacrilegious excesses.

These men laid their ensanguined hands upon the very altar of God, upheaving it from their midst, and gave a zest to crime by adding sacrilege to murder. Under their sway the cross fell from the summits of the churches, crucifixes and chalices were melted into coin. Relics, hitherto held sacred, were trampled under foot in contempt, burnt, destroyed, and despised. Church bells no longer called the people to worship, but fed the musketry of the soldiers, and the cannon turned against the enemies of France. Holy crosses were taken down from the cemeteries, and statues of sleep, in the form of voluptuous women, rested in their place. Elegance, and even decency, were banished. Guillotines became an object of fashion and of jest; children played with them as toys, women wore them in their ears and on their bosoms. Atheism, coarseness, and immorality, were liberty and equality.

This reign of reason was even more revolting than the reign of terror. It turned religion and death itself into a burlesque.

At this time Louison Brisot, who had fled from Paris while her arch enemy Robespierre remained supreme, came back with renewed audacity and joined the Herbertists. She was young, fiercely beautiful, and in her soul embodied all the enormities of the Revolution. Now the great ambition of her life was accomplished, Theroigne de Mericourt was put aside, and she was chosen as the goddess of Liberty.

The church of Notre Dame had been divested of its sacred character, and was now known as the Temple of Reason, in which the people held a grand carnival, presided over by Louison Brisot, the most wicked of all the shameless women of Paris.

On its high altar she was enthroned, clad in the scant robes of ancient Greece, with a red cap on her head and a tricolored bright scarf around her waist, she sat on the holy altar of Christ and received the blasphemous homage of thrice ten thousand idolators.

After this, the chair on which she sat was lifted by four men and carried to the Assembly, surrounded by a band of white-robed dancing girls, crowned with flowers. Here, seated by the president, this evil woman received the homage of a goddess. Bishops, vicars, and cures, laid crosses and rings at her feet, and, with the red cap on their heads, joined in a hymn chanted to the honor of the new divinity.

During this ceremony a few stood aloof, filled with abhorrence and contempt. Among these were Robespierre, and the youthful St. Just, men whose very faults lifted them infinitely above any participation in a scene so degrading. They could be cruel; but with one, at least, it was under the honest conviction, that by cruelty alone the country could be saved. To these men, relentless in their patriotism, but pure in their lives, sacrilege and blasphemy had no charm.

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## CHAPTER CXI.

### THE GODDESS OF REASON.

ROBESPIERRE and his friends had looked on the worship of reason with unflinching contempt, but in these blasphemies lay a power that crushed out the influence they

had wielded. True, it had driven such women as Madame Gosner, whose ideas of liberty were unselfish and austere, back into privacy, but only concentrated greater influence on the few.

When the hour of conflict came, and it was not of slow progress, the worshippers of reason triumphed.

Louison Brisot, the embodiment of a sacrilegious idea, found herself more powerful than Robespierre. Herbert was her slave. She had but to lift her hand to set the guillotine at work—a glance of her eye was enough to select the victim. Among the first was Madame Du Berry, whose cries of distress reached the exultant goddess as the tumbrel bore that wretched woman to the place of execution. The poor creature had concealed herself; but one day Zamara was seen whispering to the Goddess of Reason in the gallery of the Assembly. The next day came those cries of distress from the street, where a woman was going to execution, among the laughter and jeers of the people.

In vain Robespierre and his party stemmed the tide of atheism, which the nation received with avidity. In vain he had brought the queen to the scaffold; the gloom of his destiny was complete—not even a royal execution could interest the people now. In vain he got up a counter-festival, dedicated to the Supreme Being. The grounds of the Tuileries were crowded to hear his oration, the symphony and the ode; but none of these things were new to the people of France, and they turned with greater zest to the orgies, the songs, and dancing bacchantes, which gave eclat and novelty to the Festival of Reason.

At last came a fearful struggle where the two parties fought like gladiators, hand to hand, each for its life. Robespierre fell. That night he was put under arrest, the next day the man so feared, so hated, lay wounded and helpless in the power of his enemies, almost dead, and yet condemned to die.

With him were twenty-two others identified with his

cruel policy, and who had partaken of his power, all arraigned before the tribunal, and certain of their doom.

Among these was a man scarcely yet beyond his first youth whom even his enemies looked upon almost with compassion; for the strange, sad beauty of his face, the calm dignity of his manner, impressed even those murderous men with a wish to save him. They knew that intense love of country, a sublime thirst for liberty as it can never exist on earth, had possessed this man, till he deemed no act too cruel, or sacrifice too great for the freedom of his fellow-men. But they knew also that the death St. Just had been so ready to inflict he was prepared to endure. Those features, perfect as the inspirations of Grecian sculpture, scarcely changed from their grave, almost feminine expression, when sentence of death was passed upon him. His large, gray eyes gazed calmly out from the shadow of their long lashes, and around the perfect mouth came an expression of firm endurance; but with all this, it seemed impossible to believe that a man of such gentle presence would die with more courage than Danton or Robespierre.

When asked if he had anything to say, a faint smile quivered around the young man's mouth, and he answered,

"Nothing! Why should I protest against an inevitable fate, or check the swift vengeance of my enemies. You are about to give me that for which I have striven so long in vain—Liberty!"

With these words St. Just retired among those already condemned, and waited for his doom. But all at once his firmness was sorely shaken; for a fair, young maiden entered the tribunal, pale as death, and searching the faces around her with looks of wild, pathetic entreaty. The condemned prisoners stood in a group in one corner of the room. She saw St. Just among them, and made her way toward him; but the young man put out both hands to warn her away, and turned his face aside, that no one might see the anguish that convulsed it.

Marguerite was struck dumb by this mute denial.

"What is this? Who is the woman who dares to intrude on our deliberations," cried the president, rising fiercely from his seat.

Marguerite opened her white lips to speak. But a voice she had never disobeyed reached her in a firm, low undertone,

"Keep silence! I am condemned!"

She was silent, and stood there in the midst of the tribunal, white and cold as a statue.

All at once there was a commotion in the gallery, where a female, in a light, Grecian dress, with the blood-red cap of liberty on her head, started up, and leaning over, that all the tribunal might see her, called out,

"Behold the friend of St. Just, the servant of Widow Capet. I charge her with it. She is a Royalist, an enemy to the nation!"

The speaker was Louison Brisot, the Goddess of Reason, who now exhibited herself every day at the tribunal.

"If you ask proof, it is here. Patriot Zamara has already given one base aristocrat to this tribunal. It was he who pointed out the hiding-place of Du Berry. Now, his evidence will confound another. Let her go among the condemned. You have no woman in the batch to-day, which is an insult to the sex. Let her die with the rest."

Marguerite's wild, white face was uplifted to the woman, while she hurled these cruel words at the tribunal. All at once she comprehended that St. Just was condemned to die, that her terrible enemy was demanding that she should go with him to the scaffold. A bright illumination swept over her face, the power of speech came back to her lips. She took a step or two forward, drawing nearer the tribunal.

"It is true," she said. "I did serve the Queen. I loved her. She trusted me, and I was faithful. It needs no witnesses—I confess it."

"She confesses! She confesses! Put her with the condemned!"

Marguerite walked firmly across the room, and placed herself by the side of St. Just, who turned, his eyes upon her in mournful reproach, but did not speak. Perhaps there was some gleam of comfort in the idea that she would go with him into eternity.

Condemnation and death followed each other closely in those days. Less than twenty-four hours after the Jacobins were sent from the revolutionary tribunal, they were crowded into carts, surrounded by a triple guard, and dragged through multitudes that lined the streets from the Conciergerie to the Place de la Revolution. In this crowded tumbrel Robespierre was the most conspicuous and the most hated. Shouts and curses were hurled upon him by men, women, and even little children. Under this storm of detestation for one man the others passed on almost unnoticed.

In that crowded cart was a gentle girl, seated next to St. Just. She leaned upon him for the support which his shackled hands had no power to give, and, with her soft eyes lifted to his, encouraged him with faint, wan smiles, inexpressibly pathetic.

"We shall be together, my beloved. It is only a minute, and you will claim me," she whispered, as the roar of the multitude passed over them unheeded.

He strained at the cords that bound him with a wild desire to clasp her to his heart, and fight for her young life.

"Be patient," she said, grieved by the smothered fire in his eyes. "Is it for me you rebel? Ah! if you only knew how much worse life would be without you, this little minute of pain would be nothing."

"Oh, my God! I was prepared for everything but this, my poor lamb! That I should, myself, bring you to the slaughter!"

"But for that I should have been a coward. Ah! the cart stops! Let me go first. I can bear anything but the—the widowhood of a moment."

"Yes, my beloved, you shall go first. I will follow you, and find an angel waiting."

"Hark! What is that?" she whispered, shuddering.

"Do not look up; lean closer to me."

His words were drowned by a fierce howl of mingled delight and execration, that went thundering from the Place de la Revolution down the streets of Paris. The head of Robespierre had fallen.

A fair young creature, robed in white, came next upon the scaffold, and disappeared amid the dead silence of the multitude. Those who looked upon St. Just, after she was lifted from the cart, saw that his head drooped low upon his breast, and that a shiver of terrible anguish shook his frame: then a sublime courage took possession of him, he mounted the scaffold with a firm step, bent his head unresistingly, that the executioner might cut away the dark waves of hair that fell down his neck, and laid himself under that awful machine of death calmly, as if a bed of roses awaited him, rather than the hideous sawdust still wet with Marguerite's blood.

When the head of St. Just was exhibited, in all the marble beauty of its perfect features, no shout of triumph arose from the mob, for he was among the rare number of men, who, calling themselves patriots, still retained the respect of his countrymen.

THE END.