

CINQ MARS - V6

ALFRED DE VIGNY*

BOOK 6

CHAPTER XXII

THE STORM

'Blow, blow, thou winter wind;
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude.
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly.
Most friendship is feigning; most loving mere folly.'

SHAKESPEARE.

Amid that long and superb chain of the Pyrenees which forms the embattled isthmus of the peninsula, in the centre of those blue pyramids, covered in gradation with snow, forests, and downs, there opens a narrow defile, a path cut in the dried-up bed of a perpendicular torrent; it circulates among rocks, glides under bridges of frozen snow, twines along the edges of inundated precipices to scale the adjacent mountains of Urdoz and Oleron, and at last rising over their unequal ridges, turns their nebulous peak into a new country which has also its mountains and its depths, and, quitting France, descends into Spain. Never has the hoof of the mule left its trace in these windings; man himself can with difficulty stand upright there, even with the hempen boots which can not slip, and the hook of the pikestaff to force into the crevices of the rocks.

In the fine summer months the 'pastour', in his brown cape, and his black long-bearded ram lead hither flocks, whose flowing wool sweeps the turf. Nothing is heard in these rugged places but the sound of the large bells which the sheep carry, and whose irregular tinklings produce unexpected harmonies, casual gamuts, which astonish the traveller and delight the

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savage and silent shepherd. But when the long month of September comes, a shroud of snow spreads itself from the peak of the mountains down to their base, respecting only this deeply excavated path, a few gorges open by torrents, and some rocks of granite, which stretch out their fantastical forms, like the bones of a buried world.

It is then that light troops of chamois make their appearance, with their twisted horns extending over their backs, spring from rock to rock as if driven before the wind, and take possession of their aerial desert. Flights of ravens and crows incessantly wheel round and round in the gulfs and natural wells which they transform into dark dove-cots, while the brown bear, followed by her shaggy family, who sport and tumble around her in the snow, slowly descends from their retreat invaded by the frost. But these are neither the most savage nor the most cruel inhabitants that winter brings into these mountains; the daring smuggler raises for himself a dwelling of wood on the very boundary of nature and of politics. There unknown treaties, secret exchanges, are made between the two Navarres, amid fogs and winds.

It was in this narrow path on the frontiers of France that, about two months after the scenes we have witnessed in Paris, two travellers, coming from Spain, stopped at midnight, fatigued and dismayed. They heard musket-shots in the mountain.

"The scoundrels! how they have pursued us!" said one of them. "I can go no farther; but for you I should have been taken."

"And you will be taken still, as well as that infernal paper, if you lose your time in words; there is another volley on the rock of Saint Pierre-de-L'Aigle. Up there, they suppose we have gone in the direction of the Limacon; but, below, they will see the contrary. Descend; it is doubtless a patrol hunting smugglers. Descend."

"But how? I can not see."

"Never mind, descend. Take my arm."

"Hold me; my boots slip," said the first traveller, stamping on the edge of the rock to make sure of the solidity of the ground before trusting himself upon it.

"Go on; go on!" said the other, pushing him. "There's one of the rascals passing over our heads."

And, in fact, the shadow of a man, armed with a long gun, was reflected on the snow. The two adventurers stood motionless. The man passed on. They continued their descent.

"They will take us," said the one who was supporting the other. "They have turned us. Give me your confounded parchment. I wear the dress of

a smuggler, and I can pass for one seeking an asylum among them; but you would have no resource with your laced dress.”

”You are right,” said his companion; and, resting his foot against the edge of the rock, and reclining on the slope, he gave him a roll of hollow wood.

A gun was fired, and a ball buried itself, hissing, in the snow at their feet.

”Marked!” said the first. ”Roll down. If you are not dead when you get to the bottom, take the road you see before you. On the left of the hollow is Santa Maria. But turn to the right; cross Oleron; and you are on the road to Pau and are saved. Go; roll down.”

As he spoke, he pushed his comrade, and without condescending to look after him, and himself neither ascending nor descending, followed the flank of the mountain horizontally, hanging on by rocks, branches, and even by plants, with the strength and energy of a wild-cat, and soon found himself on firm ground before a small wooden hut, through which a light was visible. The adventurer went all around it, like a hungry wolf round a sheepfold, and, applying his eye to one of the openings, apparently saw what determined him, for without further hesitation he pushed the tottering door, which was not even fastened by a latch. The whole but shook with the blow he had given it. He then saw that it was divided into two cabins by a partition. A large flambeau of yellow wax lighted the first. There, a young girl, pale and fearfully thin, was crouched in a corner on the damp floor, just where the melted snow ran under the planks of the cottage. Very long black hair, entangled and covered with dust, fell in disorder over her coarse brown dress; the red hood of the Pyrenees covered her head and shoulders. Her eyes were cast down; and she was spinning with a small distaff attached to her waist. The entry of a man did not appear to move her in the least.

”Ha! La moza,—[girl]— get up and give me something to drink. I am tired and thirsty.”

The young girl did not answer, and, without raising her eyes, continued to spin assiduously.

”Dost hear?” said the stranger, thrusting her with his foot. ”Go and tell thy master that a friend wishes to see him; but first give me some drink. I shall sleep here.”

She answered, in a hoarse voice, still spinning:

”I drink the snow that melts on the rock, or the green scum that floats on the water of the swamp. But when I have spun well, they give me water from the iron spring. When I sleep, the cold lizards crawl over my face; but when I have well cleaned a mule, they throw me hay. The hay is warm;

the hay is good and warm. I put it under my marble feet.”

”What tale art thou telling me?” said Jacques. ”I spoke not of thee.”

She continued:

”They make me hold a man while they kill him. Oh, what blood I have had on my hands! God forgive them!—if that be possible. They make me hold his head, and the bucket filled with crimson water. O Heaven!—I, who was the bride of God! They throw their bodies into the abyss of snow; but the vulture finds them; he lines his nest with their hair. I now see thee full of life; I shall see thee bloody, pale, and dead.”

The adventurer, shrugging his shoulders, began to whistle as he passed the second door. Within he found the man he had seen through the chinks of the cabin. He wore the blue berret cap of the Basques on one side, and, enveloped in an ample cloak, seated on the pack-saddle of a mule, and bending over a large brazier, smoked a cigar, and from time to time drank from a leather bottle at his side. The light of the brazier showed his full yellow face, as well as the chamber, in which mule-saddles were ranged round the byasero as seats. He raised his head without altering his position.

”Oh, oh! is it thou, Jacques?” he said. ”Is it thou? Although ’tis four years since I saw thee, I recognize thee. Thou art not changed, brigand! There ’tis still, thy great knave’s face. Sit down there, and take a drink.”

”Yes, here I am. But how the devil camest thou here? I thought thou wert a judge, Houmain!”

”And I thought thou wert a Spanish captain, Jacques!”

”Ah! I was so for a time, and then a prisoner. But I got out of the thing very snugly, and have taken again to the old trade, the free life, the good smuggling work.”

”Viva! viva! Jaleo!”—[A common Spanish oath.]—cried Houmain. ”We brave fellows can turn our hands to everything. Thou camest by the other passes, I suppose, for I have not seen thee since I returned to the trade.”

”Yes, yes; I have passed where thou wilt never pass,” said Jacques.

”And what hast got?”

”A new merchandise. My mules will come tomorrow.”

”Silk sashes, cigars, or linen?”

"Thou wilt know in time, amigo," said the ruffian. "Give me the skin. I'm thirsty."

"Here, drink. It's true Valdepenas! We're so jolly here, we bandoleros! Ay! jaleo! jaleo! come, drink; our friends are coming."

"What friends?" said Jacques, dropping the horn.

"Don't be uneasy, but drink. I'll tell thee all about it presently, and then we'll sing the Andalusian Tirana."—[A kind of ballad.]

The adventurer took the horn, and assumed an appearance of ease.

"And who's that great she-devil I saw out there?" he said. "She seems half dead."

"Oh, no! she's only mad. Drink; I'll tell thee all about her."

And taking from his red sash a long poniard denticulated on each side like a saw, Houmain used it to stir up the fire, and said with vast gravity:

"Thou must know first, if thou dost not know it already, that down below there [he pointed toward France] the old wolf Richelieu carries all before him."

"Ah, ah!" said Jacques.

"Yes; they call him the king of the King. Thou knowest? There is, however, a young man almost as strong as he, and whom they call Monsieur le Grand. This young fellow commands almost the whole army of Perpignan at this moment. He arrived there a month ago; but the old fox is still at Narbonne—a very cunning fox, indeed. As to the King, he is sometimes this, sometimes that [as he spoke, Houmain turned his hand outward and inward], between zist and zest; but while he is determining, I am for zist—that is to say, I'm a Cardinalist. I've been regularly doing business for my lord since the first job he gave me, three years ago. I'll tell thee about it. He wanted some men of firmness and spirit for a little expedition, and sent for me to be judge-Advocate."

"Ah! a very pretty post, I've heard."

"Yes, 'tis a trade like ours, where they sell cord instead of thread; but it is less honest, for they kill men oftener. But 'tis also more profitable; everything has its price."

"Very properly so," said Jacques.

"Behold me, then, in a red robe. I helped to give a yellow one and brimstone to a fine fellow, who was cure at Loudun, and who had got into

a convent of nuns, like a wolf in a fold; and a fine thing he made of it.”

”Ha, ha, ha! That’s very droll!” laughed Jacques. ”Drink,” said Houmain. ”Yes, Jago, I saw him after the affair, reduced to a little black heap like this charcoal. See, this charcoal at the end of my poniard. What things we are! That’s just what we shall all come to when we go to the Devil.”

”Oh, none of these pleasantries!” said the other, very gravely. ”You know that I am religious.”

”Well, I don’t say no; it may be so,” said Houmain, in the same tone. ”There’s Richelieu, a Cardinal! But, no matter. Thou must know, then, as I was Advocate-General, I advocated—”

”Ah, thou art quite a wit!”

”Yes, a little. But, as I was saying, I advocated into my own pocket five hundred piastres, for Armand Duplessis pays his people well, and there’s nothing to be said against that, except that the money’s not his own; but that’s the way with us all. I determined to invest this money in our old trade; and I returned here. Business goes on well. There is sentence of death out against us; and our goods, of course, sell for half as much again as before.”

”What’s that?” exclaimed Jacques; ”lightning at this time of year?”

”Yes, the storms are beginning; we’ve had two already. We are in the clouds. Dost hear the roll of the thunder? But this is nothing; come, drink. ’Tis almost one in the morning; we’ll finish the skin and the night together. As I was telling thee, I made acquaintance with our president—a great scoundrel called Laubardemont. Dost know him?”

”Yes, a little,” said Jacques; ”he’s a regular miser. But never mind that; go on.”

”Well, as we had nothing to conceal from one another, I told him of my little commercial plans, and asked him, when any good jobs presented themselves, to think of his judicial comrade; and I’ve had no cause to complain of him.”

”Ah!” said Jacques, ”and what has he done?”

”Why, first, two years ago, he himself brought, me, on horseback behind him, his niece that thou’st seen out there.”

”His niece!” cried Jacques, rising; ”and thou treat’st her like a slave! Demonio!”

"Drink," said Houmain, quietly stirring the brazier with his poniard; "he himself desired it should be so. Sit down."

Jacques did so.

"I don't think," continued the smuggler, "that he'd even be sorry to know that she was—dost understand?—to hear she was under the snow rather than above it; but he would not put her there himself, because he's a good relative, as he himself said."

"And as I know," said Jacques; "but go on."

"Thou mayst suppose that a man like him, who lives at court, does not like to have a mad niece in his house. The thing is self-evident; if I'd continued to play my part of the man of the robe, I should have done the same in a similar case. But here, as you perceive, we don't care much for appearances; and I've taken her for a servant. She has shown more good sense than I expected, although she has rarely ever spoken more than a single word, and at first came the delicate over us. Now she rubs down a mule like a groom. She has had a slight fever for the last few days; but 'twill pass off one way or the other. But, I say, don't tell Laubardemont that she still lives; he'd think 'twas for the sake of economy I've kept her for a servant."

"How! is he here?" cried Jacques.

"Drink!" replied the phlegmatic Houmain, who himself set the example most assiduously, and began to half shut his eyes with a languishing air. "'Tis the second transaction I've had with this Laubardemont—or demon, or whatever the name is; but 'tis a good devil of a demon, at all events. I love him as I do my eyes; and I will drink his health out of this bottle of Jurangon here. 'Tis the wine of a jolly fellow, the late King Henry. How happy we are here!—Spain on the right hand, France on the left; the wine-skin on one side, the bottle on the other! The bottle! I've left all for the bottle!"

As he spoke, he knocked off the neck of a bottle of white wine. After taking a long draught, he continued, while the stranger closely watched him:

"Yes, he's here; and his feet must be rather cold, for he's been waiting about the mountains ever since sunset, with his guards and our comrades. Thou knowest our bandoleros, the true contrabandistas?"

"Ah! and what do they hunt?" said Jacques.

"Ah, that's the joke!" answered the drunkard. "'Tis to arrest two rascals, who want to bring here sixty thousand Spanish soldiers in paper in their pocket. You don't, perhaps, quite understand me, 'croquant'. Well, 'tis as I tell thee—in their own pockets."

"Ay, ay! I understand," said Jacques, loosening his poniard in his sash, and looking at the door.

"Very well, devil's-skin, let's sing the Tirana. Take the bottle, throw away the cigar, and sing."

With these words the drunken host began to sing in Spanish, interrupting his song with bumpers, which he threw down his throat, leaning back for the greater ease, while Jacques, still seated, looked at him gloomily by the light of the brazier, and meditated what he should do.

A flash of lightning entered the small window, and filled the room with a sulphurous odor. A fearful clap immediately followed; the cabin shook; and a beam fell outside.

"Hallo, the house!" cried the drunken man; "the Devil's among us; and our friends are not come!"

"Sing!" said Jacques, drawing the pack upon which he was close to that of Houmain.

The latter drank to encourage himself, and then continued to sing.

As he ended, he felt his seat totter, and fell backward; Jacques, thus freed from him, sprang toward the door, when it opened, and his head struck against the cold, pale face of the mad-woman. He recoiled.

"The judge!" she said, as she entered; and she fell prostrate on the cold ground.

Jacques had already passed one foot over her; but another face appeared, livid and surprised—that of a very tall man, enveloped in a cloak covered with snow. He again recoiled, and laughed a laugh of terror and rage. It was Laubardemont, followed by armed men; they looked at one another.

"Ah, com-r-a-d-e, yo-a ra-a-scal!" hiccuped Houmain, rising with difficulty; "thou'rt a Royalist."

But when he saw these two men, who seemed petrified by each other, he became silent, as conscious of his intoxication; and he reeled forward to raise up the madwoman, who was still lying between the judge and the Captain. The former spoke first.

"Are you not he we have been pursuing?"

"It is he!" said the armed men, with one voice; "the other has escaped."

Jacques receded to the split planks that formed the tottering wall of the hut; enveloping himself in his cloak, like a bear forced against a tree

by the hounds, and, wishing to gain a moment's respite for reflection, he said, firmly:

"The first who passes that brazier and the body of that girl is a dead man."

And he drew a long poniard from his cloak. At this moment Houmain, kneeling, turned the head of the girl. Her eyes were closed; he drew her toward the brazier, which lighted up her face.

"Ah, heavens!" cried Laubardemont, forgetting himself in his fright; "Jeanne again!"

"Be calm, my lo-lord," said Houmain, trying to open the eyelids, which closed again, and to raise her head, which fell back again like wet linen; "be, be-calm! Do-n't ex-cite yourself; she's dead, decidedly."

Jacques put his foot on the body as on a barrier, and, looking with a ferocious laugh in the face of Laubardemont, said to him in a low voice:

"Let me pass, and I will not compromise thee, courtier; I will not tell that she was thy niece, and that I am thy son."

Laubardemont collected himself, looked at his men, who pressed around him with advanced carabines; and, signing them to retire a few steps, he answered in a very low voice:

"Give me the treaty, and thou shalt pass."

"Here it is, in my girdle; touch it, and I will call you my father aloud. What will thy master say?"

"Give it me, and I will spare thy life."

"Let me pass, and I will pardon thy having given me that life."

"Still the same, brigand?"

"Ay, assassin."

"What matters to thee that boy conspirator?" asked the judge.

"What matters to thee that old man who reigns?" answered the other.

"Give me that paper; I've sworn to have it."

"Leave it with me; I've sworn to carry it back."

"What can be thy oath and thy God?" demanded Laubardemont.

"And thine?" replied Jacques. "Is't the crucifix of red-hot iron?"

Here Houmain, rising between them, laughing and staggering, said to the judge, slapping him on the shoulder.

"You are a long time coming to an understanding, friend; do-on't you know him of old? He's a very good fellow."

"I? no!" cried Laubardemont, aloud; "I never saw him before."

At this moment, Jacques, who was protected by the drunkard and the smallness of the crowded chamber, sprang violently against the weak planks that formed the wall, and by a blow of his heel knocked two of them out, and passed through the space thus created. The whole side of the cabin was broken; it tottered, and the wind rushed in.

"Hallo! Demonio! Santo Demonio! where art going?" cried the smuggler; "thou art breaking my house down, and on the side of the ravine, too."

All cautiously approached, tore away the planks that remained, and leaned over the abyss. They contemplated a strange spectacle. The storm raged in all its fury; and it was a storm of the Pyrenees. Enormous flashes of lightning came all at once from all parts of the horizon, and their fires succeeded so quickly that there seemed no interval; they appeared to be a continuous flash. It was but rarely the flaming vault would suddenly become obscure; and it then instantly resumed its glare. It was not the light that seemed strange on this night, but the darkness.

The tall thin peaks and whitened rocks stood out from the red background like blocks of marble on a cupola of burning brass, and resembled, amid the snows, the wonders of a volcano; the waters gushed from them like flames; the snow poured down like dazzling lava.

In this moving mass a man was seen struggling, whose efforts only involved him deeper and deeper in the whirling and liquid gulf; his knees were already buried. In vain he clasped his arms round an enormous pyramidal and transparent icicle, which reflected the lightning like a rock of crystal; the icicle itself was melting at its base, and slowly bending over the declivity of the rock. Under the covering of snow, masses of granite were heard striking against each other, as they descended into the vast depths below. Yet they could still save him; a space of scarcely four feet separated him from Laubardemont.

"I sink!" he cried; "hold out to me something, and thou shalt have the treaty."

"Give it me, and I will reach thee this musket," said the judge.

"There it is," replied the ruffian, "since the Devil is for Richelieu!" and taking one hand from the hold of his slippery support, he threw a

roll of wood into the cabin. Laubardemont rushed back upon the treaty like a wolf on his prey. Jacques in vain held out his arm; he slowly glided away with the enormous thawing block turned upon him, and was silently buried in the snow.

"Ah, villain," were his last words, "thou hast deceived me! but thou didst not take the treaty from me. I gave it thee, Father!" and he disappeared wholly under the thick white bed of snow. Nothing was seen in his place but the glittering flakes which the lightning had ploughed up, as it became extinguished in them; nothing was heard but the rolling of the thunder and the dash of the water against the rocks, for the men in the half-ruined cabin, grouped round a corpse and a villain, were silent, tongue-tied with horror, and fearing lest God himself should send a thunderbolt upon them.

CHAPTER XXIII

ABSENCE

L'absence est le plus grand des maux,
Non pas pour vous, cruelle !

LA FONTAINE.

Who has not found a charm in watching the clouds of heaven as they float along? Who has not envied them the freedom of their journeyings through the air, whether rolled in great masses by the wind, and colored by the sun, they advance peacefully, like fleets of dark ships with gilt prows, or sprinkled in light groups, they glide quickly on, airy and elongated, like birds of passage, transparent as vast opals detached from the treasury of the heavens, or glittering with whiteness, like snows from the mountains carried on the wings of the winds? Man is a slow traveller who envies those rapid journeyers; less rapid than his imagination, they have yet seen in a single day all the places he loves, in remembrance or in hope,—those that have witnessed his happiness or his misery, and those so beautiful countries unknown to us, where we expect to find everything at once. Doubtless there is not a spot on the whole earth, a wild rock, an arid plain, over which we pass with indifference, that has not been consecrated in the life of some man, and is not painted in his remembrance; for, like battered vessels, before meeting inevitable wreck, we leave some fragment of ourselves on every rock.

Whither go the dark-blue clouds of that storm of the Pyrenees? It is the wind of Africa which drives them before it with a fiery breath. They fly; they roll over one another, growlingly throwing out lightning before them, as their torches, and leaving suspended behind them a long train of

rain, like a vaporous robe. Freed by an effort from the rocky defiles that for a moment had arrested their course, they irrigate, in Bearn, the picturesque patrimony of Henri IV; in Guienne, the conquests of Charles VII; in Saintogne, Poitou, and Touraine, those of Charles V and of Philip Augustus; and at last, slackening their pace above the old domain of Hugh Capet, halt murmuring on the towers of St. Germain.

"O Madame!" exclaimed Marie de Mantua to the Queen, "do you see this storm coming up from the south?"

"You often look in that direction, 'ma chere'," answered Anne of Austria, leaning on the balcony.

"It is the direction of the sun, Madame."

"And of tempests, you see," said the Queen. "Trust in my friendship, my child; these clouds can bring no happiness to you. I would rather see you turn your eyes toward Poland. See the fine people you might command."

At this moment, to avoid the rain, which began to fall, the Prince-Palatine passed rapidly under the windows of the Queen, with a numerous suite of young Poles on horseback. Their Turkish vests, with buttons of diamonds, emeralds, and rubies; their green and gray cloaks; the lofty plumes of their horses, and their adventurous air-gave them a singular eclat to which the court had easily become accustomed. They paused for a moment, and the Prince made two salutes, while the light animal he rode passed gracefully sideways, keeping his front toward the princesses; prancing and snorting, he shook his mane, and seemed to salute by putting his head between his legs. The whole suite repeated the evolution as they passed. The Princesse Marie had at first shrunk back, lest they should see her tears; but the brilliant and flattering spectacle made her return to the balcony, and she could not help exclaiming:

"How gracefully the Palatine rides that beautiful horse! he seems scarce conscious of it."

The Queen smiled, and said:

"He is conscious about her who might be his queen tomorrow, if she would but make a sign of the head, and let but one glance from her great black almond-shaped eyes be turned on that throne, instead of always receiving these poor foreigners with poutings, as now."

And Anne of Austria kissed the cheek of Marie, who could not refrain from smiling also; but she instantly sunk her head, reproaching herself, and resumed her sadness, which seemed gliding from her. She even needed once more to contemplate the great clouds that hung over the chateau.

"Poor child," continued the Queen, "thou dost all thou canst to be very

faithful, and to keep thyself in the melancholy of thy romance. Thou art making thyself ill with weeping when thou shouldst be asleep, and with not eating. Thou passest the night in revery and in writing; but I warn thee, thou wilt get nothing by it, except making thyself thin and less beautiful, and the not being a queen. Thy Cinq-Mars is an ambitious youth, who has lost himself.”

Seeing Marie conceal her head in her handkerchief to weep, Anne of Austria for a moment reentered her chamber, leaving Marie in the balcony, and feigned to be looking for some jewels at her toilet-table; she soon returned, slowly and gravely, to the window. Marie was more calm, and was gazing sorrowfully at the landscape before her, the hills in the distance, and the storm gradually spreading itself.

The Queen resumed in a more serious tone:

”God has been more merciful to you than your imprudence perhaps deserved, Marie. He has saved you from great danger. You were willing to make great sacrifices, but fortunately they have not been accomplished as you expected. Innocence has saved you from love. You are as one who, thinking she has swallowed a deadly poison, has in reality drunk only pure and harmless water.”

”Ah, Madame, what mean you? Am I not unhappy enough already?”

”Do not interrupt me,” said the Queen; ”you will, ere long, see your present position with different eyes. I will not accuse you of ingratitude toward the Cardinal; I have too many reasons for not liking him. I myself witnessed the rise of the conspiracy. Still, you should remember, ’ma chere’, that he was the only person in France who, against the opinion of the Queen-mother and of the court, insisted upon war with the duchy of Mantua, which he recovered from the empire and from Spain, and returned to the Duc de Nevers, your father. Here, in this very chateau of Saint-Germain, was signed the treaty which deposed the Duke of Guastalla.—[The 19th of May, 1632.]— You were then very young; they must, however, have told you of it. Yet here, through love alone (I am willing to believe, with yourself, that it is so), a young man of two-and-twenty is ready to get him assassinated.”

”O Madame, he is incapable of such a deed. I swear to you that he has refused to adopt it.”

”I have begged you, Marie, to let me speak. I know that he is generous and loyal. I am willing to believe that, contrary to the custom of our times, he would not go so far as to kill an old man, as did the Chevalier de Guise. But can he prevent his assassination, if his troops make him prisoner? This we can not say, any more than he. God alone knows the future. It is, at all events, certain that it is for you he attacks him, and, to overthrow him, is preparing civil war, which perhaps is bursting forth at the very moment that we speak—a war without success. Whichever

way it turns, it can only effect evil, for Monsieur is going to abandon the conspiracy.”

”How, Madame?”

”Listen to me. I tell you I am certain of it; I need not explain myself further. What will the grand ecuyer do? The King, as he rightly anticipated, has gone to consult the Cardinal. To consult him is to yield to him; but the treaty of Spain is signed. If it be discovered, what can Monsieur de Cinq-Mars do? Do not tremble thus. We will save him; we will save his life, I promise you. There is yet time, I hope.”

”Ah, Madame, you hope! I am lost!” cried Marie, half fainting.

”Let us sit down,” said the Queen; and, placing herself near Marie, at the entrance to the chamber, she continued:

”Doubtless Monsieur will treat for all the conspirators in treating for himself; but exile will be the least punishment, perpetual exile. Behold, then, the Duchesse de Nevers and Mantua, the Princesse Marie de Gonzaga, the wife of Monsieur Henri d’Effiat, Marquis de Cinq-Mars, exiled!”

”Well, Madame, I will follow him into exile. It is my duty; I am his wife!” exclaimed Marie, sobbing. ”I would I knew he were already banished and in safety.”

”Dreams of eighteen!” said the Queen, supporting Marie. ”Awake, child, awake! you must. I deny not the good qualities of Monsieur de Cinq-Mars. He has a lofty character, a vast mind, and great courage; but he may no longer be aught for you, and, fortunately, you are not his wife, or even his betrothed.”

”I am his, Madame-his alone.”

”But without the benediction,” replied Anne of Austria; ”in a word, without marriage. No priest would have dared—not even your own; he told me so. Be silent!” she added, putting her two beautiful hands on Marie’s lips. ”Be silent! You would say that God heard your vow; that you can not live without him; that your destinies are inseparable from his; that death alone can break your union? The phrases of your age, delicious chimeras of a moment, at which one day you will smile, happy at not having to lament them all your life. Of the many and brilliant women you see around me at court, there is not one but at your age had some beautiful dream of love, like this of yours, who did not form those ties, which they believed indissoluble, and who did not in secret take eternal oaths. Well, these dreams are vanished, these knots broken, these oaths forgotten; and yet you see them happy women and mothers. Surrounded by the honors of their rank, they laugh and dance every night. I again divine what you would say—they loved not as you love, eh? You deceive

yourself, my dear child; they loved as much, and wept no less.

”And here I must make you acquainted with that great mystery which constitutes your despair, since you are ignorant of the malady that devours you. We have a twofold existence, 'm'amie': our internal life, that of our feelings powerfully works within us, while the external life dominates despite ourselves. We are never independent of men, more especially in an elevated condition. Alone, we think ourselves mistresses of our destiny; but the entrance of two or three people fastens on all our chains, by recalling our rank and our retinue. Nay; shut yourself up and abandon yourself to all the daring and extraordinary resolutions that the passions may raise up in you, to the marvellous sacrifices they may suggest to you. A lackey coming and asking your orders will at once break the charm and bring you back to your real life. It is this contest between your projects and your position which destroys you. You are invariably angry with yourself; you bitterly reproach yourself.”

Marie turned away her head.

”Yes, you believe yourself criminal. Pardon yourself, Marie; all men are beings so relative and so dependent one upon another that I know not whether the great retreats of the world that we sometimes see are not made for the world itself. Despair has its pursuits, and solitude its coquetry. It is said that the gloomiest hermits can not refrain from inquiring what men say of them. This need of public opinion is beneficial, in that it combats, almost always victoriously, that which is irregular in our imagination, and comes to the aid of duties which we too easily forget. One experiences (you will feel it, I hope) in returning to one's proper lot, after the sacrifice of that which had diverted the reason, the satisfaction of an exile returning to his family, of a sick person at sight of the sun after a night afflicted with frightful dreams.

”It is this feeling of a being returned, as it were, to its natural state that creates the calm which you see in many eyes that have also had their tears-for there are few women who have not known tears such as yours. You would think yourself perjured if you renounced Cinq-Mars! But nothing binds you; you have more than acquitted yourself toward him by refusing for more than two years past the royal hands offered you. And, after all, what has he done, this impassioned lover? He has elevated himself to reach you; but may not the ambition which here seems to you to have aided love have made use of that love? This young man seems to me too profound, too calm in his political stratagems, too independent in his vast resolutions, in his colossal enterprises, for me to believe him solely occupied by his tenderness. If you have been but a means instead of an end, what would you say?”

”I would still love him,” answered Marie. ”While he lives, I am his.”

”And while I live,” said the Queen, with firmness, ”I will oppose the

alliance.”

At these last words the rain and hail fell violently on the balcony. The Queen took advantage of the circumstance abruptly to leave the room and pass into that where the Duchesse de Chevreuse, Mazarin, Madame de Guemenee, and the Prince-Palatine had been awaiting her for a short time. The Queen walked up to them. Marie placed herself in the shade of a curtain in order to conceal the redness of her eyes. She was at first unwilling to take part in the sprightly conversation; but some words of it attracted her attention. The Queen was showing to the Princesse de Guemenee diamonds she had just received from Paris.

”As for this crown, it does not belong to me. The King had it prepared for the future Queen of Poland. Who that is to be, we know not.” Then turning toward the Prince-Palatine, ”We saw you pass, Prince. Whom were you going to visit?”

”Mademoiselle la Duchesse de Rohan,” answered the Pole.

The insinuating Mazarin, who availed himself of every opportunity to worm out secrets, and to make himself necessary by forced confidences, said, approaching the Queen:

”That comes very apropos, just as we were speaking of the crown of Poland.”

Marie, who was listening, could not hear this, and said to Madame de Guemenee, who was at her side:

”Is Monsieur de Chabot, then, King of Poland?”

The Queen heard that, and was delighted at this touch of pride. In order to develop its germ, she affected an approving attention to the conversation that ensued.

The Princesse de Guemenee exclaimed:

”Can you conceive such a marriage? We really can’t get it out of our heads. This same Mademoiselle de Rohan, whom we have seen so haughty, after having refused the Comte de Soissons, the Duc de Weimar, and the Duc de Nemours, to marry Monsieur de Chabot, a simple gentleman! ’Tis really a sad pity! What are we coming to? ’Tis impossible to say what it will all end in.”

”What! can it be true? Love at court! a real love affair! Can it be believed?”

All this time the Queen continued opening and shutting and playing with the new crown.

"Diamonds suit only black hair," she said. "Let us see. Let me put it on you, Marie. Why, it suits her to admiration!"

"One would suppose it had been made for Madame la Princesse," said the Cardinal.

"I would give the last drop of my blood for it to remain on that brow," said the Prince-Palatine.

Marie, through the tears that were still on her cheek, gave an infantine and involuntary smile, like a ray of sunshine through rain. Then, suddenly blushing deeply, she hastily took refuge in her apartments.

All present laughed. The Queen followed her with her eyes, smiled, presented her hand for the Polish ambassador to kiss, and retired to write a letter.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE WORK

One night, before Perpignan, a very unusual event took place. It was ten o'clock; and all were asleep. The slow and almost suspended operations of the siege had rendered the camp and the town inactive. The Spaniards troubled themselves little about the French, all communication toward Catalonia being open as in time of peace; and in the French army men's minds were agitated with that secret anxiety which precedes great events.

Yet all was calm; no sound was heard but that of the measured tread of the sentries. Nothing was seen in the dark night but the red light of the matches of their guns, always smoking, when suddenly the trumpets of the musketeers, of the light-horse, and of the men-at-arms sounded almost simultaneously, "boot and saddle," and "to horse." All the sentinels cried to arms; and the sergeants, with flambeaux, went from tent to tent, along pike in their hands, to waken the soldiers, range them in lines, and count them. Some files marched in gloomy silence along the streets of the camp, and took their position in battle array. The sound of the mounted squadrons announced that the heavy cavalry were making the same dispositions. After half an hour of movement the noise ceased, the torches were extinguished, and all again became calm, but the army was on foot.

One of the last tents of the camp shone within as a star with flambeaux. On approaching this little white and transparent pyramid, we might have distinguished the shadows of two men reflected on the canvas as they walked to and fro within. Outside several men on horseback were in

attendance; inside were De Thou and Cinq-Mars.

To see the pious and wise De Thou thus up and armed at this hour, you might have taken him for one of the chiefs of the revolt. But a closer examination of his serious countenance and mournful expression immediately showed that he blamed it, and allowed himself to be led into it and endangered by it from an extraordinary resolution which aided him to surmount the horror he had of the enterprise itself. From the day when Henri d'Effiat had opened his heart and confided to him its whole secret, he had seen clearly that all remonstrance was vain with a young man so powerfully resolved.

De Thou had even understood what M. de Cinq-Mars had not told him, and had seen in the secret union of his friend with the Princesse Marie, one of those ties of love whose mysterious and frequent faults, voluptuous and involuntary derelictions, could not be too soon purified by public benediction. He had comprehended that punishment, impossible to be supported long by a lover, the adored master of that young girl, and who was condemned daily to appear before her as a stranger, to receive political disclosures of marriages they were preparing for her. The day when he received his entire confession, he had done all in his power to prevent Cinq-Mars going so far in his projects as the foreign alliance. He had evoked the gravest recollections and the best feelings, without any other result than rendering the invincible resolution of his friend more rude toward him. Cinq-Mars, it will be recollected, had said to him harshly, "Well, did I ask you to take part in this conspiracy?" And he had desired only to promise not to denounce it; and he had collected all his power against friendship to say, "Expect nothing further from me if you sign this treaty." Yet Cinq-Mars had signed the treaty; and De Thou was still there with him.

The habit of familiarly discussing the projects of his friend had perhaps rendered them less odious to him. His contempt for the vices of the Prime-Minister; his indignation at the servitude of the parliaments to which his family belonged, and at the corruption of justice; the powerful names, and more especially the noble characters of the men who directed the enterprise—all had contributed to soften down his first painful impression. Having once promised secrecy to M. de Cinq-Mars, he considered himself as in a position to accept in detail all the secondary disclosures; and since the fortuitous event which had compromised him with the conspirators at the house of Marion de Lorme, he considered himself united to them by honor, and engaged to an inviolable secrecy. Since that time he had seen Monsieur, the Duc de Bouillon, and Fontrailles; they had become accustomed to speak before him without constraint, and he to hear them.

The dangers which threatened his friend now drew him into their vortex like an invincible magnet. His conscience accused him; but he followed Cinq-Mars wherever he went without even, from excess of delicacy, hazarding a single expression which might resemble a personal fear. He

had tacitly given up his life, and would have deemed it unworthy of both to manifest a desire to regain it.

The master of the horse was in his cuirass; he was armed, and wore large boots. An enormous pistol, with a lighted match, was placed upon his table between two flambeaux. A heavy watch in a brass case lay near the pistol. De Thou, wrapped in a black cloak, sat motionless with folded arms. Cinq-Mars paced backward and forward, his arms crossed behind his back, from time to time looking at the hand of the watch, too sluggish in his eyes. He opened the tent, looked up to the heavens, and returned.

"I do not see my star there," said he; "but no matter. She is here in my heart."

"The night is dark," said De Thou.

"Say rather that the time draws nigh. It advances, my friend; it advances. Twenty minutes more, and all will be accomplished. The army only waits the report of this pistol to begin."

De Thou held in his hand an ivory crucifix, and looking first at the cross, and then toward heaven, "Now," said he, "is the hour to complete the sacrifice. I repent not; but oh, how bitter is the cup of sin to my lips! I had vowed my days to innocence and to the works of the soul, and here I am about to commit a crime, and to draw the sword."

But forcibly seizing the hand of Cinq-Mars, "It is for you, for you!" he added with the enthusiasm of a blindly devoted heart. "I rejoice in my errors if they turn to your glory. I see but your happiness in my fault. Forgive me if I have returned for a moment to the habitual thought of my whole life."

Cinq-Mars looked steadfastly at him; and a tear stole slowly down his cheek.

"Virtuous friend," said he, "may your fault fall only on my head! But let us hope that God, who pardons those who love, will be for us; for we are criminal—I through love, you through friendship."

Then suddenly looking at the watch, he took the long pistol in his hand, and gazed at the smoking match with a fierce air. His long hair fell over his face like the mane of a young lion.

"Do not consume," said he; "burn slowly. Thou art about to light a flame which the waves of ocean can not extinguish. The flame will soon light half Europe; it may perhaps reach the wood of thrones. Burn slowly, precious flame! The winds which fan thee are violent and fearful; they are love and hatred. Reserve thyself! Thy explosion will be heard afar, and will find echoes in the peasant's hut and the king's palace.

Burn, burn, poor flame! Thou art to me a sceptre and a thunderbolt!"

De Thou, still holding his ivory crucifix in his hand, said in a low voice:

"Lord, pardon us the blood that will be shed! We combat the wicked and the impious." Then, raising his voice, "My friend, the cause of virtue will triumph," he said; "it alone will triumph. God has ordained that the guilty treaty should not reach us; that which constituted the crime is no doubt destroyed. We shall fight without the foreigners, and perhaps we shall not fight at all. God will change the heart of the king."

"'Tis the hour! 'tis the hour!" exclaimed Cinq-Mars, his eyes fixed upon the watch with a kind of savage joy; "four minutes more, and the Cardinalists in the camp will be crushed! We shall march upon Narbonne! He is there! Give me the pistol!"

At these words he hastily opened the tent, and took up the match.

"A courier from Paris! an express from court!" cried a voice outside, as a man, heated with hard riding and overcome with fatigue, threw himself from his horse, entered, and presented a letter to Cinq-Mars.

"From the Queen, Monseigneur," he said. Cinq-Mars turned pale, and read as follows:

M. DE CINQ-MARS: I write this letter to entreat and conjure you to restore to her duties our well-beloved adopted daughter and friend, the Princesse Marie de Gonzaga, whom your affection alone turns from the throne of Poland, which has been offered to her. I have sounded her heart. She is very young, and I have good reason to believe that she would accept the crown with less effort and less grief than you may perhaps imagine.

It is for her you have undertaken a war which will put to fire and sword my beautiful and beloved France. I supplicate and implore you to act as a gentleman, and nobly to release the Duchesse de Mantua from the promises she may have made you. Thus restore repose to her soul, and peace to our beloved country.

The Queen, who will throw herself at your feet if need be,

ANNE.

Cinq-Mars calmly replaced the pistol upon the table; his first impulse had been to turn its muzzle upon himself. However, he laid it down, and snatching a pencil, wrote on the back of the letter;

MADAME: Marie de Gonzaga, being my wife, can not be Queen of Poland until after my death. I die.

CINQ-MARS.

Then, as if he would not allow himself time for a moment's reflection, he forced the letter into the hands of the courier.

"To horse! to horse!" cried he, in a furious tone. "If you remain another instant, you are a dead man!"

He saw him gallop off, and reentered the tent. Alone with his friend, he remained an instant standing, but pale, his eyes fixed, and looking on the ground like a madman. He felt himself totter.

"De Thou!" he cried.

"What would you, my friend, my dear friend? I am with you. You have acted grandly, most grandly, sublimely!"

"De Thou!" he cried again, in a hollow voice, and fell with his face to the ground, like an uprooted tree.

Violent tempests assume different aspects, according to the climates in which they take place. Those which have spread over a terrible space in northern countries assemble into one single cloud under the torrid zone—the more formidable, that they leave the horizon in all its purity, and that the furious waves still reflect the azure of heaven while tinged with the blood of man. It is the same with great passions. They assume strange aspects according to our characters; but how terrible are they in vigorous hearts, which have preserved their force under the veil of social forms? When youth and despair embrace, we know not to what fury they may rise, or what may be their sudden resignation; we know not whether the volcano will burst the mountain or become suddenly extinguished within its entrails.

De Thou, in alarm, raised his friend. The blood gushed from his nostrils and ears; he would have thought him dead, but .for the torrents of tears which flowed from his eyes. They were the only sign of life. Suddenly he opened his lids, looked around him, and by an extraordinary energy resumed his senses and the power of his will.

"I am in the presence of men," said he; "I must finish with them. My friend, it is half-past eleven; the hour for the signal has passed. Give, in my name, the order to return to quarters. It was a false alarm, which I will myself explain this evening."

De Thou had already perceived the importance of this order; he went out and returned immediately.

He found Cinq-Mars seated, calm, and endeavoring to cleanse the blood from his face.

"De Thou," said he, looking fixedly at him, "retire; you disturb me."

"I leave you not," answered the latter.

"Fly, I tell you! the Pyrenees are not far distant. I can not speak much longer, even to you; but if you remain with me, you will die. I give you warning."

"I remain," repeated De Thou.

"May God preserve you, then!" answered Cinq-Mars, "for I can do nothing more; the moment has passed. I leave you here. Call Fontrailles and all the confederates: distribute these passports among them. Let them fly immediately; tell them all has failed, but that I thank them. For you, once again I say, fly with them, I entreat you; but whatever you do, follow me not—follow me not, for your life! I swear to you not to do violence to myself!"

With these words, shaking his friend's hand without looking at him, he rushed from the tent.

Meantime, some leagues thence another conversation was taking place. At Narbonne, in the same cabinet in which we formerly beheld Richelieu regulating with Joseph the interests of the State, were still seated the same men, nearly as we have described them. The minister, however, had grown much older in three years of suffering; and the Capuchin was as much terrified with the result of his expedition as his master appeared tranquil.

The Cardinal, seated in his armchair, his legs bound and encased with furs and warm clothing, had upon his knees three kittens, which gambolled upon his scarlet robe. Every now and then he took one of them and placed it upon the others, to continue their sport. He smiled as he watched them. On his feet lay their mother, looking like an enormous animated muff.

Joseph, seated near him, was going over the account of all he had heard in the confessional. Pale even now, at the danger he had run of being discovered, or of being murdered by Jacques, he concluded thus:

"In short, your Eminence, I can not help feeling agitated to my heart's core when I reflect upon the dangers which have, and still do, threaten you. Assassins offer themselves to poniard you. I beheld in France the whole court against you, one half of the army, and two provinces. Abroad, Spain and Portugal are ready to furnish troops. Everywhere there are snares or battles, poniards or cannon."

The Cardinal yawned three times, without discontinuing his amusement, and then said:

"A cat is a very fine animal. It is a drawing-room tiger. What suppleness, what extraordinary finesse! Here is this little yellow one pretending to sleep, in order that the tortoise-shell one may not notice it, but fall upon its brother; and this one, how it tears the other! See how it sticks its claws into its side! It would kill and eat it, I fully believe, if it were the stronger. It is very amusing. What pretty animals!"

He coughed and sneezed for some time; then he continued:

"Messire Joseph, I sent word to you not to speak to me of business until after my supper. . . I have an appetite now, and it is not yet my hour. Chicot, my doctor, recommends regularity, and I feel my usual pain in my side. This is how I shall spend the evening," he added, looking at the clock. "At nine, we will settle the affairs of Monsieur le Grand. At ten, I shall be carried round the garden to take the air by moonlight. Then I shall sleep for an hour or two. At midnight the King will be here; and at four o'clock you may return to receive the various orders for arrests, condemnations, or any others I may have to give you, for the provinces, Paris, or the armies of his Majesty."

Richelieu said all this in the same tone of voice, with a uniform enunciation, affected only by the weakness of his chest and the loss of several teeth.

It was seven in the evening. The Capuchin withdrew. The Cardinal supped with the greatest tranquillity; and when the clock struck half-past eight, he sent for Joseph, and said to him, when he was seated:

"This, then, is all they have been able to do against me during more than two years. They are poor creatures, truly! The Duc de Bouillon, whom I thought possessed some ability, has forfeited all claim to my opinion. I have watched him closely; and I ask you, has he taken one step worthy of a true statesman? The King, Monsieur, and the rest, have only shown their teeth against me, and without depriving me of one single man. The young Cinq-Mars is the only man among them who has any consecutiveness of ideas. All that he has done has been done surprisingly well. I must do him justice; he had good qualities. I should have made him my pupil, had it not been for his obstinate character. But he has here charged me 'a l'outrance, and must take the consequences. I am sorry for him. I have left them to float about in open water for the last two years. I shall now draw the net."

"It is time, Monseigneur," said Joseph, who often trembled involuntarily as he spoke. "Do you bear in mind that from Perpignan to Narbonne the way is short? Do you know that if your army here is powerful, your own troops are weak and uncertain; that the young nobles are furious; and

that the King is not sure?"

The Cardinal looked at the clock.

"It is only half-past eight, Joseph. I have already told you that I will not talk about this affair until nine. Meantime, as justice must be done, you will write what I shall dictate, for my memory serves me well. There are still some objectionable persons left, I see by my notes—four of the judges of Urbain Grandier. He was a rare genius, that Urbain Grandier," he added, with a malicious expression. Joseph bit his lips. "All the other judges have died miserably. As to Houmain, he shall be hanged as a smuggler by and by. We may leave him alone for the present. But there is that horrible Lactantius, who lives peacefully, Barre, and Mignon. Take a pen, and write to the Bishop of Poitiers,

"MONSEIGNEUR: It is his Majesty's pleasure that Fathers Mignon and Barre be superseded in their cures, and sent with the shortest possible delay to the town of Lyons, with Father Lactantius, Capuchin, to be tried before a special tribunal, charged with criminal intentions against the State."

Joseph wrote as coolly as a Turk strikes off a head at a sign from his master. The Cardinal said to him, while signing the letter:

"I will let you know how I wish them to disappear, for it is important to efface all traces of that affair. Providence has served me well. In removing these men, I complete its work. That is all that posterity shall know of the affair."

And he read to the Capuchin that page of his memoirs in which he recounts the possession and sorceries of the magician.—[Collect. des Memoires xxviii. 189.]—During this slow process, Joseph could not help looking at the clock.

"You are anxious to come to Monsieur le Grand," said the Cardinal at last. "Well, then, to please you, let us begin."

"Do you think I have not my reasons for being tranquil? You think that I have allowed these poor conspirators to go too far. No, no! Here are some little papers that would reassure you, did you know their contents. First, in this hollow stick is the treaty with Spain, seized at Oleron. I am well satisfied with Laubardemont; he is an able man."

The fire of ferocious jealousy sparkled under the thick eyebrows of the monk.

"Ah, Monseigneur," said he, "you know not from whom he seized it. He certainly suffered him to die, and in that respect we can not complain, for he was the agent of the conspiracy; but it was his son."

"Say you the truth?" cried the Cardinal, in a severe tone. "Yes, for you dare not lie to me. How knew you this?"

"From his attendants, Monsiegnur. Here are their reports. They will testify to them."

The Cardinal having examined these papers, said:

"We will employ him once more to try our conspirators, and then you shall do as you like with him. I give him to you."

Joseph joyfully pocketed his precious denunciations, and continued:

"Your Eminence speaks of trying men who are still armed and on horseback."

"They are not all so. Read this letter from Monsieur to Chavigny. He asks for pardon. He dared not address me the first day, and his prayers rose no higher than the knees of one of my servants.

To M. de Chavigny:

M. DE CHAVIGNY: Although I believe that you are little satisfied with me (and in truth you have reason to be dissatisfied), I do not the less entreat you to endeavor my reconciliation with his Eminence, and rely for this upon the true love you bear me, and which, I believe, is greater than your anger. You know how much I require to be relieved from the danger I am in. You have already twice stood my friend with his Eminence. I swear to you this shall be the last time I give you such an employment.
GASTON D'ORLEANS.

"But the next day he took courage, and sent this to myself,

To his Excellency the Cardinal-Duc:

MY COUSIN: This ungrateful M. le Grand is the most guilty man in the world to have displeased you. The favors he received from his Majesty have always made me doubtful of him and his artifices. For you, my cousin, I retain my whole esteem. I am truly repentant at having again been wanting in the fidelity I owe to my Lord the King, and I call God to witness the sincerity with which I shall be for the rest of my life your most faithful friend, with the same devotion that I am, my cousin, your affectionate cousin,
GASTON.

and the third to the King. His project choked him; he could not keep it down. But I am not so easily satisfied. I must have a free and full confession, or I will expel him from the kingdom. I have written to him

this morning.

[MONSIEUR: Since God wills that men should have recourse to a frank and entire confession to be absolved of their faults in this world, I indicate to you the steps you must take to be delivered from this danger. Your Highness has commenced well; you must continue. This is all I can say to you.]

”As to the magnificent and powerful Due de Bouillon, sovereign lord of Sedan and general-in-chief of the armies in Italy, he has just been arrested by his officers in the midst of his soldiers, concealed in a truss of straw. There remain, therefore, only our two young neighbors. They imagine they have the camp wholly at their orders, while they really have only the red troops. All the rest, being Monsieur’s men, will not act, and my troops will arrest them. However, I have permitted them to appear to obey. If they give the signal at half-past eleven, they will be arrested at the first step. If not, the King will give them up to me this evening. Do not open your eyes so wide. He will give them up to me, I repeat, this night, between midnight and one o’clock. You see that all has been done without you, Joseph. We can dispense with you very well; and truly, all this time, I do not see that we have received any great service from you. You grow negligent.”

”Ah, Monseigneur! did you but know the trouble I have had to discover the route of the bearers of the treaty! I only learned it by risking my life between these young people.”

The Cardinal laughed contemptuously, leaning back in his chair.

”Thou must have been very ridiculous and very fearful in that box, Joseph; I dare say it was the first time in thy life thou ever heardst love spoken of. Dost thou like the language, Father Joseph? Tell me, dost thou clearly understand it? I doubt whether thou hast formed a very refined idea of it.”

Richelieu, his arms crossed, looked at his discomfited Capuchin with infinite delight, and continued in the scornfully familiar tone of a grand seigneur, which he sometimes assumed, pleasing himself with putting forth the noblest expressions through the most impure lips:

”Come, now, Joseph, give me a definition of love according to thy idea. What can it be—for thou seest it exists out of romances. This worthy youngster undertook these little conspiracies through love. Thou heardst it thyself with throe unworthy ears. Come, what is love? For my part, I know nothing about it.”

The monk was astounded, and looked upon the ground with the stupid eye of some base animal. After long consideration, he replied in a drawling and nasal voice:

"It must be a kind of malignant fever which leads the brain astray; but in truth, Monseigneur, I have never reflected on it until this moment. I have always been embarrassed in speaking to a woman. I wish women could be omitted from society altogether; for I do not see what use they are, unless it be to disclose secrets, like the little Duchess or Marion de Lorme, whom I can not too strongly recommend to your Eminence. She thought of everything, and herself threw our little prophecy among the conspirators with great address. We have not been without the marvellous this time. As in the siege of Hesdin, all we have to do is to find a window through which you may pass on the day of the execution."

[In 1638, Prince Thomas having raised the siege of Hesdin, the Cardinal was much vexed at it. A nun of the convent of Mount Calvary had said that the victory would be to the King and Father Joseph, thus wishing it to be believed that Heaven protected the minister. –Memoires pour l’histoire du Cardinal de Richelieu.]

"This is another of your absurdities, sir," said the Cardinal; "you will make me as ridiculous as yourself, if you go on so; I am too powerful to need the assistance of Heaven. Do not let that happen again. Occupy yourself only with the people I consign to you. I traced your part before. When the master of the horse is taken, you will see him tried and executed at Lyons. I will not be known in this. This affair is beneath me; it is a stone under my feet, upon which I ought not to have bestowed so much attention."

Joseph was silent; he could not understand this man, who, surrounded on every side by armed enemies, spoke of the future as of a present over which he had the entire control, and of the present as a past which he no longer feared. He knew not whether to look upon him as a madman or a prophet, above or below the standard of human nature.

His astonishment was redoubled when Chavigny hastily entered, and nearly falling, in his heavy boots, over the Cardinal's footstool, exclaimed in great agitation:

"Sir, one of your servants has just arrived from Perpignan; and he has beheld the camp in an uproar, and your enemies in the saddle."

"They will soon dismount, sir," replied Richelieu, replacing his footstool. "You appear to have lost your equanimity."

"But—but, Monseigneur, must we not warn Monsieur de Fabert?"

"Let him sleep, and go to bed yourself; and you also, Joseph."

"Monseigneur, another strange event has occurred—the King has arrived."

"Indeed, that is extraordinary," said the minister, looking at his watch.

"I did not expect him these two hours. Retire, both of you."

A heavy trampling and the clattering of arms announced the arrival of the Prince; the folding-doors were thrown open; the guards in the Cardinal's service struck the ground thrice with their pikes; and the King appeared.

He entered, supporting himself with a cane on one side, and on the other leaning upon the shoulder of his confessor, Father Sirmond, who withdrew, and left him with the Cardinal; the latter rose with difficulty, but could not advance a step to meet the King, because his legs were bandaged and enveloped. He made a sign that they should assist the King to a seat near the fire, facing himself. Louis XIII fell into an armchair furnished with pillows, asked for and drank a glass of cordial, prepared to strengthen him against the frequent fainting-fits caused by his malady of languor, signed to all to leave the room, and, alone with Richelieu, he said in a languid voice:

"I am departing, my dear Cardinal; I feel that I shall soon return to God. I become weaker from day to day; neither the summer nor the southern air has restored my strength."

"I shall precede your Majesty," replied the minister. "You see that death has already conquered my limbs; but while I have a head to think and a hand to write, I shall be at the service of your Majesty."

"And I am sure it was your intention to add, 'a heart to love me.'"

"Can your Majesty doubt it?" answered the Cardinal, frowning, and biting his lips impatiently at this speech.

"Sometimes I doubt it," replied the King. "Listen: I wish to speak openly to you, and to complain of you to yourself. There are two things which have been upon my conscience these three years. I have never mentioned them to you; but I reproached you secretly; and could anything have induced me to consent to any proposals contrary to your interest, it would be this recollection."

There was in this speech that frankness natural to weak minds, who seek by thus making their ruler uneasy, to compensate for the harm they dare not do him, and revenge their subjection by a childish controversy.

Richelieu perceived by these words that he had run a great risk; but he saw at the same time the necessity of venting all his spleen, and, to facilitate the explosion of these important avowals, he accumulated all the professions he thought most calculated to provoke the King.

"No, no!" his Majesty at length exclaimed, "I shall believe nothing until you have explained those two things, which are always in my thoughts, which were lately mentioned to me, and which I can justify by no reasoning. I mean the trial of Urbain Grandier, of which I was never

well informed, and the reason for the hatred you bore to my unfortunate mother, even to her very ashes.”

”Is this all, Sire?” said Richelieu. ”Are these my only faults? They are easily explained. The first it was necessary to conceal from your Majesty because of its horrible and disgusting details of scandal. There was certainly an art employed, which can not be looked upon as guilty, in concealing, under the title of ’magic,’ crimes the very names of which are revolting to modesty, the recital of which would have revealed dangerous mysteries to the innocent; this was a holy deceit practised to hide these impurities from the eyes of the people.”

”Enough, enough, Cardinal,” said Louis XIII, turning away his head, and looking downward, while a blush covered his face; ”I can not hear more. I understand you; these explanations would disgust me. I approve your motives; ’tis well. I had not been told that; they had concealed these dreadful vices from me. Are you assured of the proofs of these crimes?”

”I have them all in my possession, Sire; and as to the glorious Queen, Marie de Medicis, I am surprised that your Majesty can forget how much I was attached to her. Yes, I do not fear to acknowledge it; it is to her I owe my elevation. She was the first who deigned to notice the Bishop of Luton, then only twenty-two years of age, to place me near her. What have I not suffered when she compelled me to oppose her in your Majesty’s interest! But this sacrifice was made for you. I never had, and never shall have, to regret it.”

”’Tis well for you, but for me!” said the King, bitterly.

”Ah, Sire,” exclaimed the Cardinal, ”did not the Son of God himself set you an example? It is by the model of every perfection that we regulate our counsels; and if the monument due to the precious remains of your mother is not yet raised, Heaven is my witness that the works were retarded through the fear of afflicting your heart by bringing back the recollection of her death. But blessed be the day in which I have been permitted to speak to you on the subject! I myself shall say the first mass at Saint-Denis, when we shall see her deposited there, if Providence allows me the strength.”

The countenance of the King assumed a more affable yet still cold expression; and the Cardinal, thinking that he could go no farther that evening in persuasion, suddenly resolved to make a more powerful move, and to attack the enemy in front. Still keeping his eyes firmly fixed upon the King, he said, coldly:

”And was it for this you consented to my death?”

”Me!” said the King. ”You have been deceived; I have indeed heard of a conspiracy, and I wished to speak to you about it; but I have commanded nothing against you.”

"The conspirators do not say so, Sire; but I am bound to believe your Majesty, and I am glad for your sake that men were deceived. But what advice were you about to condescend to give me?"

"I—I wished to tell you frankly, and between ourselves, that you will do well to beware of Monsieur—"

"Ah, Sire, I can not now heed it; for here is a letter which he has just sent to me for you. He seems to have been guilty even toward your Majesty."

The King read in astonishment:

MONSEIGNEUR: I am much grieved at having once more failed in the fidelity which I owe to your Majesty. I humbly entreat you to allow me to ask a thousand pardons, with the assurances of my submission and repentance.

Your very humble servant,
GASTON.

"What does this mean?" cried Louis; "dare they arm against me also?"

"Also!" muttered the Cardinal, biting his lips; "yes, Sire, also; and this makes me believe, to a certain degree, this little packet of papers."

While speaking, he drew a roll of parchment from a piece of hollowed elder, and opened it before the eyes of the King.

"This is simply a treaty with Spain, which I think does not bear the signature of your Majesty. You may see the twenty articles all in due form. Everything is here arranged—the place of safety, the number of troops, the supplies of men and money."

"The traitors!" cried the King, in great agitation; "they must be seized. My brother renounces them and repents; but do not fail to arrest the Duc de Bouillon."

"It shall be done, Sire."

"That will be difficult, in the middle of the army in Italy."

"I will answer with my head for his arrest, Sire; but is there not another name to be added?"

"Who—what—Cinq-Mars?" inquired the King, hesitating.

"Exactly so, Sire," answered the Cardinal.

"I see—but I think—we might—"

"Hear me!" exclaimed Richelieu, in a voice of thunder; "all must be settled to-day. Your favorite is mounted at the head of his party; choose between him and me. Yield up the boy to the man, or the man to the boy; there is no alternative."

"And what will you do if I consent?" said the King.

"I will have his head and that of his friend."

"Never! it is impossible!" replied the King, with horror, as he relapsed into the same state of irresolution he evinced when with Cinq-Mars against Richelieu. "He is my friend as well as you; my heart bleeds at the idea of his death. Why can you not both agree? Why this division? It is that which has led him to this. You have between you brought me to the brink of despair; you have made me the most miserable of men."

Louis hid his head in his hands while speaking, and perhaps he shed tears; but the inflexible minister kept his eyes upon him as if watching his prey, and without remorse, without giving the King time for reflection—on the contrary, profiting by this emotion to speak yet longer.

"And is it thus," he continued, in a harsh and cold voice, "that you remember the commandments of God communicated to you by the mouth of your confessor? You told me one day that the Church expressly commanded you to reveal to your prime minister all that you might hear against him; yet I have never heard from you of my intended death! It was necessary that more faithful friends should apprise me of this conspiracy; that the guilty themselves through the mercy of Providence should themselves make the avowal of their fault. One only, the most guilty, yet the least of all, still resists, and it is he who has conducted the whole; it is he who would deliver France into the power of the foreigner, who would overthrow in one single day my labors of twenty years. He would call up the Huguenots of the south, invite to arms all orders of the State, revive crushed pretensions, and, in fact, renew the League which was put down by your father. It is that—do not deceive yourself—it is that which raises so many heads against you. Are you prepared for the combat? If so, where are your arms?"

The King, quite overwhelmed, made no reply; he still covered his face with his hands. The stony-hearted Cardinal crossed his arms and continued:

"I fear that you imagine it is for myself I speak. Do you really think that I do not know my own powers, and that I fear such an adversary? Really, I know not what prevents me from letting you act for yourself—"

from transferring the immense burden of State affairs to the shoulders of this youth. You may imagine that during the twenty years I have been acquainted with your court, I have not forgotten to assure myself a retreat where, in spite of you, I could now go to live the six months which perhaps remain to me of life. It would be a curious employment for me to watch the progress of such a reign. What answer would you return, for instance, when all the inferior potentates, regaining their station, no longer kept in subjection by me, shall come in your brother's name to say to you, as they dared to say to Henri IV on his throne: 'Divide with us all the hereditary governments and sovereignties, and we shall be content.'—[Memoires de Sully, 1595.]— You will doubtless accede to their request; and it is the least you can do for those who will have delivered you from Richelieu. It will, perhaps, be fortunate, for to govern the Ile-de-France, which they will no doubt allow you as the original domain, your new minister will not require many secretaries.”

While speaking thus, he furiously pushed the huge table, which nearly filled the room, and was laden with papers and numerous portfolios.

Louis was aroused from his apathetic meditation by the excessive audacity of this discourse. He raised his head, and seemed to have instantly formed one resolution for fear he should adopt another.

”Well, sir,” said he, ”my answer is that I will reign alone.”

”Be it so!” replied Richelieu. ”But I ought to give you notice that affairs are at present somewhat complicated. This is the hour when I generally commence my ordinary avocations.”

”I will act in your place,” said Louis. ”I will open the portfolios and issue my commands.”

”Try, then,” said Richelieu. ”I shall retire; and if anything causes you to hesitate, you can send for me.”

He rang a bell. In the same instant, and as if they had awaited the signal, four vigorous footmen entered, and carried him and his chair into another apartment, for we have before remarked that he was unable to walk. While passing through the chambers where the secretaries were at work, he called out in a loud voice:

”You will receive his Majesty's commands.”

The King remained alone, strong in his new resolution, and, proud in having once resisted, he became anxious immediately to plunge into political business. He walked around the immense table, and beheld as many portfolios as they then counted empires, kingdoms, and States in Europe. He opened one and found it divided into sections equalling in number the subdivisions of the country to which it related. All was in order, but in alarming order for him, because each note only referred to

the very essence of the business it alluded to, and related only to the exact point of its then relations with France. These laconic notes proved as enigmatic to Louis, as did the letters in cipher which covered the table. Here all was confusion. An edict of banishment and expropriation of the Huguenots of La Rochelle was mingled with treaties with Gustavus Adolphus and the Huguenots of the north against the empire. Notes on General Bannier and Wallenstein, the Duc de Weimar, and Jean de Witt were mingled with extracts from letters taken from the casket of the Queen, the list of the necklaces and jewels they contained, and the double interpretation which might be put upon every phrase of her notes. Upon the margin of one of these letters was written: "For four lines in a man's handwriting he might be criminally tried." Farther on were scattered denunciations against the Huguenots; the republican plans they had drawn up; the division of France into departments under the annual dictatorship of a chief. The seal of this projected State was affixed to it, representing an angel leaning upon a cross, and holding in his hand a Bible, which he raised to his forehead. By the side was a document which contained a list of those cardinals the pope had selected the same day as the Bishop of Lurgon (Richelieu). Among them was to be found the Marquis de Bedemar, ambassador and conspirator at Venice.

Louis XIII exhausted his powers in vain over the details of another period, seeking unsuccessfully for any documents which might allude to the present conspiracy, to enable him to perceive its true meaning, and all that had been attempted against him, when a diminutive man, of an olive complexion, who stooped much, entered the cabinet with a measured step. This was a Secretary of State named Desnoyers. He advanced, bowing.

"May I be permitted to address your Majesty on the affairs of Portugal?" said he.

"And consequently of Spain?" said Louis. "Portugal is a province of Spain."

"Of Portugal," reiterated Desnoyers. "Here is the manifesto we have this moment received." And he read, "Don John, by the grace of God, King of Portugal and of Algarves, kingdoms on this side of Africa, lord over Guinea, by conquest, navigation, and trade with Arabia, Persia, and the Indies—"

"What is all that?" said the King. "Who talks in this manner?"

"The Duke of Braganza, King of Portugal, crowned already some time by a man whom they call Pinto. Scarcely has he ascended the throne than he offers assistance to the revolted Catalonians."

"Has Catalonia also revolted? The King, Philip IV, no longer has the Count-Duke for his Prime-Minister?"

"Just the contrary, Sire. It is on this very account. Here is the declaration of the States-General of Catalonia to his Catholic Majesty, signifying that the whole country will take up arms against his sacrilegious and excommunicated troops. The King of Portugal—"

"Say the Duke of Braganza!" replied Louis. "I recognize no rebels."

"The Duke of Braganza, then," coldly repeated the Secretary of State, "sends his nephew, Don Ignacio de Mascarenas, to the principality of Catalonia, to seize the protection (and it may be the sovereignty) of that country, which he would add to that he has just reconquered. Your Majesty's troops are before Perpignan—"

"Well, and what of that?" said Louis.

"The Catalonians are more disposed toward France than toward Portugal, and there is still time to deprive the King of the Duke of Portugal, I should say—of this protectorship."

"What! I assist rebels! You dare—"

"Such was the intention of his Eminence," continued the Secretary of State. "Spain and France are nearly at open war, and Monsieur d'Olivares has not hesitated to offer the assistance of his Catholic Majesty to the Huguenots."

"Very good. I will consider it," said the King. "Leave me."

"Sire, the States-General of Catalonia are in a dilemma. The troops from Aragon march against them."

"We shall see. I will come to a decision in a quarter of an hour," answered Louis XIII.

The little Secretary of State left the apartment discontented and discouraged. In his place Chavigny immediately appeared, holding a portfolio, on which were emblazoned the arms of England. "Sire," said he, "I have to request your Majesty's commands upon the affairs of England. The Parliamentarians, commanded by the Earl of Essex, have raised the siege of Gloucester. Prince Rupert has at Newbury fought a disastrous battle, and of little profit to his Britannic Majesty. The Parliament is prolonged. All the principal cities take part with it, together with all the seaports and the Presbyterian population. King Charles I implores assistance, which the Queen can no longer obtain from Holland."

"Troops must be sent to my brother of England," said Louis; but he wanted to look over the preceding papers, and casting his eyes over the notes of the Cardinal, he found that under a former request of the King of England

he had written with his own hand:

"We must consider some time and wait. The Commons are strong. King Charles reckons upon the Scots; they will sell him.

"We must be cautious. A warlike man has been over to see Vincennes, and he has said that 'princes ought never to be struck, except on the head.'"

The Cardinal had added "remarkable," but he had erased this word and substituted "formidable." Again, beneath:

"This man rules Fairfax. He plays an inspired part. He will be a great man—assistance refused—money lost."

The King then said, "No, no! do nothing hastily. I shall wait."

"But, Sire," said Chavigny, "events pass rapidly. If the courier be delayed, the King's destruction may happen a year sooner."

"Have they advanced so far?" asked Louis.

"In the camp of the Independents they preach up the republic with the Bible in their hands. In that of the Royalists, they dispute for precedence, and amuse themselves."

"But one turn of good fortune may save everything?"

"The Stuarts are not fortunate, Sire," answered Chavigny, respectfully, but in a tone which left ample room for consideration.

"Leave me," said the King, with some displeasure.

The State-Secretary slowly retired.

It was then that Louis XIII beheld himself as he really was, and was terrified at the nothingness he found in himself. He at first stared at the mass of papers which surrounded him, passing from one to the other, finding dangers on every side, and finding them still greater with the remedies he invented. He rose; and changing his place, he bent over, or rather threw himself upon, a geographical map of Europe. There he found all his fears concentrated. In the north, the south, the very centre of the kingdom, revolutions appeared to him like so many Eumenides. In every country he thought he saw a volcano ready to burst forth. He imagined he heard cries of distress from kings, who appealed to him for help, and the furious shouts of the populace. He fancied he felt the territory of France trembling and crumbling beneath his feet. His feeble and fatigued sight failed him. His weak head was attacked by vertigo, which threw all his blood back upon his heart.

"Richelieu!" he cried, in a stifled voice, while he rang a bell; "summon the Cardinal immediately."

And he swooned in an armchair.

When the King opened his eyes, revived by salts and potent essences which had been applied to his lips and temples, he for one instant beheld himself surrounded by pages, who withdrew as soon as he opened his eyes, and he was once more left alone with the Cardinal. The impassible minister had had his chair placed by that of the King, as a physician would seat himself by the bedside of his patient, and fixed his sparkling and scrutinizing eyes upon the pale countenance of Louis. As soon as his victim could hear him, he renewed his fearful discourse in a hollow voice:

"You have recalled me. What would you with me?"

Louis, who was reclining on the pillow, half opened his eyes, fixed them upon Richelieu, and hastily closed them again. That bony head, armed with two flaming eyes, and terminating in a pointed and grizzly beard, the cap and vestments of the color of blood and flames,—all appeared to him like an infernal spirit.

"You must reign," he said, in a languid voice.

"But will you give me up Cinq-Mars and De Thou?" again urged the implacable minister, bending forward to read in the dull eyes of the Prince, as an avaricious heir follows up, even to the tomb, the last glimpses of the will of a dying relative.

"You must reign," repeated the King, turning away his head.

"Sign then," said Richelieu; "the contents of this are, 'This is my command—to take them, dead or alive.'"

Louis, whose head still reclined on the raised back of the chair, suffered his hand to fall upon the fatal paper, and signed it. "For pity's sake, leave me; I am dying!" he said.

"That is not yet all," continued he whom men call the great politician. "I place no reliance on you; I must first have some guarantee and assurance. Sign this paper, and I will leave you:

"When the King shall go to visit the Cardinal, the guards of the latter shall remain under arms; and when the Cardinal shall visit the King, the guards of the Cardinal shall share the same post with those of his Majesty.

"Again:

"His Majesty undertakes to place the two princes, his sons, in the Cardinal's hands, as hostages of the good faith of his attachment."

"My children!" exclaimed Louis, raising his head, "dare you?"

"Would you rather that I should retire?" said Richelieu.

The King again signed.

"Is all finished now?" he inquired, with a deep sigh.

All was not finished; one other grief was still in reserve for him. The door was suddenly opened, and Cinq-Mars entered. It was the Cardinal who trembled now.

"What would you here, sir?" said he, seizing the bell to ring for assistance.

The master of the horse was as pale as the King, and without condescending to answer Richelieu, he advanced steadily toward Louis XIII, who looked at him with the air of a man who has just received a sentence of death.

"You would, Sire, find it difficult to have me arrested, for I have twenty thousand men under my command," said Henri d'Effiat, in a sweet and subdued voice.

"Alas, Cinq-Mars!" replied the King, sadly; "is it thou who hast been guilty of these crimes?"

"Yes, Sire; and I also bring you my sword, for no doubt you came here to surrender me," said he, unbuckling his sword, and laying it at the feet of the King, who fixed his eyes upon the floor without making any reply.

Cinq-Mars smiled sadly, but not bitterly, for he no longer belonged to this earth. Then, looking contemptuously at Richelieu, "I surrender because I wish to die, but I am not conquered."

The Cardinal clenched his fist with passion; but he restrained his fury. "Who are your accomplices?" he demanded. Cinq-Mars looked steadfastly at Louis, and half opened his lips to speak. The King bent down his head, and felt at that moment a torture unknown to all other men.

"I have none," said Cinq-Mars, pitying the King; and he slowly left the apartment. He stopped in the first gallery. Fabert and all the gentlemen rose on seeing him. He walked up to the commander, and said:

"Sir, order these gentlemen to arrest me!"

They looked at each other, without daring to approach him.

"Yes, sir, I am your prisoner; yes, gentlemen, I am without my sword, and I repeat to you that I am the King's prisoner."

"I do not understand what I see," said the General; "there are two of you who surrender, and I have no instruction to arrest any one."

"Two!" said Cinq-Mars; "the other is doubtless De Thou. Alas! I recognize him by this devotion."

"And had I not also guessed your intention?" exclaimed the latter, coming forward, and throwing himself into his arms.

CHAPTER XXV

THE PRISONERS

Among those old chateaux of which France is every year deprived regretfully, as of flowers from her, crown, there was one of a grim and savage appearance upon the left bank of the Saline. It looked like a formidable sentinel placed at one of the gates of Lyons, and derived its name from an enormous rock, known as Pierre-Encise, which terminates in a peak—a sort of natural pyramid, the summit of which overhanging the river in former times, they say, joined the rocks which may still be seen on the opposite bank, forming the natural arch of a bridge; but time, the waters, and the hand of man have left nothing standing but the ancient mass of granite which formed the pedestal of the now destroyed fortress.

The archbishops of Lyons, as the temporal lords of the city, had built and formerly resided in this castle. It afterward became a fortress, and during the reign of Louis XIII a State prison. One colossal tower, where the daylight could only penetrate through three long loopholes, commanded the edifice, and some irregular buildings surrounded it with their massive walls, whose lines and angles followed the form of the immense and perpendicular rock.

It was here that the Cardinal, jealous of his prey, determined to imprison his young enemies, and to conduct them himself.

Allowing Louis to precede him to Paris, he removed his captives from Narbonne, dragging them in his train to ornament his last triumph, and embarking on the Rhone at Tarascon, nearly, at the mouth of the river, as if to prolong the pleasure of revenge which men have dared to call that of the gods, displayed to the eyes of the spectators on both sides of the river the luxury of his hatred; he slowly proceeded on his course up the

river in barges with gilded oars and emblazoned with his armorial bearings, reclining in the first and followed by his two victims in the second, which was fastened to his own by a long chain.

Often in the evening, when the heat of the day was passed, the awnings of the two boats were removed, and in the one Richelieu might be seen, pale, and seated in the stern; in that which followed, the two young prisoners, calm and collected, supported each other, watching the passage of the rapid stream. Formerly the soldiers of Caesar, who encamped on the same shores, would have thought they beheld the inflexible boatman of the infernal regions conducting the friendly shades of Castor and Pollux. Christians dared not even reflect, or see a priest leading his two enemies to the scaffold; it was the first minister who passed.

Thus he went on his way until he left his victims under guard at the identical city in which the late conspirators had doomed him to perish. Thus he loved to defy Fate herself, and to plant a trophy on the very spot which had been selected for his tomb.

"He was borne," says an ancient manuscript journal of this year, "along the river Rhone in a boat in which a wooden chamber had been constructed, lined with crimson fluted velvet, the flooring of which was of gold. The same boat contained an antechamber decorated in the same manner. The prow and stern of the boat were occupied by soldiers and guards, wearing scarlet coats embroidered with gold, silver, and silk; and many lords of note. His Eminence occupied a bed hung with purple taffetas. Monseigneur the Cardinal Bigni, and Messeigneurs the Bishops of Nantes and Chartres, were there, with many abbés and gentlemen in other boats. Preceding his vessel, a boat sounded the passages, and another boat followed, filled with arquebusiers and officers to command them. When they approached any isle, they sent soldiers to inspect it, to discover whether it was occupied by any suspicious persons; and, not meeting any, they guarded the shore until two boats which followed had passed. They were filled with the nobility and well-armed soldiers.

"Afterward came the boat of his Eminence, to the stern of which was attached a little boat, which conveyed MM. de Thou and Cinq-Mars, guarded by an officer of the King's guard and twelve guards from the regiment of his Eminence. Three vessels, containing the clothes and plate of his Eminence, with several gentlemen and soldiers, followed the boats.

"Two companies of light-horsemen followed the banks of the Rhone in Dauphin, and as many on the Languedoc and Vivarais side, and a noble regiment of foot, who preceded his Eminence in the towns which he was to enter, or in which he was to sleep. It was pleasant to listen to the trumpets, which, played in Dauphine, were answered by those in Vivarais, and repeated by the echoes of our rocks. It seemed as if all were trying which could play best."—[See Notes.]

In the middle of a night of the month of September, while everything appeared to slumber in the impregnable tower which contained the prisoners, the door of their outer chamber turned noiselessly on its hinges, and a man appeared on the threshold, clad in a brown robe confined round his waist by a cord. His feet were encased in sandals, and his hand grasped a large bunch of keys; it was Joseph. He looked cautiously round without advancing, and contemplated in silence the apartment occupied by the master of the horse. Thick carpets covered the floor, and large and splendid hangings concealed the walls of the prison; a bed hung with red damask was prepared, but it was unoccupied. Seated near a high chimney in a large armchair, attired in a long gray robe, similar in form to that of a priest, his head bent down, and his eyes fixed upon a little cross of gold by the flickering light of a lamp, he was absorbed in so deep a meditation that the Capuchin had leisure to approach him closely, and confront the prisoner before he perceived him. Suddenly, however, Cinq-Mars raised his head and exclaimed, "Wretch, what do you here?"

"Young man, you are violent," answered the mysterious intruder, in a low voice. "Two months' imprisonment ought to have been enough to calm you. I come to tell you things of great importance. Listen to me! I have thought much of you; and I do not hate you so much as you imagine. The moments are precious. I will tell you all in a few words: in two hours you will be interrogated, tried, and condemned to death with your friend. It can not be otherwise, for all will be finished the same day."

"I know it," answered Cinq-Mars; "and I am prepared."

"Well, then, I can still release you from this affair. I have reflected deeply, as I told you; and I am here to make a proposal which can but give you satisfaction. The Cardinal has but six months to live. Let us not be mysterious; we must speak openly. You see where I have brought you to serve him; and you can judge by that the point to which I would conduct him to serve you. If you wish it, we can cut short the six months of his life which still remain. The King loves you, and will recall you with joy when he finds you still live. You may long live, and be powerful and happy, if you will protect me, and make me cardinal."

Astonishment deprived the young prisoner of speech. He could not understand such language, and seemed to be unable to descend to it from his higher meditations. All that he could say was:

"Your benefactor, Richelieu?"

The Capuchin smiled, and, drawing nearer, continued in an undertone:

"Policy admits of no benefits; it contains nothing but interest. A man employed by a minister is no more bound to be grateful than a horse whose rider prefers him to others. My pace has been convenient to him; so much

the better. Now it is my interest to throw him from the saddle. Yes, this man loves none but himself. I now see that he has deceived me by continually retarding my elevation; but once again, I possess the sure means for your escape in silence. I am the master here. I will remove the men in whom he trusts, and replace them by others whom he has condemned to die, and who are near at hand confined in the northern tower—the Tour des Oubliettes, which overhangs the river. His creatures will occupy their places. I will recommend a physician—an empyric who is devoted to me—to the illustrious Cardinal, who has been given over by the most scientific in Paris. If you will unite with me, he shall convey to him a universal and eternal remedy.”

”Away!” exclaimed Cinq-Mars. ”Leave me, thou infernal monk! No, thou art like no other man! Thou glidest with a noiseless and furtive step through the darkness; thou traversest the walls to preside at secret crimes; thou placest thyself between the hearts of lovers to separate them eternally. Who art thou? Thou resemblest a tormented spirit of the damned!”

”Romantic boy!” answered Joseph; ”you would have possessed high attainments had it not been for your false notions. There is perhaps neither damnation nor soul. If the dead returned to complain of their fate, I should have a thousand around me; and I have never seen any, even in my dreams.”

”Monster!” muttered Cinq-Mars.

”Words again!” said Joseph; ”there is neither monster nor virtuous man. You and De Thou, who pride yourselves on what you call virtue—you have failed in causing the death of perhaps a hundred thousand men—at once and in the broad daylight—for no end, while Richelieu and I have caused the death of far fewer, one by one, and by night, to found a great power. Would you remain pure and virtuous, you must not interfere with other men; or, rather, it is more reasonable to see that which is, and to say with me, it is possible that there is no such thing as a soul. We are the sons of chance; but relative to other men, we have passions which we must satisfy.”

”I breathe again!” exclaimed Cinq-Mars; ”he believes not in God!”

Joseph continued:

”Richelieu, you, and I were born ambitious; it followed, then, that everything must be sacrificed to this idea.”

”Wretched man, do not compare me to thyself!”

”It is the plain truth, nevertheless,” replied the Capuchin; ”only you now see that our system was better than yours.”

"Miserable wretch, it was for love—"

"No, no! it was not that; here are mere words again. You have perhaps imagined it was so; but it was for your own advancement. I have heard you speak to the young girl. You thought but of yourselves; you do not love each other. She thought but of her rank, and you of your ambition. One loves in order to hear one's self called perfect, and to be adored; it is still the same egoism."

"Cruel serpent!" cried Cinq-Mars; "is it not enough that thou hast caused our deaths? Why dost thou come here to cast thy venom upon the life thou hast taken from us? What demon has suggested to thee thy horrible analysis of hearts?"

"Hatred of everything which is superior to myself," replied Joseph, with a low and hollow laugh, "and the desire to crush those I hate under my feet, have made me ambitious and ingenious in finding the weakness of your dreams."

"Just Heaven, dost thou hear him?" exclaimed Cinq-Mars, rising and extending his arms upward.

The solitude of his prison; the pious conversations of his friend; and, above all, the presence of death, which, like the light of an unknown star, paints in other colors the objects we are accustomed to see; meditations on eternity; and (shall we say it?) the great efforts he had made to change his heartrending regrets into immortal hopes, and to direct to God all that power of love which had led him astray upon earth—all this combined had worked a strange revolution in him; and like those ears of corn which ripen suddenly on receiving one ray from the sun, his soul had acquired light, exalted by the mysterious influence of death.

"Just Heaven!" he repeated, "if this wretch and his master are human, can I also be a man? Behold, O God, behold two distinct ambitions—the one egoistical and bloody, the other devoted and unstained; theirs roused by hatred, and ours inspired by love. Look down, O Lord, judge, and pardon! Pardon, for we have greatly erred in walking but for a single day in the same paths which, on earth, possess but one name to whatever end it may tend!"

Joseph interrupted him harshly, stamping his foot on the ground:

"When you have finished your prayer," said he, "you will perhaps inform me whether you will assist me; and I will instantly—"

"Never, impure wretch, never!" said Henri d'Effiat. "I will never unite with you in an assassination. I refused to do so when powerful, and upon yourself."

"You were wrong; you would have been master now."

"And what happiness should I find in my power when shared as it must be by a woman who does not understand me; who loved me feebly, and prefers a crown?"

"Inconceivable folly!" said the Capuchin, laughing.

"All with her; nothing without her—that was my desire."

"It is from obstinacy and vanity that you persist; it is impossible," replied Joseph. "It is not in nature."

"Thou who wouldst deny the spirit of self-sacrifice," answered Cinq-Mars; "dost thou understand that of my friend?"

"It does not exist; he follows you because—"

Here the Capuchin, slightly embarrassed, reflected an instant.

"Because—because—he has formed you; you are his work; he is attached to you by the self-love of an author. He was accustomed to lecture you; and he felt that he should not find another pupil so docile to listen to and applaud him. Constant habit has persuaded him that his life was bound to yours; it is something of that kind. He will accompany you mechanically. Besides, all is not yet finished; we shall see the end and the examination. He will certainly deny all knowledge of the conspiracy."

"He will not deny it!" exclaimed Cinq-Mars, impetuously.

"He knew it, then? You confess it," said Joseph, triumphantly; "you have not said as much before."

"O Heaven, what have I done!" gasped Cinq-Mars, hiding his face.

"Calm yourself; he is saved, notwithstanding this avowal, if you accept my offer."

D'Effiat remained silent for a short time.

The Capuchin continued:

"Save your friend. The King's favor awaits you, and perhaps the love which has erred for a moment."

"Man, or whatever else thou art, if thou hast in thee anything resembling a heart," answered the prisoner, "save him! He is the purest of created beings; but convey him far away while yet he sleeps, for should he awake, thy endeavors would be vain."

"What good will that do me?" said the Capuchin, laughing. "It is you and your favor that I want."

The impetuous Cinq-Mars rose, and, seizing Joseph by the arm, eyeing him with a terrible look, said:

"I degraded him in interceding with thee for him." He continued, raising the tapestry which separated his apartment from that of his friend, "Come, and doubt, if thou canst, devotion and the immortality of the soul. Compare the uneasiness and misery of thy triumph with the calmness of our defeat, the meanness of thy reign with the grandeur of our captivity, thy sanguinary vigils to the slumbers of the just."

A solitary lamp threw its light on De Thou. The young man was kneeling on a cushion, surmounted by a large ebony crucifix. He seemed to have fallen asleep while praying. His head, inclining backward, was still raised toward the cross. His pale lips wore a calm and divine smile.

"Holy Father, how he sleeps!" exclaimed the astonished Capuchin, thoughtlessly uniting to his frightful discourse the sacred name he every day pronounced. He suddenly retired some paces, as if dazzled by a heavenly vision.

"Nonsense, nonsense!" he said, shaking his head, and passing his hand rapidly over his face. "All this is childishness. It would overcome me if I reflected on it. These ideas may serve as opium to produce a calm. But that is not the question; say yes or no."

"No," said Cinq-Mars, pushing him to the door by the shoulder. "I will not accept life; and I do not regret having compromised De Thou, for he would not have bought his life at the price of an assassination. And when he yielded at Narbonne, it was not that he might escape at Lyons."

"Then wake him, for here come the judges," said the furious Capuchin, in a sharp, piercing voice.

Lighted by flambeaux, and preceded by a detachment of the Scotch guards, fourteen judges entered, wrapped in long robes, and whose features were not easily distinguished. They seated themselves in silence on the right and left of the huge chamber. They were the judges delegated by the Cardinal to judge this sad and solemn affair—all true men to the Cardinal Richelieu, and in his confidence, who from Tarascon had chosen and instructed them. He had the Chancellor Seguier brought to Lyons, to avoid, as he stated in the instructions he sent by Chavigny to the King Louis XIII—"to avoid all the delays which would take place if he were not present. M. de Mayillac," he adds, "was at Nantes for the trial of Chulais, M. de Chateau-Neuf at Toulouse, superintending the death of M. de Montmorency, and M. de Bellievre at Paris, conducting the trial of M. de Biron. The authority and intelligence of these gentlemen in forms of justice are indispensable."

The Chancellor arrived with all speed. But at this moment he was informed that he was not to appear, for fear that he might be influenced by the memory of his ancient friendship for the prisoner, whom he only saw *tete-a-tete*. The commissioners and himself had previously and rapidly received the cowardly depositions of the Duc d'Orleans, at Villefranche, in Beaujolais, and then at Vivey, — [House which belonged to an Abbe d'Esney, brother of M. de Villeroy, called Montresor.] two miles from Lyons, where this wretched prince had received orders to go, begging forgiveness, and trembling, although surrounded by his followers, whom from very pity he had been allowed to retain, carefully watched, however, by the French and Swiss guards. The Cardinal had dictated to him his part and answers word for word; and in consideration of this docility, they had exempted him in form from the painful task of confronting MM. de Cinq-Mars and De Thou. The chancellor and commissioners had also prepared M. de Bouillon, and, strong with their preliminary work, they visited in all their strength the two young criminals whom they had determined not to save.

History has only handed down to us the names of the State counsellors who accompanied Pierre Seguier, but not those of the other commissioners, of whom it is only mentioned that there were six from the parliament of Grenoble, and two presidents. The counsellor, or reporter of the State, Laubardemont, who had directed them in all, was at their head. Joseph often whispered to them with the most studied politeness, glancing at Laubardemont with a ferocious sneer.

It was arranged that an armchair should serve as a bar; and all were silent in expectation of the prisoner's answer.

He spoke in a soft and clear voice:

"Say to Monsieur le Chancelier that I have the right of appeal to the parliament of Paris, and to object to my judges, because two of them are my declared enemies, and at their head one of my friends, Monsieur de Seguier himself, whom I maintained in his charge.

"But I will spare you much trouble, gentlemen, by pleading guilty to the whole charge of conspiracy, arranged and conducted by myself alone. It is my wish to die. I have nothing to add for myself; but if you would be just, you will not harm the life of him whom the King has pronounced to be the most honest man in France, and who dies for my sake alone."

"Summon him," said Laubardemont.

Two guards entered the apartment of De Thou, and led him forth. He advanced, and bowed gravely, while an angelical smile played upon his lips. Embracing Cinq-Mars, "Here at last is our day of glory," said he. "We are about to gain heaven and eternal happiness."

"We understand," said Laubardemont, "we have been given to understand by Monsieur de Cinq-Mars himself, that you were acquainted with this conspiracy?"

De Thou answered instantly, and without hesitation. A half-smile was still on his lips, and his eyes cast down.

"Gentlemen, I have passed my life in studying human laws, and I know that the testimony of one accused person can not condemn another. I can also repeat what I said before, that I should not have been believed had I denounced the King's brother without proof. You perceive, then, that my life and death entirely rest with myself. I have, however, well weighed the one and the other. I have clearly foreseen that whatever life I may hereafter lead, it could not but be most unhappy after the loss of Monsieur de Cinq-Mars. I therefore acknowledge and confess that I was aware of his conspiracy. I did my utmost to prevent it, to deter him from it. He believed me to be his only and faithful friend, and I would not betray him. Therefore, I condemn myself by the very laws which were set forth by my father, who, I hope, forgives me."

At these words, the two friends precipitated themselves into each other's arms.

Cinq-Mars exclaimed:

"My friend, my friend, how bitterly I regret that I have caused your death! Twice I have betrayed you; but you shall know in what manner."

But De Thou, embracing and consoling his friend, answered, raising his eyes from the ground:

"Ah, happy are we to end our days in this manner! Humanly speaking, I might complain of you; but God knows how much I love you. What have we done to merit the grace of martyrdom, and the happiness of dying together?"

The judges were not prepared for this mildness, and looked at each other with surprise.

"If they would only give me a good partisan," muttered a hoarse voice (it was Grandchamp, who had crept into the room, and whose eyes were red with fury), "I would soon rid Monseigneur of all these black-looking fellows." Two men with halberds immediately placed themselves silently at his side. He said no more, and to compose himself retired to a window which overlooked the river, whose tranquil waters the sun had not yet lighted with its beams, and appeared to pay no attention to what was passing in the room.

However, Laubardemont, fearing that the judges might be touched with compassion, said in a loud voice:

"In pursuance of the order of Monseigneur the Cardinal, these two men will be put to the rack; that is to say, to the ordinary and extraordinary question."

Indignation forced Cinq-Mars again to assume his natural character; crossing his arms, he made two steps toward Laubardemont and Joseph, which alarmed them. The former involuntarily placed his hand to his forehead.

"Are we at Loudun?" exclaimed the prisoner; but De Thou, advancing, took his hand and held it. Cinq-Mars was silent, then continued in a calm voice, looking steadfastly at the judges:

"Messieurs, this measure appears to me rather harsh; a man of my age and rank ought not to be subjected to these formalities. I have confessed all, and I will confess it all again. I willingly and gladly accept death; it is not from souls like ours that secrets can be wrung by bodily suffering. We are prisoners by our own free will, and at the time chosen by us. We have confessed enough for you to condemn us to death; you shall know nothing more. We have obtained what we wanted."

"What are you doing, my friend?" interrupted De Thou. "He is mistaken, gentlemen, we do not refuse this martyrdom which God offers us; we demand it."

"But," said Cinq-Mars, "do you need such infamous tortures to obtain salvation—you who are already a martyr, a voluntary martyr to friendship? Gentlemen, it is I alone who possess important secrets; it is the chief of a conspiracy who knows all. Put me alone to the torture if we must be treated like the worst of malefactors."

"For the sake of charity," added De Thou, "deprive me not of equal suffering with my friend; I have not followed him so far, to abandon him at this dreadful moment, and not to use every effort to accompany him to heaven."

During this debate, another was going forward between Laubardemont and Joseph. The latter, fearing that torments would induce him to disclose the secret of his recent proposition, advised that they should not be resorted to; the other, not thinking his triumph complete by death alone, absolutely insisted on their being applied. The judges surrounded and listened to these secret agents of the Prime-Minister; however, many circumstances having caused them to suspect that the influence of the Capuchin was more powerful than that of the judge, they took part with him, and decided for mercy, when he finished by these words uttered in a low voice:

"I know their secrets. There is no necessity to force them from their lips, because they are useless, and relate to too high circumstances. Monsieur le Grand has no one to denounce but the King, and the other the Queen. It is better that we should remain ignorant. Besides, they will not confess. I know them; they will be silent—the one from pride, the other through piety. Let them alone. The torture will wound them; they will be disfigured and unable to walk. That will spoil the whole ceremony; they must be kept to appear."

This last observation prevailed. The judges retired to deliberate with the chancellor. While departing, Joseph whispered to Laubardemont:

"I have provided you with enough pleasure here; you will still have that of deliberating, and then you shall go and examine three men who are confined in the northern tower."

These were the three judges who had condemned Urbain Grandier.

As he spoke, he laughed heartily, and was the last to leave the room, pushing the astonished master of requests before him.

The sombre tribunal had scarcely disappeared when Grandchamp, relieved from his two guards, hastened toward his master, and, seizing his hand, said:

"In the name of Heaven, come to the terrace, Monseigneur! I have something to show you; in the name of your mother, come!"

But at that moment the chamber door was opened, and the old Abbe Quillet appeared.

"My children! my dear children!" exclaimed the old man, weeping bitterly. "Alas! why was I only permitted to enter to-day? Dear Henri, your mother, your brother, your sister, are concealed here."

"Be quiet, Monsieur l'Abbe!" said Grandchamp; "do come to the terrace, Monseigneur."

But the old priest still detained and embraced his pupil.

"We hope," said he; "we hope for mercy."

"I shall refuse it," said Cinq-Mars.

"We hope for nothing but the mercy of God," added De Thou.

"Silence!" said Grandchamp, "the judges are returning."

And the door opened again to admit the dismal procession, from which Joseph and Laubardemont were missing.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed the good Abbe, addressing the commissioners, "I am happy to tell you that I have just arrived from Paris, and that no one doubts but that all the conspirators will be pardoned. I have had an interview at her Majesty's apartments with Monsieur himself; and as to the Duc de Bouillon, his examination is not unfav—"

"Silence!" cried M. de Seyton, the lieutenant of the Scotch guards; and the commissioners entered and again arranged themselves in the apartment.

M. de Thou, hearing them summon the criminal recorder of the presidial of Lyons to pronounce the sentence, involuntarily launched out in one of those transports of religious joy which are never displayed but by the martyrs and saints at the approach of death; and, advancing toward this man, he exclaimed:

"Quam speciosi pedes evangelizantium pacem, evangelizantium bona!"

Then, taking the hand of Cinq-Mars, he knelt down bareheaded to receive the sentence, as was the custom. D'Effiat remained standing; and they dared not compel him to kneel. The sentence was pronounced in these words:

"The Attorney-General, prosecutor on the part of the State, on a charge of high treason; and Messire Henri d'Effiat de Cinq-Mars, master of the horse, aged twenty-two, and Francois Auguste de Thou, aged thirty-five, of the King's privy council, prisoners in the chateau of Pierre-Encise, at Lyons, accused and defendants on the other part:

"Considered, the special trial commenced by the aforesaid attorney-general against the said D'Effiat and De Thou; informations, interrogations, confessions, denegations, and confrontations, and authenticated copies of the treaty with Spain, it is considered in the delegated chamber:

"That he who conspires against the person of the ministers of princes is considered by the ancient laws and constitutions of the emperors to be guilty of high treason; (2) that the third ordinance of the King Louis XI renders any one liable to the punishment of death who does not reveal a conspiracy against the State.

"The commissioners deputed by his Majesty have declared the said D'Effiat and De Thou guilty and convicted of the crime of high treason:

"The said D'Effiat, for the conspiracies and enterprises, league, and treaties, formed by him with the foreigner against the State;

”And the said De Thou, for having a thorough knowledge of this conspiracy.

”In reparation of which crimes they have deprived them of all honors and dignities, and condemned them to be deprived of their heads on a scaffold, which is for this purpose erected in the Place des Terreaux, in this city.

”It is further declared that all and each of their possessions, real and personal, be confiscated to the King, and that those which they hold from the crown do pass immediately to it again of the aforesaid goods, sixty thousand livres being devoted to pious uses.”

After the sentence was pronounced, M. de Thou exclaimed in a loud voice:

”God be blessed! God be praised!”

”I have never feared death,” said Cinq-Mars, coldly.

Then, according to the forms prescribed, M. Seyton, the lieutenant of the Scotch guards, an old man upward of sixty years of age, declared with emotion that he placed the prisoners in the hands of the Sieur Thome, provost of the merchants of Lyons; he then took leave of them, followed by the whole of the body-guard, silently, and in tears.

”Weep not,” said Cinq-Mars; ”tears are useless. Rather pray for us; and be assured that I do not fear death.”

He shook them by the hand, and De Thou embraced them; after which they left the apartment, their eyes filled with tears, and hiding their faces in their cloaks.

”Barbarians!” exclaimed the Abbe Quillet; ”to find arms against them, one must search the whole arsenal of tyrants. Why did they admit me at this moment?”

”As a confessor, Monsieur,” whispered one of the commissioners; ”for no stranger has entered this place these two months.”

As soon as the huge gates of the prison were closed, and the outside gratings lowered, ”To the terrace, in the name of Heaven!” again exclaimed Grandchamp. And he drew his master and De Thou thither.

The old preceptor followed them, weeping.

”What do you want with us in a moment like this?” said Cinq-Mars, with indulgent gravity.

”Look at the chains of the town,” said the faithful servant.

The rising sun had hardly tinged the sky. In the horizon a line of vivid yellow was visible, upon which the mountain's rough blue outlines were boldly traced; the waves of the Saline, and the chains of the town hanging from one bank to the other, were still veiled by a light vapor, which also rose from Lyons and concealed the roofs of the houses from the eye of the spectator. The first tints of the morning light had as yet colored only the most elevated points of the magnificent landscape. In the city the steeples of the Hotel de Ville and St. Nizier, and on the surrounding hills the monasteries of the Carmelites and Ste.-Marie, and the entire fortress of Pierre-Encise were gilded with the fires of the coming day. The joyful peals from the churches were heard, the peaceful matins from the convent and village bells. The walls of the prison were alone silent.

"Well," said Cinq-Mars, "what are we to see the beauty of the plains, the richness of the city, or the calm peacefulness of these villages? Ah, my friend, in every place there are to be found passions and griefs, like those which have brought us here."

The old Abbe and Grandchamp leaned over the parapet, watching the bank of the river.

"The fog is so thick, we can see nothing yet," said the Abbe.

"How slowly our last sun appears!" said De Thou.

"Do you not see low down there, at the foot of the rocks, on the opposite bank, a small white house, between the Halincourt gate and the Boulevard Saint Jean?" asked the Abbe.

"I see nothing," answered Cinq-Mars, "but a mass of dreary wall."

"Hark!" said the Abbe; "some one speaks near us!"

In fact, a confused, low, and inexplicable murmur was heard in a little turret, the back of which rested upon the platform of the terrace. As it was scarcely larger than a pigeon-house, the prisoners had not until now observed it.

"Are they already coming to fetch us?" said Cinq-Mars.

"Bah! bah!" answered Grandchamp, "do not make yourself uneasy; it is the Tour des Oubliettes. I have prowled round the fort for two months, and I have seen men fall from there into the water at least once a week. Let us think of our affair. I see a light down there."

An invincible curiosity, however, led the two prisoners to look at the turret, in spite of the horror of their own situation. It advanced to the extremity of the rock, over a gulf of foaming green water of great

depth. A wheel of a mill long deserted was seen turning with great rapidity. Three distinct sounds were now heard, like those of a drawbridge suddenly lowered and raised to its former position by a recoil or spring striking against the stone walls; and three times a black substance was seen to fall into the water with a splash.

"Mercy! can these be men?" exclaimed the Abbe, crossing himself.

"I thought I saw brown robes turning in the air," said Grandchamp; "they are the Cardinal's friends."

A horrible cry was heard from the tower, accompanied by an impious oath. The heavy trap groaned for the fourth time. The green water received with a loud noise a burden which cracked the enormous wheel of the mill; one of its large spokes was torn away, and a man entangled in its beams appeared above the foam, which he colored with his blood. He rose twice, and sank beneath the waters, shrieking violently; it was Laubardemont.

Cinq-Mars drew back in horror.

"There is a Providence," said Grandchamp; "Urbain Grandier summoned him in three years. But come, come! the time is precious! Do not remain motionless. Be it he, I am not surprised, for those wretches devour each other. But let us endeavor to deprive them of their choicest morsel. Vive Dieu! I see the signal! We are saved! All is ready; run to this side, Monsieur l'Abbe! See the white handkerchief at the window! our friends are prepared."

The Abbe seized the hands of both his friends, and drew them to that side of the terrace toward which they had at first looked. "Listen to me, both of you," said he. "You must know that none of the conspirators has profited by the retreat you secured for them. They have all hastened to Lyons, disguised, and in great number; they have distributed sufficient gold in the city to secure them from being betrayed; they are resolved to make an attempt to deliver you. The time chosen is that when they are conducting you to the scaffold; the signal is your hat, which you will place on your head when they are to commence."

The worthy Abbe, half weeping, half smiling hopefully, related that upon the arrest of his pupil he had hastened to Paris; that such secrecy enveloped all the Cardinal's actions that none there knew the place in which the master of the horse was detained. Many said that he was banished; and when the reconciliation between Monsieur and the Duc de Bouillon and the King was known, men no longer doubted that the life of the other was assured, and ceased to speak of this affair, which, not having been executed, compromised few persons. They had even in some measure rejoiced in Paris to see the town of Sedan and its territory added to the kingdom in exchange for the letters of abolition granted to the Duke, acknowledged innocent in common with Monsieur; so that the

result of all the arrangements had been to excite admiration of the Cardinal's ability, and of his clemency toward the conspirators, who, it was said, had contemplated his death. They even spread the report that he had facilitated the escape of Cinq-Mars and De Thou, occupying himself generously with their retreat to a foreign land, after having bravely caused them to be arrested in the midst of the camp of Perpignan.

At this part of the narrative, Cinq-Mars could not avoid forgetting his resignation, and clasping his friend's hand, "Arrested!" he exclaimed. "Must we renounce even the honor of having voluntarily surrendered ourselves? Must we sacrifice all, even the opinion of posterity?"

"There is vanity again," replied De Thou, placing his fingers on his lips. "But hush! let us hear the Abbe to the end."

The tutor, not doubting that the calmness which these two young men exhibited arose from the joy they felt in finding their escape assured, and seeing that the sun had hardly yet dispersed the morning mists, yielded himself without restraint to the involuntary pleasure which old men always feel in recounting new events, even though they afflict the hearers. He related all his fruitless endeavors to discover his pupil's retreat, unknown to the court and the town, where none, indeed, dared to pronounce the name of Cinq-Mars in the most secret asylums. He had only heard of the imprisonment at Pierre-Encise from the Queen herself, who had deigned to send for him, and charge him to inform the Marechale d'Effiat and all the conspirators that they might make a desperate effort to deliver their young chief. Anne of Austria had even ventured to send many of the gentlemen of Auvergne and Touraine to Lyons to assist in their last attempt.

"The good Queen!" said he; "she wept greatly when I saw her, and said that she would give all she possessed to save you. She reproached herself deeply for some letter, I know not what. She spoke of the welfare of France, but did not explain herself. She said that she admired you, and conjured you to save yourself, if it were only through pity for her, whom you would otherwise consign to everlasting remorse."

"Said she nothing else?" interrupted De Thou, supporting Cinq-Mars, who grew visibly paler.

"Nothing more," said the old man.

"And no one else spoke of me?" inquired the master of the horse.

"No one," said the Abbe.

"If she had but written to me!" murmured Henri.

"Remember, my father, that you were sent here as a confessor," said De Thou.

Here old Grandchamp, who had been kneeling before Cinq-Mars, and dragging him by his clothes to the other side of the terrace, exclaimed in a broken voice:

"Monseigneur—my master—my good master—do you see them? Look there—'tis they! 'tis they—all of them!"

"Who, my old friend?" asked his master.

"Who? Great Heaven! look at that window! Do you not recognize them? Your mother, your sisters, and your brother."

And the day, now fairly broken, showed him in the distance several women waving their handkerchiefs; and there, dressed all in black, stretching out her arms toward the prison, sustained by those about her, Cinq-Mars recognized his mother, with his family, and his strength failed him for a moment. He leaned his head upon his friend's breast and wept.

"How many times must I, then, die?" he murmured; then, with a gesture, returning from the top of the tower the salutations of his family, "Let us descend quickly, my father!" he said to the old Abbe. "You will tell me at the tribunal of penitence, and before God, whether the remainder of my life is worth my shedding more blood to preserve it."

It was there that Cinq-Mars confessed to God what he alone and Marie de Mantua knew of their secret and unfortunate love. "He gave to his confessor," says Father Daniel, "a portrait of a noble lady, set in diamonds, which were to be sold, and the money employed in pious works."

M. de Thou, after having confessed, wrote a letter;—[See the copy of this letter to Madame la Princesse de Guemenee, in the notes at the end of the volume.]—after which (according to the account given by his confessor) he said, "This is the last thought I will bestow upon this world; let us depart for heaven!" and walking up and down the room with long strides, he recited aloud the psalm, 'Miserere mei, Deus', with an incredible ardor of spirit, his whole frame trembling so violently it seemed as if he did not touch the earth, and that the soul was about to make its exit from his body. The guards were mute at this spectacle, which made them all shudder with respect and horror.

Meanwhile, all was calm in the city of Lyons, when to the great astonishment of its inhabitants, they beheld the entrance through all its gates of troops of infantry and cavalry, which they knew were encamped at a great distance. The French and the Swiss guards, the regiment of Pompadours, the men-at-arms of Maurevert, and the carabineers of La Roque, all defiled in silence. The cavalry, with their muskets on the pommel of the saddle, silently drew up round the chateau of Pierre-Encise; the infantry formed a line upon the banks of the Saone from the

gate of the fortress to the Place des Terreaux. It was the usual spot for execution.

”Four companies of the bourgeois of Lyons, called ‘pennonage’, of which about eleven or twelve hundred men, were ranged [says the journal of Montresor] in the midst of the Place des Terreaux, so as to enclose a space of about eighty paces each way, into which they admitted no one but those who were absolutely necessary.

”In the centre of this space was raised a scaffold about seven feet high and nine feet square, in the midst of which, somewhat forward, was placed a stake three feet in height, in front of which was a block half a foot high, so that the principal face of the scaffold looked toward the shambles of the Terreaux, by the side of the Saone. Against the scaffold was placed a short ladder of eight rounds, in the direction of the Dames de St. Pierre.”

Nothing had transpired in the town as to the name of the prisoners. The inaccessible walls of the fortress let none enter or leave but at night, and the deep dungeons had sometimes confined father and son for years together, four feet apart from each other, without their even being aware of the vicinity. The surprise was extreme at these striking preparations, and the crowd collected, not knowing whether for a fete or for an execution.

This same secrecy which the agents of the minister had strictly preserved was also carefully adhered to by the conspirators, for their heads depended on it.

Montresor, Fontrailles, the Baron de Beauvau, Olivier d’Entraigues, Gondi, the Comte du Lude, and the Advocate Fournier, disguised as soldiers, workmen, and morris-dancers, armed with poniards under their clothes, had dispersed amid the crowd more than five hundred gentlemen and domestics, disguised like themselves. Horses were ready on the road to Italy, and boats upon the Rhone had been previously engaged. The young Marquis d’Effiat, elder brother of Cinq-Mars, dressed as a Carthusian, traversed the crowd, without ceasing, between the Place des Terreaux and the little house in which his mother and sister were concealed with the Presidente de Pontac, the sister of the unfortunate De Thou. He reassured them, gave them from time to time a ray of hope, and returned to the conspirators to satisfy himself that each was prepared for action.

Each soldier forming the line had at his side a man ready to poniard him.

The vast crowd, heaped together behind the line of guards, pushed them forward, passed their lines, and made them lose ground. Ambrosio, the Spanish servant whom Cinq-Mars had saved, had taken charge of the captain of the pikemen, and, disguised as a Catalonian musician, had commenced a dispute with him, pretending to be determined not to cease playing the

hurdy-gurdy.

Every one was at his post.

The Abbe de Gondi, Olivier d'Entraigues, and the Marquis d'Effiat were in the midst of a group of fish-women and oyster-wenches, who were disputing and bawling, abusing one of their number younger and more timid than her masculine companions. The brother of Cinq-Mars approached to listen to their quarrel.

"And why," said she to the others, "would you have Jean le Roux, who is an honest man, cut off the heads of two Christians, because he is a butcher by trade? So long as I am his wife, I'll not allow it. I'd rather—"

"Well, you are wrong!" replied her companions. "What is't to thee whether the meat he cuts is eaten or not eaten? Why, thou'lt have a hundred crowns to dress thy three children all in new clothes. Thou'rt lucky to be the wife of a butcher. Profit, then, 'ma mignonne', by what God sends thee by the favor of his Eminence."

"Let me alone!" answered the first speaker. "I'll not accept it. I've seen these fine young gentlemen at the windows. They look as mild as lambs."

"Well! and are not thy lambs and calves killed?" said Femme le Bon. "What fortune falls to this little woman! What a pity! especially when it is from the reverend Capuchin!"

"How horrible is the gayety of the people!" said Olivier d'Entraigues, unguardedly. All the women heard him, and began to murmur against him.

"Of the people!" said they; "and whence comes this little bricklayer with his plastered clothes?"

"Ah!" interrupted another, "dost not see that 'tis some gentleman in disguise? Look at his white hands! He never worked a square; 'tis some little dandy conspirator. I've a great mind to go and fetch the captain of the watch to arrest him."

The Abbe de Gondi felt all the danger of this situation, and throwing himself with an air of anger upon Olivier, and assuming the manners of a joiner, whose costume and apron he had adopted, he exclaimed, seizing him by the collar:

"You're just right. 'Tis a little rascal that never works! These two years that my father's apprenticed him, he has done nothing but comb his hair to please the girls. Come, get home with you!"

And, striking him with his rule, he drove him through the crowd, and returned to place himself on another part of the line. After having well reprimanded the thoughtless page, he asked him for the letter which he said he had to give to M. de Cinq-Mars when he should have escaped. Olivier had carried it in his pocket for two months. He gave it him. "It is from one prisoner to another," said he, "for the Chevalier de jars, on leaving the Bastille, sent it me from one of his companions in captivity."

"Ma foi!" said Gondi, "there may be some important secret in it for our friends. I'll open it. You ought to have thought of it before. Ah, bah! it is from old Bassompierre. Let us read it.

MY DEAR CHILD: I learn from the depths of the Bastille, where I still remain, that you are conspiring against the tyrant Richelieu, who does not cease to humiliate our good old nobility and the parliaments, and to sap the foundations of the edifice upon which the State reposes. I hear that the nobles are taxed and condemned by petty judges, contrary to the privileges of their condition, forced to the arriere-ban, despite the ancient customs."

"Ah! the old dotard!" interrupted the page, laughing immoderately.

"Not so foolish as you imagine, only he is a little behindhand for our affair."

"I can not but approve this generous project, and I pray you give me to wot all your proceedings—"

"Ah! the old language of the last reign!" said Olivier. "He can't say 'Make me acquainted with your proceedings,' as we now say."

"Let me read, for Heaven's sake!" said the Abbe; "a hundred years hence they'll laugh at our phrases." He continued:

"I can counsel you, notwithstanding my great age, in relating to you what happened to me in 1560."

"Ah, faith! I've not time to waste in reading it all. Let us see the end.

"When I remember my dining at the house of Madame la Marechale d'Effiat, your mother, and ask myself what has become of all the guests, I am really afflicted. My poor Puy-Laurens has died at Vincennes, of grief at being forgotten by Monsieur in his prison; De Launay killed in a duel, and I am grieved at it, for although I was little satisfied with my arrest, he did it with courtesy, and I have always thought him a gentleman. As for me, I am under lock and key until the death of M. le Cardinal. Ah, my child! we were thirteen at table. We must not laugh at old superstitions. Thank

God that you are the only one to whom evil has not arrived!"

"There again!" said Olivier, laughing heartily; and this time the Abbe de Gondi could not maintain his gravity, despite all his efforts.

They tore the useless letter to pieces, that it might not prolong the detention of the old marechal, should it be found, and drew near the Place des Terreaux and the line of guards, whom they were to attack when the signal of the hat should be given by the young prisoner.

They beheld with satisfaction all their friends at their posts, and ready "to play with their knives," to use their own expression. The people, pressing around them, favored them without being aware of it. There came near the Abbe a troop of young ladies dressed in white and veiled. They were going to church to communicate; and the nuns who conducted them, thinking, like most of the people, that the preparations were intended to do honor to some great personage, allowed them to mount upon some large hewn stones, collected behind the soldiers. There they grouped themselves with the grace natural to their age, like twenty beautiful statues upon a single pedestal. One would have taken them for those vestals whom antiquity invited to the sanguinary shows of the gladiators. They whispered to each other, looking around them, laughing and blushing together like children.

The Abbe de Gondi saw with impatience that Olivier was again forgetting his character of conspirator and his costume of a bricklayer in ogling these girls, and assuming a mien too elegant, an attitude too refined, for the position in life he was supposed to occupy. He already began to approach them, turning his hair with his fingers, when Fontrailles and Montresor fortunately arrived in the dress of Swiss soldiers. A group of gentlemen, disguised as sailors, followed them with iron-shod staves in their hands. There was a paleness on their faces which announced no good.

"Stop here!" said one of them to his suite; "this is the place."

The sombre air and the silence of these spectators contrasted with the gay and anxious looks of the girls, and their childish exclamations.

"Ah, the fine procession!" they cried; "there are at least five hundred men with cuirasses and red uniforms, upon fine horses. They've got yellow feathers in their large hats."

"They are strangers—Catalonians," said a French guard.

"Whom are they conducting here? Ah, here is a fine gilt coach! but there's no one in it."

"Ah! I see three men on foot; where are they going?"

"To death!" said Fontrailles, in a deep, stern voice which silenced all around. Nothing was heard but the slow tramp of the horses, which suddenly stopped, from one of those delays that happen in all processions. They then beheld a painful and singular spectacle. An old man with a tonsured head walked with difficulty, sobbing violently, supported by two young men of interesting and engaging appearance, who held one of each other's hands behind his bent shoulders, while with the other each held one of his arms. The one on the left was dressed in black; he was grave, and his eyes were cast down. The other, much younger, was attired in a striking dress. A pourpoint of Holland cloth, adorned with broad gold lace, and with large embroidered sleeves, covered him from the neck to the waist, somewhat in the fashion of a woman's corset; the rest of his vestments were in black velvet, embroidered with silver palms. Gray boots with red heels, to which were attached golden spurs; a scarlet cloak with gold buttons—all set off to advantage his elegant and graceful figure. He bowed right and left with a melancholy smile.

An old servant, with white moustache, and beard, followed with his head bent down, leading two chargers, richly comparisoned. The young ladies were silent; but they could not restrain their sobs.

"It is, then, that poor old man whom they are leading to the scaffold," they exclaimed; "and his children are supporting him."

"Upon your knees, ladies," said a man, "and pray for him!"

"On your knees," cried Gondi, "and let us pray that God will deliver him!"

All the conspirators repeated, "On your knees! on your knees!" and set the example to the people, who imitated them in silence.

"We can see his movements better now," said Gondi, in a whisper to Montresor. "Stand up; what is he doing?"

"He has stopped, and is speaking on our side, saluting us; I think he has recognized us."

Every house, window, wall, roof, and raised platform that looked upon the place was filled with persons of every age and condition.

The most profound silence prevailed throughout the immense multitude. One might have heard the wings of a gnat, the breath of the slightest wind, the passage of the grains of dust which it raised; yet the air was calm, the sun brilliant, the sky blue. The people listened attentively. They were close to the Place des Terreaux; they heard the blows of the hammer upon the planks, then the voice of Cinq-Mars.

A young Carthusian thrust his pale face between two guards. All the

conspirators rose above the kneeling people. Every one put his hand to his belt or in his bosom, approaching close to the soldier whom he was to poniard.

"What is he doing?" asked the Carthusian. "Has he his hat upon his head?"

"He throws his hat upon the ground far from him," calmly answered the arquebusier.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE FETE

"Mon Dieu! quest-ce que ce monde!"

Dernieres paroles de M. Cinq-Mars

The same day that the melancholy procession took place at Lyons, and during the scenes we have just witnessed, a magnificent fete was given at Paris with all the luxury and bad taste of the time. The powerful Cardinal had determined to fill the first two towns in France with his pomp. The Cardinal's return was the occasion on which this fete was announced, as given to the King and all his court.

Master of the French empire by force, the Cardinal desired to be master of French opinion by seduction; and, weary of dominating, hoped to please. The tragedy of "Mirame" was to be represented in a hall constructed expressly for this great day, which raised the expenses of this entertainment, says Pelisson, to three hundred thousand crowns.

The entire guard of the Prime-Minister were under arms; his four companies of musketeers and gens d'armes were ranged in a line upon the vast staircases and at the entrance of the long galleries of the Palais-Cardinal. This brilliant pandemonium, where the mortal sins have a temple on each floor, belonged that day to pride alone, which occupied it from top to bottom. Upon each step was placed one of the arquebusiers of the Cardinal's guard, holding a torch in one hand and a long carbine in the other. The crowd of his gentlemen circulated between these living candelabra, while in the large garden, surrounded by huge chestnut-trees, now replaced by a range of archers, two companies of mounted light-horse, their muskets in their hands, were ready to obey the first order or the first fear of their master.

The Cardinal, carried and followed by his thirty-eight pages, took his seat in his box hung with purple, facing that in which the King was half

reclining behind the green curtains which preserved him from the glare of the flambeaux. The whole court filled the boxes, and rose when the King appeared. The orchestra commenced a brilliant overture, and the pit was thrown open to all the men of the town and the army who presented themselves. Three impetuous waves of spectators rushed in and filled it in an instant. They were standing, and so thickly pressed together that the movement of a single arm sufficed to cause in the crowd a movement similar to the waving of a field of corn. There was one man whose head thus described a large circle, as that of a compass, without his feet quitting the spot to which they were fixed; and some young men were carried out fainting.

The minister, contrary to custom, advanced his skeleton head out of his box, and saluted the assembly with an air which was meant to be gracious. This grimace obtained an acknowledgment only from the boxes; the pit was silent. Richelieu had wished to show that he did not fear the public judgment upon his work, and had given orders to admit without distinction all who should present themselves. He began to repent of this, but too late. The impartial assembly was as cold at the tragedie-pastorale itself. In vain did the theatrical bergeres, covered with jewels, raised upon red heels, with crooks ornamented with ribbons and garlands of flowers upon their robes, which were stuck out with farthingale's, die of love in tirades of two hundred verses; in vain did the 'amants parfaits' starve themselves in solitary caves, deploring their death in emphatic tones, and fastening to their hair ribbons of the favorite color of their mistress; in vain did the ladies of the court exhibit signs of perfect ecstasy, leaning over the edges of their boxes, and even attempt a few fainting-fits—the silent pit gave no other sign of life than the perpetual shaking of black heads with long hair.

The Cardinal bit his lips and played the abstracted during the first and second acts; the silence in which the third and fourth passed off so wounded his paternal heart that he had himself raised half out of the balcony, and in this uncomfortable and ridiculous position signed to the court to remark the finest passages, and himself gave the signal for applause. It was acted upon from some of the boxes, but the impassible pit was more silent than ever; leaving the affair entirely between the stage and the upper regions, they obstinately remained neuter. The master of Europe and France then cast a furious look at this handful of men who dared not to admire his work, feeling in his heart the wish of Nero, and thought for a moment how happy he should be if all those men had but one head.

Suddenly this black and before silent mass became animated, and endless rounds of applause burst forth, to the great astonishment of the boxes, and above all, of the minister. He bent forward and bowed gratefully, but drew back on perceiving that the clapping of hands interrupted the actors every time they wished to proceed. The King had the curtains of his box, until then closed, opened, to see what excited so much enthusiasm. The whole court leaned forward from their boxes, and

perceived among the spectators on the stage a young man, humbly dressed, who had just seated himself there with difficulty. Every look was fixed upon him. He appeared utterly embarrassed by this, and sought to cover himself with his little black cloak—far too short for the purpose. "Le Cid! le Cid!" cried the pit, incessantly applauding.

"Terrified, Corneille escaped behind the scenes, and all was again silent. The Cardinal, beside himself with fury, had his curtain closed, and was carried into his galleries, where was performed another scene, prepared long before by the care of Joseph, who had tutored the attendants upon the point before quitting Paris. Cardinal Mazarin exclaimed that it would be quicker to pass his Eminence through a long glazed window, which was only two feet from the ground, and led from his box to the apartments; and it opened and the page passed his armchair through it. Hereupon a hundred voices rose to proclaim the accomplishment of the grand prophecy of Nostradamus. They said:

"The bonnet rouge!—that's Monseigneur; 'quarante onces!'—that's Cinq-Mars; 'tout finira!'—that's De Thou. What a providential incident! His Eminence reigns over the future as over the present."

He advanced thus upon his ambulatory throne through the long and splendid galleries, listening to this delicious murmur of a new flattery; but insensible to the hum of voices which deified his genius, he would have given all their praises for one word, one single gesture of that immovable and inflexible public, even had that word been a cry of hatred; for clamor can be stifled, but how avenge one's self on silence? The people can be prevented from striking, but who can prevent their waiting? Pursued by the troublesome phantom of public opinion, the gloomy minister only thought himself in safety when he reached the interior of his palace amid his flattering courtiers, whose adorations soon made him forget that a miserable pit had dared not to admire him. He had himself placed like a king in the midst of his vast apartments, and, looking around him, attentively counted the powerful and submissive men who surrounded him.

Counting them, he admired himself. The chiefs of the great families, the princes of the Church, the presidents of all the parliaments, the governors of the provinces, the marshals and generals-in-chief of the armies, the nuncio, the ambassadors of all the kingdoms, the deputies and senators of the republics, were motionless, submissive, and ranged around him, as if awaiting his orders. There was no longer a look to brave his look, no longer a word to raise itself against his will, not a project that men dared to form in the most secret recesses of the heart, not a thought which did not proceed from his. Mute Europe listened to him by its representatives. From time to time he raised an imperious voice, and threw a self-satisfied word to this pompous circle, as a man who throws a copper coin among a crowd of beggars. Then might be distinguished, by the pride which lit up his looks and the joy visible in his countenance, the prince who had received such a favor.

Transformed into another man, he seemed to have made a step in the hierarchy of power, so surrounded with unlooked-for adorations and sudden caresses was the fortunate courtier, whose obscure happiness the Cardinal did not even perceive. The King's brother and the Duc de Bouillon stood in the crowd, whence the minister did not deign to withdraw them. Only he ostentatiously said that it would be well to dismantle a few fortresses, spoke at length of the necessity of pavements and quays at Paris, and said in two words to Turenne that he might perhaps be sent to the army in Italy, to seek his baton as marechal from Prince Thomas.

While Richelieu thus played with the great and small things of Europe, amid his noisy fete, the Queen was informed at the Louvre that the time was come for her to proceed to the Cardinal's palace, where the King awaited her after the tragedy. The serious Anne of Austria did not witness any play; but she could not refuse her presence at the fete of the Prime-Minister. She was in her oratory, ready to depart, and covered with pearls, her favorite ornament; standing opposite a large glass with Marie de Mantua, she was arranging more to her satisfaction one or two details of the young Duchess's toilette, who, dressed in a long pink robe, was herself contemplating with attention, though with somewhat of ennui and a little sullenness, the ensemble of her appearance.

She saw her own work in Marie, and, more troubled, thought with deep apprehension of the moment when this transient calm would cease, despite the profound knowledge she had of the feeling but frivolous character of Marie. Since the conversation at St.-Germain (the fatal letter), she had not quitted the young Princess, and had bestowed all her care to lead her mind to the path which she had traced out for her, for the most decided feature in the character of Anne of Austria was an invincible obstinacy in her calculations, to which she would fain have subjected all events and all passions with a geometrical exactitude. There is no doubt that to this positive and immovable mind we must attribute all the misfortunes of her regency. The sombre reply of Cinq-Mars; his arrest; his trial—all had been concealed from the Princesse Marie, whose first fault, it is true, had been a movement of self-love and a momentary forgetfulness.

However, the Queen by nature was good-hearted, and had bitterly repented her precipitation in writing words so decisive, and whose consequences had been so serious; and all her endeavors had been applied to mitigate the results. In reflecting upon her conduct in reference to the happiness of France, she applauded herself for having thus, at one stroke, stifled the germ of a civil war which would have shaken the State to its very foundations. But when she approached her young friend and gazed on that charming being whose happiness she was thus destroying in its bloom, and reflected that an old man upon a throne, even, would not recompense her for the eternal loss she was about to sustain; when she thought of the entire devotion, the total abnegation of himself, she had witnessed in a young man of twenty-two, of so lofty a character, and almost master of the kingdom—she pitied Marie, and admired from her very

soul the man whom she had judged so ill.

She would at least have desired to explain his worth to her whom he had loved so deeply, and who as yet knew him not; but she still hoped that the conspirators assembled at Lyons would be able to save him, and once knowing him to be in a foreign land she could tell all to her dear Marie.

As to the latter, she had at first feared war. But surrounded by the Queen's people, who had let nothing reach her ear but news dictated by this Princess, she knew, or thought she knew, that the conspiracy had not taken place; that the King and the Cardinal had returned to Paris nearly at the same time; that Monsieur, relapsed for a while, had reappeared at court; that the Duc de Bouillon, on ceding Sedan, had also been restored to favor; and that if the 'grand ecuyer' had not yet appeared, the reason was the more decided animosity of the Cardinal toward him, and the greater part he had taken in the conspiracy. But common sense and natural justice clearly said that having acted under the order of the King's brother, his pardon ought to follow that of this Prince.

All then, had calmed the first uneasiness of her heart, while nothing had softened the kind of proud resentment she felt against Cinq-Mars, so indifferent as not to inform her of the place of his retreat, known to the Queen and the whole court, while, she said to herself, she had thought but of him. Besides, for two months the balls and fetes had so rapidly succeeded each other, and so many mysterious duties had commanded her presence, that she had for reflection and regret scarce more than the time of her toilette, at which she was generally almost alone. Every evening she regularly commenced the general reflection upon the ingratitude and inconstancy of men—a profound and novel thought, which never fails to occupy the head of a young person in the time of first love—but sleep never permitted her to finish the reflection; and the fatigue of dancing closed her large black eyes ere her ideas had found time to classify themselves in her memory, or to present her with any distinct images of the past.

In the morning she was always surrounded by the young princesses of the court, and ere she well had time to dress had to present herself in the Queen's apartment, where awaited her the eternal, but now less disagreeable homage of the Prince-Palatine. The Poles had had time to learn at the court of France that mysterious reserve, that eloquent silence which so pleases the women, because it enhances the importance of things always secret, and elevates those whom they respect, so as to preclude the idea of exhibiting suffering in their presence. Marie was regarded as promised to King Uladislas; and she herself—we must confess it—had so well accustomed herself to this idea that the throne of Poland occupied by another queen would have appeared to her a monstrous thing. She did not look forward with pleasure to the period of ascending it, but had, however, taken possession of the homage which was rendered her beforehand. Thus, without avowing it even to herself, she greatly exaggerated the supposed offences of Cinq-Mars, which the Queen had

expounded to her at St. Germain.

"You are as fresh as the roses in this bouquet," said the Queen. "Come, 'ma chere', are you ready? What means this pouting air? Come, let me fasten this earring. Do you not like these toys, eh? Will you have another set of ornaments?"

"Oh, no, Madame. I think that I ought not to decorate myself at all, for no one knows better than yourself how unhappy I am. Men are very cruel toward us!

"I have reflected on what you said, and all is now clear to me. Yes, it is quite true that he did not love me, for had he loved me he would have renounced an enterprise that gave me so much uneasiness. I told him, I remember, indeed, which was very decided," she added, with an important and even solemn air, "that he would be a rebel—yes, Madame, a rebel. I told him so at Saint-Eustache. But I see that your Majesty was right. I am very unfortunate! He had more ambition than love." Here a tear of pique escaped from her eyes, and rolled quickly down her cheek, as a pearl upon a rose.

"Yes, it is certain," she continued, fastening her bracelets; "and the greatest proof is that in the two months he has renounced his enterprise—you told me that you had saved him—he has not let me know the place of his retreat, while I during that time have been weeping, have been imploring all your power in his favor; have sought but a word that might inform me of his proceedings. I have thought but of him; and even now I refuse every day the throne of Poland, because I wish to prove to the end that I am constant, that you yourself can not make me disloyal to my attachment, far more serious than his, and that we are of higher worth than the men. But, however, I think I may attend this fete, since it is not a ball."

"Yes, yes, my dear child! come, come!" said the Queen, desirous of putting an end to this childish talk, which afflicted her all the more that it was herself who had encouraged it. "Come, you will see the union that prevails between the princes and the Cardinal, and we shall perhaps hear some good news." They departed.

When the two princesses entered the long galleries of the Palais-Cardinal, they were received and coldly saluted by the King and the minister, who, closely surrounded by silent courtiers, were playing at chess upon a small low table. All the ladies who entered with the Queen or followed her, spread through the apartments; and soon soft music sounded in one of the saloons—a gentle accompaniment to the thousand private conversations carried on round the play tables.

Near the Queen passed, saluting her, a young newly married couple—the happy Chabot and the beautiful Duchesse de Rohan. They seemed to shun the crowd, and to seek apart a moment to speak to each other of

themselves. Every one received them with a smile and looked after them with envy. Their happiness was expressed as strongly in the countenances of others as in their own.

Marie followed them with her eyes. "Still they are happy," she whispered to the Queen, remembering the censure which in her hearing had been thrown upon the match.

But without answering, Anne of Austria, fearful that in the crowd some inconsiderate expression might inform her young friend of the mournful event so interesting to her, placed herself with Marie behind the King. Monsieur, the Prince-Palatine, and the Duc de Bouillon came to speak to her with a gay and lively air. The second, however, casting upon Marie a severe and scrutinizing glance, said to her:

"Madame la Princesse, you are most surprisingly beautiful and gay this evening."

She was confused at these words, and at seeing the speaker walk away with a sombre air. She addressed herself to the Duc d'Orleans, who did not answer, and seemed not to hear her. Marie looked at the Queen, and thought she remarked paleness and disquiet on her features. Meantime, no one ventured to approach the minister, who was deliberately meditating his moves. Mazarin alone, leaning over his chair, followed all the strokes with a servile attention, giving gestures of admiration every time that the Cardinal played. Application to the game seemed to have dissipated for a moment the cloud that usually shaded the minister's brow. He had just advanced a tower, which placed Louis's king in that false position which is called "stalemate,"—a situation in which the ebony king, without being personally attacked, can neither advance nor retire in any direction. The Cardinal, raising his eyes, looked at his adversary and smiled with one corner of his mouth, not being able to avoid a secret analogy. Then, observing the dim eyes and dying countenance of the Prince, he whispered to Mazarin:

"Faith, I think he'll go before me. He is greatly changed."

At the same time he himself was seized with a long and violent cough, accompanied internally with the sharp, deep pain he so often felt in the side. At the sinister warning he put a handkerchief to his mouth, which he withdrew covered with blood. To hide it, he threw it under the table, and looked around him with a stern smile, as if to forbid observation. Louis XIII, perfectly insensible, did not make the least movement, beyond arranging his men for another game with a skeleton and trembling hand. There two dying men seemed to be throwing lots which should depart first.

At this moment a clock struck the hour of midnight. The King raised his head.

"Ah, ah!" he said; "this morning at twelve Monsieur le Grand had a

disagreeable time of it.”

A piercing shriek was uttered behind him. He shuddered, and threw himself forward, upsetting the table. Marie de Mantua lay senseless in the arms of the Queen, who, weeping bitterly, said in the King’s ear:

”Ah, Sire, your axe has a double edge.”

She then bestowed all her cares and maternal kisses upon the young Princess, who, surrounded by all the ladies of the court, only came to herself to burst into a torrent of tears. As soon as she opened her eyes, ”Alas! yes, my child,” said Anne of Austria. ”My poor girl, you are Queen of Poland.”

It has often happened that the same event which causes tears to flow in the palace of kings has spread joy without, for the people ever suppose that happiness reigns at festivals. There were five days’ rejoicings for the return of the minister, and every evening under the windows of the Palais-Cardinal and those of the Louvre pressed the people of Paris. The late disturbances had given them a taste for public movements. They rushed from one street to another with a curiosity at times insulting and hostile, sometimes walking in silent procession, sometimes sending forth loud peals of laughter or prolonged yells, of which no one understood the meaning. Bands of young men fought in the streets and danced in rounds in the squares, as if manifesting some secret hope of pleasure and some insensate joy, grievous to the upright heart.

It was remarkable that profound silence prevailed exactly in those places where the minister had ordered rejoicings, and that the people passed disdainfully before the illuminated facade of his palace. If some voices were raised, it was to read aloud in a sneering tone the legends and inscriptions with which the idiot flattery of some obscure writers had surrounded the portraits of the minister. One of these pictures was guarded by arquebusiers, who, however, could not preserve it from the stones which were thrown at it from a distance by unseen hands. It represented the Cardinal-Generalissimo wearing a casque surrounded by laurels. Above it was inscribed:

”Grand Duc: c’est justement que la France t’honore;
Ainsi que le dieu Mars dans Paris on t’adore.”

These fine phrases did not persuade the people that they were happy. They no more adored the Cardinal than they did the god Mars, but they accepted his fetes because they served as a covering for disorder. All Paris was in an uproar. Men with long beards, carrying torches, measures of wine, and two drinking-cups, which they knocked together with a great noise, went along, arm in arm, shouting in chorus with rude voices an old round of the League:.

”Reprenons la danse;

Allons, c'est assez.
Le printemps commence;
Les rois sont passes.

"Prenons quelque treve;
Nous sommes lasses.
Les rois de la feve
Nous ont harasses.

"Allons, Jean du Mayne,
Les rois sont passes.

"Les rois de la feve
Nous ont harasses.
Allons, Jean du Mayne,
Les rois sont passes."

The frightful bands who howled forth these words traversed the Quais and the Pont-Neuf, squeezing against the high houses, which then covered the latter, the peaceful citizens who were led there by simple curiosity. Two young men, wrapped in cloaks, thus thrown one against the other, recognized each other by the light of a torch placed at the foot of the statue of Henri IV, which had been lately raised.

"What! still at Paris?" said Corneille to Milton. "I thought you were in London."

"Hear you the people, Monsieur? Do you hear them? What is this ominous chorus,

'Les rois sont passes'?"

"That is nothing, Monsieur. Listen to their conversation."

"The parliament is dead," said one of the men; "the nobles are dead. Let us dance; we are the masters. The old Cardinal is dying. There is no longer any but the King and ourselves."

"Do you hear that drunken wretch, Monsieur?" asked Corneille. "All our epoch is in those words of his."

"What! is this the work of the minister who is called great among you, and even by other nations? I do not understand him."

"I will explain the matter to you presently," answered Corneille. "But first listen to the concluding part of this letter, which I received to-day. Draw near this light under the statue of the late King. We are alone. The crowd has passed. Listen!

"It was by one of those unforeseen circumstances which prevent the accomplishment of the noblest enterprises that we were not able to save MM. de Cinq-Mars and De Thou. We might have foreseen that, prepared for death by long meditation, they would themselves refuse our aid; but this idea did not occur to any of us. In the precipitation of our measures, we also committed the fault of dispersing ourselves too much in the crowd, so that we could not take a sudden resolution. I was unfortunately stationed near the scaffold; and I saw our unfortunate friends advance to the foot of it, supporting the poor Abbe Quillet, who was destined to behold the death of the pupil whose birth he had witnessed. He sobbed aloud, and had strength enough only to kiss the hands of the two friends. We all advanced, ready to throw ourselves upon the guards at the announced signal; but I saw with grief M. de Cinq-Mars cast his hat from him with an air of disdain. Our movement had been observed, and the Catalonian guard was doubled round the scaffold. I could see no more; but I heard much weeping around me. After the three usual blasts of the trumpet, the recorder of Lyons, on horseback at a little distance from the scaffold, read the sentence of death, to which neither of the prisoners listened. M. de Thou said to M. de Cinq-Mars:

"'Well, dear friend, which shall die first? Do you remember Saint-Gervais and Saint-Protais?'

"'Which you think best,' answered Cinq-Mars.

"The second confessor, addressing M. de Thou, said, 'You are the elder.'

"'True,' said M. de Thou; and, turning to M. le Grand, 'You are the most generous; you will show me the way to the glory of heaven.'

"'Alas!' said Cinq-Mars; 'I have opened to you that of the precipice; but let us meet death nobly, and we shall revel in the glory and happiness of heaven!'

"Hereupon he embraced him, and ascended the scaffold with surprising address and agility. He walked round the scaffold, and contemplated the whole of the great assembly with a calm countenance, which betrayed no sign of fear, and a serious and graceful manner. He then went round once more, saluting the people on every side, without appearing to recognize any of us, with a majestic and charming expression of face; he then knelt down, raising his eyes to heaven, adoring God, and recommending himself to Him. As he embraced the crucifix, the father confessor called to the people to pray for him; and M. le Grand, opening his arms, still holding his crucifix, made the same request to the people. Then he readily knelt before the block, holding the stake, placed his neck upon it, and asked the confessor, 'Father, is this right?' Then, while they

were cutting off his hair, he raised his eyes to heaven, and said, sighing:

”My God, what is this world? My God, I offer thee my death as a satisfaction for my sins!”

”What are you waiting for? What are you doing there?” he said to the executioner, who had not yet taken his axe from an old bag he had brought with him. His confessor, approaching, gave him a medallion; and he, with an incredible tranquillity of mind, begged the father to hold the crucifix before his eyes, which he would not allow to be bound. I saw the two trembling hands of the Abbe Quillet, who raised the crucifix. At this moment a voice, as clear and pure as that of an angel, commenced the ‘Ave, maris stella’. In the universal silence I recognized the voice of M. de Thou, who was at the foot of the scaffold; the people repeated the sacred strain. M. de Cinq-Mars clung more tightly to the stake; and I saw a raised axe, made like the English axes. A terrible cry of the people from the Place, the windows, and the towers told me that it had fallen, and that the head had rolled to the ground. I had happily strength enough left to think of his soul, and to commence a prayer for him.

”I mingled it with that which I heard pronounced aloud by our unfortunate and pious friend De Thou. I rose and saw him spring upon the scaffold with such promptitude that he might almost have been said to fly. The father and he recited a psalm; he uttered it with the ardor of a seraphim, as if his soul had borne his body to heaven. Then, kneeling down, he kissed the blood of Cinq-Mars as that of a martyr, and became himself a greater martyr. I do not know whether God was pleased to grant him this last favor; but I saw with horror that the executioner, terrified no doubt at the first blow he had given, struck him upon the top of his head, whither the unfortunate young man raised his hand; the people sent forth a long groan, and advanced against the executioner. The poor wretch, terrified still more, struck him another blow, which only cut the skin and threw him upon the scaffold, where the executioner rolled upon him to despatch him. A strange event terrified the people as much as the horrible spectacle. M. de Cinq-Mars’ old servant held his horse as at a military funeral; he had stopped at the foot of the scaffold, and like a man paralyzed, watched his master to the end, then suddenly, as if struck by the same axe, fell dead under the blow which had taken off his master’s head.

”I write these sad details in haste, on board a Genoese galley, into which Fontrailles, Gondi, Entraigues, Beauvau, Du Lude, myself, and others of the chief conspirators have retired. We are going to England to await until time shall deliver France from the tyrant whom we could not destroy. I abandon forever the service of the base Prince who betrayed us.

"MONTRESOR"

"Such," continued Corneille, "has been the fate of these two young men whom you lately saw so powerful. Their last sigh was that of the ancient monarchy. Nothing more than a court can reign here henceforth; the nobles and the senates are destroyed."

"And this is your pretended great man!" said Milton. "What has he sought to do? He would, then, create republics for future ages, since he destroys the basis of your monarchy?"

"Look not so far," answered Corneille; "he only seeks to reign until the end of his life. He has worked for the present and not for the future; he has continued the work of Louis XI; and neither one nor the other knew what they were doing."

The Englishman smiled.

"I thought," he said, "that true genius followed another path. This man has shaken all that he ought to have supported, and they admire him! I pity your nation."

"Pity it not!" exclaimed Corneille, warmly; "a man passes away, but a people is renewed. This people, Monsieur, is gifted with an immortal energy, which nothing can destroy; its imagination often leads it astray, but superior reason will ever ultimately master its disorders."

The two young and already great men walked, as they conversed, upon the space which separates the statue of Henri IV from the Place Dauphine; they stopped a moment in the centre of this Place.

"Yes, Monsieur," continued Corneille, "I see every evening with what rapidity a noble thought finds its echo in French hearts; and every evening I retire happy at the sight. Gratitude prostrates the poor people before this statue of a good king! Who knows what other monument another passion may raise near this? Who can say how far the love of glory will lead our people? Who knows that in the place where we now are, there may not be raised a pyramid taken from the East?"

"These are the secrets of the future," said Milton. "I, like yourself, admire your impassioned nation; but I fear them for themselves. I do not well understand them; and I do not recognize their wisdom when I see them lavishing their admiration upon men such as he who now rules you. The love of power is very puerile; and this man is devoured by it, without having force enough to seize it wholly. By an utter absurdity, he is a tyrant under a master. Thus has this colossus, never firmly balanced, been all but overthrown by the finger of a boy. Does that indicate genius? No, no! when genius condescends to quit the lofty regions of its true home for a human passion, at least, it should grasp that passion

in its entirety. Since Richelieu only aimed at power, why did he not, if he was a genius, make himself absolute master of power? I am going to see a man who is not yet known, and whom I see swayed by this miserable ambition; but I think that he will go farther. His name is Cromwell!"