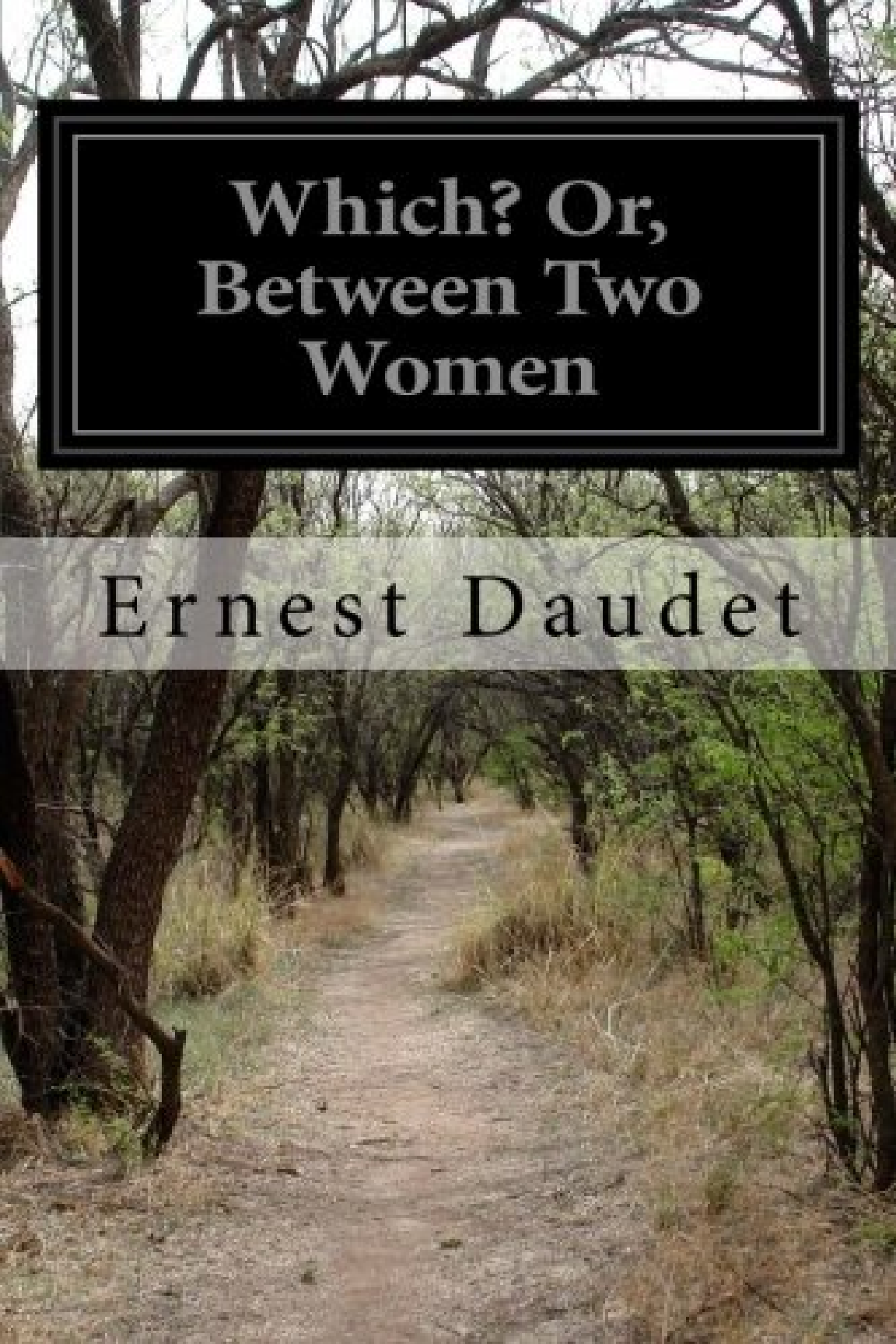

Which? Or, Between Two Women
Ernest Daudet

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Which? Or, Between Two Women

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Which? Or, Between Two Women

Author: Ernest Daudet

Translator: Laura E. Kendall

Release date: June 14, 2007 [eBook #21838]
Most recently updated: January 2, 2021

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/21838

Credits: Produced by Barbara Tozier, Bill Tozier, Martin Pettit and
the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at
https://www.pgdp.net

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK
WHICH? OR, BETWEEN TWO WOMEN ***

WHICH?

OR,

BETWEEN TWO WOMEN.

BY ERNEST DAUDET.

**TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY LAURA E. KENDALL.**

"WHICH? OR, BETWEEN TWO WOMEN," is the latest and most powerful novel from the pen of the celebrated French novelist, Ernest Daudet. It is fully worthy of its famous author's great reputation, for a more absorbing and thrilling romance has seldom been published. The interest begins at once with the

flight of the gypsy mother with her child and her death in the Château de Chamondrin, where the friendless little one is received and cared for. The plot is simple and without mystery, but never, perhaps, were so many stirring incidents crowded within the covers of a novel. The scene is laid in Paris and the country, and some of the most striking events of the times are vividly reproduced. The reader is given a very realistic glimpse of Paris, and part of the action takes place in that historic prison, the Conciergerie, where nobles and others accused of crimes against the French Republic were confined. History and fiction are adroitly mingled in the excellent novel, which may be termed a double love story in that two women are passionately attached to one man. On the thrilling adventures and heart experiences of this trio the romance turns, and the reader's attention is kept constantly riveted to the exciting narrative. The other characters are all naturally drawn, and the book as a whole is one of the best and most absorbing novels that can be found. It will delight everybody.

NEW YORK:
W. L. ALLISON COMPANY, Publishers,
1893.

COPYRIGHT:
BY T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS.
1887.

WHICH?

"WHICH? OR, BETWEEN TWO WOMEN," *is the title of a new, very thrilling and intensely interesting novel, by Ernest Daudet, one of the best known and most widely read of the living French novelists. A highly romantic, attractive and touching love story, in which a gypsy girl of great beauty and heroism, named Dolores, and Antoinette de Mirandol, an heiress, are rivals for the possession of Philip de Chamondrin, the hero, forms the*

main theme, and it is most skilfully and effectively handled. About this double romance of the heart are clustered a series of exceedingly stirring episodes, many of which are historic. The adventures of Philip, Dolores and Antoinette in Paris are graphically described and hold the reader spell-bound. The book is highly dramatic from beginning to end, and especially so that portion where the Conciergerie prison and its noble inmates are depicted. Very stirring scenes also are the attack on the Château de Chamondrin, Coursegol's struggle with Vauquelas and Bridoul's rescue of the condemned prisoners on the Place de la Révolution. But the entire novel is exceedingly spirited, exciting and absorbing, and every character is finely drawn. "Which? or, Between Two Women," should be read by all who relish an excellent novel.

CONTENTS.

I. THE BOHEMIANS
II. THE CHATEAU DE CHAMONDRIN
III. THE CHILDHOOD OF DOLORES
IV. PERTAINING TO LOVE MATTERS
V. IN WHICH HISTORY IS MINGLED WITH ROMANCE
VI. PARIS IN 1792
VII. CITIZEN JEAN VAUQUELAS
VIII. AN EPISODE OF THE EMIGRATION
IX. THE MOVING CURTAIN

X. COURSEGOL'S EXPLOITS
XI. THE CONCIERGERIE
XII. ANTOINETTE DE MIRANDOL
XIII. LOVE'S CONFLICTS
XIV. THE THUNDERBOLT
XV. THE LAST FAREWELL
XVI. IN THE CHÉVREUSE VALLEY

WHICH?

BY ERNEST DAUDET.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOHEMIANS.

Early one morning in the month of March, 1770, a woman bearing in her arms a new-born infant, was hastening along the left bank of the Garden, a small river that rises in the Cevennes, traverses the department of the Gard, and empties into the Rhone, not far from Beaucaire. It would be difficult to find more varied and picturesque scenery than that which borders this stream whose praises have been chanted by Florian, and which certainly should not be

unknown to fame since it was here the Romans constructed the Pont du Gard, that gigantic aqueduct which conveyed the waters of Eure to Nîmes.

The woman of whom we speak was at that moment very near the famous Pont du Gard—which is only a short distance from the spot on which the little village of Lafous now stands, and directly opposite Remoulins, a town of considerable size situated on the right bank of the river—and at a point where the highway from Nîmes to Avignon intersects the road leading up from the villages that dot the river banks. The woman paused on reaching the place where these roads meet, not to take breath, but to decide which course she should pursue. But she did not hesitate long. After casting an anxious glance behind her, she hastened on again, directing her steps toward the Pont du Gard, which was distant not more than half a mile.

The air was very cold; the wind had been blowing furiously all night, and at day-break it was still raging, ruffling the water, bending the trees, snatching up great clouds of dust, and moaning and shrieking through the clumps of willows that bordered the stream, while immense masses of gray and white clouds scudding rapidly across the sky, imparted to it the appearance of a tempest-tossed ocean. Some of these clouds were so low that they seemed almost to touch the earth as they rushed wildly on, pursued by the fury of the gale, and assuming strange and fantastic forms in their erratic course. Undeterred by the violence of the tempest, the stranger advanced steadily, apparently with but one aim in view: to reach her journey's end with all possible expedition in order to protect her sleeping infant from the inclemency of the weather.

She was a young woman, not yet twenty years of age. Her luxuriant golden hair hung in wild disorder from the brilliant-hued kerchief that was bound about her head; and her garments were as remarkable for their peculiarity of form as for their diversity of color. She wore a short, full dress of blue de laine bordered with yellow, and confined at the waist by a red silk girdle. Over this, she wore a gray cape of coarse woollen stuff. Her legs were bare, and her feet were protected only by rude sandals, held in place by leathern thongs. Many rents, more or less neatly repaired by the aid of thread or if material of another color, revealed the fact that these faded garments had been in long and constant use. Even the sandals were so dilapidated that the feet of their wearer were upon the ground. Her whole attire, in short, was wretched and poverty-stricken in the extreme.

But no face could be more charming. Her pure and delicate features shone out from their framework of golden hair with marvellous beauty, in spite of the sorrow and fatigue which had left their impress upon her face. Her eyes, shaded by long dark lashes and dewy with tears, were remarkably beautiful and expressive. The sunburn that disfigured her charming face, her exquisitely formed hands and her tiny feet, which were scarcely larger than those of a child, extended no further. Upon those portions of her body that were protected by her clothing, her skin was white and delicate, and scarcely colored by the young blood that coursed through her veins. Such was this woman, and it would have been difficult to divine her origin if the tambourine that hung at her girdle, and the hieroglyphics embroidered upon her sleeves had not revealed it beyond all question.

Tiepoletta, for that was her name, belonged to one of those wandering tribes that leave Spain or Hungary each spring to spend some months in Southern France, advancing as far as Beaucaire, Avignon and Arles—sleeping as fate wills, under the arches of bridges, in tumbledown barns, or in the open air; living sometimes by theft, but oftener by their own exertions; the men dealing in mules and in rags; the women telling fortunes, captivating young peasants, extorting money from them, and selling glassware of their own manufacture—the children imploring charity. These people, scattered throughout Europe—these people, whose manner of life is so mysterious and whose origin is more mysterious still—seem to be closely allied both to the Moors and to the Hindoos, not only in appearance but in their phlegm, fanaticism and rapacity. Such of our readers as have travelled in Southern Europe must have frequently encountered these Bohemians, who come from no one knows where only to disappear again like the swallows at the approach of winter.

Their language is a mixture of the Spanish and the Sclavonic. Some jabber a little French. The men are generally athletic, very dark complexioned and have strong, energetic features, wavy hair and sonorous voices. The women, when young, are remarkably beautiful; but like all who lead an exposed and migratory life, they become hideous before they are thirty. They live in families or tribes, each family consisting of fifteen or twenty members, and obeying the orders of the oldest woman, who is dignified by the title of queen, and from whose decisions there is no appeal, though she, in turn, owes allegiance to one great queen. These Bohemians are tolerated in the countries through which they pass; but people seldom enter into any closer relations with them

than are necessary to effect the purchase of a horse or mule, or to obtain a prediction concerning the future. They know the feeling of repulsion they inspire, so they seldom approach thickly settled districts, and only the women and children venture into the villages to solicit alms.

It was to this race that Tiepoletta belonged; and though the color of her hair, the delicacy of her features and the fairness of her skin did not accord with her supposed origin, her memory hinted at nothing that did not harmonize with what had been told her concerning her parentage. It is not the aim of this story to investigate the truth or the falsity of this assertion. That Tiepoletta had Bohemian blood in her veins; that she had, as a child, been stolen from her friends; that she was the fruit of some mysterious love affair; all these hypotheses were equally plausible, but there was nothing to prove that the first was not the true one, nor had her imagination ever engaged in a search for any other; but the people of her tribe seemed to suspect that she was of different blood, for they evidently regarded her with aversion. Preserved from the pernicious counsels and examples of those around her by some secret instinct, she had remained pure. With the aid of a book picked up on the roadside, she had learned to read and to speak a few French words. This was more than enough to convince her companions that she was haughty and proud. When she was a child, they beat her unmercifully because she refused to beg. As she grew older, she had a most cruel enemy in her beauty, which was the cause of much of her misery. Subjected to temptations to which she saw young girls around her yield without a thought, she escaped only by a miracle, but it brought down upon her, anger, hatred and cruel vengeance. She

increased these by refusing to choose a husband from among the young men with whom she had been reared.

They resolved to compel her to marry one of her companions. She fled, but they succeeded in recapturing her without much difficulty. They then shut her up, telling her that she should remain a prisoner until she promised obedience. It was the most trying time of her whole life. Beset on every side, beaten, buffetted, tyrannized over, fed on food that was only fit for a dog, she would certainly have died in the struggle had not destiny sent her a protector in the person of Borachio, a young man about twenty-five years of age, whose heart was touched by her misfortunes.

He was so bold, so strong and so terrible in his anger that the whole tribe stood in awe of him. He took compassion on their victim and compelled her tormentors to cease their persecution. Tiepoletta was not ungrateful, and she afterward married her preserver to the great disgust of the young girls of the tribe, with whom Borachio was a great favorite.

According to custom, the queen solemnized the marriage without delay; and at nineteen Tiepoletta had a master whose coarse tenderness was sweet, indeed, in comparison with the harsh treatment to which she had been subjected heretofore. But this happiness was destined to be of short duration. Borachio was found dead upon the roadside one morning, his breast pierced by eight dagger thrusts. Envious of his beauty, his authority and his lovely young wife, one of his comrades had assassinated him and made Tiepoletta a widow some time before she was to become a mother. Six months went by,

during which they seemed to respect her grief. Then, in a cave near the Pont du Gard, she gave birth to a daughter. The very next evening, while she was lying, half asleep, on some straw on the floor of the cave, with her child beside her, she overheard a conversation that was going on outside. They were talking of her. She listened eagerly. Picture her fear and horror when she heard them scheming to deprive her of her infant and then drive her from their midst, thus ridding the tribe of a useless member and retaining Borachio's child. It was Corcovita, the mother of the poor heart-broken creature, who was the strongest advocate of this shameful outrage.

"We shall leave here to-morrow to go to Avignon," said she. "We must obtain possession of the child and then find an opportunity to abandon Tiepoletta on the road."

This plan gave general satisfaction, and Corcovita was charged with its execution. Tiepoletta had heard enough. Wild with terror she endeavored to devise some means of escape from this new peril, and during the long watches of the night she finally resolved to flee with her child. The next morning at day-break the little band was on its way. A seat in the carriage was offered to Tiepoletta. She accepted it, knowing she must save all her strength if she would carry her plan into successful execution.

After a long march, they paused at nightfall to encamp near Avignon. Tiepoletta, a prey to the most intense anxiety, had detected the interchange of divers signs that convinced her they were only waiting for her to fall asleep to steal her child from her. She watched. At eight o'clock the men had gone

to stroll around the suburbs of the city; the old women were dozing; the young people were laughing and teasing one another, and the children were sound asleep. Tiepoletta profited by a moment when no one was observing her to steal from the camp on tip-toe. She proceeded perhaps a hundred paces in this way, then, seized with sudden fright, she began to run, holding her child pressed close to her heart; fancying she heard her mother's voice behind her, she rushed wildly on, never pausing until she sank exhausted on the lonely road.

She had pursued her flight for more than an hour without even asking herself where she was going, and with no thought save that of escaping from her persecutors. She was now beyond their reach. Still she could not dismiss her fears. Dreading pursuit, she soon resumed her journey, turning her steps in the direction of the Pont du Gard, in the hope that her former companions would not think of looking for her there, and that she might find in the cave they had just deserted a little straw upon which she could rest her weary limbs, and some fragments of food that would keep her alive until she had decided upon her future course. She walked all night. When she found herself near the Pont du Gard day was breaking.

The wind was still blowing; but the clouds had scattered before its violence like a flock of frightened sheep, and a pale light was beginning to shine upon the drenched fields. Gloomy and majestic in its century-old impassibility, the Pont du Gard—a colossus upheld by two mountains, and accustomed to defy alike the tempest and the ravages of time—seemed to laugh at the gale which beat against its massive pillars and rushed into its gigantic arches

with a sound like thunder. These strong yet graceful arches seem so many frames through which the astonished eyes of the traveller seize the landscape bit by bit: the quiet valley, watered by the Gardon, the luxuriant green of the willows, the clear waves dancing along over their sandy bed, the blue sky reflected there, the mountains that border the horizon.

Nothing can be more wildly beautiful than this secluded spot, which is as silent and lonely as if it had never been trodden by the foot of man. Judging from the prodigality with which nature has lavished her riches here, it would seem that she wishes the sole credit of this superb panorama. The massive aqueduct alone attests the existence of man. Looming up in its mighty grandeur—the imperishable monument of a departed civilization, and the only one of its kind—the beholder feels that it is no unworthy rival of the works of Deity.

But the majestic scene made no impression upon Tiepoletta. That poor creature, fainting with hunger and fatigue, did not even notice the grandeur around her. With half-closed eyes, arms cramped by the weight of the precious burden upon which she now maintained her hold only by a superhuman effort, and lips parched by the wind, she plodded on with a measured, automatic step. She was hungry; she was thirsty; she was shivering with the cold. Her feet were swollen; but her sufferings were forgotten when she neared her journey's end. She passed under the Pont du Gard. The path on the other side of the aqueduct winds along between the base of the cliffs and the bed of the stream. Under one of these cliffs nature has hewn out a grotto of such liberal dimensions that the people of the neighborhood

assemble there on fête days to dance and make merry.

It was there the Bohemians had encamped a few days before; it was there Tiepoletta had given birth to the tiny creature whom she had just rescued from the heartless wretches who had conspired to despoil a mother of her child. This comfortless cavern where she had suffered so much seemed to her now a Paradise, in which she would be content to dwell forever.

She rushed into the cave. The sunlight illumined only a small portion of the grotto; the rest of it was veiled in shadow. Tiepoletta glanced around her and uttered a cry of joy. In one dim corner she discerned a little straw, enough, however, to serve as a bed. She laid her sleeping infant upon it, covered the child with her mantle; then gathering up a few bits of bread and some half-picked bones which had been left upon the floor of the cave, she proceeded to appease her hunger. When this was satisfied, she ran to the river, quenched her thirst, bathed her sore and bleeding feet, and then returned to the cave after walking about awhile in the sunlight to warm herself. Flinging herself down upon the straw, she covered herself with her tattered garments as best she could, and drawing her child to her gave it the breast. The little one roused from its slumber uttered a moan and applied its pale lips to the bosom upon which it was dependent for sustenance; but it soon exhausted the supply of milk, whose abundance had been greatly diminished by the fatigues of the preceding night, and again fell asleep.

Then, in the midst of this profound silence and solitude, Tiepoletta, providentially rescued from her

persecutors, experienced an intense joy that made her entirely forget the hardships she had just undergone. There were undoubtedly new misfortunes in store for her. She must, without delay, find some way to earn her own living and that of her child; but their wants were few. Birds and Bohemians are accustomed to scanty fare. She could work: she was accustomed to labor: she was inured to fatigue. Besides, who would be so hard-hearted as to refuse her bread when she said: "I am willing to earn it." This artless creature, whose ambition was so modest, consoled her troubled mind with these hopes, and trembled only when she thought of those from whom she had just fled. No one had ever told Tiepoletta that there was a God. She did not know how to pray; nevertheless, in the refuge she had found, her soul lifted itself up in fervent adoration to the unknown God whose power had protected her, though she was ignorant of His existence and of His name. It was in the midst of this feverish exaltation of spirit that sleep overcame her before she had even thought to ask herself what she should do on awaking.

For several hours she slumbered on undisturbed, but suddenly she woke. She fancied she heard in her sleep a frightful noise like the rumbling of heavy thunder, a noise which mingled with the shrieks of the wind and finally drowned them entirely. At first she thought she must be the victim of some terrible dream. But the sound grew louder and louder. This was no dream; it was reality. She sprang to her feet, seeking some loophole of escape from the unknown peril that threatened her. Above the tumult she could distinguish human cries. She thought these must come from her pursuers. But no; these distant voices were calling for succor. She caught up her child and ran from the cave. A grand but terrible sight met her

gaze and riveted her to the spot in motionless horror.

The Gardon had overflowed its banks. With the rapidity that characterizes its sudden inundations and transforms this peaceful stream into the most impetuous of torrents, the water had risen over the banks that border it and flooded the fields, sweeping away everything that stood in its path. This water now laved the feet of the young Bohemian; and as far as the eye could reach she could see nothing but a mass of boiling, turbulent waves, bearing on their crests floating fragments of houses and furniture, as well as trees, animals and occasionally human bodies. The cries she had heard came from some women who had been overtaken by the torrent while engaged in washing their linen at the river, and who had taken refuge upon a rock on the side of the now inundated road.

The river continued to rise. This immense volume of water was vainly seeking an outlet through the narrow defile formed by the hills and which ordinarily sufficed for the bed of the Gardon; but, finding the passage inadequate now, it dashed itself violently against the rocks and against the supports of the aqueduct which haughtily defied the furious flood; then, converted into a mass of seething foam, it returned over the same road it had just traversed until it met the new waves that were being constantly formed by the current. It was the shock of this meeting that caused the noise which had roused Tiepoletta from her slumber. A stormy sea could not have appeared more angry, or formed more formidable billows. One might have called it a fragmentary episode of the universal deluge.

Five minutes more than sufficed to give Tiepoletta an

idea of the extent of the inundation. She stood with wild eyes and unbound hair, the picture of terror and dismay. Suddenly an enormous wave broke not far from her with the roar of a wild beast, and the water dashed up to her very feet. She pressed her child closer to her breast and recoiled. Another wave dashed up, blinding her with its spray. Would the water invade the cave? Her blood froze in her veins. Frenzy seized her. This new misfortune, added to those she had suffered during the past three days, was more than she could bear. From that moment she acted under the influence of actual madness caused by her terror. She must flee. But by what road? To reach either of the neighboring villages was impossible. The foaming waters covered the entire plain.

Suddenly Tiepoletta recollected that on the summit of the hill above her there was a château which the Bohemians had visited sometimes in pursuit of alms. She could reach it by means of a broad footpath that intersected the road only a few yards from the grotto. It was there she resolved to go for shelter. But to reach this path she must walk through the raging flood. She did not hesitate. Each moment of delay aggravated her peril, and might place some insurmountable barrier between her and her only chance of salvation. She lifted her skirts, fastened her child upon her back and bravely waded into the torrent.

What agony she endured during that short journey. The water was higher than her waist; the ground was slippery; the current, rapid and capricious. It required an indomitable will to sustain her—to keep her from yielding twenty times to the might of this unchained monster. Frequently she was obliged to

pause in order to regain her breath. The struggle lasted only ten minutes, but those ten minutes seemed so many ages. At last she reached the path leading to the château. She was saved!

She let fall her tattered skirts about her slender limbs, and, without wasting time in looking back upon the perilous road she had just traversed, she hastened up the hill. A few moments later she reached the door of the château in a plight most pitiable to behold. It was time. A moment more and her limbs trembling with excitement and exhaustion, would have refused to sustain her. She fell on her knees and deposited her burden upon some tufts of heather; then with a mighty effort she seized and pulled a chain suspended at the side of the door. The sound of a bell was instantly heard. As if her strength had only waited until this moment to desert her, she fell to the ground unconscious at the very instant the door opened.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHATEAU DE CHAMONDRIN.

The man who appeared at the door was young, and, in spite of his swarthy complexion and formidable moustache, his features and the expression of his eyes indicated frankness and benevolence. His garb was that of a soldier rather than a servant, but the arms of the Marquis de Chamondrin, the owner of

the château, were embroidered in silver upon it. On seeing the unconscious Tiepoletta and the child so quietly sleeping beside her, he could not repress a cry of astonishment and dismay.

"What is it, Coursegol?" inquired a gentleman who had followed him.

"Look, sir," replied Coursegol, pointing to Tiepoletta.

"Is she dead?" exclaimed the Marquis, springing forward; then, deeply impressed by the beauty of the unconscious girl, he knelt beside her and placed his hand upon her heart. It still throbbed, but so feebly that he could scarcely count its pulsations. The Marquis rose.

"She lives," said he, "but I do not know that we shall save her. Quick, Coursegol, have her and her child brought in and apply restoratives."

"Oh, the child is doing very well," replied the servitor. "All it needs is a little milk; for to-day, one of our goats must be its nurse."

As he spoke Coursegol summoned a servant to whom he confided the infant; then, taking the mother in his strong arms, he carried her up-stairs and placed her on a bed.

Coursegol was thirty years of age. Born in the château, where his father and his grandfather before him had served the Marquis de Chamondrin, he had shared the childish sports of the lad who afterwards became his master. He absolutely worshipped the Marquis, regarding him with a veritable idolatry that was compounded of respect and of love. Outside of the château and its occupants, there was nothing that could interest or attract this honest fellow. His heart,

his intelligence and his life were consecrated to his master's service. In the neighboring villages he so lauded the name of Chamondrin that no one dared to let fall in his presence any word that did not redound to the glory and honor of Coursegol's idolized master. He had no particular office at the château, but he superintended everything, assuming the duties of lodge-keeper, gardener, major-domo and not unfrequently those of cook. It was he who instructed the son of the Marquis in the arts of horsemanship and of fencing, for he had served two years in His Majesty's cavalry and thoroughly understood these accomplishments. He was also an adept in the manufacture of whistles from willow twigs, in the training of dogs, falcons and ferrets, in snaring birds, in the capture of butterflies and in skipping stones.

He had already begun to teach Philip—his master's son, a bright boy of five—all these accomplishments. He had some knowledge of medicine also; and, as he had spent much of his life in the fields, he had become acquainted with the names and properties of many plants and herbs; and this knowledge had often been called into requisition for the benefit of many of the people as well as the animals of the neighborhood. Never had his skill been needed more than now, for poor Tiepoletta had not recovered consciousness, and her rigidity and the ghastly pallor which had overspread her features seemed to indicate that she had already been struck with death.

Anxious to resuscitate her, Coursegol set energetically to work, but not without emotion. It was the first time he had ever exercised his skill on a woman, and this pure and lovely face had made a

deep impression on his heart. He would willingly have given a generous share of his own blood to hear Tiepoletta speak, to see her smile upon him.

"Look, sir," said he, "how beautiful she is! She certainly cannot be twenty years old. Her skin is as fine as satin, and what hair! Could anything be more lovely?"

While he spoke, Coursegol was endeavoring to unclose the teeth of the gypsy in order to introduce a few drops of warm, sweetened wine through her pallid lips. Then he rubbed the feet of the unfortunate woman vigorously with hot flannels.

"They are sore and swollen!" he added. "She must have come a long distance!"

"Is she recovering?" asked the Marquis, who stood by, watching Coursegol's efforts.

"I do not know; but see, sir, it seemed to me that she moved."

The Marquis came nearer. As he did so Tiepoletta opened her eyes. She looked anxiously about her, then faintly murmured a few words in a strange tongue.

"She speaks," said the Marquis, "but what does she say? She seems frightened and distressed."

"She wishes to see her child," exclaimed Coursegol, departing on the run.

During his absence Tiepoletta regained her senses sufficiently to recollect what had happened; but she was so weak that she could scarcely speak. Still, when Coursegol appeared with the child in his arms,

she smiled and extended her hands.

"Kiss her, but do not take her," said the Marquis. "You are not strong enough for that yet."

Tiepoletta understood and obeyed. Then she said gently in bad French:

"My Dolores."

"Dolores! That is a pretty name!" remarked Coursegol, pleased to hear the poor woman speak.

"You will keep her, will you not?" said Tiepoletta, entreatingly. "You will not give her to those who will maltreat her? Make an honest girl of her. Teach her not to scorn the poor gypsies. Tell her that her father and her mother belonged to that despised race."

She uttered these phrases slowly, speaking, not without difficulty, French words that would clearly express her meaning.

"Have no fears," replied Coursegol. "The child shall want for nothing. Rest in peace."

"Yes," she repeated, "rest in death."

"She talks of dying!" exclaimed the Marquis. The words had hardly left his lips when the woman rose and extended her arms. Her features contracted; her large eyes seemed to start from her head; she placed her hand upon her heart, uttered a shrill cry and fell back upon the bed. It was the work of an instant. Coursegol and the Marquis both sprang forward, lifted her, and endeavored to restore her, but in vain. The unfortunate Tiepoletta was dead. Her heart had broken like a fragile vase, shattered by the successive misfortunes she had undergone. A great tear fell

from the eyes of Coursegol.

"Poor woman!" said he.

"What shall we do with the child?" inquired the Marquis. "I would like to keep her and rear her. Heaven has sent her here; but who will act as a mother to the poor little waif? The condition of the Marquise renders it impossible for her to do so."

As he spoke, his voice trembled with emotion. It was not only because he was touched by the sight before him, but because the words he had uttered reminded him of his own misfortunes.

"If Monsieur le Marquis would but grant my request," said Coursegol, timidly.

"What is your request?"

"I have no wife, no child. The little apartment that I occupy is very gloomy when M. Philip is not with me. If you will consent to it, Dolores shall be my daughter."

"Your daughter, but who would take care of her?"

"Oh! I will attend to that. I know some very worthy people in Remoulins. The woman has a young child. She will have milk enough for this little thing too. I will entrust the child to her for a time."

"Very well; I have no objection, Coursegol," replied the Marquis. "Take the child, if you wish. As for the mother, may her soul rest in peace! She probably had no faith in religion; but I am sure she was guilty of no sin. I shall request the curé of Remoulins to allow her body to repose in his cemetery. I will now inform the authorities of what has occurred."

With these words, the Marquis left the room; and Coursegol, after covering the face of the dead with reverent hands, knelt and prayed for her as well as for the orphan who had been confided to his care.

The Château de Chamondrin was scarcely a century old. Erected on the site of a feudal castle which had been demolished because it threatened to fall into ruins, the present structure was destitute of the massive towers, moats and drawbridges that characterize the ancient castle. The building was square and enclosed an immense court; it was only two stories high, and the upper story was surrounded by a veranda. Such had been the very simple plan executed by the architect; and the result had been an unpretentious abode, but one to which the color of the bricks used in its construction, the delicate columns that supported the windows and doors and the graceful pavilions placed at each of the four corners lent an air of extreme elegance.

The building occupied the entire plateau on the brow of the hill and commanded a superb view of the Garden; while the park and farm-lands, vineyards and forests pertaining to the château covered the hill itself. This property was now the only possession of the house of Chamondrin, one of the oldest in Languedoc and Provence. It was not always thus. There had been a time when "As rich as a Chamondrin" was a proverb in the region thereabout. In those days this illustrious family had countless vassals and unbounded wealth, and enjoyed an income that enabled it for many successive generations to play a conspicuous rôle, first at the Court of Provence and later at the Court of France. The grandfather and father of the present Marquis

lived to see the end of this proverbial opulence. They both led careers of extravagance and dissipation, taking part in all the gayeties and follies of the court. The grandfather was one of the favorite companions of Philippe d'Orleans; and wine, cards and women killed him when he should have been still in the prime of life.

His son did not learn wisdom from his father's example. He in his turn became the friend of the Regent, and to repair his shattered fortunes he engaged, at the advice of Lau, in those disastrous financial enterprises that paved the way for the Revolution. He failed completely in his ventures, left Paris insolvent, and took refuge in the Château de Chamondrin, where he hoped to escape the wrath of his creditors. But they complained to the king, and brought such influence to bear upon him that Louis XV., the Well-beloved, who had just ascended the throne, informed the Marquis de Chamondrin that he would allow him three months in which to choose between the payment of his debts and incarceration in the Bastile. The Marquis did not hesitate long. He sold all his property with the exception of this château and paid his debts. But when this plebeian duty was accomplished, it left him in receipt of an extremely modest income. Poverty had fallen upon this house at the very time that the favor of the king was withdrawn from it, and this two-fold misfortune was quickly followed by the birth of a son and the loss of his wife.

These afflictions completely prostrated this man who was wholly unprepared to meet them. He shut himself up in his château, and there, far from the pleasures for which he pined, far from the friends who had forgotten him, cursing God and man for his

misfortunes, he lapsed into a misanthropy that rendered him nervous and eccentric almost to madness. He lived twenty years in this way, apparently taking no pleasure or interest in his son, whose youth was gloomy and whose education was entrusted entirely to the curé of a neighboring village. He died in 1765, in the middle of the eighteenth century, the first half of which had proved so fatal to the prosperity of his house.

His son, Hector—the same who had sheltered Tiepoletta—found himself, when he became of age, the owner of a name famous in the courts of Europe and upon many a field of battle, of an income of five thousand pounds and of the Château de Chamondrin. He was a gentle, serious young man of very simple tastes. He quickly resigned himself to the situation. After a close examination of the condition of affairs, he resolved to devote his life and all his efforts to the restoration of the glory of his name. He married, two years after the death of his father, the daughter of an impoverished Provençal nobleman, a lady whose domestic virtues seemed likely to aid him in the execution of his plans. He brought his wife home the day after their marriage and then said to her:

"My dear Edmée, you have entered a family which for the past forty years has been subjected to reverses which can only be repaired by great self-denial on our part. We cannot hope to enjoy the fruits of our labors ourselves, but our children, should God grant us any, may enjoy them, and it is for their sakes that we must endeavor to restore the house of Chamondrin to its former splendor and opulence; and since you have consented to share my humble lot I hope that you will unite your efforts with mine to lay aside each year a sum that will enable our

oldest son, when he arrives at the age of manhood, to make a respectable appearance at court where he will perhaps be fortunate enough to win the king's favor, our only hope."

"You will ever find me ready to second you in your efforts," replied the young wife.

A son and a daughter were born to them during the two years that followed. Nor were these their only blessings. The crops were abundant and their savings considerable. The life of the young couple was serene and happy. The Marquis was hopeful; the Marquise, a charming and most lovable creature, shared his hopes. Undoubtedly their life in this isolated château was often lonely and monotonous. The winters were very long; but the Marquis read a great deal, hunted and superintended his farms with the diligence of a peasant. The Marquise, too, was obliged to have a finger in the pie, to use a common expression. She directed the affairs of her household with as much care and economy as the plainest bourgeoise and seemed to live only to second the efforts of her husband. If resignation is the chief element of happiness, they were happy at the Château de Chamondrin.

Four years passed in this way. Little Philip was growing finely; he had passed safely through the perils of teething and was beginning to talk.

"We will make a fine gentleman of him," said the Marquis. "He will create a sensation at court; the king will give him command of a regiment, and he will marry some rich heiress. As for this young lady," he added, caressing his daughter who was named Martha, "if we cannot give her a dowry we will obtain an appointment as lady abbess for her."

The Marquise encouraged her dear Hector in these projects with her sweetest smile; but a terrible accident, followed by a catastrophe no less horrible, destroyed these delightful dreams and brought desolation to this happy home.

Towards the close of the year 1769, Martha, the youngest child, began to lose her fine color and faded so rapidly that her parents became alarmed. They passed long nights at the bedside of the little sufferer, who seemed to be a victim of a sort of nervous debility or exhaustion. One night the Marquise volunteered to watch while her husband slept, and, in administering some medicine to her child, mistook the vial and poisoned her. Martha died and it was impossible to conceal the cause of her death from the grief-stricken mother. Her despair was even more poignant than that of her husband for with hers was mingled a frightful remorse which all the tenderness of the Marquis could not assuage. This despair caused an attack of fever from which she recovered, but which left her in a still more pitiable condition. A profound calm had succeeded the paroxysms of fever; and her sorrow no longer betrayed itself in sobs and lamentations, but only in silent tears and heart-breaking sighs. These alarming symptoms soon revealed the truth: reason had fled. For hours at a time poor Edmée rocked to and fro, with a bundle of rags clasped tightly to her breast, crooning over it the same lullaby she had been wont to sing over her sleeping child.

Physicians summoned from Avignon, Nîmes and Montpellier tried in vain to overcome this deep despondency, which was far more dangerous than frenzy. Their skill was powerless; they could not give the Marquis even the slightest ray of hope. It was not

long before the Marquise became frightfully pale and emaciated, while her mind was more than ever under the control of the monomania which saw her daughter in all the objects that surrounded her. She took, by turns, flowers, articles of clothing and of furniture, lavishing every mark of affection upon them and calling them by the most endearing names until their insensibility dispelled the illusion and she cast them aside with loathing to seek elsewhere the child for which she mourned.

These afflictions, the rapidity with which they had followed one another and their magnitude impaired the health of the Marquis. He fell ill in his turn, and for more than a month Coursegol thought the shadow of death was hovering over his master. But the Marquis was young and strong; and the thought that if he succumbed his son would be left an orphan produced a salutary reaction. He was soon on his feet again, and, though he was always sad, he accepted his misfortunes bravely and resolved to live for his son's sake.

These events occurred about a year before Tiepoletta dragged herself to the door of the château to die in Coursegol's arms, confiding her daughter to his care.

After he had prayed for the departed, Coursegol rose, took up little Dolores and went out into the court-yard, calling:

"Master Philip! Master Philip!"

The little fellow, who was playing in charge of one of the servant-maids, came running to answer the summons. He was now four years old. His pretty and rather delicate face was surrounded by a profusion of brown curls, and his large eyes revealed an

intelligence and thoughtfulness unusual in a child of his age. He talked well enough to make himself clearly understood, and understood all that was said to him in reply.

"See this pretty baby!" said Coursegol, displaying Dolores.

"A doll!" exclaimed Philip, clapping his hands in rapture.

"Yes, in flesh and blood," replied Coursegol; "a doll that cries, that will grow and talk to you and amuse you."

"When?" demanded Philip.

"When she grows up."

"Then make her grow up immediately," ordered the little autocrat.

Then, seizing Coursegol's hand, he dragged him to the kitchen, for he wished to show every one his newfound treasure without delay. A crowd of servants soon gathered around Philip and Coursegol. The latter was explaining how the infant had come into his possession, and every one was marvelling at the strangeness of the adventure, when the Marquise suddenly appeared. The poor creature was always closely followed by a woman who was ordered never to lose sight of her mistress. She wandered about the château, never noisy or troublesome, but recognizing no one, not even her husband or her own child. She now advanced towards the little group which respectfully divided to make way for her. One could scarcely imagine a more pitiable sight than that presented by this beautiful young woman, whose

haggard eyes, unbound hair and disordered garments revealed her insanity in spite of her attendant's efforts to keep her neatly dressed. At that moment, she was holding a piece of wood tightly to her bosom, and was singing softly as she advanced with measured steps as if trying to lull this supposed child to sleep. Suddenly she paused, threw the fragment of wood far from her and burst into tears.

All the spectators of this scene stood motionless, overcome with pity, though they witnessed a similar spectacle each day and many times a day. Little Philip in his terror clung closely to Coursegol. The Marquise passed, looked at him, and, shaking her head, murmured:

"That is not what I am looking for!" Suddenly she stopped as if riveted to the spot. Her eyes had fallen upon the sleeping Dolores cradled in Coursegol's arms. There was such an intentness in her gaze, she was regarding the child with so much persistence, that a strange thought flashed through the mind of the faithful servant.

"Good Heavens!" he exclaimed, "might it be possible? Retire," he said, hastily, addressing those around him; "take Master Philip away and call the Marquis."

They obeyed: all the servants vanished; the Marquise alone remained. Then Coursegol deposited the child upon a wide bench that stood against the wall, and, departing in his turn, ran to conceal himself behind a window where he could see his mistress without being seen. It was there the Marquis found him.

"Ah! sir," exclaimed Coursegol on beholding his master, "I believe madame is saved. Heaven has inspired me. But what if I am mistaken?" he added,

anxiously. "What if she should kill the poor little thing?"

"What do you say? What have you done? Run and take the child from her. Have we not had misfortunes enough already? Go, I tell you!"

"It is too late!" replied Coursegol, terribly excited. "Look!"

After devouring Dolores with her eyes for several moments, the Marquise gently approached her with outstretched arms, her face strangely altered by the emotion that filled her heart. Curiosity, surprise and fear were imprinted upon her features. She leaned over the child and scrutinized it anew; then, with an eager movement, seized it, pressed it to her bosom and started as if to run away with it. But when she had gone perhaps twenty paces, she paused and looked around as if to assure herself that no one was following her. The Marquis and Coursegol were standing at the half-open window, not daring to breathe, so great was their anxiety. Suddenly they saw the Marquise press little Dolores still closer to her heart, and imprint frenzied kisses upon her brow, while for the first time for many a long month beneficent tears flowed from her eyes. At the same time she exclaimed in a clear, strong voice:

"Hector, my daughter! I have found my daughter!"

The agitated Marquis sprang towards her. She saw him approaching and advanced to meet him, laughing and crying and displaying the child; then, overcome by the violence of her emotion, she fell in his extended arms, devoid of consciousness.

"She is saved!'" said Coursegol, who had followed his

master.

"Ah, Coursegol, can it be true?" demanded the Marquis, who could scarcely believe his own eyes.

"Did she not recognize you? Did she not speak to you? Her madness disappeared as soon as her maternal instincts were re-awakened."

They carried the Marquise to her chamber and laid her upon the bed. In obedience to Coursegol's directions a cradle was placed in her room and the infant deposited in it; then the devoted servant mounted a horse and started for Nîmes in quest of a physician.

When he returned at the end of three hours, accompanied by the doctor, the Marquise had regained consciousness. They had shown her the sleeping Dolores and, reassured by the sight of the child, she had fallen asleep. Occasionally she roused a little and those around her heard her murmur:

"My daughter! my daughter!"

Then, raising herself upon her elbow, she watched the babe in silent ecstasy until overcome with exhaustion she again closed her eyes in slumber.

"I can be of no service here," said the physician. "Her reason has returned unquestionably; and her weakness will be overcome by good care and absolute quiet."

It was in this way that the Marquise was restored to her right mind. From that day her hold upon life slowly but surely strengthened; she recognized her husband and her son, and it was not long before they could without danger reveal the circumstances

attendant upon Dolores' arrival at the château. Three months later her recovery was complete.

One morning the Marquis sent for Coursegol.

"I gave you Dolores," said he, abruptly; "will you not return her to me? Henceforth she shall be my daughter."

"She is my daughter as well," replied Coursegol, "but you may take her, sir. Though I relinquish her to you, I do not lose her since I shall live near her, and we can both love her."

The Marquis de Chamondrin offered his hand to Coursegol, thus consenting to the compact that gave Dolores two protectors; and so the daughter of the gypsy, though she had lost her parents, was not an orphan.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHILDHOOD OF DOLORES.

Dolores passed a happy childhood in the Château de Chamondrin, where she was loved, petted and caressed as if she had been the little Martha whose loss had deprived the Marquise of reason for many dreary months. Nothing was left undone to render the illusion complete in the eyes of the members of the household and in her own. The first companion of her childish play was Philip, who called her sister;

and she pillowed her fair head on the bosom of the Marquise without a shadow of fear and fondly called her mother. The Marquise loved her as devotedly as she had loved her own daughter; Coursegol regarded her with an affection whose fervor was mingled with the deference he owed to the children of his master. As for the servants, they treated Philip and Dolores with equal respect; and there were no relatives or friends of the family who did not take pleasure in exhibiting their fondness for the little creature whose presence had cured the Marquise of the most terrible of maladies.

It is true that Dolores was such a lovely child no one could help loving her. She promised to resemble her mother. She had the same luxuriant golden hair, the same large, dark eyes, the same energy, the same sweetness of disposition and of voice. The Marquis and Coursegol, who had seen the gypsy, and who still remembered her, were often struck by the strong resemblance that seemed to make Tiepoletta live again in Dolores. The child also possessed the same tender heart, vivid imagination and honorable instincts. Her mind absorbed with marvellous facility the instruction which she received from the Marquis and which she shared with his son. She had a wonderful memory, and what she learned seemed to be indelibly imprinted upon her mind. She was loving in disposition, docile and sweet-tempered, and had already won the love of all who came in contact with her.

Philip actually worshipped his little sister. He was five years her senior, a large, noisy, almost coarse boy, rather vain of his birth and of the authority which enabled him to lord it over the little peasants who sometimes played with him. But these faults,

which were destined to be greatly modified by time, concealed a thoroughly good heart and disappeared entirely when he was with Dolores.

It was amusing to see the tenderness and care with which he surrounded her. If they were walking together in the park, he removed all the stones which might hurt her tiny feet or cause her to stumble. If a dainty morsel fell to his share at the table, he transferred it from his plate to that of Dolores. If they dressed her in any new garment, he was never weary of admiring her, of telling her how beautiful she was, and of fondling her luxuriant golden curls. If it was necessary to punish Philip, they had only to deprive him of the society of Dolores. But unfortunately this punishment, the most severe that could be inflicted upon him, grieved his sister as much as it did him, so it was used rarely and only in grave cases. One of the favorite amusements of the two children was to walk with Coursegol, and this was not a delight to them alone, for that faithful fellow was never so happy as when roving about the fields with them.

Often, during those lovely spring mornings that are so charming in the south, they descended the hill and strolled along the banks of the Garden. The delicately-tinted willows that grew on the banks drooped over the stream, caressing it with their flexible branches. Above the willows, fig trees, olives and vineyards covered the base of the hill with foliage of a darker hue, which in turn contrasted with the still deeper green of the cypress trees and pines that grew upon the rocky sides of the cliff. This luxuriant vegetation, of tints as varied as those of an artist's palette, mirrored itself in the clear waters below together with the arches of the massive Pont du Gard, whose bold yet graceful curves were

festooned with a dense growth of creeping vines.

Coursegol called the children's attention to the beauties of the scene, thus awakening in their young hearts appreciation of the countless charms of nature. They played in the sand; they fished for silver carp; hunted for birds' nests among the reeds. There were merry shouts of laughter, continual surprises and numberless questions. In answering these, all Coursegol's rather primitive but trusty knowledge on scientific subjects was called into requisition. When they returned home they were obliged to pass the cave, and Dolores, who knew nothing of her history, often entered it in company with Philip if they found it unoccupied by the much-dreaded gypsies.

At certain seasons of the year, early in the spring and late in the summer, roving bands of Bohemians encamped on the banks of the Gardon, and Philip and Dolores took good care not to approach them, especially after an evening when an old gypsy woman, struck perhaps by the child's resemblance to Tiepoletta, pointed Dolores out to some of the tribe who went into ecstasies over her beauty. One of the gypsies approached the children to beg, which so terrified them that they clung frantically to Coursegol, who found it difficult to reassure them.

These pleasant rambles, the lessons which she recited to her adopted father, the religious instruction she received from the Marquise and long hours of play with Philip made up the life of Dolores. Day succeeded day without bringing anything to break the pleasant monotony of their existence, for the capture of a mischievous fox, an encounter with some harmless snake, or the periodical overflow of the Gardon could scarcely be dignified by the name

of an event: yet these, or similar incidents furnished the children with topics of conversation for weeks together.

They took little interest in the news that came from Paris, and though they sometimes observed a cloud on the brow of the Marquis, or tears in the eyes of his wife, they were ignorant of the cause. Nor was it possible for them to understand the gravity of the political situation or the well-founded fears of the Royalists, which were frequently mentioned in the letters received at the château.

Thirteen serene and happy years passed after Dolores became the adopted daughter of the Marquis de Chamondrin, before she made her first acquaintance with real sorrow. She had grown rapidly and her mental progress had kept pace with her physical development. She promised to be an honor to her parents and to justify them in their determination to keep her with them always.

But the Marquis had not lost sight of the projects formed years before in relation to his son's future. As we have previously stated, the Marquis, even before the birth of his son, dreamed of restoring in him and through him the glory of the house of Chamondrin—a glory which had suffered an eclipse for more than a quarter of a century. It was now time to carry these plans into execution. Philip was eighteen, a vigorous youth, already a man in stature and in bearing, endowed with all the faults and virtues of his race, but possessed of more virtues than faults and especially of an incontestable courage and a profound reverence for the name he bore. The Marquis had about decided that the time to send him to Paris had come. He had been preparing for this

event for some months and, thanks to the economy in which he had been so admirably seconded by his wife, he had laid by a very considerable amount; enough to supply Philip's wants for five years at least —that is, until he would be in a position to obtain some office at court or a command in the army.

But the Marquis had taken other measures to insure his son's success. He had appealed to family friends, and through the Chevalier de Florian, an occasional guest at the château, he had received an assurance that Philip would find an earnest champion in the Duke de Penthieore. Fortune seemed inclined to smile on the young man; nevertheless the Marquis was beset with doubts, for all this occurred in the year 1783, just as the hostility to the king was beginning to manifest itself in an alarming manner, and the Marquis asked himself again and again if this was a propitious moment to send so young a man, almost a boy, into a divided and disaffected court—a court, too, that was subjected to the closest espionage on the part of a people already deeply incensed and irritated by the scandal and debauchery of the nobility, and utterly insensible to the king's well-meant efforts to institute a much-needed reform.

But the birth of the Dauphin, which occurred that same year, dissipated M. de Chamondrin's doubts. He was completely reassured by the enthusiasm of a nation, which, even in its dire extremity, broke into songs of rejoicing over the new-born heir. Philip's departure was decided upon.

The young people had been aware of their father's intentions for some time. They knew the hour of separation was approaching, and the tears sprang to their eyes whenever any allusion to Philip's intended

departure was made in their presence; but, with the characteristic light-heartedness of youth, they dismissed the unwelcome thought from their minds, and in present joys forgot the sorrow the future held in store for them. But the flight of time is rapid, and that which causes us little anxiety because it was the future, that is, a possibility, becomes the present, in other words, reality. One day the Marquis, not without emotion, made known his plans to his wife and afterwards to his son. Philip was to start for Paris at the close of autumn, or in about two months, and Coursegol was to accompany him. This news carried despair to the heart of Dolores, for she loved Philip devotedly. Had he not been her brother, her protector, and the sharer of all her joys since she was old enough to talk? Could it be she was about to lose him?

In spite of all their efforts to conceal the fact, the grief was general. The departure of Philip would be a sore trial to all the inmates of the château. Dolores was inconsolable. A dozen times a day, the Marquise, conquering her own sadness, endeavored to console Dolores by descanting on the advantages Philip would derive from this journey; but the poor girl could understand but one thing—that her brother was to leave her for an indefinite time. For several days before his departure she scarcely left his side. How many plans were made to be carried into execution on his return! How many bright hopes were mingled with the sadness of those last hours! Philip, who had become grave and serious as befitted his new rôle, declared that he would never forget Dolores—that he should love her forever. The hours flew swiftly by and the day appointed for the separation came all too quickly for those who were awaiting and dreading it.

The morning that Philip was to start his father sent for him. The young man was in the court-yard, superintending the preparations for departure. The servants, superintended by Coursegol, were fastening the trunks upon the carriage that was to convey the travellers and their baggage to Avignon, where places had been bespoken for them in the coach which was then the only mode of conveyance between Marseilles and Paris.

Dolores was standing near Coursegol. Her red eyes, still moist with tears, and her pale face showed that her sorrow had made sleep impossible during the previous night; but, in spite of this, she looked so lovely that Philip was more deeply impressed by her beauty than he had ever been before. He kissed her tenderly, as he tried to console her.

"Ah! Philip, why do you leave us?" she exclaimed, reproachfully.

"Because it is necessary both for your sake and mine," he responded. "Do you not know my father's plans? And if he commands me to go, must I not obey?"

"That is what I was just telling mademoiselle," began Coursegol. "I explained to her that the Marquis, your father, was acting wisely in sending you to court. You will soon make a fortune there, and then you will return to us laden with laurels and with gold. Shall we not be happy then, mademoiselle?"

Even while speaking thus, Coursegol found it very difficult to conceal his own emotion, for though he was pleased to accompany Philip, it cost him a bitter pang to part with Dolores. Rescued by him, reared under his very eyes, he loved her as devotedly as he would have loved a child of his own, had the thought

of any other family than that of his master ever occurred to him.

But his words and Philip's caresses seemed to comfort Dolores. Her sobs ceased and she dried her tears; but, as Philip was about to leave her in obedience to a summons from his father, she suddenly exclaimed:

"Will you not forget me in the midst of the splendor that will surround you? Will you not cease to love me?"

"Forget you! Cease to love you!" replied Philip, with a shudder, as if such a fear expressed at such a moment was an evil omen. "I shall never forget you! I shall never cease to love you!"

He was about to say still more when he saw his mother approaching. He led Dolores gently to her, kissed them both, and hastened to join his father.

The latter was pacing to and fro in his chamber, thoughtful and sad, for the departure of his son made his heart heavy with grief.

"You sent for me, father," said Philip.

"Yes, my son," responded the Marquis, seating himself and motioning his son to a chair beside him. "I wish to say a few words to you. You are about to leave me, Philip. In a few hours you will be your own master. I shall no longer be near you; nor will your mother be at hand to advise you. Moreover, you are deprived of our counsel and experience just when you most need them, at a time when your life must undergo a radical change and you are beset with difficulties. I have decided that Coursegol shall accompany you, for his judgment may be of service

to you in the absence of ours. You must regard his advice as that of a friend rather than of a servant; but do not accept his counsels or the counsels of any other person without reflection. There are cases, it is true, in which one must decide hastily. If you have not time to consult those in whom you repose confidence, you must be guided by your own judgment; and in order that you may not err, engrave upon your heart the words I am about to utter."

The Marquis paused a moment, then resumed:

"'God, your country and the king'—this should be your motto. You are about to go out into the world. You will meet many fanatics, atheists and libertines. Shun their example; do not be led astray by their sophistries, and before you speak or act, ask yourself if what you are about to say or do does not conflict with the respect you owe to your religion, to France and to your king."

This was the general tenor of the conversation, which lasted nearly an hour. His father, it is true, told him nothing he had not heard already. His advice was nothing more than a resumé of the lessons he had always taught him; but Philip was deeply moved, and he promised with an emotion closely akin to ardent enthusiasm that he would never depart from the line of conduct his father had marked out for him.

Then the Marquis, with a sudden change of tone, said to his son:

"Since you are about to leave home, perhaps for several years, I will tell you a secret which I should

no longer withhold."

"What is it?" demanded Philip, in surprise.

"Dolores is not your sister!"

"Dolores not my sister! Then—"

Philip paused. He dare not utter the thought that had suddenly entered his mind. On hearing the Marquis' words and learning the truth in regard to Dolores from his lips, he had experienced an emotion of joy. If he had given expression to what was passing in his soul, his father would have heard these words:

"Dolores not my sister! Then she shall be my wife!"

But he controlled himself and his father little suspected the emotion caused by this revelation. The Marquis related the history of Dolores in detail, and Philip could scarcely believe his ears when he heard that the charming girl was the offspring of one of those Bohemians he had frequently seen by the roadside.

"You must not love her the less," said the Marquis in conclusion. "She has filled Martha's place in our hearts; we owe to her your mother's restoration to reason. We should always love and cherish her. She has no suspicion of the truth; and I wish her to remain in ignorance until I think proper to acquaint her with the facts."

"Oh! I shall never cease to love her," replied Philip, quickly, thus repeating to his father the promise he had made to Dolores a few moments before.

Then, agitated by the news he had heard, he left the Marquis and rejoined Dolores. He wished to see her alone once more before his departure. When he

approached her, his heart throbbed wildly.

"She is not my sister," he said to himself, exultantly.

She seemed to him an entirely different being. For the first time he observed that she had exquisitely formed hands of marvellous whiteness for the first time he shrank from the light of the dark eyes uplifted to his. He wished that Dolores knew the secret of her birth, and that she could hear him once again say:

"I love you!"

It was a new emotion to the pure and artless heart of an eighteen-year old lad; and, yielding to its influence, Philip threw his arms about Dolores, and, pressing her to his heart, said tenderly:

"I shall always love you—always—I swear it! Remember this promise. Some day you will understand it better."

Dolores looked at him in astonishment. Though she was deeply moved she made no reply, but throwing her arms around his neck she kissed him again and again, thus unconsciously arousing a new passion in what had been the soul of a child only a few moments before, but what had suddenly become the soul of a man.

But the hour of departure had come. The char-a-banc drawn by two strong horses was in waiting at the base of the hill. They were to walk down the hill with Philip and bid him farewell there. Philip gave his arm to his mother; Dolores walked between Coursegol and the Marquis, with an expression of profound sorrow upon her features.

An air of sadness and gloom pervaded everything. It was the close of autumn; the air was full of withered leaves; they rustled beneath the tread at every step, and the wind moaned drearily through the pines.

"Take care of your health," said the Marquise.

"Write to me," pleaded Dolores.

"Be brave and upright," said the father; then all three, turning as if with one accord to Coursegol, placed Philip under his protection.

Again they embraced their beloved; again they wept; then one more embrace, one last kiss, and he was gone. The carriage that bore him away was hidden from their sight by clouds of dust, and the loving hearts left behind sadly wondered if this cruel parting was not, after all, a dream.

Dolores, in spite of her earnest efforts to fill the void that had been made in her life, spent a month in tears. A deep despair seemed to have taken possession of her heart. In vain her adopted parents endeavored to divert her mind; in vain they concealed their own grief to console her; in vain they lavished a wealth of tenderness upon her; she would not be consoled and her silent sorrow revealed a soul peculiarly sensitive to suffering.

It was Philip who persuaded her to conquer this despondency; for he, even at a distance, exerted a much more powerful influence over her than either the Marquis or his wife. His first letter, which arrived about a month after his departure, was more potent in its effects than all the efforts of her adopted parents. It was to Dolores that Philip had written. He described his journey to Paris; the cordial welcome

he had received from the Duke de Penthieore and the Princess de Lamballe, to whom he had been presented by the Chevalier de Florian; the condescension this Princess had displayed in taking him to Versailles, and in commending him to the kindly notice of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI.; the promises made by their majesties, and lastly the promptitude with which the Duke, as a proof of his interest, had attached him to his own household. So Philip was on the highway to wealth and honor at last. The Princess de Lamballe had evinced a very decided interest in him; he enjoyed the friendship of the Chevalier de Florian and would soon accompany the Duke de Penthieore to Brittany. Moreover, these kind friends were only waiting until he should attain the age of twenty to request the king to give him command of a company in one of his regiments.

This good news filled the heart of the Marquis with joy. He immediately wrote to the Duke, thanking him for his kindness, and that gentleman in his reply, manifested such an earnest desire to insure Philip's success that the Marquis and his wife were consoled for their son's absence by the thought of the brilliant career that seemed to be in store for him. As for Dolores, what comforted her was not so much her brother's success as the expressions of affection with which his letter was filled. All his happiness and all his good fortune were to be shared with her. It was for her sake he desired fame, in order that he might make her proud and happy. Thus Philip expressed the still confused sentiments that filled his young heart, though he did not betray the secret that his father had confided to him.

This letter seemed to restore to Dolores the natural light-heartedness of youth. She no longer lamented

her brother's absence, but spent most of her time in writing to him, and in perusing and re-perusing his letters. The months passed, but brought nothing to disturb the tranquillity of this monotonous existence. At the end of two years Philip announced that he had been appointed to the command of a company of dragoons. This appointment, which he owed entirely to the kindness of the Princess de Lamballe and the Duke de Penthieore, was only the first step. The queen had promised not to forget him and to prove her interest in some conclusive manner. That he might not be obliged to leave his young master, Coursegol asked and obtained permission to enlist in the same regiment.

Two more years passed.

It would be a difficult task to describe Dolores as she appeared in those days. The cleverest pen would be powerless to give an adequate conception of her charms. Her simple country life had made her as strong and vigorous as the sturdy young trees that adorned the landscape ever beneath her eyes. In health and strength she was a true daughter of the Bohemians, a race whose vigor has never been impaired by the luxuries and restraints of civilization. She had not the olive complexion and fiery temper of her father, but she had inherited from her mother that delicate beauty and that refinement of manner which made it almost impossible for one to believe that Tiepoletta was the daughter of Corcovita.

Dolores was as energetic as her father and as lovely as her mother. Her brilliant dark eyes betrayed an ardent temperament and unusual power of will. She was no fragile creature, but a healthy, spirited,

beautiful young girl, the robust scion of a hardy and fruitful tree. Had she been reared among the gypsies, she might have been coarsely handsome; but education had softened her charms while it developed her intellect, and though but seventeen she was already one of those dazzling beauties who defy description and who eclipse all rivals whenever they appear. The soul was worthy of the casket that enshrined it; and the reader who follows this narrative to its close cannot fail to acknowledge the inherent nobility of this young girl, who was destined to play a rôle as heroic as it was humble in the great drama of the Revolution, and whose devotion, purity, unselfishness and indomitable courage elevated her high above the plane of poor, erring humanity.

Had it not been for Philip's prolonged absence, Dolores would have been perfectly happy at this period of her life. Separated from their son, the Marquis and his wife seemed to regard her with redoubled tenderness. Her wishes were their law. To amuse her, they took her to Nîmes, to Montpellier and to Avignon; and she was everywhere welcomed as the daughter of the great house of Chamondrin, whose glory had been veiled in obscurity for a quarter of a century, only to emerge again more radiant than ever. Dolores was really happy. She was looking forward to a speedy meeting with her beloved Philip; and he shared this hope, for had he not written in a recent letter: "I expect to see you all soon and to spend several weeks at Chamondrin, as free from care and as happy as in days gone by?" In a still later letter Philip said: "I am eager to start for home, but sometimes the journey seems to be attended by many difficulties. Should it prove an impossibility, I shall expect to see you all in Paris."

So either in Chamondrin, or in Paris, Dolores would soon embrace her brother. This thought intoxicated her with happiness, and her impatience led her to interrogate the Marquis.

"Why does Philip speak of his return as impossible?" she asked again and again. "What does he fear?"

"There may be circumstances that will detain him at his post near the king," replied the Marquis, sadly, but evasively.

In the letters which he, himself, received from his son, the latter spoke freely of the danger that menaced the throne. There was, indeed, abundant cause of alarm to all thoughtful and observant minds, and especially to men who were living like the Marquis in the heart of the provinces, and who were consequently able to judge understandingly of the imminence of the peril. Of course, no person could then foresee the catastrophes which were to succeed one another so rapidly for several years; but a very general and undeniable discontent prevailed throughout the entire kingdom, a discontent that could not fail to engender misfortunes without number.

The year 1788 had just opened under the most unfavorable auspices. Marepas, Turgot, Necker and Calonne had held the reins of power in turn, without being able to restore the country to peace and prosperity. Their efforts proving powerless from divers causes they had been dismissed in disgrace; some through the intrigues of the court; some by reason of their own incapacity. Brienne was now in office; but he was no more fortunate than his predecessors. Instead of subsiding, the discord was continually on the increase.

The convention of leading men, upon which Calonne had based such flattering hopes, adjourned without arriving at any satisfactory result. The treasury was empty; and, as the payment of government obligations was consequently suspended, the murmurs of the people became long and loud. Parliament refused to notice the royal edicts, and the army showed open hostility to the court. In the provinces, poverty everywhere prevailed; and the dissatisfaction was steadily increasing.

The condition of affairs in Southern France was extremely ominous. At Nîmes, the religious factions, which were as bitterly at variance as they had been at the time of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes had arrayed themselves in open warfare one against the other. Avignon, eager to shake off the pontifical yoke and annex itself to France, was the scene of daily outbreaks. As the Château de Chamondrin was situated between these two cities, its inmates could not fail to be aware of these dissensions.

Conventions were held in most of the large towns, and the situation of the country was discussed with much heat and bitterness. The nobility and clergy, who trembled for their threatened privileges, and the people, who had suffered so long and so uncomplainingly, took part in these discussions; and their utterances betrayed great intolerance on the one side and excessive irritation on the other. The discontent had reached a class which, up to that date, had been allowed no voice in the management of affairs; but now, the peasants, oppressed by taxes as exorbitant as they were unjust, began to cast angry and envious glances at the nobility. The hovel was menacing the castle; and France seemed to be on the watch for some great event.

In the midst of this general perturbation, the king, anxious and undecided, was running from one adviser to another, listening to all kinds of counsel, consenting to all sorts of intrigues and making a thousand resolutions without possessing the requisite firmness to carry any good one into execution.

The Marquis de Chamondrin was a witness to some of these facts. The letters of his son revealed others. He was extremely anxious in regard to the future, and more than once Dolores and his wife saw his brow overcast and his eyes gloomy.

A letter received from Philip early in May, 1788, increased his disquietude. It was written on the day following the arrest of Esprémenil. Philip had witnessed the disturbance; had seen the people applaud the officers of the municipal government, and insult the representatives of royal authority. He described the scene in his letter to his father. The Marquis, at the solicitation of Dolores, read her Philip's letter and made her the confidante of his fears. She understood now why Philip's return had been postponed. After this, she took a deep interest in the progress of events not so much on account of their gravity, which she did not comprehend as clearly as her adopted parents, but because Philip was a witness of them, and because his return depended upon a peaceful solution of the difficulty. She could not foresee that an event, as sorrowful as it was unexpected, would soon recall him to Chamondrin.

CHAPTER IV.

PERTAINING TO LOVE MATTERS.

A fortnight later, Philip, who was stationed at Versailles with his command, received the following letter from Dolores:

> "It is my sad duty, my dear Philip, to inform you of the irreparable misfortune which has just befallen us. Summon all your fortitude, my dear brother. Your mother died yesterday. The blow was so sudden, the progress of the malady so rapid, that we could not warn you in time to give you the supreme consolation of embracing for the last time her whom we mourn, and who departed with the name of her son upon her lips.
>
> "Only four days ago she was in our midst, full of life, of strength and of hope. She was talking of your speedy return, and we rejoiced with her. One evening she returned from her accustomed walk a trifle feverish and complaining of the cold. It was a slight indisposition which was, unfortunately, destined to become an alarming illness by the following day. All our efforts to check the disease were unavailing; and we could only weep and bow in submission to the hand that had

smitten us.

"Weep then, my dear Philip, but do not rebel against the will of God. Be resigned. You will have strength, if you will but remember the immortal life in which we shall be united forever. It is this blessed hope that has given me strength to overcome my own sorrow, to write to you, and to bestow upon your father the consolation of which he stands so sorely in need. Still, I shall be unable to assuage his grief if his son does not come to my assistance. You must lose no time, Philip. The Marquis needs you. In his terrible affliction, he calls for you. Do not delay.

"Now to you, whom I called my brother only yesterday, I owe an avowal. Perhaps you have already learned my secret. I know the truth in regard to my birth. Before her death, the Marquise told me the details of that strange adventure which threw me, an orphan and a beggar, upon the mercy of your parents. Just as she breathed her last sigh, your father threw himself in my arms, weeping and moaning. He called me by the tenderest names, as if wishing to find solace for his grief in the caresses of his child. I fell at his feet.

"'I know all, sir,' I cried.

> "'What! She has told you!' he exclaimed. 'Ah, well! Would you refuse me your affection at a moment like this?'
>
> "'Never!' I cried, clasping my arms about his neck.
>
> "'I shall never leave him, Philip. I will do my best to make his old age happy and serene, and since I continue to be his daughter, it is for you to decide whether or not I shall still be your sister.
>
> "DOLORES."

A few hours after the receipt of this letter, which carried desolation to his heart, Philip, accompanied by Coursegol, left Versailles for Chamondrin. In spite of the ever increasing gravity of the political situation it had not been difficult for him to obtain leave of absence for an indefinite time on account of the bereavement that summoned him to his father's side and might detain him there. He made the journey in a post-chaise, stopping only to change horses.

Dolores was little more than a child when they parted and they had been separated more than four years, but absence had not diminished the love that was first revealed to him on the day he left the paternal roof, and the thought of meeting her again made his pulses quicken their throbbing. Time and change of scene had proved powerless against the deep love and devotion that filled his heart, and he was more than ever determined to wed the

companion of his youth; and now that she was no longer ignorant of the truth concerning her birth, he could press his suit as a lover. As the decisive moment approached, the moment when Dolores' answer would make or mar the happiness of his life, he experienced a profound emotion which was increased by the host of memories that crowd in upon a man when he returns to his childhood's home after a long absence to find some one of those he loved departed never to return.

Philip thought of the mother he would never see again, of his father, heart-broken and desolate, of Dolores, whose grief he understood. His sadness increased in proportion as he approached the Pont du Gard. Yet the road was well-known to him; the trees seemed to smile upon their old companion as if in greeting, and the sun shone with more than its usual brightness as if to honor his return. How many times he had journeyed from Avignon to Chamondrin on such a day as this! Every object along the roadside awakened some pleasant recollection; but the joy of again beholding his beloved home and these familiar scenes was clouded by regret, doubts and uncertainty; and Philip was far from happy. During their journey, Coursegol had done his best to cheer his young master, but as they neared Chamondrin he, too, became a victim to the melancholy he had endeavored to dissipate.

At last the post-chaise rolled noisily under one of the arches of the Pont du Gard, and a few moments later the horses, panting and covered with foam after climbing the steep ascent, entered the court-yard of the château.

The Marquis and Dolores, who were waiting for

supper to be served, had seated themselves on the terrace overlooking the park. The sound of carriage wheels drew them into the court-yard just as Philip and Coursegol were alighting. There was a cry of joy, and then the long separated friends embraced one another. It would be impossible to describe this meeting and the rapture of this return.

It was Dolores whom Philip saw first. Her wonderful beauty actually startled him. Four years had transformed the child into an exquisitely and lovely young girl. Her delicate features, her golden hair, her lustrous dark eyes, her vermillion lips, her musical yet penetrating voice, her willowy figure and her beautifully shaped hands aroused Philip's intense admiration. A pure and noble love had filled his heart during his absence, and had exerted a powerful and restraining influence over his actions, his thoughts, his hopes and his language. He had endowed his idol with beauty in his fancy, but, beautiful as he had pictured her, he was obliged to confess on beholding her that the reality surpassed his dreams, and he loved her still more ardently.

The Marquis led his son to the drawing-room. He, too, wished to observe the changes that time had wrought in Philip. He scrutinized him closely by the light of the candles, embraced him, and then looked at him again admiringly. His son was, indeed, the noble heir of an illustrious race.

They talked of the past and of the dead. They wept, but these were not the same bitter tears the Marquis had shed after his bereavement. The joy of seeing his son consoled him in a measure, and death seemed to him less cruel because, when he was surrounded by his children, his faith and his hope gathered new

strength.

The first evening flew by on wings. Philip, to divert his father, described the stirring events and the countless intrigues of which the court had been the theatre; and together they talked of the hopes and the fears of the country. Philip spoke in the most enthusiastic terms of the kind-hearted Duke de Penthieore who had aided him so much in life, of the Chevalier de Florian, and of the charming Princess de Lamballe who had become the favorite friend of the queen. Dolores did not lose a word of the conversation, and gave her love and homage unquestioningly to those Philip praised even though they were strangers to her. She admired the soundness of judgment her adopted brother displayed in his estimate of people and of things, and the eloquence with which he expressed his opinions.

Coursegol was present. Often by a word he completed or rectified the statements of his young master, and Dolores loved him for the devotion testified by his every word. As for him, notwithstanding the familiarity which had formerly characterized his daily relations with the girl, he felt rather intimidated by her presence, though his affection for her was undiminished.

About eleven o'clock the Marquis rose and, addressing his son, said:

"Do you not feel the need of rest?"

"I am so happy to see you all again that I am not sensible of the slightest fatigue," replied Philip, "and I have so many things to tell and to ask Dolores that I am not at all sleepy."

"Ah, well, my dear children, talk at your ease. As for me, I will retire."

And the Marquis, after tenderly embracing them, quitted the room, followed by Coursegol. Philip and Dolores were left alone together. There was a long silence. Seated beside an open window, Dolores, to conceal her embarrassment, fixed her eyes upon the park and the fields that lay quiet and peaceful in the bright moonlight of the clear and balmy summer evening. Philip, even more agitated, paced nervously to and fro, seeking an opportunity to utter the avowal that was eager to leave his lips. At last, he summoned the necessary courage, and, seating himself opposite Dolores, he said:

"You wrote me a long letter. You asked me to bring you the response. Here it is."

Dolores looked up and perceived that he was greatly agitated. This discovery increased her own embarrassment, and she could not find a word to say in reply. Philip resumed:

"But, first, explain the cause of the coldness betrayed by that letter. Why did you address me so formally? Why did you not call me your brother as you had been accustomed to do in the past?"

"How was I to know that you would not regard me as a stranger, as an intruder?" responded Dolores, gently.

"An intruder! You!" exclaimed Philip, springing up. "I have known the truth for more than four years and never have I loved you so fondly! What am I saying? I mean that from the day I first knew the truth I have loved you with a far greater and entirely different

love!"

Dolores dare not reply. How could she confess that she, too, since she learned she was not his sister, had experienced a similar change of feeling? Philip continued:

"You asked me if I would consent to still regard you as a sister. My sister, no! Not, as my sister, but as my wife, if you will but consent!"

"Your wife!" exclaimed Dolores, looking up at him with eyes radiant with joy.

Then, as if fearing he would read too much there, she hastily covered them with her trembling hands. The next instant Philip was on his knees before her, saying, eagerly:

"I have cherished this hope ever since the day that my father made me acquainted with your history. I told myself that we would never part, that I should always have by my side the loved one I had so long called sister, the gentle girl who had restored my mother's reason, who had cheered her life, consoled her last moments, and comforted my desolate father in his bereavement! Dolores, do not refuse me; it would break my heart!"

She could not believe her ears. She listened to Philip's pleading as if in a dream, and he, alarmed by her silence, added:

"If my mother were here, she would entreat you to make me happy."

Suddenly Dolores remembered the projects which had been confided to her by the Marquis, who had often made her his confidante—those projects in

which Philip's marriage with a rich heiress of illustrious birth played such an important part. And yet, in the presence of the profound love she had inspired and which she shared, she had not courage to make Philip wretched by an immediate refusal, or to renounce the hope that had just been aroused in her heart.

"In pity, say no more!" she exclaimed, hastily. "We are mad!"

"Why is it madness to love you?" demanded Philip.

"Listen," she replied. "I cannot answer you now. Wait a little—I must have time to think—to consult my conscience and my heart. You also must have time for reflection."

"I have reflected for four years."

"But I have never before thought of the new life you are offering me."

"Do you not love me?"

"As a sister loves a brother, yes; but whether the love I bear you is of a different character I do not yet know. Go now, my dear Philip," she added, endeavoring by calming herself to calm him; "give me time to become accustomed to the new ideas you have awakened in my mind. They will develop there, and then you shall know my answer. Until that time comes, I entreat you to have pity on my weakness, respect my silence and wait."

Philip instantly rose and said:

"The best proof of love that I can give you is obedience. I will wait, Dolores, I will wait, but I shall

hope."

Having said this he retired, leaving her oppressed by a vague sorrow that sleep only partially dispelled.

During the days that followed this conversation, Philip, faithful to his promise, made no allusion to the scene we have just described. For four years he had buried his secret so deeply in his own heart that even Coursegol had not suspected it, so he did not find it difficult to continue this rôle under the eyes of his father; and, though the burden he imposed upon himself had become much heavier by reason of the presence of Dolores, his hopes supplied him with strength to endure it.

For his hopes were great! Youthful hearts have no fear. He was not ignorant of his father's plans; but he told himself that his father loved him too much to cause him sorrow, and that he would probably be glad to sacrifice his ambitious dreams if he could ensure the happiness of both his children. Philip was sure of this. If he invoked the memory of his mother and the love she bore Dolores, the Marquis could not refuse his consent. He confidently believed that before six mouths had elapsed he should be married and enjoying a felicity so perfect as to leave nothing more to be desired. Cheered by this hope, he impatiently awaited the decision of Dolores, happy, however, in living near her, in seeing her every day, in listening to her voice and in accompanying her on her walks. He watched himself so carefully that no word revealed the real condition of his mind, and not even the closest observer of his language and actions could have divined the existence of the sentiments upon which he was, at that very moment, basing his future happiness.

Dolores was grateful to him for his delicacy and for the faithfulness with which he kept his promise. She appreciated Philip's sacrifice the more because she was obliged to impose an equally powerful restraint upon herself in order to preserve her own secret. She loved him. All the aspirations of an ardent and lofty soul, all the dreams of a pure felicity based upon a noble affection were hers; and Philip's avowal, closely following the revelations of the dying Marquise, had convinced her that her happiness depended upon a marriage in accordance with the dictates of her heart, and that the one being destined from all eternity to crown her life with bliss unspeakable was Philip. Reared together, they thoroughly understood and esteemed each other; they had shared the same joys and the same impressions. There was a bond between them which nothing could break, and which made their souls one indissolubly. In her eyes, Philip was the handsomest, the most honorable, the most noble and the most perfect of men. Was not this love? Why then did Dolores persist in her silence when her lover was anxiously waiting to learn his fate? Simply because she feared to displease the Marquis. She owed everything to his generosity. She had no fortune. If she became Philip's wife, she could confer upon the house of Chamondrin none of those advantages which the Marquis hoped to gain from a grand alliance, and for the sake of which he had condemned himself to a life of obscurity and privation. Would he ever consent to a marriage that so ruthlessly destroyed his ambitious dreams? And if he did not consent, how terrible would be her position when compelled to choose between the love of the son and the wrath of the father! And, even if he consented, would it not cost him the most terrible

of sacrifices? Shattered already by the untimely death of his wife, would he survive this blow to his long-cherished hopes? Such were the sorrowful thoughts that presented themselves to the mind of Dolores and deprived her of the power to speak. She dare not make Philip a confidant of her fears; and to declare that she did not love him was beyond her strength. Even when the impossibility of this marriage became clearly apparent to her, she had not courage to lie to her lover and to trample her own heart underfoot. One alternative remained: to reveal the truth to the Marquis. But this would imperil all. A secret presentiment warned her if she, herself, disclosed the truth, that it would be to her that the Marquis would appeal in order to compel Philip to renounce his hopes, since it was in her power to destroy them by a single word. Day followed day, and Dolores, beset alternately by hopes and fears, was waiting for fate to solve the question upon which her future happiness depended.

Two mouths later, the Marquis was summoned to Marseilles by a cousin, who was lying at the point of death. He departed immediately, accompanied by Philip. This cousin was the Count de Mirandol. The master of a large fortune which he had accumulated in the colonies, a widower of long standing and the father of but one child, a girl of eighteen, who would inherit all his wealth, he had returned to France, intending to take up his permanent abode there. He had been afflicted for years by a chronic malady, contracted during his long sea voyages, and he returned to his native land with the hope that he should find there relief from his sufferings. But he had scarcely landed at Marseilles when he was attacked by his old malady in an aggravated form. He could live but a few days, and realizing his

condition, and desiring to find a protector for his daughter, his thoughts turned to his cousin, the Marquis de Chamondrin. Although he had scarcely seen the Marquis for thirty years, he knew him sufficiently well not to hesitate to entrust his daughter to his cousin's care.

The Marquis did not fail him. He accepted the charge that his relative confided to him, closed the eyes of the dying man, and a few days afterwards he and Philip returned to the château, accompanied by a young girl clad in mourning. The stranger was Mademoiselle Antoinette de Mirandol.

Endowed with a refined and singularly expressive face, Antoinette, without possessing any of those charms which imparted such an incomparable splendor to the beauty of Dolores, was very attractive. She was a brunette, rather frail in appearance and small of stature; but there was such a gentle, winning light in her eyes that when she lifted them to yours you were somehow penetrated and held captive by them; in other words, you were compelled to love her.

"I bring you a sister," the Marquis said to Dolores, as he presented Antoinette. "She needs your love and sympathy."

The two girls tenderly embraced each other. Dolores led her guest to the room which they were to share, and lavished comforting words and caresses upon her, and from that moment they loved each other as fondly as if they had been friends all their lives.

Cruelly tried by the loss of her benefactress and by her mental conflicts on the subject of Philip, Dolores forgot her own sorrows and devoted herself entirely

to the task of consoling Antoinette. It was not long before the latter became more cheerful. This was the work of Dolores. They talked of their past, and Dolores concealed nothing from her new friend. She confessed, without any false shame or false modesty, that she had entered the house of the Marquis as a beggar. Antoinette, in her turn, spoke of herself. She knew nothing of France. Her childhood had been spent in Louisiana; and she talked enthusiastically of the lovely country she had left. Dolores, to divert her companion's thoughts from grief, made Philip tell her what he knew about Paris Versailles and the court, and the Marquis, not without design probably, did his best to place in the most favorable light those attributes of mind and of heart that made Philip the most attractive of men. Like another Desdemona charmed by the eloquence of Othello, it was while listening to Philip that Antoinette first began to love him.

After a month's sojourn at Chamondrin, she came to the conclusion that Philip was kind, good, irresistible in short; and she was by no means unwilling to become the Marquise de Chamondrin. Nor did she conceal these feelings from Dolores, little suspecting, how she was torturing her friend by these revelations. It was then that the absolute impossibility of a marriage with Philip first became clearly apparent to Dolores. Antoinette's confession was like the flash of lightning which suddenly discloses a yawning precipice to the traveller on a dark and lonely road. She saw the insurmountable barrier between them more distinctly than ever before. Could she compete with Antoinette? Yes; if her love and that of Philip were to be considered. No; if rank, wealth, all the advantages that Antoinette possessed, and which the Marquis

required in his son's bride, were to be taken into consideration.

What a terrible night Dolores spent after Antoinette's confession! How she wept! What anguish she endured! The young girls occupied the same room and if one was unconscious of the sufferings of her companion, it was only because Dolores stifled her sobs. She was unwilling to let Antoinette see what she termed "her weakness." She felt neither hatred nor envy towards her friend, for she knew that Antoinette was not to blame. She wept, not from anger or jealousy, but from despair.

Since she had been aware of Philip's affection for her, she had cherished a secret hope in spite of the numerous obstacles that stood in the way of their happiness. Time wrought so many changes! The bride whom the Marquis was seeking for his son had not yet been found. She had comforted herself by reflections like these. Now, these illusions had vanished. The struggle was terrible. One voice whispered: "You love; you are beloved. Fight for your rights, struggle, entreat—second Philip's efforts, work with him for the triumph of your love. Resist his father's will, and, though you may not conquer at once, your labors will eventually be crowned with success." But another voice said: "The Marquis was your benefactor, the Marquise filled your mother's place. Had it not been for them you would have been reared in shame, in ignorance and in depravity. You would never have known parental tenderness, the happiness of a home or the comforts and luxuries that have surrounded you from your childhood. Is it too much to ask that you should silence the pleadings of your heart in order not to destroy their hopes?" The first voice retorted: "Philip will be

wretched if you desert him. He will regret you, he will curse you and you will spend your life in tears, blaming yourself for having sacrificed his happiness and yours to exaggerated scruples." But the second voice responded: "Antoinette will console Philip. If he curses you at first, he will bless you later when he learns the cause of your refusal. As for you, though you may weep bitterly, you will be consoled by the thought that you have done your duty." Such were the conflicts through which Dolores passed; but before morning came she had resolved to silence her imagination and the pleadings of her heart. Resigned to her voluntary defeat, she decided not to combat this growing passion on the part of Antoinette, but to encourage it. She believed that Philip would not long remain insensible to the charms of her friend, and in that case she could venture to deceive him and to declare that she did not love him.

Three months passed in this way; then Philip, weary of waiting for the reply that was to decide his fate, but not daring to break his promise and interrogate Dolores directly, concluded to at least make an attempt to obtain through Antoinette the decision that would put an end to his intolerable suspense. Knowing how fondly these young girls loved each other, and how perfect was their mutual confidence, he felt sure that Antoinette would not refuse to intercede for him.

This project once formed, he began operations by endeavoring to ingratiate himself into the good graces of Mademoiselle de Mirandol. Up to this time, he had treated her rather coolly, but he now changed his tactics and showed her many of those little attentions which he had hitherto reserved for his

adopted sister. It was just as Antoinette was becoming too much interested in Philip for her own peace of mind that she noticed his change of manner. She misunderstood him. Who would not have been deceived? During their rambles, Philip seemed to take pleasure in walking by her side. Every morning she found beside her plate a bouquet which he had culled. He never went to Avignon or to Nîmes without bringing some little souvenir for her. What interpretation could she place upon these frequent marks of interest? Her own love made her credulous. After receiving many such attentions from him, she fancied she comprehended his motive.

"He loves me," she said one evening to Dolores.

The latter thought her bereft of her senses. Could it be possible that Philip had forgotten his former love so soon? Was he deceiving her when he pressed his suit with such ardor? Impossible! How could she suppose it even for a moment? Still Dolores could not even imagine such a possibility without a shudder. After the struggle between her conscience and her heart, she had secretly resolved that Philip should cease to love her, that she would sacrifice herself to Mademoiselle de Mirandol, to whose charms he could not long remain insensible and whom he would eventually marry. Yes; she was ready to see her own misery consummated without a murmur; but to be thus forgotten in a few weeks seemed terrible.

"If this is really so," she thought, "Philip is as unworthy of Antionette as he is of me. But it cannot be. She is mistaken."

Was Antoinette deceiving herself? To set her mind at rest upon this point, Dolores questioned her friend in

regard to the acts and words which she had interpreted as proofs of Philip's love for her. Mademoiselle de Mirandol revealed them to her friend; and Dolores was reassured. The attentions that had been bestowed upon the ward of the Marquis de Chamondrin by that gentleman's son did not assume in the eyes of Dolores that importance which had been attributed to them by her more romantic and enthusiastic companion; nevertheless, she was careful not to disturb a conviction that caused Antoinette so much happiness.

The following day, as Mademoiselle de Mirandol was leaving her room, she encountered Philip in the hall.

"I wish to speak with you," he said, rapidly and in low tones as he passed her. "I will wait for you in the park near the Buissieres."

His pleasant voice rung in Antoinette's ears long after he had disappeared, leaving her in a state of mingled ecstasy and confusion. Her cheeks were flushed and her heart throbbed violently. She hurried away to conceal her embarrassment from Dolores, who was following her, and soon went to join Philip at the Buissieres. This was the name they had bestowed upon a hedge of tall bushes to the left of the park, and which enclosed as if by two high thick walls a quiet path where the sun's rays seldom or never found their way. It was to this spot that Antoinette directed her steps, reproaching herself all the while for the readiness with which she obeyed Philip, and looking back every now and then to see if any one was observing her.

She soon arrived at the Buissieres; Philip was awaiting her. On seeing her approach, he came

forward to meet her. She noticed that his manner was perfectly composed, that his features betrayed no emotion, and that he was smiling as if to assure her that what he desired to tell her was neither solemn nor frightful in its nature. Antoinette was somewhat disappointed. She had expected to find him pale and nervous, and with his hair disordered like the lovers described in the two or three innocent romances that had chanced to fall into her hands.

"Excuse me, Mademoiselle, for troubling you," began Philip, without the slightest hesitation; "but the service you can render me is of such importance to me, and the happiness of my whole life is so dependent upon it, that I have not scrupled to appeal to your generosity."

"In what way can I serve you?" inquired Mademoiselle de Mirandol, whose emotion had been suddenly calmed by this preamble, so utterly unlike anything she had expected to hear.

"I am in love!" began Philip.

She trembled, her embarrassment returned and her eyes dropped. Philip continued:

"She whom I love is charming, beautiful and good, like yourself. You surely will not contradict me, for it is Dolores whom I love!"

Why Antoinette did not betray her secret, she, herself, could not understand when she afterwards recalled the circumstances of this interview. She did, however, utter a stifled cry which Philip failed to hear. She felt that she turned very pale, but her change of color was not discernible in the shadow. It was with intense disappointment that she listened to

Philip's confession. He told her that he had loved Dolores for more than four years, but that she had known it only a few months, and that she hod made no response to his declaration of love. He had waited patiently for her answer, but he could endure this state of cruel uncertainty no longer, and he entreated Mademoiselle de Mirandol to intercede for him, and to persuade Dolores to make known her decision to her adorer. Antoinette promised to fulfil his request. She promised, scarcely knowing what she said, so terrible was the anguish that filled her heart. She desired only one thing—to make her escape that she might be at liberty to weep. How wretched he was! Coming to this rendezvous with a heart full of implicit confidence, she had met, instead of the felicity she expected, the utter ruin of her hopes. This revulsion of feeling proved too much for a young girl who was entirely unaccustomed to violent emotions of any kind. She blamed herself bitterly, reproaching herself for her love as if it had been a crime, and regarded her disappointment as a judgment upon her for having allowed herself to think of Philip so soon, after her father's death.

At last Philip left her, and she could then give vent to her sorrow. Soon jealously took possession of her heart. Incensed at Dolores, who had received her confidence without once telling her that Philip's love had long since been given to her, Antoinette hastened to her rival to reproach her for her duplicity.

"Antoinette, what has happened?" exclaimed Dolores, seeing her friend enter pale and in tears.

"I have discovered my mistake. It is not I who am beloved, it is you; and he has been entreating me to

plead his cause and to persuade you to give him an answer that accords with his wishes! What irony could be more bitter than that displayed by fate in making me the advocate to whom Philip has applied for aid in winning you? Ah! how deeply I am wounded! How terrible is my shame and humiliation! You would have spared me this degradation if you had frankly told me that Philip loved you when I first confided my silly fancies to you. Why did you not confess the truth? It was cruel, Dolores, and I believed you my friend, my sister!"

Sobs choked her utterance and she could say no more. Dolores, who had suffered and who was still suffering the most poignant anguish, nevertheless felt the deepest sympathy for her unhappy friend. She approached her, gently wiped away her tears and said:

"It is true that Philip loves me, that he quite recently avowed his love and that I refused to engage myself to him until I had had time for reflection; but it is equally true that after an examination of my heart I cannot consent to look upon him as other than a brother. I shall never be his wife; and if I have postponed the announcement of my decision, it was only because I dislike to pain him by destroying the hopes to which he still seemed to cling."

"What! he loves you and you will not marry him?" cried Antoinette, amazed at such an avowal.

"I shall not marry him," replied Dolores. "And now will you listen to my confession? On seeing you arrive at the château, I said to myself: 'Here is one who will be a suitable wife for Philip; and if my refusal renders him unhappy, the love of Antionette will console him!'"

"You thought that!" exclaimed Mademoiselle de Mirandol, throwing her arms around her friend's neck. "And I have so cruelly misjudged you! Dolores, can you ever forgive me?"

A brave smile, accompanied by a kiss, was the response of Dolores; then she added:

"I not only forgive you, but I will do my best to insure your happiness. Philip shall love you."

"Alas!" said Antoinette, "how can he love me when his heart is full of you, when his eyes follow you unceasingly? You are unconsciously a most formidable rival, for Philip will never love me while you are by my side and while he can compare me with you."

"I will go away if necessary."

"What, leave your home! Do you think I would consent to that? Never!" cried Antoinette.

"But I can return to it the very day your happiness is assured. When you are Philip's wife you will go to Paris with him, and I can then return to my place beside the Marquis."

"Dolores! How good you are, and how much I love you!" exclaimed Mademoiselle de Mirandol, clasping her friend in her arms.

The words of Dolores had reassured her, had revived her hopes and dried her tears. When left alone, Dolores, exhausted by the ordeal through which she had just passed, could at first form no plans for the future. She comprehended but one thing—she was still beloved. Philip's faithfulness and the intensity of the love which had just been revealed to her

rendered the sacrifice still more difficult. It seemed to her she would never have strength to accomplish it.

"It must be done," she said to herself, finally.

And shaking off her weakness, she went in search of the Marquis. They had a long conversation together. Dolores told him the whole truth. It was through her that the Marquis learned that she was loved by Philip, and that she loved him in return, but, being unwilling to place any obstacle in the way of the plans long since formed with a view to the restoration of the glory of the house of Chamondrin, she had renounced her hopes and yielded her place and her rights to Antoinette. The Marquis had not the courage to refuse the proffered sacrifice, though he fully realized the extent of it. His dearest wishes were about to be realized. While he lamented the fate to which Dolores had condemned herself, he was grateful for a decision that spared him the unpleasantness of a contest with his son, and which insured that son's marriage to a rich heiress. Still, when Dolores told him that she had decided to leave Chamondrin not to return until after Philip's marriage, he refused at first to consent to a separation.

"But it is necessary," replied Dolores. "So long as Philip sees me here, he will not relinquish his hopes. I am certain that he will not consent to renounce me unless he believes there is an impassable barrier between us, unless he believes me dead to the world and to love. Besides, you would surely not require me to live near one whom I wish to forget. I shall spend two years in a convent, and then I will return to you."

M. de Chamondrin, touched by this heroism whose grandeur Dolores, in her simplicity, did not seem to comprehend, pressed her to his heart in a long embrace, covering her face with kisses and murmuring words of tenderness and gratitude in her ears. When they separated, he was not the least moved of the two. Dolores next went in search of Philip. She found him at the Buissieres, the same place where he had entreated Antoinette to intercede for him a few hours before.

He saw her approaching.

"She is coming to pronounce my sentence," he thought.

She was very calm. The sadness imprinted on her face did not mar its serenity.

"Antoinette has spoken to me," she said, firmly, but quietly. "The fear of making you unhappy has until now deterred me from giving you the answer for which you have been waiting; but after the events of this morning, I must speak frankly."

This introduction left Philip no longer in doubt. He uttered a groan, as with bowed head he awaited the remainder of his sentence.

"Courage, Philip," Dolores continued: "Do not add to my sorrow by making me a witness of yours. Since the day you opened your heart that I might read there the feelings that burdened it, I have been carefully examining mine. I wished to find there signs of a love equal to yours; I have sought for them in vain. I love you enough to give you my blood and my happiness, my entire life. I have always loved you thus—loved you with that sisterly devotion that

is capable of any sacrifice. But is this the love you feel? Is this the love you would bestow upon me? No; and, as you see, my heart has remained obstinately closed against the passion which I have inspired in you, and it would ever remain closed even if I consented to unite myself with you more closely by the bonds of marriage. If I was weak enough to listen to you and to yield to your wishes, I should only bring misery upon both of us."

"Alas!" murmured Philip, "I cannot understand this."

"How can I forget that for eighteen long years I have regarded you as a brother?" said Dolores, vainly endeavoring to console him. "Moreover, such a marriage would be impossible! Would it not be contrary to the wishes of your father? Would it not detract from the glory of the name you bear?"

"And what do the glory of my name and the wishes of my father matter to me?" exclaimed Philip, impetuously. "Was I brought into the world to be made a victim to such absurd prejudices? For four years I have lived upon this hope. It has been destroyed to-day. What have I to look forward to now? There is nothing to bind me to life, for, if your decision is irrevocable, I shall never be consoled."

"Do not forget those who love you."

"Those who love me! Where are they? I seek for them in vain. Do you mean my father, who has reared me with a view to the gratification of his own selfish ambition? Is it you, Dolores, who seem to take pleasure in my sufferings? My mother, the only human being who would have understood, sustained and consoled me, she is no longer here to plead my cause."

Wild with grief and despair, he was about to continue his reproaches, but Dolores, whose powers of endurance were nearly exhausted, summoned all her courage and said coldly, almost sternly:

"You forget yourself, Philip! You are ungrateful to your father and to me; but even if you doubt our affection, can you say the same of Antoinette?"

"Antoinette!"

"She loves you with the tenderest, most devoted affection. She has said as much to me, and now that you know it, will you still try to convince yourself that there are only unfeeling hearts around you?"

Philip, astonished by this revelation, became suddenly silent. He recollected that he had confided his hopes and fears to Mademoiselle de Mirandol that very morning; and when he thought of the trying position in which he had placed her, and of what she must have suffered, his pity was aroused.

"If her sorrow equals mine, she is, indeed, to be pitied," he said, sadly.

"Why do you not try to assuage your own sorrow by consoling her?" asked Dolores, gently.

These words kindled Philip's anger afresh.

"What power have I to annihilate the memory of that which at once charms and tortures me?" he exclaimed. "Can I tear your image from its shrine in my heart and put that of Antoinette in its place? Do you think that your words will suffice to destroy the hopes I have cherished so long? Undeceive yourself, Dolores. I am deeply disappointed, but I will not give you up. I will compel you to love me, if it be only

through the pity which my despair will inspire in your heart."

These frenzied words caused Dolores the most poignant anguish without weakening her determination in the least. She felt that she must destroy the hope to which Philip had just alluded—that this was the only means of compelling him lo accept the love of Antoinette; so she said, gravely:

"I love you too much, Philip, to desire to foster illusions which will certainly never be realized. My decision is irrevocable; and if you still doubt the truth of my words, I will frankly tell you all. I am promised——"

"Promised!" exclaimed Philip, with a menacing gesture for the unknown man who had dared to become his rival. "Promised!" he repeated. "To whom?"

"To God!" responded Dolores, gently. "I have just informed your father of my determination to enter a convent!"

Philip recoiled in horror and astonishment; then covering his face with his hands he fled through the lonely park, repeating again and again the name of her whom he so fondly loved but who would soon be lost to him forever. For some moments, Dolores remained motionless on the spot where she had just renounced her last hope of earthly happiness. Her eyes followed Philip in his frenzied flight, and, when he disappeared, she stretched out her hands with a gesture of mingled longing and despair. But the weakness that had made this courageous soul falter for an instant soon vanished. She lifted her eyes

toward Heaven as if imploring strength from on high and then walked slowly in the direction of the château. Suddenly, at a turn in the path, she met Coursegol. She had not time to conceal her face and he saw her tears. The memory of the past and the affection that filled his heart emboldened him to question one whom he regarded in some degree, at least, as his own child.

"Why do you weep, my dear Mademoiselle?" he asked, with anxious solicitude.

This question did not wound Dolores; on the contrary it consoled her. She had found some one in whom she could confide. There are hours when the heart longs to pour out its sorrows to another heart that understands and sympathizes with its woes. Coursegol made his appearance at a propitious moment. Dolores regarded him with something very like filial affection; she had loved him devotedly even when she supposed herself the daughter of the Marquis de Chamondrin, and now that she knew her origin she regarded the son of a peasant as equal in every respect to a descendent of the gypsies, so she did not hesitate to open her soul to him. She told him of the conflicts through which she had passed and the suffering they had caused her. She acknowledged the ardent love that had given her courage and strength to sacrifice her own happiness; and she wept before the friend of her childhood as unrestrainedly as she would have wept before her own father.

"I have been expecting this," said Coursegol, sadly. "Poor children, the truth was revealed too soon. You should have been left in ignorance until one of you was married. Then you would not have thought of

uniting your destinies. Your mutual friendship would not have been transformed into an unfortunate passion and all this misery would have been avoided."

"It would have been far better," replied Dolores.

"And now what do you intend to do?" inquired Coursegol.

"I shall enter a convent and remain there until Philip marries."

"You in a convent! You, who are so gay, so full of life and health and exuberant spirits, immure yourself in a cloister! Impossible!"

"There is no alternative," said Dolores, repeating to Coursegol what she had already said to the Marquis.

"I see that you must leave this house, but why do you select a cloister for your retreat?"

"Where else could I, alone and unprotected, find a refuge?"

"Do you not know that Coursegol is your friend, and that he is ready to leave everything and follow you? Where do you wish to go? I will accompany you; I will serve and defend you. I have some little property and it is entirely at your disposal."

He made this offer very simply, but in a tone that left no possible doubt of his sincerity. Though she was touched by his devotion, Dolores firmly refused. She explained that his place was at the château, and that, as she expected to return there herself after Philip's marriage, a convent would be the safest and most dignified retreat she could enter.

"So be it, then," responded Coursegol; "but should you ever change your plans, remember that my life, my little fortune and my devotion are yours, to use as you see fit."

His emotion, as he spoke, was even greater than hers.

Early in the year 1789 Dolores entered the convent of the Carmelites in Arles, not as a postulant—for she did not wish to devote herself to a religious life—but as a boarder, which placed a barrier between her and Philip for the time being, but left her free to decide upon her future.

Her departure filled Philip with despair. The death of Dolores could not have caused him more intense sorrow. For was she not dead to him? She had carefully concealed the fact that her sojourn at the convent would not be permanent. He supposed she had buried herself there forever. He mourned for her as we weep for those that death wrests from us, destroying their lives and our happiness at a single blow; but the very violence of his grief convinced his father that he was not inconsolable. There are sorrows that kill; but, if they do not kill when they first fall upon us, we recover; and this would be the case with Philip. The certainty that Dolores would never belong to another, that she had refused him only to give herself to God, was of all circumstances the one most likely to console him. The presence of Antoinette—who honestly believed all Dolores had said concerning the state of her heart and the purely sisterly affection she felt for her adopted brother—and the timid, shrinking love of the young girl also aided not a little in assuaging his grief. However ardent your passion may be, you become reconciled

to disappointment when the object of your love refuses your affection only to consecrate herself to God, and when she leaves with you as a comforter a companion who is her equal in gentleness and in goodness, if not in energy and nobility of character. Without entering into other details, this sufficiently explains how Philip's passionate grief came to abate in violence.

He wished to leave Chamondrin the very next day after the departure of Dolores, and to return to Versailles where his regiment was still stationed; but his father's entreaties induced him to abandon this project. The Marquis assured him that he could not live abandoned by both Dolores and his son, so Philip remained. This was one advantage gained for the Marquis. The causes previously referred to and Antoinette's charms accomplished the rest. Philip began to regard their marriage without aversion; but he would not consent to abruptly cast off one love for another. Time was needed for the transition. Even as he would have mourned for Dolores dead, he wished to mourn the Dolores he had lost, and to wait until his wounded heart was healed. He gave his father and also Mademoiselle de Mirandol to understand that, while he did not reject the idea of this union which seemed so pleasing to them, he must be allowed to fix the date of it. His will was law with both; the Marquis wisely concealed his impatience; Antoinette displayed great discretion, and matters were moving along smoothly when political events which had become more and more grave in character suddenly complicated the situation.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH HISTORY IS MINGLED WITH ROMANCE.

The real awaking of the country, the real beginning of the Revolution dates from the year 1789. What France had endured for half a century every one knows. Every one also knows that, becoming weary of poverty, of the tyranny of the powerful, of the weakness of the king, of the squandering of her treasure and of the intrigues of those in authority, and compelled to find a remedy within herself, the country demanded the convocation of the États Généraux. The government at last decided to accede to the entreaties that were heard on every side; and it was during the early part of the year 1789 that France was called upon to elect her representatives; while, from one end of the kingdom to the other, there was a general desire for a great and much needed reform.

The south did not take a less active part in this movement than the rest of the country. Provence and Languedoc were shaken to their centres. In all the region round about the Gardon—at Nîmes, in Beaucaire in Arles, in Remoulins—political clubs were formed. The condition of the peasantry, who had previously been condemned to a sort of slavery, suddenly changed. The weak became the strong; the timid became the audacious; the humble became the proud; and from the mouth of an oppressed people issued a voice demanding liberty. This movement

had been ripe for some time among the lower classes, but it suddenly burst forth and revealed itself in all its mighty power in the convocation of the États Généraux.

In Nîmes and the surrounding country, the agitation caused by this great event was increased by the remembrance of the religious warfare that had been waged there between the Protestants and Catholics for more than a century. This enmity blazed out afresh, greatly aggravating the bitterness naturally caused by the elections. Were not these last a mere pretext invented by one sect to conceal their evil designs against the other? Was it only a conflict between the champions of the old and of the new régime, or were these excited men eager to take up arms one against the other, mere fanatics ready to condemn others to martyrdom and to accept it themselves? History has not yet decided this important question; and sectarian passion has not yet allowed an impartial critic to be heard. Still, it is a well-known fact that throughout the province of Languedoc, and notably in Nîmes, the political excitement was of the most virulent character. Blood flowed there even sooner than in Paris. The massacres at Nîmes preceded the celebrated massacres of September by more than two years; and in Avignon, though this city was as yet French only in its situation and in the language of its inhabitants, the reign of terror was at its height in the mouth of October, 1791.

In 1789, while the elections were in progress, signs of these coming events began to manifest themselves. In Nîmes the Catholics and Protestants were bitterly denouncing one another, quarrelling over the local

offices, and striving in every possible way to gain the ascendancy. The Marquis de Chamondrin was a Catholic, but he was very tolerant and liberal in his opinions. One of his ancestors, at the imminent risk of exile, had boldly opposed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The Marquis shared the opinions of his ancestor; despotism found no champion in him. He had read the philosophers of his time, and he was convinced that equality in rights if not in fortunes could be established between men. He recognized the necessity of reform, but he detested violence; and he exerted all his influence to secure moderation, to reconcile opponents and to draw men together. Thus at Nîmes, on more than one occasion, he had prevented the effusion of blood. But the passions were so strongly excited in that locality at that time that his efforts as a moderator gained him but one thing, isolation. He drew down upon himself the hatred of those whom he wished to calm; he did not even win the friendship of those whom he desired to protect, and who, unless their peril was extreme, boldly declared that they were able to protect themselves. His popularity, cleverly undermined by his enemies, soon became impaired, and, weary of the dissensions in which he was embroiled in spite of all his efforts, he shut himself up in his château, resolving to keep a philosophical watch over events, but to take no part in them.

A few days later, the États Généraux assembled at Versailles; but their time was spent in bickerings and in sterile discussions while oppressed and panting France vainly awaited the salutary reforms they were expected to effect. From May, the date of their meeting, to the immortal night of the Fourth of August, when the nation entered upon an era that

was to atone for so many disasters, one event succeeded another with bewildering rapidity. The victorious resistance of the Third Estate to the pretensions of the nobility and clergy; the proclamation of the king; the movement of the French Guards; their imprisonment; their deliverance by the people; the intrigues of the Orleans party; the taking of the Bastile; the death of Foulon and of Berthier came one after another to accelerate the progress of the revolutionary movement which was already advancing rapidly.

In 1790, famine was at the gates of Paris and threatened to spread over all France. Armed brigands, taking advantage of the general disorder, began to lay waste the provinces. In many parts of the country, the peasants joined them; in others, they resisted them. These brigands attacked the châteaux, they burned several and pillaged others. Finally, dread of a foreign foe was added to all these fears, and the people accused the nobility of calling a foreign nation to their assistance.

These are some of the many events that served to distract Philip de Chamondrin's mind from his disappointment and delay his marriage to Antoinette de Mirandol. Anxious as the Marquis was to hasten this union, he shared the general apprehension too strongly to urge his son to marry at such a time. The inmates of the château were troubled and depressed. Gloomy news from the outer world reached them daily. The king's life was believed to be in danger. A dozen times Philip had almost decided to start for Versailles to die, if need be, in the service of his sovereign; but Coursegol succeeded in convincing him that his presence was a necessity at Chamondrin, and that he could not go away without leaving the

Marquis and Antoinette exposed to the gravest peril. Coursegol had several reasons for dissuading his young master from his purpose, the chief of which was that he did not wish to go himself. In case of actual danger, he could be of great service to the Marquis. Thanks to his plebeian origin, to his many acquaintances and to his reputation as a good fellow in Nîmes and in Beaucaire, he could mingle with the crowd, converse with the peasantry, question the artisans and discover their temper and plans. In case the château was attacked, he would also be able to make many friends for the Marquis and call quite a number of defenders to his aid. Then, too, he could not endure the thought of going so far from Arles while Dolores was there, alone and defenceless, and might need his protection at any moment.

So Philip did not go, but together with his father and Coursegol he began to make arrangements for the defence of the château. They augmented their force by the addition of three or four men upon whose fidelity they could implicitly rely. Coursegol was also promised the services of several peasants. The Marquis frequently visited the little town of Remoulins, that lay a few miles from the château on the other side of the Gardon, and he still had a few warm friends there, some of whom had desired to send him to the États Généraux. They, too, promised to come to his assistance in case of an attack on the castle. If the former masters of Chamondrin had been tyrants this was now forgotten. The large possessions which would have endowed them with feudal rights were theirs no longer. For several years Dolores and the Marquise de Chamondrin had endeavored to obliterate the memory of the past by visiting the poor and the sick around them, and Antoinette de Mirandol had perpetuated the memory of their good

deeds by imitating their example.

Hence they had nothing to apprehend from those in their immediate neighborhood; but they had every reason to fear the many lawless bands that were now scouring that region of country, ostensibly attracted there by the fair that was to be held at Beaucaire in the month of July—bands of armed and desperate men, who plundered and pillaged and lived by rapine. The Bohemians, too, who passed the Pont du Gard each spring and autumn, inspired the inmates of the château with no slight dread, as it seemed more than likely they would take advantage of the general disorder that prevailed to commit depredations upon any isolated dwellings that tempted their cupidity. Moreover, north of Nîmes there were several villages whose fanatical and intensely excited inhabitants were strongly urged by their leaders to make an attack upon the Catholics, who were accused of opposition to the reform movement. It was rumored that these people intended to march upon Nîmes, burn the city and put its population to the sword. Was there not good reason to fear that these men, if they succeeded in this undertaking, would take it into their heads to spread death and destruction beyond the walls of Nîmes. No apprehension was ridiculous, no prudence was exaggerated at a time when all France trembled.

Such were the causes that had induced the Marquis and his son to prepare for an attack on the castle. In spite of their precautions, they could not conceal these preparations from Antoinette. She courageously assisted them, almost thankful for the perils that menaced their safety, since they detained Philip at the château. She loved him even more devotedly than ever, and, if she shuddered sometimes at the

thought that a life so precious to her might be endangered at any moment, she comforted herself by thinking she would at least have the consolation of dying with him.

But the Marquis was beset by many scruples. He felt that he did wrong to expose Antoinette to such danger, since she did not yet belong to his family and since he had promised her dying father to protect her and her fortune until the day of her marriage. He finally decided to send her to England, which she would find a safer retreat than the Château de Chamondrin. He confided this project to Antoinette, but he had scarcely broached the subject when, the girl interrupted him with these words:

"If you love me, do not separate me from Philip!"

The Marquis could not resist this entreaty. Antoinette remained.

While these events were taking place at the château, Dolores, immured in the convent at Arles, was patiently awaiting the termination of the imprisonment she had voluntarily imposed upon herself. After a sojourn of several months in this saintly house, she experienced a great relief. Solitude had calmed her sorrow. She still suffered, she would always suffer, but she gathered from her faith and from noble resolutions bravely accomplished that peace and resignation which a merciful Heaven bestows upon all sad hearts that appeal to it of aid.

Dolores, as we have said before, entered the convent not as a novice, but as a boarder. From the founding of the institution, that is to say, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Carmelite nuns of

Arles, in obedience to the wishes of their foundress, to whose liberality they owed the building and grounds which they occupied, had offered an asylum to all gentlewomen who, from one cause or another, desired to dwell in the shelter of those sacred walls without obeying the rules of the order. Disconsolate widows, mothers mourning the loss of their children, and orphans affrighted by the world found a peaceful home there and a quiet life which was not unfrequently a step towards the cloister.

When Dolores went to live at the convent, the boarders were seven in number, all older than herself. They accorded a cordial welcome to the young girl, who was soon at ease in their midst. Their life was very simple. They lived in the convent, but not within the cloister. Rising at six in the morning, they attended service in the chapel with the nuns from whom they were separated by a grating. Between the hours of morning and evening service they were at liberty to spend their time in whatever way they chose. They all ate at the same table. Dolores spent her time in working for the needy and for the institution. She made clothing for poor children; she embroidered altar cloths for the chapel; she visited the sick and destitute. Thus her life was peacefully devoted to prayer and good works. She frequently received tidings from the château, sometimes through letters written by the Marquis, sometimes through Coursegol, who came to see her every month. She took a lively interest in all that pertained to those whom she had left only to give them a new proof of her affection and devotion. When Coursegol visited her, she invariably spoke of her longing to return to Chamondrin. She hoped that Philip and Antoinette would soon be married, and that she would be able to go back to the loved home

in which her happy childhood had been spent. These hopes were never to be realized; that beloved home she was destined never to behold again.

Early in June, Coursegol, in accordance with his usual habit, left the château to pass a few days in Arles. He reached the city on the fourteenth, and, after visiting Dolores, left for home on the morning of the sixteenth.

He made the journey on foot. The sky was slightly veiled by fleecy, white clouds that tempered the heat of the sun. The road between Arles and Nîmes is charming, and Coursegol walked blithely along, inhaling with delight the fresh morning breeze that came to him laden with the vivifying fragrance of the olive and cypress. As he approached Beaucaire, a pretty village on the bank of the Rhone, he noticed that an unusual animation pervaded the place. Groups of peasants stood here and there, engaged in excited conversation; every face wore an expression of anxiety. He thought at first that these people must be going or returning from some funeral; but he soon noticed that many were armed, some with guns, some with scythes. On reaching the centre of the town, he found the market-place full of soldiers; officers were giving excited orders. It looked as if the town were arming to defend itself.

"What does all this mean?" inquired Coursegol, addressing a little group of townspeople.

"Why, do you not know what has happened?" one man replied, in evident astonishment.

"I have heard nothing. I have just arrived from Arles."

"Nîmes has been pillaged. The peasantry from the Cevennes have descended upon the city and massacred three hundred people—laborers, bourgeois, priests and nuns. They are now masters of the place, and it is feared that a detachment of them is coming in this direction. We are making ready to receive them."

"What! Have they advanced beyond Nîmes?" inquired Coursegol, appalled by this news.

"Some of them advanced last night as far as the Pont du Gard. There they sacked and burned the Château de Chamondrin!"

A ghastly pallor overspread Coursegol's features; he uttered a cry of horror.

"What is the matter?" asked the man who had just apprised him of this terrible calamity.

"My masters!—where are my masters?" cried poor Coursegol.

Then, without waiting for the response which no one could give, he darted off like a madman in the direction of the Pont du Gard.

Although the events that took place in Nîmes early in 1790 have never been clearly explained by an impartial historian, we have reason to suppose that the public sentiment prevailing there at the time was unfavorable to the Revolution. The Catholics of the south became indignant when they learned that the Assembly wished to reform the Catholic Church without consulting the Pope. From that day, they were the enemies of the Revolution. Their protests were energetic, and from protests they passed to acts.

The Catholics took up arms ostensibly to defend themselves against the Protestants, but chiefly to defend their menaced religion. The Protestants, who were in communication with their religious brethren in Paris and Montauban, were also ready to take the field at any moment. A regiment was quartered in the city. The sympathies of the officers were with the Catholics, who represented the aristocracy in their eyes; the soldiers seemed to favor the Protestants—the patriots. This division brought a new element of discord into the civil war. This condition of affairs lasted several months. A conflict between some of the National Guards—Catholics—and a company of dragoons was the signal for a struggle that had become inevitable. The Protestants of Nîmes sided with the dragoons; the Catholics espoused the cause of the National Guards. Several of these last were killed. This happened on the 13th of June. The following day, bands of peasants, summoned to the aid of the Protestants from the country north of Nîmes, descended upon the city. They entered it in an orderly manner, as if animated by peaceful intentions; but many of the men were either half-crazed fanatics or wretches who were actuated by a desire for plunder. They ran through the streets, becoming more and more excited until their fury suddenly burst forth and they rushed wildly about the city, carrying death and devastation in their track. There was a Capuchin monastery at Nîmes. They invaded this first, slaying the priests at the foot of the altar in the church that still retains the ineffaceable stain of their blood. The assassins then hastened to the monastery of the Carmelites. The monks had fled. They sacked the church, and then plundered a number of private houses. The bandits showed no mercy. They opened a vigorous

cannonade upon the tower of Froment where many had taken refuge. In three days three hundred persons perished.

At the news of these massacres a cry of rage and terror rose from the Catholic villages on the banks of the Rhone and the Gardon. The cry was this:

"They are slaughtering our brothers at Nîmes!"

The influential men immediately assembled and counselled the frightened and indignant populace to take up arms in their own defence. The tocsin was sounded, and in a few hours several hundred men had assembled near the Pont du Gard, ready to march upon Nîmes and punish the wretches who had slain the innocent and defenceless. By unanimous consent the Marquis de Chamondrin was made one of the leaders of this hastily improvised army. He accepted the command with a few eloquent words, urging his men to do their duty, and the army took up its line of march. Some gypsies, who chanced to be near the Pont du Gard at the time, brought up the rear, hoping that the fortunes of war would gain them an entrance into the city of Nîmes that they might pillage and steal without restraint.

This manifestation of wrath on the part of the inhabitants of the surrounding country terrified the assassins, and most of them took to flight; but those who lived in Nîmes and who were alarmed for their own safety and that of their families resolved to avert the blow that menaced them.

There are traitors in every party, men ready to sell or to be sold; men for whom treason and infamy are pathways to wealth. There were some of these men

in the Catholic ranks, and promises of gold induced them to go out and meet the approaching army and assure its leaders that order was re-established at Nîmes and that their entrance into the city would only occasion a fresh outbreak. These emissaries accomplished their mission; and that same evening all these men who had left home that morning thirsting for vengeance returned quietly to their firesides.

But, unfortunately, the Marquis de Chamondrin had taken such an active part in this demonstration that he had deeply incensed the assassins; and the more ferocious of them resolved to wreak vengeance upon him by pillaging and burning his château. A conspiracy was organized, and the following night about forty men of both parties, or rather the scum and refuse of both, started for Chamondrin. They knew the castle had but a small number of defenders, and that Coursegol, the most formidable of these, was absent at the time. They also knew that the isolated situation of the château afforded its inmates little chance of succor, and that, if they could succeed in surprising it, they could accomplish their work of destruction before the inhabitants of Remoulins and the surrounding villages could come to the aid of the Marquis and his household. The plan was decided upon in a few hours; and the disorder that prevailed throughout the country, the inertness of the authorities and the want of harmony among the soldiery, all favored its execution.

About nine o'clock in the evening, the bandits stole quietly out of Nîmes. They reached the Pont du Gard a little before midnight and halted there to receive their final instructions before ascending the hill upon the summit of which stood the Château de

Chamondrin.

Here, they were joined by a dozen or more Bohemians who were encamped near by, the same men who had accompanied the Catholics on their expedition that same morning. They approached the bandits in the hope that a new army was in process of organization for an attack upon the city, and that they might accompany it. When they saw the band proceed in the direction of the château, they straggled along in the rear. Like hungry vultures, they seemed to scent a battle from which they might derive some profit.

The household at Chamondrin chanced to be astir late that evening. The Marquis, Philip, Antoinette, the curé of Remoulins and two or three landed proprietors living in the vicinity were in the drawing-room. After such a day of excitement, no one could think of sleep. They were discussing the events that had occurred at Nîmes, and deploring the death of the victims. They were anxiously asking if the blood that had been shed would be the last, and were endeavoring to find means to prevent the repetition of such a calamity. When the clock struck the hour of midnight, the curé of Remoulins, an energetic old man named Peretty, rose to return to the village. The other visitors, whose homes lay in the same direction and whose carriages were waiting in the court-yard, followed his example. Suddenly a frightened cry broke the silence of the night. Followed by the others present, Philip rushed to the door. The cry had come from the man who guarded the gate.

"We are attacked!" exclaimed this man on seeing Philip.

At a glance the latter understood the extent and the imminence of their danger. The bright moonlight revealed a terrible sight. The besiegers had found only one opening through which they could effect an entrance into the château; but even there a heavy gate composed of strong iron bars opposed their passage. This gate was very high, and the bars were securely fastened to each other, while the top was surmounted by sharp pickets. Still, the bandits were not discouraged. Half-crazed with fury and with wine, they climbed this formidable barrier with the hope of leaping over it. It seemed to bend beneath their weight. The massive bolts trembled, the ponderous hinges creaked, as fifty or more repulsive-looking wretches, the majority of them clad in rags, hurled themselves against the gate, uttering shrieks of baffled rage. One would have supposed them wild beasts trying to break from their cage.

"To arms!" cried Philip.

He ran to the lower hall, which was used as an armory. His father, the visitors and the servants, who were all devoted to the Chamondrin family, followed him, while Antoinette stood watching in alarm this formidable horde of invaders.

The Abbé Peretty advanced towards the intruders.

"What do you desire, my friends?" he asked, calmly.

"Open the gates!" responded the less excited among the crowd.

"We want Chamondrin's head!" exclaimed others.

"Have you any just cause of complaint against the Marquis?" persisted the abbé, striving to calm the furious throng.

"Death to the aristocrats!" the crowd responded with one voice.

One man went so far as to point his gun at the venerable priest, who, without once losing his sang-froid, recrossed the court-yard, keeping his face turned towards the excited band outside, and rejoined his companions, who under the leadership of the Marquis and Philip were just emerging from the hall, armed to the teeth.

"They will not listen to reason," said the Abbé Peretty, calmly!

"Then we will defend ourselves, and woe be unto them!"

As he uttered these words, the Marquis turned to Mademoiselle de Mirandol, around whom the women of the château were crowding, half-crazed with terror.

"Go into the house; your place is not here," said he.

"My place is by your side!" replied Antoinette.

"No, my dear Antoinette; it is madness to expose yourself unnecessarily. I know you are courageous, but you can be of far greater service to us by quieting these poor, shrieking creatures."

While this conversation was going on, Philip advanced to the gate. It still resisted the efforts of the assailants, some of whom were endeavoring to climb over the roofs of the pavilions that stood on either side of the entrance to the château.

"I command you to retire!" cried Philip.

Angry threats of "Death" resounded afresh.

"Then I hold you responsible for any disasters that may occur!" Philip replied.

At the same moment the impetuous youth raised his gun and fired, wounding one of the men who had climbed the gate and was preparing to leap down into the court-yard. Imprecations broke forth anew and the combat began. Nothing could be heard but a vigorous fusillade, accompanied by the shouts of the besiegers and the besieged. These last were so few in number that they dare not dispatch one of their little company to Remoulins for aid. Besides, they were not sure that the band now assailing them would not be followed by others that would waylay their messenger; but they hoped that their shouts and the sound of the firing would arouse the inhabitants of the sleeping town. The Marquis fought with the desperation of a man who is defending his outraged fireside, and Philip struggled with the energy of despair. He was fighting for his father and for Antoinette. He shuddered when he thought of the horrible fate that awaited the young girl if these brutes, more formidable than any wild beasts, were victorious. Even the Abbé Peretty had armed himself. The servants and the friends of the house conducted themselves like heroes, but, unfortunately, Coursegol was far from Chamondrin, and the defenders of the château sadly missed his valiant arm.

The assailants were still crowding against the gate, uttering howls of fury. They were poorly armed. Only a few had guns, the others brandished hatchets and pickaxes, crying:

"Tear down the gate!"

But, when the firing began, they left this dangerous position and retired perhaps twenty feet, where they

hid behind the trees, firing at random, sometimes trying to advance, but always driven back with loss. Five or six of them were already stretched upon the grass, but the defenders of the castle were unhurt. The gypsies had retreated to a safe distance, where they stood impatiently awaiting the conclusion of the struggle, ready to fall upon the vanquished as soon as they became unable to defend themselves.

Meanwhile Antoinette, surrounded by four or five women, was upon her knees in the drawing-room, praying fervently, her heart sick with anguish and fear. How ardently she wished herself a man that she might fight by Philip's side! The firing suddenly ceased. Philip entered the room. His face was pale, but stained here and there by smoke and powder; his head was bare; his clothing disordered. Grief and despair were imprinted upon his countenance.

"We must fly!" he exclaimed.

And taking Antoinette by the hand he led her through the long corridor opening into the park. The frightened women followed them. In the park they met the defenders of the château, carrying a wounded man in their arms.

Antoinette uttered a cry of consternation.

"Ah! I would have fought until death!" exclaimed Philip, despairingly, "but we were overpowered; the gate was torn down; my father was wounded. He must be saved from the hands of the bandits at any cost, so we were forced to retreat."

Antoinette walked on like one in a frightful dream. If Philip had not supported her she would have fallen again and again. They walked beside the Marquis,

who was still conscious, though mortally wounded in the breast. When he saw his son and Antoinette beside him, he looked at them with sorrowful tenderness, and even attempted to smile as if to convince them that he was not suffering.

The little band proceeded with all possible speed to a small summer-house concealed in the pines and shrubbery. Nothing could be more mournful than this little procession of gloomy-visaged men and weeping women, fleeing through the darkness to escape the assassins who were now masters of the castle, destroying everything around them and making night hideous with their ferocious yells. At last they reached the summer-house. The Marquis was deposited upon a hastily improvised bed; the Abbé Peretty, assisted by Philip and Antoinette, attempted to dress his wound; and two men started in the hope of reaching Remoulins by a circuitous route, in order to bring a physician and call upon the inhabitants of the village for aid.

An hour went by; it seemed a century. In the gloomy room where these unfortunates had taken refuge no sound broke the stillness save the moans of the Marquis and the voice of the Abbé Peretty, as he uttered occasional words of consolation and encouragement to assuage the mute anguish of Philip and the despair of the weeping Antoinette. Then all was still again.

Philip's agony was terrible. His father dying; his home in the hands of vandals, who were ruthlessly destroying the loved and cherished objects that had surrounded him from infancy, Antoinette, crushed by the disasters of this most wretched night, this was the terrible picture that rose before him. To this

torture was added the despair caused by a sense of his utter powerlessness. Gladly would he have rushed back to the château to die there, struggling with his enemies, but he was prevented by the thought of Antoinette, who was now dependent upon him for protection. He was engrossed in these gloomy thoughts when a strange crackling sound attracted his attention, and at the same moment a man, who had ventured out into the park to watch the proceedings of the enemy rushed back, exclaiming:

"They are burning the château!"

The tidings of this new misfortune overpowered Philip and almost bereft him of reason. He ran to the door. A tall column of flame and smoke was mounting to the sky; the trees were tinged with a crimson light, and the crackling of the fire could be distinctly heard above the hooting and yelling of the infuriated crowd. His eyes filled with tears, but he was dashing them away preparatory to returning to his father when the Abbé Peretty joined him.

"Courage, my poor boy!" said the good priest.

"I will be brave, sir. I can cheerfully submit to the loss of our possessions, but to the death of my father, I——"

He could not complete the sentence. The abbé, who had lost all hope, was silent for a moment; then he said:

"There is something I must no longer conceal from you. After the château is destroyed, I fear these wretches will search the park in order to discover our retreat. I do not fear for myself. I shall remain with the Marquis. They will respect a dying man and

a white-haired priest; but you, Philip, must remain here no longer. Make your escape with Mademoiselle de Mirandol without delay."

"I cannot abandon my father," replied Philip. "If our hiding-place is discovered, we will defend ourselves —we will fight until death!"

The priest said no more, and they both returned to the bedside of the Marquis. On seeing them, the latter, addressing his son, inquired:

"The château is on fire, is it not?"

Philip's reply seemed to cause the Marquis intense anguish; but, after a moment, he motioned to his son to come nearer; then he said.

"Listen, Philip. You must leave France. This unhappy country is about to enter upon a series of misfortunes which neither you nor I can foresee, and of which you will certainly be a victim if you remain here. You must depart, Philip. Think, my son, you will be the sole heir of the house of Chamondrin."

"You will recover, father."

"No; death is close at hand. It is so near that I cannot deceive myself; so, Philip, I wish you to grant one of my dearest wishes. I wish, before I die, to feel assured that the family of Chamondrin will be perpetuated. Consent to marry Antoinette."

Philip, as we have said before, had already tacitly consented to this marriage. Since he had lost all hope of winning Dolores, the thought of wedding another was no longer revolting to him.

"I am ready to obey you, father," he replied, "but will you allow me to remind you that Mademoiselle de

Mirandol is rich and that I have nothing."

The Marquis checked him and, calling Antoinette, said in a voice that was becoming weaker and weaker:

"Antoinette, Philip is poor; his position is gone; the favor of the king will avail him nothing in the future, and the power has passed into the hands of our enemies; nevertheless, will you consent to marry him?"

"If he desires it," exclaimed Mademoiselle de Mirandol, "and never was I so grateful for my wealth!"

Philip pressed the hand of the noble girl, and the face of the Marquis was transfigured with joy in spite of his agony. Then M. de Chamondrin resumed:

"You must leave the country, my children, and marry as soon as circumstances will permit. You must stay in foreign lands until France recovers her reason. Promise to obey me."

They promised in voices choked with sobs.

"Abbé," continued the Marquis, "bless these children!"

Without exchanging another word, Philip and Antoinette, in obedience to the wishes of the dying man, knelt before the priest. The latter, employing the solemn formula which makes bride and bridegroom indissolubly one, asked Mademoiselle de Mirandol if she would accept Philip as her husband, and Philip if he would take Antoinette for his wife, and when they had answered in the affirmative, he added:

"I cannot here, and under such circumstances, unite you by the bonds of marriage; but until the vows you have just exchanged can be consecrated by the church, I, as the witness of this covenant, shall pray God to bless you."

"I am satisfied," said the Marquis, faintly. "Father, grant me absolution."

Antoinette and Philip remained upon their knees. A quarter of an hour later the Marquis expired. Just as he breathed his last, the same man who discovered the firing of the château, and who had again returned to the park to watch the movements of the enemy, burst into the room.

"They are searching the park! They are coming this way!" he cried, breathlessly.

The curé, who had been engaged in prayer, rose.

"Fly!" he exclaimed.

"My place is here!" replied Philip.

Antoinette gave him a look of approval.

"In the name of the Father, who has commanded you to love, I order you to fly!"

And, as he spoke, the priest pointed to the door.

"But who will give him burial?" exclaimed Philip.

"I will; go!" replied the abbé.

Antoinette and Philip were compelled to obey.

The priest was left alone with the lifeless body of M. de Chamondrin. He knelt, and, as calmly as if he were in his own presbytery, recited the prayers the

church addresses to Heaven for the souls of the dead. The flickering light of a nearly consumed candle dimly illumined the room. The world without was bathed in a flood of clear moonlight. The marauders ran about the park, shouting at the top of their voices, uprooting plants and shrubbery, breaking the statuary and the marble vases, and expending upon inanimate objects the fury they were unable to vent upon the living.

Suddenly, one of them discovered the summer-house. The door was open; he entered. Some of his comrades followed him. A priest with white, flowing locks rose at their entrance, and, pointing to the couch upon which the dead body of the Marquis was reposing, said:

"Death has passed this way! Retire—"

He was not allowed to complete his sentence. A violent blow from an axe felled him to the ground, his skull, fractured. They trampled his body under foot, then one of the assassins applied a burning torch to the floor. The flames rose, licking each portion of the building with their fiery tongues. Then the shameless crowd departed to continue their work of destruction. The sacking of the château occupied three hours. The pillagers had not retired when the approach of the National Guard of Remoulins, coming too late to the assistance of the Marquis, was discovered by one of the ruffians, and they fled in every direction to escape the punishment they merited.

When Coursegol, wild with anxiety, reached the château on the day that followed this frightful scene, only the walls remained standing. Of the imposing edifice in which he was born there was left only bare

and crumbling walls. The farm-house and the summer-house had shared the same fate; and in the park, thickly strewn with prostrate trees and debris, a crowd of gypsies and beggars were searching for valuables spared by the fire. Coursegol could not repress a cry of rage and despair at the sight; but how greatly his sorrow was augmented when he learned that two dead bodies, those of the Marquis and of the Abbé Peretty had been discovered half-consumed in the still smoking ruins.

Were Philip and Antoinette also dead? No one knew.

One person declared that he saw them making their escape. This uncertainty was more horrible to Coursegol than the poignant reality before his eyes. He flung himself down upon the seared turf, and there, gloomy, motionless, a prey to the most frightful despair, he wept bitterly.

CHAPTER VI.

PARIS IN 1792.

On the third of September, 1792, about eleven o'clock in the morning, a tall, stalwart man, with an energetic face and sunburned hands, and accompanied by a young woman, might have been seen approaching the Barriere du Trone. Both were clad in the garb worn by the peasantry of southern France. The young woman wore the costume of a Provençale peasant girl, and carried upon her arm a

short, dark cloak, which she used as a protection against the cool night air, but which she did not require now in the heat of the day. The man wore a suit of black fustian, a foxskin cap, blue stockings and heavy shoes. The expression of weariness imprinted upon their features and the dust that covered their garments proved that their journey had been long. As they neared the gateway, the man, who was carrying a heavy valise in his hand, paused to take breath. His companion followed his example, and, as they seated themselves by the roadside, she cast an anxious glance at the city.

"Do you think they will allow us to pass?" she murmured, frightened already at the thought of being subjected to the examination of the soldiers who guarded the gate.

"Are not our passports all right?" demanded her companion. "If we wished to leave Paris it would be quite another matter; but as we merely desire to enter the city, there will be no difficulty. Have no fears, Mademoiselle; they will not detain us long at the gate."

"Coursegol, stop calling me Mademoiselle. Call me your daughter. If you do not acquire the habit of doing so, you will forget some day and then all will be discovered."

"I know my rôle, and I shall play it to perfection when we are before strangers, but, when we are alone, I cannot forget that I am only your servant."

"Not my servant; but my friend, my father. Have you not always felt for me the same affection and solicitude you would have entertained for your own

daughter?"

Coursegol responded only by a look; but this look proved that Dolores had spoken the truth and that the paternal love, of which he had given abundant proofs in the early part of this history, had suffered no diminution.

"If you had only been willing to listen to me," he remarked, after a few moment's silence, "we should have remained in the village where the coach stopped. There we could have awaited a more propitious opportunity to reach our journey's end."

"I was too eager to reach the city. It seems to me that, in approaching Paris, I am nearing Philip and Antoinette. If they are still living, we shall certainly find them in Paris."

"Oh! they are living; I am sure of it; but is it not likely that they have emigrated? In that case, why should we remain in a city that is so full of danger for us?"

"We can lead a quiet and retired life there! No one will know us and we shall have better facilities for obtaining news in Paris than in a village. My heart tells me that we are not far from our friends."

"God grant it, my child," responded Coursegol; "and if, as I hope, Bridoul has not forgotten his friend of former days, we shall soon be safe in his house."

"Are you not sure of his friendship?" inquired Dolores, anxiously.

"Can we place implicit confidence in any one as times are now?" returned Coursegol. "Bridoul was my comrade in the army. He loved me, and he was

devoted to Monsieur Philip, our captain. But to-day the remembrance of such a friendship is a crime. It must be forgotten; and fear sometimes renders the bravest hearts cowardly and timorous. Still, I do not believe Bridoul has changed. But we shall soon know. Now, let us go on, my dear daughter, and show no anxiety if they question us at the gate."

"Have no fear, father," replied Dolores, with a smile.

Coursegol picked up his valise, and boldly approached the gate. Dolores followed him, striving to quiet the throbbings of her heart; she was more troubled in mind now than she had been during the whole of the long journey. As they were passing through the gateway, a sentinel stopped them and made them enter a small house occupied by the detachment of the National Guard, which was deputized to watch over the safety of Paris from this point. The post was commanded by a young lieutenant, a mere boy with a beardless face. On seeing a beautiful girl enter, followed by an aged man, he rose, and turning to his soldiers:

"What is the meaning of this?" he inquired.

"I wish to enter the city, lieutenant," volunteered Coursegol, without waiting to be questioned.

"Enter Paris! You have chosen a nice time! There are many people in it who would be only too glad to make their escape. Who is this citoyenne?" added the officer, pointing to Dolores.

"That is my daughter."

"Be seated, citoyenne," said the lieutenant, politely offering Dolores his own chair.

She accepted it, and the examination continued.

"From whence do you come?"

"From Beaucaire."

"Afoot?"

"No, citizen; we left the coach at Montgeron. The driver had no other passengers, and, when he heard of the troubles in Paris, he declared he would wait there until they were over. His coach was loaded with merchandise, and he feared it would be taken from him."

"Does he take patriots for bandits?" exclaimed the officer, angrily. "If I am on guard here when his coach enters the city, he will receive the lesson he deserves. You said you had passports, I think?"

"Here they are!"

The officer took the papers that Coursegol handed him and examined them carefully.

"These papers were drawn up two years ago," said he. "Where have you spent these years?"

"My daughter has been ill and we were obliged to stop at numerous places on the way. We made long sojourns at Dijon and at Montereau; but you will notice, citizen, the passports bear the endorsement of the authorities of those towns."

"So I perceive. Very well, you will be taken before the Commissioners and if your papers prove all right, as I believe they are, you will be allowed to remain in the city."

The young lieutenant turned away to give an order

to one of his soldiers; then suddenly he approached Coursegol and said kindly, in a low voice:

"You seem to be worthy people, and I should be very sorry if any misfortune happened to you. Paris is not a safe abode just now. Yesterday they began to put the prisoners to death, and, perhaps, you and your daughter would do well to wait until the fury of the populace is appeased."

"But we belong to the people," replied Coursegol. "We have nothing to fear; moreover, I know a good patriot who will be responsible for us if necessary: Citizen Bridoul, who keeps a wine-shop on the Rue Antoine."

"At the sign of the Bonnet Rouge?" cried the officer.

"The very same," replied Coursegol, boldly, though until now he had been ignorant of the sign which distinguished his friend Bridoul's establishment.

"Bridoul is a true patriot. Thanks to him, you will incur no risk! You will now be conducted to the Commissioners."

"Many thanks for your kindness, lieutenant," said Coursegol.

And taking Dolores' arm in his, he followed the soldier who was to conduct them to the municipal authorities. There, they underwent a fresh examination, and Coursegol responded as before. As people who desired to enter Paris at such a time could hardly be regarded with suspicion, Coursegol and Dolores were walking freely about the streets of the city a few moments later, surprised and alarmed at the sights that met their eyes at every turn. The

last witnesses of the grand revolutionary drama are disappearing every day. Age has bowed their heads, blanched their locks and enfeebled their memories. Soon there will remain none of those whose testimony might aid the historian of that stormy time in his search after truth; but among the few who still survive and who in the year 1792 were old enough to see and understand and remember, there are none upon whom the recollection of those terrible days in September is not indelibly imprinted. Since the tenth of August, Paris had been delivered up to frenzy and bloodshed. The arrest of the royal family, the rivalry between the Commune and the Convention, the bitter debates at the clubs and the uprising of the volunteers were more than enough to throw the great city into a state of excitement, disorder and terror. Business was paralyzed; the stores were for the most part closed; the aristocratic portions of the city deserted; emigration had deprived France of thousands of her citizens; the streets were filled with a fierce, ragged crowd; the luxury upon which the artisan depended for a livelihood was proscribed; famine was knocking at the gates; gold had disappeared; places of amusement were broken up; the gardens and the galleries of the Palais-Royal alone remained—the only rendezvous accessible to those who, even while looking forward to death, frantically desired to enjoy the little of life that remained. Such was the aspect of affairs in Paris.

With the last days of August came the news of the capture of Longwy by the Prussians, the siege of Terdun, and the warlike preparations of Russia and Germany. This was more than enough to excite the terror of the Parisians and to arouse their anger against those whom they called aristocrats and whom they accused of complicity with the enemies

of the nation.

On the 29th of August, by the order of the Commune, the gates were closed. It was impossible to enter Paris without a passport endorsed by examiners appointed for the purpose. No one was allowed to leave the city on any pretext whatever. The Parisians were virtually prisoners. Every house, every apartment was visited by inspectors. Rich and poor were alike compelled to submit. Every suspicious article was seized, and the man in whose dwelling it was discovered was arrested. The inspectors performed their tasks with unnecessary harshness, ruthlessly destroying any valuable object upon which they could lay their hands. They rapped upon the walls to see if they contained any secret hiding-place; they pierced the mattresses with their swords and poignards. After these visits thousands of citizens were arrested and conducted to the Hotel de Ville, where many were detained for thirty hours without food, awaiting their turn to appear before the members of the Commune. After their examination some were released; others were thrown into the prisons, which were soon crowded to such a degree that there was not room for a single newcomer by the first of September. If room could not be found, room must be made; and the following day, the second of September, twenty-four prisoners, chiefly priests, were led before the mayor, adjudged guilty of treason, crowded into fiacres and taken to the Abbaye, where they were executed immediately on their arrival.

After this, their first taste of blood, the executioners hastened to the Châtelet and to the Conciergerie, where they wrought horrors that the pen refuses to describe, sentencing to death the innocent and the

guilty without giving them any opportunity to defend themselves. Night did not appease the fury of the butchers. On the third of September they killed again at the Abbaye, at the Force and at the Bernardins prisons; and on the fourth they continued their work of death at La Salpêtriere and Bicêtre.

For three days the tocsin sounded. Bands of sans-culottes and tricoteuses, thirsting for blood, traversed the streets, uttering cries of death; and no one seemed to think of checking their sanguinary fury. A prey to a truly remarkable panic, when we consider the relatively small number of assassins, the terrified citizens remained shut up in their houses. The National Assembly seemed powerless to arrest the horrors of these tragical hours; the Commune seemed to favor them.

Of all those days that inspire us with such horror, even now, after the lapse of nearly a century, the darkest was that which witnessed the execution of the Princesse de Lamballe, who perished for no other crime than that of love for the queen. Beheaded, and thrown at first upon a pile of corpses, her body was afterwards despoiled of its clothing and exposed to the view of an infamous mob. One of the bandits dared to separate from this poor body, defiled with mud, and later by the hands of its murderers, the lovely head that had surmounted it; others, dividing it with a brutality that nothing could soften, quarrelled over the bleeding fragments. Then began a frightful massacre. Like wild beasts, bearing these spoils of the head as trophies of victory, the band of assassins rushed down the Rue de Sicile to carry terror to the heart of Paris.

It was nearly noon when Coursegol and Dolores,

having passed the Bastile, entered the Rue Saint Antoine to find a dense crowd of men, women and ragged children yelling at one another and singing coarse songs. Some of the National Guard were among the throng; and they were stopped every few moments by the people to shout: "Vive la Nation!" the patriotic cry that lent courage to the hearts of the soldiers of the Republic nobly fighting for the defence of our frontiers, but which had been caught up and was incessantly vociferated by the ruffians who inaugurated the Reign of Terror. All carriages that attempted to pass through this moving crowd were stopped, and their occupants were obliged to prove their patriotism by mingling their acclamations with those of the mob. The audacity and brutality of the sans-culottes knew no bounds. Woe to him who allowed his face to betray his sentiments, even for a moment! Terror, pity, sadness, these were crimes to be cruelly expiated.

Coursegol had hesitated to enter the Rue Saint Antoine. He feared to come in contact with this excited multitude, but the more alarming the great city which she saw for the first time appeared to Dolores, the more anxious she was to find shelter at Bridoul's house. But Bridoul's house was in the Rue Saint Antoine; and, to reach it, it was absolutely necessary to make their way through the crowd, or to wait until it had dispersed. But when would it disperse? Was it not dangerous to remain much longer without an asylum and a protector? This thought terrified Dolores, and, longing to reach her place of destination, she urged Coursegol to proceed.

At first, they advanced without much difficulty, following the throng that seemed to be wending its way in the same direction as themselves; but when

they had passed the Palais-Royal, they were obliged to slacken their pace, and soon to stop entirely. The crowd formed an impassable barrier against which they were pressed so closely by those behind that Dolores was nearly suffocated, and Coursegol, to protect her, placed her before him, extending his arms to keep off the excited throng.

In the midst of the tumult which we have attempted to describe, Coursegol was troubled, not so much by the impatience of Dolores as by the doubts that beset him when he thought of Bridoul. He had not seen the latter for three years. He only knew that his comrade, on quitting the army, had purchased a wine merchant's establishment; but, on hearing that his former friend sold his merchandise at the sign of the Bonnet Rouge, he asked himself in alarm if he would not find, instead of a friend, a rabid patriot who would refuse to come to the aid of the ex-servant of a Marquis. These reflections had made him silent and anxious until now; but, finding his progress checked by the crowd, the thought of inquiring the cause of this excitement occurred to him. Addressing a man who was standing a few steps from him, and who, judging from his impassive features, seemed not to share the emotions of which he was a witness, Coursegol inquired:

"What is going on, my friend?"

"What is going on!" replied the stranger, not without bitterness. "They are carrying the head of the Princesse de Lamballe through the streets of Paris!"

Coursegol could not repress a movement of horror and of pity. On several occasions, when he had accompanied Philip to the house of the Duke de

Penthieore, he had seen the Princess who had befriended his young master. At the same time, the thought that Dolores might be obliged to witness such a horrible exhibition frightened him, and he resolved to find some way to spare the girl the shameful spectacle that the eager crowd was awaiting. Suddenly Dolores, who had been standing on the same spot for some time, discovered that the soil beneath her feet had become wet and slippery, and, turning to Coursegol, she said:

"I am standing in water."

Coursegol drew back and forced the crowd to give way a trifle, so Dolores could have a little more standing-room. Thanks to his exertions, she could breathe once more; but, chancing to look down upon the ground, she uttered an exclamation of consternation.

"Blood! It is blood!" she exclaimed, in horror.

Coursegol's eyes followed hers. She was not mistaken. She was standing in a pool of blood, and not far off lay a body that the crowd had trampled upon only a few moments before.

"But where are we?" murmured the terrified Coursegol.

The man to whom he had previously spoken drew a little nearer and said:

"You are, perhaps, a hundred paces from the prison where they executed the prisoners scarcely an hour ago."

Then, drawing still nearer, so that no one save Coursegol could hear him, he added:

"Advise that young girl not to cry out again as she did just now. If some of these fanatics had heard her, she would have fared badly!"

At that very moment, the crowd resumed its march. The man disappeared. When Coursegol, agitated by these horrors which were so new to him, turned again to speak to Dolores, he saw that she had fainted in his arms. The poor man glanced despairingly about him. Suddenly his eyes fell upon a sign hanging over a shop on the opposite side of the street. This sign represented a red Phrygian cap upon a white ground, and above it was written in large red letters: "Le Bonnet Rouge." For a quarter of an hour he had been standing directly opposite Bridoul's establishment. He uttered a cry of joy, lifted Dolores in his strong arms, and, in a stentorian voice, exclaimed:

"Make way! Make way, good citizens! My daughter has fainted!"

The Provençale costume worn by Dolores deceived the persons who would otherwise have impeded Coursegol's progress.

"He is from Marseilles," some one cried.

Just at that time the Marseillais were heroes in the eyes of all good patriots. The unusual height of Coursegol strengthened the illusion.

"Yes," remarked another, "he is one of the Marseillais who have come to the aid of the Parisians."

The crowd opened before him. He soon reached the shop over which hung the sign of the "Bonnet Rouge" and entered it. There were but few customers in the large saloon. He placed Dolores in a chair, ran to the

counter, seized a glass of water, returned to the girl and bathed her forehead and temples. In a moment she opened her eyes.

"My dear child, are you better?" he asked.

"Yes, yes, my good Coursegol," replied Dolores. Then she added: "Yes, father, but I was terribly frightened."

"The citoyenne was crushed in the crowd!" said a voice behind Coursegol. He turned and saw a woman who was still young. Suddenly he recollected that Bridoul was married.

"Are you not Citoyenne Bridoul?" he asked.

"Certainly, Cornelia Bridoul."

"Where is your husband?"

"Here he is."

Bridoul appeared. He had followed his wife in order to see the young Provençale who had been brought into his shop.

"Do you know me?" inquired Coursegol.

"Can it be Coursegol?"

"Yes; I am your brother-in-law; this young girl is your niece. We have just arrived from Beaucaire. I will explain everything by and by."

Bridoul cast a hasty glance around him. No one was observing them. The few who had been sitting at the table had risen and gone to the door, attracted there by the increasing tumult without.

"Take the young lady into the back room," Bridoul

whispered to his wife. "There will be a crowd here in a moment."

The latter made haste to obey. It was time. In another moment Dolores would have been obliged to witness an even more horrible spectacle than that upon which her eyes had rested a short while before. The shop was suddenly taken by storm. Several men with repulsive faces, long hair and cruel eyes, and whose clothing was thickly spattered with blood, entered the saloon, followed by a yelling crowd. People mounted on chairs and tables to obtain a look at them. They were the city executioners. They ordered wine which Bridoul hastened to place before them. One carried in his hand the newly decapitated head of a woman, whose fair hair was twined round his bare arm. Before drinking his wine he placed the head upon the counter. Coursegol closed his eyes to shut out the ghastly sight. He had recognized the features of the Princesse de Lamballe. When the men had finished their wine, one said:

"Now we will have the hair of this citoyenne dressed so that Marie Antoinette will recognize her."

And addressing Bridoul, he added:

"Is there any hair-dresser in this neighborhood?"

"About a hundred paces from here, on the Place de la Bastille," replied Bridoul.

"On! on!" shouted the executioners.

And taking the head of the unfortunate Princess they departed, accompanied by the crowd that had followed them from the prison. A few moments later the saloon was empty. Bridoul hastened into the back room. Coursegol followed him. Fortunately the two

women had not seen what had occurred, and, thanks to Cornelia Bridoul's friendly offices, Dolores had regained her composure.

"First of all, are you classed among the suspected characters?" the wine merchant inquired of Coursegol. "Are you trying to escape from your pursuers? Must I conceal you?"

"No," replied Coursegol "We have come to Paris in the hope of finding Monsieur Philip."

"Our old captain?"

"The same," answered Coursegol, at once recounting the events with which the reader is already familiar. When the recital was ended, Bridoul spoke in his turn.

"I am willing to swear that the captain is not in Paris. If he were, he, like all the rest of the nobles, would have been in great danger; and in peril, he would certainly have thought of his old soldier, Bridoul, for he knows he can rely upon my devotion."

"Ah! you have not changed!" cried Coursegol, pressing his friend's hand.

"No, I have not changed. As you knew me so will you find me. But, my good friend, we must be prudent. You did well to come to my house. You and your daughter must remain here. You are relatives of mine; that is understood. Later, we can make other arrangements; but this evening I shall take you to the political club to which I belong. I will introduce you as my brother-in-law, a brave patriot from the south."

"But what the devil shall I do at the club?" inquired

Coursegol.

"What shall you do there? Why, you will howl with the wolves; that is the only way to save yourself from being eaten by them!"

But Coursegol demurred.

"M. Bridoul is right," urged Dolores, timidly.

"Niece, you are wise to take your uncle's part," remarked Bridoul; "but you must take care not to call me monsieur. That is more than enough to send you to prison as times are now."

"Is everything a crime then?" cried Coursegol.

"Everything," answered Bridoul, "and the greatest crime of all would be to remain at home while all good patriots are listening to the friends of the people in the political meetings. You will be closely watched, for we are surrounded by spies; and if any act of yours arouses the slightest suspicion we shall all go to sleep on the straw in the Conciergerie or the Abbaye, until we are sent to the block!"

Coursegol uttered a groan.

"Why do you sigh?" asked Bridoul. "All this does not prevent me from doing a service to such as deserve it. On the contrary, I should be rich if the number of thousand louis I possess equalled the number of lives I have saved since the tenth of August!"

"Hush, husband!" said Madame Bridoul, quickly. "What if some one should hear you!"

"Yes, yes, Cornelia, I will be prudent. Here we are all good patriots, worthy sans-culottes, ever ready to cry: 'Vive la Nation!'"

As he spoke Bridoul returned to his shop, for several customers were coming in.

The former dragoon was over forty years of age. He was small of stature, and in no way resembled one's ideal of a brave cavalier. His short limbs, his protruding stomach, his enormous arms and his fat hands gave him, when he was not moving about, the appearance of a penguin in repose. The large head covered with bushy gray hair, that surmounted his short body imparted to him really an almost grotesque look; but so much kindness shone in his eyes, and his voice was so rich and genial that one instantly divined a brave man beneath this unattractive exterior and was irresistibly attracted to him. Twenty-five years of his existence had been spent in the service of the king. He had cheerfully shed his blood and risked his life, and, thanks to the shrewdness he had displayed in his dealings with recruiting officers, he was now the possessor of several thousand francs. This little fortune enabled him to leave the army and to marry. A pretty shop-girl on the Faubourg du Roule, whose beautiful eyes, as he, himself, expressed it, had pierced his heart from end to end, consented, though she was much his junior, to a union of their destinies. In 1789 the newly married couple purchased the stock of a wine-shop, over the door of which, after the 10th of August, they prudently hung the sign of the "Bonnet Rouge."

At heart, Bridoul and his wife were still ardent royalists. They bitterly deplored the imprisonment of Louis XVI. and his family, but they were governed by a feeling which soon became general, and under the empire of which most of the events of this bloody period were accomplished. They were afraid. It

would not do for them to be classed with suspected persons, so they did not hesitate to violate their conscience and their heart by openly professing doctrines which they secretly abhorred, but which gave them the reputation of irreproachable patriots. Hence the "Bonnet Rouge" soon became the rendezvous of the Revolutionists of that quarter; and through them Bridoul acquired information with regard to their plans that enabled him to save the lives of many citizens. Fear had made him cautious but not cowardly; and he was fortunate enough to find in his wife a valuable auxiliary whose resolution, courage and coolness were never failing. After this explanation, not one will be surprised at the welcome this worthy couple accorded Dolores and Coursegol. They were ever ready to do good and to succor the distressed.

The evening after her arrival, Dolores was installed in a chamber over the shop. Coursegol occupied a small room adjoining this chamber. They could reach their apartments without passing through the saloon; so Dolores and Coursegol were not compelled to mingle against their will with the crowd of customers that filled the wine-shop during the day. It was decided that they should all take their meals at a common table, which was to be served in the back shop where Bridoul and his wife slept. It was also decided that Dolores should lay aside the Provençale costume which she had worn on her arrival in Paris, and dress like a daughter of the people. Everything that would be likely to attract attention must be scrupulously avoided, for the beauty of Dolores had already awakened too much interest on the part of curious customers.

The following Sunday morning, Dolores, who felt

certain that Cornelia Bridoul was a devout Christian, said to her:

"At what hour do you go to church? I would like to accompany you?"

"To church! For what?" asked Cornelia, evidently surprised.

"To hear mass."

"Would you listen to a mass celebrated by a perjured priest?"

And, as Dolores looked at her in astonishment, Cornelia added:

"The sacred offices are now celebrated only by renegade priests, who have forsaken the tenets of the church to render allegiance to the constitution."

But that same evening after supper, as Dolores was about retiring to her chamber, Cornelia, who was sitting with her guest in the room in the rear of the shop, while Bridoul and Coursegol were closing the saloon, said to her:

"This morning you were regretting that you could not attend church. I have been informed that an aged saint, who has found shelter with some worthy people in the neighborhood, will celebrate mass this evening."

"Oh! let us go!" cried Dolores.

"Very well, you shall go; Coursegol will accompany us; Bridoul will remain at home and take care of the house."

A few moments later, Dolores, Cornelia and

Coursegol, provided with the pass that all good patriots were obliged to carry if they were in the streets of Paris after ten o'clock at night, stole out of the wine-shop and turned their steps toward the Place Royale. The streets which they traversed, looking back anxiously now and then to make sure that they were not followed, were dark and almost deserted. It was only occasionally that they met little groups of two or three persons, who passed rapidly, as if they distrusted the other passers-by. A policeman stopped our friends. They displayed their passes, and he allowed them to pursue their way without further questions. At last, they reached the Place Royale, and turned into a side street. At a half-open door stood a man clad in a blouse, and wearing a red cap. Cornelia said a few words to him in a low tone.

"Pass in," was his response.

He stepped aside. Dolores and Cornelia hastily entered, but Coursegol, who was to watch in the street, remained outside. The two women ascended to the fifth floor, and at last reached a door which was guarded as the one below had been. Cornelia gave the password and they entered. They traversed several rooms and finally found themselves in a spacious apartment dimly lighted by two candles. There were no windows, and the only means of lighting and ventilating the room was a sky-light; but this was now covered with heavy linen, undoubtedly for the purpose of concealing what was passing within from any spy who might be seized with a fancy for a promenade on the roof. At one end of the room, and separated from it by a thick curtain, was an alcove. There were about twenty people, mostly women, in the room. Every one stood silent and

motionless, as if awaiting some mysterious event. When the clock struck eleven, a voice from behind the curtain said: "Close the doors."

The man on guard obeyed and came and took his place with the others, who with one accord fell upon their knees. At the same instant, the curtains parted, revealing the interior of the alcove in which stood a lighted altar surmounted by a cross of dark wood. At the foot of the altar stood an old white-haired priest, arrayed in sacerdotal robes, and assisted by two young men who acted as a choir. The service began. Dolores could not restrain her tears. After a few moments she became calmer and began to pray. She prayed fervently for Philip, for Antoinette, for all whom she loved and for herself. The ceremony was short. The priest addressed a brief exhortation to his audience. The time of pomp and of long sermons had gone by. At any moment they might be surprised, and the life of every one present would have been in danger had they been arrested in that modest room which had become for the nonce the only asylum of the proscribed Romish Church.

When the service was concluded, the curtains were again drawn and the worshippers withdrew, not without depositing in a box an offering for the venerable priest who had officiated. Just as Dolores and Cornelia were leaving the room, the brave old man passed them. He was arrayed in the garb of a worthy patriot, and was so effectually disguised that they would not have recognized him if he had not addressed them. As for the altar, it had disappeared as if by enchantment.

So, either in this house or in some other, Dolores regularly attended the offices of her church. Not a

Sunday passed that Cornelia did not conduct her to some mysterious retreat, where a little band of brave-hearted Christians met to worship together. She was in this way made familiar with heroic deeds which gave her courage to brave the dangers that threatened every one in those trying days, and she was thus initiated into a sort of league, formed without previous intent, for the purpose of providing a means of escape for those who were in danger of becoming the victims of the dread and merciless Committee of Public Safety. It was in this way that she was led to accompany Cornelia one evening when the latter went to carry food to a nobleman whose life was in danger, and who was concealed in the neighborhood of the Invalides, and, on another occasion, to aid in the escape of an old man who had been condemned to die. The enthusiasm of Dolores was so great that she often exposed herself to danger imprudently and unnecessarily. She was proud and happy to assist the Bridouls in their efforts, and she conceived for them an admiration and an affection which inspired her with the desire to equal them in their noble work to which they had so bravely consecrated themselves.

But Coursegol, ignorant of most of the dangers to which Dolores exposed herself, or who knew of them only when it was too late to blame her for her temerity, had not lost sight of the motives which had induced him to accompany the girl on her expedition to Paris.

What they had aimed to do, as the reader doubtless recollects, was to find Philip de Chamondrin and Antoinette de Mirandol, who had both been missing since the death of the Marquis and the destruction of the château. Though Bridoul persisted in declaring that his former captain was not in Paris, Coursegol was not discouraged. For three months he pursued an unremitting search. He found several men who, like himself, had formed a part of M. de Chamondrin's company. He succeeded in effecting an entrance to the houses of some of the friends whom his master had visited during his sojourn in Paris. He frequented public places. He might have been seen, by turn, in the Jacobin Club, in the galleries of the Convention, at the Palais Égalité, in every place where he would be likely to find any trace of Philip; but nowhere could he discover the slightest clew to his whereabouts. Every evening on his return home, after a day of laborious search, he was obliged to admit his want of success to Dolores. She listened sadly, then shook her head and said:

"Bridoul is right. Philip and Antoinette have left the country; we shall never see them again. After all, it is, perhaps, for the best, since they are in safety."

But, even while she thus attempted to console herself, Dolores could not conceal the intense sorrow and disappointment that filled her heart, and which were caused, not so much by the absence of her

friends as by the mystery that enshrouded their fate. If it be misery to be separated from those we love, how much greater is that misery when we know nothing concerning their fate, and do not even know whether they are dead or alive! Dolores loved Antoinette with all a sister's tenderness, and Philip, with a much deeper and far more absorbing passion, although she had voluntarily sacrificed her hopes and forced herself to see in him only a brother. She had paid for the satisfaction of knowing that he was happy and prosperous with all that made life desirable; and this uncertainty was hard to bear.

"Come, come, my child, do not weep," Coursegol would say at times like these. "We shall soon discover what has become of them."

"They are in England or in Germany," added Bridoul, "probably quite as much distressed about you as you are about them. You will see them again some day. Until then, have patience."

More than four months had passed when it was suddenly announced that the king, who had been a prisoner in the Temple for some time, was to be brought to trial. It was also rumored that a number of noblemen had eluded the vigilance of the authorities and had entered Paris resolved upon a desperate attempt to save him at the very last moment.

Coursegol's hope revived. He felt certain that Philip would not hesitate to hazard his life in such an enterprise if he were still alive; and it was in the hope of meeting him that he attended the trial of the unfortunate monarch, and that, on the twentieth day of January, he accompanied Bridoul to the very steps of the guillotine. The king was beheaded; no attempt

was made to rescue him. Then Coursegol decided upon a step which he had been contemplating for some little time.

It will be remembered that Philip on his first arrival in Paris, had been attached to the household of the Duke de Penthieore, into which he had been introduced by the efforts of the Chevalier de Florian. The duke was the only member of the royal family who had remained in France unmolested. He owed this fortunate exemption of which the history of that epoch offers no similar example, to his many virtues and especially to his well known benevolence. Since the death of his daughter-in-law, the Princess de Lamballe, whom he had been unable to save from the hands of the executioners, he had lived with his daughter, the Duchess of Orleans at the Château de Bisy, in Vernon. He was living there, not as a proscribed man but as a prince, ill, broken-hearted at the death of his relatives, almost dying, surrounded by his friends and protected from the fury of the Revolutionists by the veneration of the inhabitants of Vernon, who had displayed their reverence by planting with great pomp, in front of the good duke's château, a tree of liberty crowned with this inscription: "A Tribute to Virtue;" and who evinced it still more strongly a little later by sending a deputation to his death-bed to implore him before his departure from earth, to bless the humble village in which his last days had been spent.

One morning, Coursegol, having obtained a passport through Bridoul, started for Vernon. This village is situated a few leagues from Paris on the road to Normandy. Coursegol, who in his double rôle of peasant and soldier was accustomed to walking, made the journey afoot, which enabled him to see

with his own eyes the misery that was then prevailing in the provinces as well as in Paris. It was horrible. On every side he saw only barren and devastated fields, and ragged, starving villagers, trembling with fear. The revolution which had promised these poor wretches deliverance and comfort, had as yet brought them only misfortunes.

Coursegol reached Vernon that evening, spent the night at an inn, and the next morning at sunrise, repaired to the duke's château. That good old man had long been in the habit of receiving all who desired to speak with him, so it was easy for Coursegol to obtain an interview. He was ushered into a hall where several persons were already waiting, and through which the duke was obliged to pass on his way to attend morning services in the chapel.

At ten o'clock, the duke appeared. Coursegol, who had not seen him for several years, found him greatly changed. But the face surrounded by white floating locks had not lost the benign expression which had always characterized it; and he displayed the same simplicity of manner that had always endeared him to the poor and humble. When he entered the hall, the people who had been waiting for him, advanced to meet him. They were mostly noblemen who owed their lives to his influence, and who, thanks to him, were allowed to remain in France unmolested. He listened to them with an abstracted air, glancing to the right and left while they offered him their homage. Suddenly he perceived Coursegol who was standing at a little distance awaiting his turn. He stepped toward him and said:

"What do you desire, my friend?"

Coursegol bowed profoundly.

"Monseigneur," he replied, "I am the servant of the Marquis Philip de Chamondrin, who once had the honor to belong to your household."

"Chamondrin! I remember him perfectly; a brave young man for whom my poor Lamballe obtained a commission as captain of dragoons. I had news of him quite recently."

"News of him!" exclaimed Coursegol, joyfully. "Ah! Monseigneur, where is he? How is he?"

"Are you anxious to know?" inquired the duke.

"Your highness shall judge."

And Coursegol briefly recounted the events that had separated him from Philip, and told the duke how Dolores and himself had come to Paris in the hope of finding him. His recital must have been both eloquent and pathetic, for when it was concluded tears stood in the eyes of the listeners.

"Ah! What anxiety the young girl must have suffered!" exclaimed the prince; "but I can reassure her. Yes; I recently received a letter from the Marquis de Chamondrin. It shall be given to you and you shall carry it to his sister. She will be indebted to me for a few hours of happiness. My dear Miromesnil," added the duke, addressing an old man who was standing near, "will you look in my correspondence of the month of October for a letter bearing the signature of Chamondrin? When you find it, give it to this worthy man."

Coursegol began to stammer out his thanks, but, without heeding them, the duke came still nearer

and said, in a low voice:

"Does Mademoiselle de Chamondrin require aid of any sort?"

"No, monseigneur," replied Coursegol.

"Do not forget that I am ready to come to her assistance whenever it is necessary; and assure her of my sincere sympathy."

Having uttered these words, the kind-hearted prince passed on, leaning upon the arm of a nobleman connected with his household. Coursegol, elated by the certainty that Philip was alive, could scarcely restrain his impatience; but he waited for the promised letter, which would prove to Dolores that those she loved were still on earth. In a few moments M. de Miromesnil returned. He held the precious letter in his hand and gave it to Coursegol, who hastily perused it. It was dated in London, and had been addressed to the duke soon after the death of Madame de Lamballe. It contained no allusion to Mademoiselle de Mirandol, and Philip said but little about himself; still was it not an unspeakable relief to him to feel that he was alive and to know in what country he was sojourning.

Eager to place this letter in the hands of Dolores, Coursegol started for home immediately; but, instead of returning as he came, he took passage in the diligence that plied between Rouen and Paris; and that same evening, after so many months of dreary waiting, he was able to relieve the anxiety that Dolores had felt regarding her brother's fate. The girl's joy was intense, and she devoutly thanked God who had revived her faith and hope just as she was beginning to despair. If Coursegol had listened to

her, they would have started for London without delay, so eager was she to rejoin Philip and Antoinette whom she supposed married. But Coursegol convinced her of the absolute impossibility of this journey. They could reach the sea only by passing through the greatest dangers.

"Besides," added Coursegol, "what does this letter prove? That M. Philip is safe and well, of course; but it does not prove that he is still in London."

"Coursegol is right!" remarked Bridoul. "Before you think of starting, you must write to M. Philip."

"But can letters pass the frontier more easily than persons?" asked Dolores.

"Oh, I will take care of all that. If you wish to write, I know a gentleman who is going to England and who will take charge of your letter."

"Then I will write," said Dolores, with a sigh. "I would have preferred to go myself, but since that is impossible——"

She paused, resolved to wait in patience.

Coursegol breathed freely again. He feared she would persist in her determination to go, and that he would be obliged to tell her that their resources were nearly exhausted and would not suffice to meet the costs of such a long and difficult journey, every step of which would demand a lavish expenditure of money.

Since the destruction of Chamondrin, Dolores had been entirely dependent upon Coursegol's bounty. The latter had possessed quite a snug little fortune, inherited from his parents; but a sojourn of fifteen

months at Beaucaire and more than a year's income expended on the journey to Paris had made great inroads in his little capital. Fortunately, on arriving in Paris, the generous hospitality of the Bridouls had spared him the necessity of drawing upon the remnant of his fortune. This amounted now to about twelve hundred francs. Still, he felt that he could not remain much longer under the roof of these worthy people without trespassing upon their kindness and generosity, for they firmly refused to accept any remuneration; and Coursegol was anxiously wondering how he could support Dolores when this money was exhausted. He confided his anxiety to Bridoul; but the latter, instead of sharing it, showed him that such a sum was equivalent to a fortune in times like those.

"Twelve hundred francs!" said he. "Why that is more than enough for the establishment of a lucrative business or for speculation in assignats which, with prudence, would yield you a fortune."

It was good advice. Gold and silver were becoming scarce; and assignats were subject to daily fluctuations that afforded one an excellent opportunity to realize handsome profits, if one had a little money on hand and knew how to employ it to advantage.

CHAPTER VII.

CITIZEN JEAN VAUQUELAS.

In April, 1793, about eight months after his arrival in Paris, Coursegol went one evening to the Palais Égalité. The establishment, which had formerly been known as the Palais Royal, had at that epoch a splendor and an importance of which its present appearance gives but a faint conception. One should read in the journals of those days the description of the galleries ever filled with an eager, bustling throng attracted by the excitement and the unwholesome amusements always to be found there. Mercier, in sharp, almost indignant language, gives us a vivid picture of the famous resort. Gambling-dens, dance-halls, shops devoted to the sale of the most reckless and infamous productions, restaurants and wine-shops were to be seen on every side. The spirit of speculation and gambling raged with inconceivable violence. Vice sat enthroned there, and when evening came the immense establishment was densely crowded by a throng of people thirsting for pleasure, and circling round and round in the brilliantly-lighted galleries to the sound of the violins that mounted to the ears of the promenaders from the dance-halls in the basement below.

Coursegol frequently visited the Palais Égalité. At the instance of Bridoul he had speculated a little in assignats which were constantly fluctuating in value. It was the only negotiation in which Coursegol would consent to embark. He might have trafficked in the estates of the Émigres which the Republic was selling at a merely nominal price; but he had no desire to become the owner of what he considered stolen property. After a few evenings spent in the Palais Égalité, Coursegol became acquainted with

most of the brokers who transacted business there. They were stout, well-fed, jovial men, whose self-satisfied and flourishing appearance seemed a stinging irony hurled in the face of the poor wretches who were perishing of hunger in the Faubourgs of Paris. They could be seen rushing about the garden and through the galleries, giving orders to their subordinates whose duty it was to find new clients, and to allure unsophisticated provincials, that they might rob them of their money to cast it into the gulf in which the fortunes of so many had been swallowed up.

These unprincipled persons resorted to the basest means to dupe those who trusted them. They called wine and reckless women to their aid, and thus disarmed the unsuspecting men who came to the money market with the hope of doubling their capital. In the Palais Égalité, conspiracies were formed not only against the Republic but against the fortunes, the place, and even the lives of its citizens. Still even the dread Committee of Public Safety were powerless to discover the formidable enemies that concealed themselves there. That Coursegol was not irretrievably lost the instant he crossed the threshold of this mysterious and dangerous cavern was due entirely to Bridoul, who had volunteered to act as his guide and protector. Bridoul possessed a very considerable amount of influence. He presented his comrade to some of the fortunate speculators, and recommended him to them to such purpose that several of them took Coursegol under their protection. Quick-witted, endowed with remarkable energy and tact, and inspired by an ardent desire to acquire wealth for the sake of Dolores, he rendered them important services on more than one occasion by lending his obscure and modest name to conceal

operations in which a well-known personage could not have embarked without peril.

Coursegol was only a peasant; but he had served in the army a long time, and contact with others had sharpened his wits, while the excellent judgment of his old master, the Marquis de Chamondrin, had not failed to exert a most beneficial effect upon his intellectual development. Hence, though it was not without hesitation that he entered upon a career so entirely new to him, he at least brought with him not only honesty, prudence and tact, but a coolness which could not but contribute notably to his success in those perturbed times.

On the evening to which we have alluded he went to the Palais Égalité as usual. It was after nightfall, and the restaurants were filled to overflowing with crowds of excited people glad to forget in the distractions of play, of speculation and of good cheer the woes of the country and their own degradation. Some were eagerly buying tickets that would entitle them to seats in the Théâtre de la République, only a hundred paces distant; others were buying the daily papers. Some were promenading with that careless gayety that never deserts the French even in their darkest days, while they insolently eyed the shameless women, who, with bold gaze and naked shoulders, stood there endeavoring to attract the attention of the passers-by. Others rushed to the gambling saloons, already dreaming of the stroke of good fortune that would enlarge the rolls of assignats with which their pockets were filled.

Some promenaders approached each other with mysterious proposals, and afterwards repaired to the garden where they could converse undisturbed. It

was there that many confidential interviews were held, it was there that the most diverse hopes had birth; it was there that the Royalists, the friends and the relatives of the Émigrés or of suspected persons incarcerated in prison plotted for the return of the Bourbons or for the deliverance of the poor wretches whose lives hung upon a thread. There, too, the spies in the employ of the Committee of Public Safety, or of the Commune, flitted about, trying to discover any secret that might be hostile to the Republic. Sometimes gloomy visaged men or women with pale and anxious looks were seen hurrying through the crowd; some man who had been vainly seeking bread for his children; some woman whose husband was in the Luxembourg or in the Abbaye prisons, awaiting the dread fiat of the Revolutionary Tribunal.

These livid and despairing faces were the only blemishes upon the exuberant gayety that prevailed; but no one saw them and the poor wretches disappeared without exciting either anger or pity.

The eyes of Coursegol were accustomed to this spectacle, so he walked coolly through the galleries heedless of the tumult around him and paused only when he met a group of acquaintances who were discussing the news of the day. Suddenly some one tapped him on the shoulder. He turned.

"Is that you, Citizen Vauquelas?"

"I wish to speak to you, Coursegol."

At the same time the man who had just interrupted Coursegol's promenade took him by the arm and led him toward the garden. He was clad in black and enveloped in a large cloak that would have made him look like a priest had it not been for the high

hat, ornamented with the national cockade, which proved him a patriot of the middle class. His thin, emaciated face, deeply furrowed with wrinkles indicated that he had long since passed his sixtieth birthday; but there was nothing else in his appearance that betokened old age. His form was so erect, his eye so clear, his step so firm, that one, not seeing his face, would have thought him still in the prime of life.

On entering the garden, Vauquelas glanced around, but, seeing no place which he deemed sufficiently retired, he seemed to change his plan.

"I fear that these trees have ears," said he, "and what I wish to say to you must not be overheard."

And without saying more, he led the way to the Café Corazza. They entered it. The saloon was filled with people, eating and drinking while they read the papers or indulged in heated political discussions. One man had mounted a table and was delivering a long discourse. He was endeavoring to convince his listeners that France was being betrayed by the secret agents sent to Paris by the Émigrés. His was no new theme; buy the orator displayed so much energy that his audience was polite enough to seem pleased with his efforts. Vauquelas, who appeared to be perfectly at home, crossed the room to whisper a word in the ear of the man who was standing at the cashier's desk. This man, who proved to be the proprietor of the establishment, at once conducted Vauquelas to a private room. Coursegol followed, and, the proprietor having taken his departure, the two men found themselves alone.

"I have been contemplating the proposition I am

about to make you for several months," Vauquelas then began. "The very first time I saw you, I made up my mind that you were the man to aid me in the projects I had long since formed, but which had not been carried into execution for want of an assistant in whom I could implicitly confide. But before I trusted you with my plans, I wished to know you; so I have studied you closely while you were unconscious of my scrutiny. I have admired the prudence you have displayed in all your business transactions. You suit me; and if you see fit to accede to the proposition I am about to offer for your consideration, our fortunes are made."

"I am listening, Citizen Vauquelas," replied Coursegol, "but I may as well tell you that it will be useless to confide your plans to me if they are not perfectly honest."

"You shall judge," rejoined Vauquelas, not appearing in the least wounded by Coursegol's remark. "Last month the Republic passed a decree against the Émigrés, ordering the confiscation of their property for the benefit of the nation. This measure has been carried into execution, and the government is now the possessor of a large amount of such property. These lands will be sold at public auction, and will fall into all sorts of hands. They will be divided and parceled out, and the rightful owners when they return to France will have no power to take possession of the property that once belonged to them. Very well—now I have wondered if the purchase of a portion of this property would not be both profitable and a praiseworthy action."

"And why?" inquired Coursegol, who had been listening attentively.

"The reason is plain," replied Vauquelas. "Will it not be for the interest of the exiled owners that their estates should be bought on the most favorable possible terms, and properly cared for. The brigands who are now in power will fall some day; and then the Émigrés will return. Will they not be glad to find their property in good and careful hands, and to be able to regain possession of it by paying the trifling sum which the government received for it?"

Coursegol did not reply at once, he was reflecting.

"The transactions would be honest enough," he said at last; "but if you purchase the lands of the government to-day and sell them later to their owners at the same price you paid for them, where would your profit come in?"

"I would pay for them in assignats; their owners would pay me in gold."

Vauquelas uttered these last words with an air of triumph; then, as if fearing Coursegol's objections, he made haste to develop his scheme.

"The assignats have already undergone a very considerable depreciation. With fifty thousand francs in gold one can, to-day, purchase at least two hundred thousand francs in assignats; and the depreciation will become much greater. There is a piece of property in the Faubourg Saint-Germain which will be ostensibly sold for two millions by the Republic, but which will really cost the purchaser only two hundred thousand francs; and, by and by, the owner will have no difficulty in disposing of it again for the ostensible price he paid for it, and it will be only natural and right that he should demand gold in payment."

"And in what way could I be of service to you?" Coursegol timidly inquired.

"By lending me your name. We will buy sometimes in your name, sometimes in mine, so we shall not arouse suspicion."

"But where shall we find the money?"

Vauquelas arose and, without the slightest hesitation, replied:

"Since I have begun to give you my confidence, I will hide nothing. Come with me."

Vauquelas, as we have said before, had arrived at the trying age of three-score and ten, which, for the majority of men, is the age of decrepitude, that sinister forerunner of death; but time had neither bowed his head nor enfeebled his intellect. The clearness of his mind and the vigor of his limbs indicated that he was likely to be one of those centenarians who carry their years so lightly that they make us think with regret of that golden age in which the gods could confer immortality upon man. His eye still flashed with all the ardor of youth; and in his breast glowed a fire which age was powerless to quench. Vauquelas had formerly been a magistrate in Arras. A widower, without a child for whose fate he was compelled to tremble, he had seen the approach of the Revolution and the Reign of Terror without the slightest dismay; and the tenth of August found him in Paris, drawn there by the desire to increase his by no means contemptible fortune, and to win the favor of those who were then in power.

He had taken up his abode in a modest mansion at the extremity of the Faubourg du Roule. The house

stood in the centre of a garden, which was protected from the gaze of the curious by high walls that surrounded it on every side. Served by an old woman whom he had brought from Arras, he apparently lived the life of a recluse who desires to remain a stranger to the changes and emotions of the moment, and to end his days in peace and quietness. He received no visitors; and the people in the neighborhood thought him a poor man who had lost his family and squandered his money in unfortunate speculations. He never left the house until evening and always returned very late at night. A sans-culotte, who lived near by and whose suspicions had been aroused, followed him one evening. He fancied him a conspirator, he saw him enter the Palais Égalité, speak to several persons who seemed to listen to him with extreme deference, and afterwards repair to the house of one of the most influential members of the Committee of Public Safety, where he remained until two o'clock in the morning, and then returned home. The self-constituted spy concluded that he had to deal with one of the Committee's secret agents; and he was inspired with such wholesome awe that he decided to push his investigations no further.

In reality, Vauquelas was nothing more nor less than a man tormented by an unappeasable thirst for wealth. He had only one passion: a passion for gold. It was this that urged him—in spite of a fortune that would have satisfied his modest wants ten times over—into all kinds of financial ventures. It was this that had suggested to him the idea of ingratiating himself with the men who were in power, and thus gain their friendship, their influences and protection. In all the acts of the government, in the great events that succeeded one another day after day, he saw only an

opportunity for speculation. Whether peace or war prevailed; whether the people obeyed the Commune or Convention; whether they worshipped the Supreme Being or the Goddess of Reason; whether the men condemned to death were innocent or guilty mattered little to him. These things interested him only by the effect they might produce on the money-market. So he had allied himself in turn with the Girondists and with the Jacobins. He had loaned money to Mirabeau; he had speculated with Barras and with Tallien, always placing himself at the service of those who held the power or seemed likely to hold it in the future.

Such was the man whose confidence Coursegol had won by his honesty and sagacity. He appeared in the pathway of Vauquelas just as the latter had arrived at the conclusion that further speculation in assignats would be extremely hazardous, and just as he was looking about him for some reliable man who would join him in enterprises of a different and much safer nature. In those perilous times it was hard to find a person in whom one could implicitly confide. Denunciation, that fatal weapon that lay within the reach of every hand, was frequently made the instrument of personal vengeance. No one was beyond its reach; and Vauquelas was not disposed to reveal his plans to a man who would be likely to betray them or him.

It was about eight o'clock when the two men left the Café and the Palais Égalité, and entered one of the cabriolets that stood before the theatre, a few steps below.

In about twenty minutes, the carriage stopped not far from the Folies-Bergères. When the driver had been

paid and dismissed, Vauquelas and Coursegol traversed the unoccupied ground that lay between the Rue du Roule and the Champs-Élysées. The place was dark and deserted. A few houses, surrounded by gardens, skirted the street. Superb residences have since been erected there and Boulevards have been opened; but at the time of which we write this Faubourg resembled a street in a quiet country village. It was here that Vauquelas lived. As the two men were approaching the house by a path shaded with lindens, pruned into the same uniformity as those at Versailles, an enormous dog sprang out upon them, barking ferociously. With a word, Vauquelas quieted him; then, turning to Coursegol, he said, smiling:

"This is the guardian of my dwelling. If need be, he can hold a band of robbers at bay."

They reached the house and were admitted by the old servant, who conducted them to the drawing-room.

"Give me a lantern and then go to bed, my good woman," said Vauquelas.

She disappeared, but soon returned, bearing in one hand a double candlestick which she placed upon a table, and in the other the lantern for which her master had called.

"Follow me," said Coursegol's host.

Coursegol obeyed. They left the drawing-room, passed through several small and shabbily furnished apartments, and at last entered a small passage. Vauquelas opened a door and Coursegol saw a narrow stairway winding down into the cellar.

"This is my wine-cellar and it is well stocked," said Vauquelas, with a smile.

He spoke only the simple truth. Countless casks ranged along the wall and long shelves filled with dusty bottles attracted Coursegol's attention; but he could scarcely understand why Vauquelas had brought him there if he had nothing else to show him. Suddenly the latter exclaimed:

"You asked me just now if I had money enough for the enterprise I proposed to you. You shall judge for yourself, for I am going to reveal my secret."

As he spoke he seized a spade that stood near by, removed a few shovels full of earth and disclosed a large white stone slab, in the centre of which was an iron ring which enabled him to lift it.

"Look!" said he.

Coursegol bent over the opening and looked in. He saw a large iron box buried in the earth and filled with sacks of gold. The bright metal gleamed through the meshes of the coarse bags, dazzling the eye of the beholder with its golden glory. Vauquelas seemed to enjoy Coursegol's surprise; but it was in vain that he tried to discover the slightest vestige of envy or avarice in the face of his visitor. Coursegol was astonished, and perhaps dazzled by the sight of so much wealth, but no evil thought entered his mind. Vauquelas breathed more freely. He had just subjected the man upon whom he had bestowed his confidence to a decisive test, and he had emerged from it victorious.

"There are two millions here," he remarked.

"Two millions! Do they belong to you?"

"They belong to me."

"And you are not satisfied! You wish to acquire more!"

"Oh! it is a question of health to me. If I stopped work I should soon die; and I wish to live—life is good!"

There was a moment's silence, and Vauquelas looked tenderly at his treasure.

"Moreover, as I have told you, we shall not only make money, but perform a most commendable action," he remarked after a little. "We will purchase some of those fine houses on the Faubourg Saint-Germain, which have been confiscated by the government in their masters' absence. We will take good care of them. In some hands, they would soon fall to ruin; but in ours they will increase in value, and when their former owners return, they will find their homes in the same condition as when they left them. They will buy them from us, and they will be ever grateful to us. Come, my boy, make up your mind. Will you become my partner in this enterprise?"

"I accept your offer," replied Coursegol. He saw his fortune assured in a few years, and Dolores forever out of the reach of want.

"Do you know how to write?" Vauquelas inquired.

"Not very well."

"That is bad. We must keep an account of our business operations; it will not do to take any one else into our confidence, and I cannot do the work myself. My eyesight is not very good."

"I will do my best," replied Coursegol, mentally cursing his ignorance.

Suddenly another plan flashed through his brain.

"Ah! now I have it," he exclaimed, eagerly. "This work that you cannot do and that I should do so badly can be entrusted to my daughter."

"Your daughter! You have a daughter! You have never told me that you were a married man."

Coursegol was silent for a moment; he seemed to hesitate.

"I will return confidence for confidence," he said finally.

Then he related the history of Dolores, and his own. When it was ended, Vauquelas rubbed his hands joyfully.

"She will not betray us," said he. "Ah well! Everything is for the best."

He covered the box in which his gold was concealed with earth, and then the two men returned to the drawing-room. They remained in earnest conversation for some time, Vauquelas disclosing his plans for the future, the other listening and proffering occasional but judicious suggestions. It was after midnight when they separated.

Coursegol walked home. Twice he was stopped by the patrols, but, thanks to the credentials he carried with him, he was allowed to pursue his way unmolested. A week later, Dolores and Coursegol left Bridoul's house to take up their abode in that of Vauquelas. The parting was a sad one. Cornelia Bridoul loved Dolores as fondly as the latter loved

her; still they would have frequent opportunities to see each other, and this thought greatly alleviated their sorrow.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN EPISODE OF THE EMIGRATION.

On the first Sunday in the month of September, 1793, about ten o'clock in the morning, a young girl clad in mourning emerged from the doorway of a pretty cottage in the suburbs of London. She slowly descended the broad and handsome steps that led up to the dwelling, passed through the garden, and having opened the gate, gazed anxiously in the direction of the city.

She was a brunette, rather fragile in appearance, and petite in stature; and though she was not really beautiful, hers was a sympathetic and altogether charming face. The air of elegance that characterized her person and her attire, the whiteness of her hands, and her delicate and refined features, all indicated that she was a person of gentle birth. She did not appear to be more than twenty years of age. By the anxiety with which her large blue eyes scanned the horizon, it was easy to divine that she was expecting some loved one; but it was also evident that he did not come quickly enough to suit her desires, for she seemed restless and impatient.

"What if he should not come?" she murmured. As if

these words had been heard, a voice responded:

"Do not be impatient, dear Antoinette. M. Philip said he would be here to-day, but did not mention the hour; and the day has scarcely begun. You will see him, never fear."

The lady who had just spoken had used the English language. She was a kind, motherly looking person, past middle age. Understanding the young girl's anxiety, she had joined her with the desire to appease it. Antoinette replied, not without some bitterness:

"I am quite sure that we shall see him, dear Mrs. Reed; but have I not a right to be impatient? Has it not been three weeks since he was here?"

"You do not know what important interests may have detained him in London."

Antoinette shook her head; then, after casting another glance at the deserted road, she sadly returned to the house. Mrs. Reed followed her, trying to divert her mind and make her forget the sorrow and anxiety caused by Philip's long absence. The two ladies entered a small, but prettily furnished parlor and seated themselves at a round table, upon which a servant had just deposited a smoking tea-urn, some empty cups and some bread and butter. Just then, a very stout man entered the room. It was Mr. Reed, the master of the house. He strongly resembled his wife; there was the same age, the same corpulence, the same kind and benevolent expression of countenance.

"Ah, well! mademoiselle," he remarked to the young girl, pouring out a cup of tea, "this is a fête day, is it

not? You are expecting Monsieur Philip?"

Antoinette made no response. Mrs. Reed answered for her.

"Mademoiselle Antoinette is afraid her cousin will not keep his word."

"She is wrong then," quietly remarked Mr. Reed, who was now standing by the window, sipping his tea, "she is wrong, for here he is!"

Antoinette sprang up, uttering a cry of joy. She was about to rush out to meet Philip, but the latter did not give her time. He entered almost immediately, and Antoinette flew to his arms. All her doubts, all her griefs were forgotten! Ah! If the hour of separation is cruel when it sounds in the ears of those who love, how sweet is the hour that reunites them! Antoinette clung rapturously to Philip's breast, and Mr. and Mrs. Reed, wishing to allow the young people to enjoy each other's society undisturbed, left the room; but before he went, Mr. Reed said to Philip:

"You will spend the day and dine with us, will you not?"

"Ah! how gladly would I do so! But I shall be obliged to leave in an hour!"

Mr. Reed stood motionless for a moment, actually stupefied with astonishment.

"What! you are going to leave me so soon?" cried Antoinette, despairingly.

"I will explain my reasons," replied Philip.

Mr. Reed bowed and followed his wife, who had just disappeared.

Two years had passed since Philip fled with Antoinette from the burning château and from the bedside of his dying father. On quitting the scene of the catastrophe that destroyed the home of his childhood, Philip accompanied by Mlle. de Mirandol repaired to Valence. There, a friend of the Chamondrin family furnished them with the means to pursue their journey to England, which country they gained after many perils and vicissitudes.

London served as a refuge for many of the Émigrés, but Philip had chosen the capital of Great Britain as a retreat for Antoinette, principally because he knew that a portion of Mlle. de Mirandol's fortune was in the hands of a banker in that city, and because it would be easy there to obtain news from Louisiana, where the heiress of M. de Mirandol still owned considerable property.

After their perilous journey was concluded and they were safely established in England, the agitation caused by the great disaster which had deprived them of so much that they loved was succeeded by a relative calm which gave them an opportunity to look their situation in the face. They both found it exceedingly embarrassing. Antoinette remembered only that she loved Philip, and that, in obedience to the request of his dying father, he had solemnly promised to marry her. She was simply waiting for him to fulfil this promise, and already regarded herself as his wife.

As for Philip, he inwardly cursed this promise. His thoughts were constantly occupied with Dolores; he said to himself that since the convents had been

broken up, she must be free if she were still alive; and he would not believe that she was dead. He was certain that she was still alive, that Coursegol had remained with her to protect her, and that the day of their meeting was near at hand. These thoughts made his heart rebel against the yoke he had striven to impose upon it; for no matter what attempts may be made to destroy it, hope will not die in a heart that loves sincerely. It resists time and the sternest ordeals. Death alone can, not destroy it, but transform it, by associating realization with the delights of a future life which shall know no blight or decay.

Still, Philip dare not speak frankly to Mlle. de Mirandol. He loved her with true brotherly affection; and his courage failed him when he thought of the misery his confession would cause this loving and artless girl. Moreover, the promise he had made to his father was ever on his mind, arousing constant sorrow and remorse. He resolved, therefore, to gain time, if possible. With this aim in view, he had a long conversation with Antoinette a few days after their arrival in London. Without referring to the engagement which he had a just right to consider irrevocable, he requested that its accomplishment should be deferred until his period of mourning had expired. He pleaded the tragic death of his father and the uncertainty that still enshrouded the fate of Dolores and of Coursegol as reasons for delay; and Antoinette consented. He then gave her to understand that, as they were not married, it was not proper for them to remain under the same roof, and told her that he had found a pleasant home for her with some worthy people who resided in the environs of London and who, as they had no children of their own, would be glad to have a young girl

with them as a boarder. Antoinette consented to this arrangement also; and this explains her installation in the Reed household. Mr. Reed was formerly a merchant, but had retired from business to spend his last years in quiet and comfort. The situation of the French Émigrés had aroused the sympathy of the kind-hearted man and his wife, so Philip's proposition was gladly accepted, and they petted and spoiled the young girl entrusted to their charge as if she had been their own daughter.

Philip remained in London; but once a week he came to spend a day with Antoinette; and the hours that Mlle. de Mirandol thought so delightful flew by all too swiftly for her. They never spoke of the future. Philip carefully avoided any allusion to that subject; but they talked of the past and of Dolores whose fate was still veiled in mystery.

Sometimes, accompanied by Mrs. Reed, Antoinette visited the poor Émigrés who had taken refuge in London, and relieved their necessities. She also requested Philip, who had charge of her property, never to refuse aid to any of her countrymen or countrywomen who asked it of him; and in the benefits she quietly conferred upon the needy around her she found some consolation for her own sorrow and anxiety. As for Philip, he had plunged into the active and feverish life led by most of the Émigrés, as if he desired to drown his own doubts and regrets in bustle and excitement.

London was then the rendezvous of a great proportion of those who had fled from the Reign of Terror. Princes, noblemen, prelates and ladies of rank, who were striving to console themselves for the hardships of exile by bright dreams of the future, had

assembled there. They plotted against the Republic; they planned descents upon France, attacks upon Paris, movements in La Vendée, and the assassination of Robespierre and his friends; but all these schemes were rendered fruitless by the spirit of rivalry and of intrigue that prevailed. They were all united upon the result to be attained, but divided as to the means of attaining it. In this great party there were a thousand factions. They quarreled at a word; they slandered one another; they patched up flimsy reconciliations. French society had taken with it into exile all its faults, vanities, frivolities and ignorance. Philip de Chamondrin did not forsake this circle, though he inwardly chafed at the weakness of purpose that was exhibited on every side; but here he could live in a constant fever of excitement and could forget his personal griefs and anxieties. This was not the case with Antoinette, however, and if Philip had hoped that by living apart from him and seeing him only at rare intervals she would soon cease to love him, he was mistaken. Antoinette's heart did not change. She waited, and had it not been for the events that hastened the solution of the difficulty, she would have waited always; and though she suffered deeply, she concealed her grief so carefully that even the friends with whom she lived and who loved her as tenderly as if she had been their daughter were deceived. All Philip's attempts to destroy her love for him proved fruitless. Her heart once given was given irrevocably. Nor did she possess that experience which would have enabled her to see that she was not beloved. She attributed Philip's coldness to the successive misfortunes that had befallen him; and she was waiting for time to assuage his sorrow and awaken feelings responsive to her own.

Under these circumstances one can easily understand why she had awaited Philip's coming with such feverish impatience. Three weeks had passed since she had seen him; and all Mrs. Reed's caresses and well-meant attempts at consolation had failed to overcome her chagrin. Philip had come at last! She had sprung forward to meet him without making any effort to conceal the joy awakened by the prospect of a day spent with him, and she had hardly done this when the young man announced that he must leave in an hour.

"Will you explain the cause of this hasty departure?" she said, as soon as they were alone.

Her voice trembled and her lovely eyes were dim with tears.

"I am leaving you, Antoinette, to go where duty calls me," replied Philip, gravely.

"Duty? What duty?"

"The queen is still imprisoned in the Temple. It is said that she will soon be sentenced to death. I have formed the project of wresting her from the hands of her enemies, of rescuing her from their sanguinary fury."

"Alone?" cried Antoinette, overcome with terror at the thought of the dangers Philip would incur.

"Six of us have resolved to save her or die! We go together. A vessel is to convey us to the coast of Brittany. From there we shall make our way to Paris as best we can."

"But what can you do, you, so few in number?"

"God will be with us," replied Philip. "Besides, we shall find friends in Paris who will gladly join our little band."

On hearing these words which proved that Philip's determination was immovable, Antoinette could not control her emotion. She sank into an arm chair, covered her pale face with her trembling hands and burst into tears.

"Do not weep so bitterly, my dear Antoinette," said Philip, touched by her despair and kneeling beside her.

"Why did you not consult me before engaging in this mad and perilous undertaking?" she said, at last. "You are leaving me, abandoning me without even asking what my fate will be when I no longer have you to protect me; without thinking how I shall suffer in your absence, and forgetting that if you should be killed I too should die!"

Philip, deeply moved, took her hands and said, gently:

"Be comforted; I shall not die; you will see me again soon. Do you not feel that I should be dishonored if I shrank from the task that is before me? Could you respect a man who might be justly accused of cowardice and of failure to perform his duty. The queen was formerly my benefactress; how can I stand here to-day, and make no effort to rescue her from death?"

"But if you should die!"

This cry betrayed Antoinette's love in all its passionate intensity, and it found an echo in Philip's heart.

"I shall not be killed," said he, trying to make Mlle. de Mirandol share the conviction that animated his own mind; then, seeing her so sad and heart-broken at his departure, he added, with mingled remorse and tenderness:

"When I return, the fulfilment of the promise I made you shall be no longer delayed."

He had not referred to this subject before for a long time, and these few words carried unspeakable comfort to Antoinette's heart.

"I have no right to detain you," said she. "Go! May you succeed and soon return. I shall pray for you."

They conversed some time longer. Philip, who had until then, taken charge of Antoinette's business interests, told her that he had decided to entrust them until his return to Mr. Reed. He knew her protector to be an honest man in whom she could place perfect confidence; still, he felt that it was not only proper, but necessary, to acquaint the girl with the extent of her resources and the condition of her affairs. After he had done this, he asked to see Mr. and Mrs. Reed. He recommended Mlle. de Mirandol to their care, and for the first time revealed the fact that she was his betrothed. So at the moment of separation, he forced himself to render the pang of parting less bitter to her. The hope of approaching happiness did much to assuage Antoinette's grief, and Philip was scarcely gone before she began to forget the past in dreams of the future.

The six weeks that followed Philip's departure were weeks of constant anxiety and alarm. Antoinette could not close her eyes to the perils that threatened Philip on every side. The reports that reached

London in regard to the condition of affairs in Paris were not calculated to reassure her. She heard of the active surveillance exercised by the Committee of Public Safety, and of the terrible punishment inflicted upon those who were guilty of no crime save that of being regarded with suspicion. She was in constant fear lest some misfortune had happened to Philip. Every night and every morning she prayed for him. He was ever in her thoughts; and she was continually trying to divine where he was and what he was doing. Every day she looked eagerly for a letter which would relieve her anxiety, but in vain. No news came, and she was forced to be content with such rumors as Mr. Reed could collect for her in the city.

On the twenty-second of October that good man did not return until unusually late in the evening. Antoinette was awaiting him, her heart oppressed by the gloomiest forebodings. When he entered the room she saw that he was greatly agitated.

"You have heard bad news!" she exclaimed, wildly.

Mr. Reed did not attempt to deny it. He told Antoinette that the unfortunate queen of France had been put to death on the sixteenth, just six days before.

"They have killed her!" exclaimed the horrified girl.

She shuddered to think of Philip's probable fate. Since the queen was dead, the conspiracy which Philip had organized must have failed; and if it had failed, the conspirators had undoubtedly been discovered and arrested! This thought brought a deathlike pallor to her cheeks. Her friends saw her

totter; they sprang forward to support her and she sank into their arms wild with anguish and despair.

"Tell me all!" she entreated.

"Alas! I know so little," responded kind-hearted Mr. Reed. "The queen was sentenced on the sixteenth and beheaded the same day. Several persons are now in prison, charged with a conspiracy to rescue her and place her son upon the throne. I could learn nothing further."

"That is enough!" she cried. "Philip is in prison!"

She was silent a moment; then suddenly she said, in a firm voice:

"I must start at once."

The husband and wife uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"Start, and why?" demanded Mr. Reed.

"To join Philip."

"But it is walking straight into the jaws of death!" said Mrs. Reed.

Antoinette only repeated even more firmly than before:

"I must go at once!"

Then she broke into a passion of sobbing. Mrs. Reed took her in her arms, dried her tears, and tried to reassure her, lavishing every endearment upon the unhappy girl.

"My dear child," said she, "your lover confided you to

our care; we cannot let you go. Besides, how do you know that your betrothed has not escaped the dangers you fear for him? He is young, strong and clever. Perhaps at this very moment he is on his way back to you."

Antoinette made no reply; but she shook her head despondently, as if to give Mrs. Reed to understand that she had no hope. Still, she did not rebel against her guardian's decision. Mrs. Reed conducted her to her chamber, persuaded her to undress, and did not leave her until the girl had fallen asleep. But her slumber was of short duration. It was scarcely midnight when Antoinette awoke with a start from a frightful dream. Philip had appeared to her, his hands bound behind his back, his neck bare, his hair cut short. He was clad in the lugubrious garb of the condemned, and he called her name in a voice wild with entreaty.

"Oh! I will go—I will go to save him or to die with him!"

This cry was upon her lips when she woke. She sprang up, hastily dressed herself, took the little money that chanced to be in her possession, and some or her jewels, and when the first gleam of daylight illumined the sky, animated by a saint-like courage, she furtively left the roof that had sheltered her for three long years. When Mrs. Reed entered the young girl's room a few hours later, she found only a letter apprising her of Antoinette's fixed determination to go to the rescue of her lover, and thanking her most gratefully for her care and love. Mr. Reed hastened to London, hoping to overtake the fugitive. Vain attempt! His search was fruitless. Antoinette had disappeared.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MOVING CURTAIN.

Several months had passed since Dolores and Coursegol had taken up their abode in the house of Citizen Vauquelas. Coursegol, engrossed in the business matters which he had undertaken in concert with Vauquelas, went out every day, frequenting the Clubs, the Convention and the Palais Égalité. Dolores, on the contrary, seldom left the refuge that chance had provided for her. If she sometimes ventured into the heart of the city, it was only to visit Cornelia Bridoul or to accompany her to a stealthily said mass, solemnized in an obscure chamber by some courageous priest who dared for conscience's sake to bid defiance to the Committee of Public Safety, and who would have paid the penalty of disobedience with his blood, had he been discovered.

The life of Dolores was extremely lonely and sad. Deprived of companions of her own age, and oppressed with anxiety concerning the fate of those who were so dear to her, she grew pale and wan like a plant deprived of sunlight; the old joyous, sonorous ring was gone from her voice and from her laugh. She had suffered so much during the past three years that she no longer cherished any hope of happiness in the future; and, instead of the bright dreams that are wont to gladden the slumber of young girls, sad memories of the past haunted her restless nights.

Those whom she had loved and lost appeared before her as in a vision—the Marquise de Chamondrin, who had lavished upon her all a mother's care and tenderness; the Marquis, whose affection had filled her early years with joy; Philip and Antoinette, the brother and sister of her adoption—these appeared and vanished without awaking in her sorrowing heart any emotion save that of the profound anguish of separation. Look which way she would for comfort, she could find none; and she was condemned to bear her heavy burden alone. Those days of universal distrust were not propitious for the birth and development of new friendships; nor were Vauquelas and Coursegol such companions as Dolores needed to cheer and encourage her. During the few short hours that Coursegol spent at home, he was always absorbed in his calculations; and as for Vauquelas, though he treated her with rather cold respect, it was difficult to ascertain his real feelings toward her, for his furrowed face betrayed none of his impressions; and Dolores instinctively felt that she could not look to him for the consolation of which she stood so greatly in need. Her mornings were spent over the account-books, which had been entrusted to her charge; at noon, she partook of a solitary repast, and it was only at dinner that she saw Coursegol and her host.

One stormy evening in October, she was sitting in her chamber, a room upon the first-floor, opening into the garden by a glass door over which hung a heavy curtain. It was about nine o'clock. Vauquelas and Coursegol had gone out; the servants had retired, and Dolores was quite alone. Seated in a low chair before the fire, she was busying herself with her embroidery; but it was easy to see that her thoughts were not upon her work. She was brooding

over the past and wondering in what quarter of the globe she might hope to find her lost friends.

"What are they doing?" she wondered. "Are they thinking of me? Are they happy?"

And as these questions suggested many others, she sank into a profound reverie.

Suddenly the wind gave a loud shriek without, and the branches of the trees in the garden creaked and groaned as the tempest buffeted them and tossed them to and fro. Dolores shivered, partly from fear, partly from nervousness. As she did so, another gust, more furious than the first, filled the air with its weird voices. It sounded like the roar of the angry sea. A cloud of dust entered through the glass door which was partially concealed by the heavy curtain. The light flickered, and the smoke poured out into the room from the fire-place. At the same time Dolores heard, or fancied she heard, a sound like that made by the closing of a door.

"They have forgotten to shut that door," thought Dolores; and she rose to repair the omission, but suddenly paused, astonished and almost frightened. She saw the curtain move, not as if in obedience to the wind, but as if an invisible hand had shaken it.

"Heavens! there is some one behind the curtain!"

That a robber should have effected an entrance into the house at that hour of the night was not at all impossible; and this was the first thought that entered her mind. She recollected, too, that Vauquelas and Coursegol had just gone out, that the servants were in bed and that she was to all intents and purposes alone in the house. The feminine mind

is quick to take fright; and night and solitude increased the terror which is so easily aroused by a fevered imagination. Her usual courage deserted her; she turned pale and her lips quivered.

"How foolish!" she said to herself, the next instant. "Who would think of entering here at such an hour? It must have been the wind. I will close the door."

And struggling against the fear that had taken possession of her, she stepped quickly forward, but paused again. She could plainly discern a human form in the shadow behind the curtain.

"Oh! this is terrible!" she murmured, pressing her hand upon her heart.

Then she said, in a trembling voice:

"Who is there?"

There was no response. Summoning all her courage, she made two steps forward, seized the curtain and lifted it. Leaning against the glass door, which was now firmly closed, stood a man. Dolores was so terrified that she dare not raise her eyes to his face.

"Who are you?" she demanded.

The words had scarcely left her lips when the man sprang forward, crying:

"Dolores! Dolores!"

"Philip!"

Then, with a wild cry of rapturous delight, she flung herself in the arms of her lover from whom she had been parted three long weary years. They clung to each other a moment without uttering a word,

completely overcome with emotion. It was Philip, but Philip grown older and thinner. His face was unshaven and his clothing disordered, and he was frightfully pale. When she saw the ravages time and suffering had made upon the face of the man she loved, Dolores burst into tears.

"Oh Dolores!" sighed Philip, "have I really found you again after all these years!"

She smiled and wept as he devoured her with his eyes, then stepped by him and after satisfying herself that the door was securely closed and locked, she lowered the curtain and led Philip to an arm chair near the fire.

"Do you find me changed?" she asked.

"You are even more beautiful now than in the past!"

She blushed and turned away her face, then suddenly inquired: "How happens it you are here, Philip?"

"I came to Paris with a party of noblemen to rescue the queen from the hands of her executioners. We failed; she died upon the guillotine. My companions were arrested; I alone succeeded in making my escape—"

"Then you are pursued—you are a fugitive. Perhaps they are even now upon your track!"

"For a week I have been concealed in the house of a kind-hearted man who had taken compassion on my misery. I hoped to remain there until I could find an opportunity to make my escape from Paris. Day before yesterday, he told me that he was suspected of sheltering some enemy of the nation, and that his house was liable to be searched at any moment by

Robespierre's emissaries, and that I must flee at once if I did not desire to ruin him. I obeyed and since that time I have been wandering about the streets of Paris, hiding in obscure nooks, living like a dog, and not daring to ask aid of any one for fear I should be denounced. This evening, half-dead with hunger and cold, I was wondering if it would not be better to deliver myself up when, only a few steps from here, I met a man who was formerly in the employ of the Duke de Penthieore, and to whom I had once rendered an important service. Believing that he had not forgotten it, I approached him and told him who I was. The wretch cursed me, and tried to arrest me. The instinct of self-preservation lent me fresh strength. I struggled with him and knocked him down, and while he was calling for help, I ran across the unoccupied ground near the house. A low wall suddenly rose before me. I leaped over it, and found myself in this garden. I saw the light from your window; the door stood open. I entered and God has willed that the hours of agony through which I have just passed should lead me to you. Ah! now I can die. Now that I have seen you again, Dolores, I can die content!"

"Why do you talk of dying?" exclaimed Dolores. "Since you are here, you are saved! You shall remain!"

She paused suddenly, recollecting that the house was not hers; Philip noticed her hesitation.

"Am I in your house?" he asked.

"No; you are in the house of Citizen Vauquelas, Coursegol's business partner."

"Vauquelas! How unfortunate!"

"Why?"

"Because, unless there are two individuals by that name, the master of this house is the friend of Robespierre, and one of the men who aided in the discovery of the plot formed by my companions and myself for the rescue of the queen."

Dolores uttered a cry and hid her face in her hands.

"What shall we do?" she murmured.

"Is not Coursegol here?"

"He will not return until late at night."

"He would have found some way to conceal me until to-morrow."

"I will conceal you in his room," said Dolores. "No one enters it but himself. I will await his return and tell him you are there."

Philip approved this plan.

"But you said just now that you were hungry;" exclaimed Dolores. "Ah! how unfortunate it is that the servants are in bed."

She hastily left the room, and Philip, worn out with excitement, hunger and fatigue, remained in the arm chair in which Dolores had placed him. She soon returned, laden with bread, wine, and a piece of cold meat, which she had been fortunate enough to find in the kitchen. She placed these upon a small table, which she brought to Philip's side. Without a word, the latter began to eat and drink with the eagerness of a half-famished man. Dolores stood there watching

him, her heart throbbing wildly with joy while tears of happiness gushed from her burning eyes.

Soon Philip was himself again. The warmth and the nourishing food restored his strength. A slight color mounted to his cheeks, and a hopeful smile played upon his lips. Not until then, did Dolores venture to utter the name that had been uppermost in her thoughts for some moments.

"You have told me nothing of Antoinette."

This name reminded Philip of the sacred bond of which Dolores was ignorant, and which had never seemed to him so galling as now.

"Antoinette!" he replied. "She is living near London in the care of some friends to whom I have confided her."

"Is she your wife?" inquired Dolores, not daring to meet Philip's eyes.

"No."

"But your father's wishes—"

"In pity, say no more!" interrupted Philip, "If I had not found you again, if I had had certain proofs that you were no longer alive, I might, perhaps, have married Antoinette, but now—"

"Now?"

"She will never be my wife!"

"Does she no longer love you?"

Philip's head drooped. There was a long silence; suddenly he glanced up.

"Why should I conceal it from you longer, Dolores? I love you; I love you as I loved you in years gone by when I first dared to open my heart to you; and since that time, in spite of the barriers between us, I have never ceased to love you. Nor can our love be a sin in the sight of Heaven since it is God's providence, in spite of your will, that brings us together again to-day. And I swear that nothing shall separate us now!"

Dolores had no strength to reply to such language, or to destroy the hopes which seemed even stronger now than in the past, and far more precious since three years of absence had not sufficed to extinguish them in the faithful and impassioned heart of her lover. Philip continued:

"Ah! if I could but tell you how miserable I have been since we have been separated. My Dolores, did you not know when you left the château in which we had grown up together to offer as a sacrifice to God the love you shared, did you not know that you took away a part of myself with you?"

"Stop!" she entreated, sinking into a chair and burying her face in her hands.

But he would not listen.

"Since that day," he continued, "my life has been wretched. In vain I have striven to drive from the heart which you refused to accept the memory of your grace and your beauty; in vain have I striven to listen with a complaisant ear to Antoinette, whom you commanded me to accept as my wife. Do you not see that this sacrifice is beyond my strength. I cannot do it—I love her as a sister, but you——"

Dolores interrupted him. Suddenly quieted, and

recalled to a recollection of duty by some mysterious inspiration, she rose, and in a gentle and firm voice said:

"Philip, I must hear no more. I belong to God, and you, yourself, are no longer free. Antoinette——"

"Would you compel me to hate her?"

The cry frightened Dolores and awakened in her heart a tender pity for the unfortunate man whom she adored, even while she wrung his soul with anguish.

"Ah well! do not marry her," she replied, "if the union that your father desired is a greater sacrifice than you have strength to make; but do not hope that I shall ever be weak enough to yield to your entreaties. Whether you love her or whether you detest her, Antoinette will forever stand between us."

On hearing these words, Philip sprang wildly to his feet, then sank back in his chair and, concealing his face in his hands, broke into passionate sob.

The girl's powers of endurance were almost exhausted; but she still retained energy enough to attempt to put an end to this trying scene.

"The hour when the master of the house usually returns is fast approaching," she resumed. "He must not find you here. I will take you to Coursegol's room; you will be safe there."

But Philip would not heed her. He wept like a child, and, in a voice broken with sobs, he cried:

"Ah, the sacrifice you demand is too much to ask of any human creature! God does not require it of us. If after creating us for each other it is His will that we

should live forever apart and be eternally miserable, why has He united us to-night? Is not our meeting providential? Dolores, your decision cannot be irrevocable."

It required all her courage and determination to repress the loving words that rose to her lips from her overflowing heart.

"Come, Philip," she pleaded, striving to give a maternal tone to her voice.

"But promise me——"

"Ah well! to-morrow,——" she said, quietly, doing her best to calm him.

She succeeded. Philip rose, ready to follow her. She had already taken a candle from the table when footsteps were heard in the adjoining room.

"Good Heavens! it is Vauquelas! We are lost!"

"He will not enter here, perhaps," whispered Philip.

With a gesture, Dolores imposed silence: then she waited and listened, hoping that Vauquelas would pass on to his own room without pausing. Her hopes were not realized. Vauquelas rapped twice at the door.

"May I come in, Citoyenne Dolores?"

"No, I am in bed."

"Get up quickly then, and open the door. A man was seen to leap over the wall that separates the garden from the street. He must be prowling about the house. They are in pursuit of him. The police are coming."

"I am getting up," replied Dolores, anxious to gain time, and racking her brain to discover some means of escape for Philip.

"The night is very dark," he whispered. "I will go into the garden and conceal myself there until the soldiers have searched the house and gone."

Dolores nodded her approval, and went on tip-toe to the glass door to open it and let Philip out. She turned the knob, softly opened the door, and stepped aside to let him pass. The next instant she uttered a cry of dismay, for she saw five members of the National Guard approaching the house, beating the shrubbery that bordered the path through which they were advancing with the butt ends of their muskets. She recoiled in horror, for before she could prevent it Philip stepped out and stood for an instant plainly visible in the light that streamed through the open door ere he perceived them. As soon as they saw him, they raised their guns and took aim.

"Do not fire!" he exclaimed. "I surrender!"

And he paused, awaiting their approach. At the same moment Vauquelas entered the room by the other door. Dolores cast a despairing look at Philip, then involuntarily stepped to his side as if to protect him. There was a moment's silence caused by surprise on the one side and terror on the other. Philip was filled with consternation not that his courage failed him, but because he was appalled by the thought of the danger in which he had involved Dolores.

As for Vauquelas, he glanced from one to the other in evident anger and astonishment. The presence of the soldiers, and the thought of the suspicions to

which he—ardent patriot though he was—might be exposed on account of this stranger's arrest in his house irritated him not a little. He was about to vent his wrath and indignation upon Philip when the sergeant in command interposed, and addressing the young man, said, harshly;

"What are you doing in this house, you rascal? Who are you?"

Philip attempted to reply, but Vauquelas did not give him time.

"Who is he?" he exclaimed. "It is easy to answer that question. Some enemy of the Republic, you may be sure, who has sought shelter in my house at the risk of compromising the honor of this young girl, and my reputation as well."

Dolores trembled; then sacrificing, not without a terrible effort, her maidenly delicacy and modesty she said: "You are mistaken, Citizen Vauquelas. This man is my husband!"

"Your husband! Are you married?"

"I had a special reason for keeping the fact a secret from every one."

"But Coursegol—"

"Even he is ignorant of it," answered Dolores, with downcast eyes.

"Married! married!" repeated Vauquelas mechanically, while Philip drew nearer to Dolores and, in a voice audible to her alone, murmured:

"Ah! cruel one, had you uttered those words sooner, we should not be here now."

Dolores made no response. She cast a beseeching look upon Vauquelas. At a word from him the soldiers would have departed; but he remembered the history of Dolores which Coursegol had confided to him, and he said to himself that the adopted daughter of the late Marquis de Chamondrin would not be likely to marry other than a nobleman, and that this nobleman must be an implacable enemy to the new order of things, and consequently one of those men whom the Committee of Public Safety were so relentlessly pursuing. That such a person should be found in his house augured ill for his patriotism and might cost him his influence over Robespierre, so it was necessary to strike a crushing blow if he wished to emerge from this ordeal unscathed.

"Why have you concealed your marriage from me?" he inquired, turning to Dolores.

"For purely personal reasons."

"And why does your husband steal into my house like a robber, instead of entering by the door?"

"Because we wished to keep our marriage a secret."

"All this is not very clear," remarked the sergeant; then addressing Philip, he demanded:

"What is your name, and from whence do you come?"

And seeing Philip hesitate, the man continued:

"The citizen and this young woman will follow us to the station-house. They can explain matters to the officials there; and if no blame attaches to them, they will be immediately set at liberty."

"Yes, yes, take them away," cried Vauquelas, glad of any decision that would remove the soldiers from his house.

Then Dolores comprehended that the falsehood to which she had resorted had not only failed to save Philip but had probably cost her her own life. For herself, she did not care. She had long ago sacrificed for his sake that which was a thousand times dearer than life; and now her only regret was for him. But Philip would not accept the sacrifice. When he saw that both Dolores and himself were to be placed under arrest, he exclaimed:

"This young girl has uttered a falsehood. She did it, probably, to save a stranger whom she would have forgotten in a few hours. I am not her husband, and that I have been found in her room is simply due to the fact that I took refuge here a few moments ago from a pursuer. I am the Marquis de Chamondrin. I am an Émigré and a conspirator!"

"Ah, he is lost! he is lost!" murmured Dolores.

On hearing Philip's confession, Vauquelas sprang towards him, wild with rage.

"You call yourself Philip de Chamondrin?" he demanded.

"That is my name."

"Then you are the adopted brother of this young girl, and if you, an Émigré and a conspirator, are here, it can only be because she is your accomplice. Vile wretch! to make my house a rendezvous for the enemies of the Nation!"

Anger crimsoned his cheeks and glittered in his eyes.

He actually frothed with rage.

"Arrest them! Arrest them both!" he exclaimed.

Philip, who had supposed he could save Dolores by the confession he had just made, could not repress a movement of wrath and despair.

"You will regret this, sir," he said, haughtily.

"There could be no greater misfortune than to shelter aristocrats like you under my roof. I am a patriot; I love the Republic. France, first of all! Citizens, this is a dangerous man. This so-called nobleman has been plotting to save the queen and to place the little Capet upon the throne. As for this young woman, she is a viper who has repaid my hospitality with treachery. Take them away!—and so perish the enemies of the Nation!"

He uttered these words with great energy and enthusiasm as if he wished to give convincing proofs of his patriotism. The soldiers were consulting together; presently they formed into two squads. One division took Dolores in charge; the other took Philip, and they were led away. It was then nearly eleven o'clock.

CHAPTER X.

COURSEGOL'S EXPLOITS.

Coursegol returned home about midnight. In accordance with his usual custom he was passing through the lower hall without stopping on his way to his room on the floor above, when he heard some one call him. He recognized the voice of Vauquelas, but it seemed to proceed from the chamber occupied by Dolores. Surprised that the latter was not in bed at this late hour, and fearing she was ill, he hastily entered her room. Vauquelas was there alone, pale, nervous and excited. The girl's bed had not been disturbed. Her absence struck Coursegol at once.

"Where is Dolores?" he asked, quickly.

"Coursegol, why did you not tell me she was receiving Philip de Chamondrin here?" was his friend's only response.

"She receiving M. Philip!" cried Coursegol, greatly astonished.

"Yes, here in my house; here in this chamber. They were discovered here."

"Then M. Philip is still alive!"

"Unfortunately for me, he is still alive."

"What do you mean?" inquired Coursegol, who as yet understood but one thing—that his master was not dead.

"I mean that Dolores, whom I received into my house at your request, has been sheltering here, at the risk of compromising and ruining me, Philip de Chamondrin, one of the prime movers in a conspiracy formed for the purpose of saving the widow Capet."

"Ah! I understand," murmured Coursegol, at once

divining that Philip being pursued had taken refuge in the house of Vauquelas, and had found Dolores there. "Ah, well! citizen, the young man must not remain here. We will help him to make his escape and no one will be the wiser—"

"It is too late!"

"Why?"

"Both have been arrested; he, for conspiring against the government, she, as his accomplice."

Coursegol uttered a terrible oath: then, turning to Vauquelas and seizing him by the collar, he cried:

"It was you, wretch, who betrayed them!"

"You are choking me!" groaned Vauquelas, breathless in Coursegol's violent grasp.

"Tell me where they are!" thundered Coursegol. "I must see them. Where are they?"

"Release me," gasped Vauquelas.

This time Coursegol obeyed; but he stood before Vauquelas, angry and menacing. The latter trembled. He had not foreseen that Coursegol would hold him accountable for the arrest of Philip and Dolores.

"Explain and quickly!" cried Coursegol.

"The soldiers came to the house in pursuit of young Philip, who had taken refuge in this room. To save him, Dolores said she was his wife. Philip, fearing she would be compromised, denied her statement; and as their explanation did not seem sufficiently clear, they were both taken to prison."

"Could you not have vouched for them—declared

that they were friends of yours?"

"I did all I could to save them," whined Vauquelas.

"You lie! you lie! I tell you, you lie! It was you who betrayed them! I am sure of it. You trembled for your life, for your money. Woe be unto you!"

And Coursegol accompanied those words with a gesture so menacing that Vauquelas, believing his last hour had come, fell on his knees begging for mercy. But Coursegol seemed pitiless.

"Poor children! that death should overtake them just as Providence had united them. Wretch! fool! you were less merciful than destiny."

"Have pity!"

"Had you any pity on them? No! Ah well! you shall die!"

And drawing from his pocket a dagger that he always carried with him, Coursegol raised it above the old man's head.

"But if I promise to save them—"

The hand of Coursegol, raised to strike, fell.

"You will save them! That is only another lie. How can you save them? The prisons of the Republic release their victims only to send them to the guillotine."

"I will bribe the jailers to let them escape."

"The jailers are not the only masters: and who among them would expose himself to almost certain death for the sake of your money?"

"Then I will do still better," replied Vauquelas. "I will bribe the judges of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and they will acquit your friends."

"Useless! these judges will demand that the money shall be paid in advance! and as soon as they have it in their grasp, they will condemn the prisoners."

"What can I do then?"

"There is no help for the misfortune, and it is because you are the cause of it that I am going to wreak my vengeance upon you!"

"Stop, stop! I will go to Robespierre."

"He will refuse your petition."

"No! my influence over him is all-powerful. I have means to compel him to grant my request."

"Even when you ask for the release of one of the leaders of the conspiracy to save the queen?"

"Yes; he will not refuse me."

Coursegol reflected a moment. Vauquelas, still on his knees before him, looked up, trying to read his fate in the stern face above him.

"Listen," said Coursegol at last. "I will spare your life on certain conditions. It depends upon yourself whether you are to live or die."

"Name them. I will obey!" murmured Vauquelas, servilely, beginning to breathe freely once more.

"To-morrow by sunset, I must receive from you a blank order signed by Robespierre which will enable me to obtain the release of two prisoners."

"You shall have it."

"I also desire that Robespierre shall remain in ignorance of the names of the prisoners who are to be released."

"He shall not know."

"Under these conditions, your life is yours. Only do not attempt to deceive me. I know that it is in your power to obtain an order for my arrest and thus save yourself from the chastisement you so richly deserve."

"Can you believe—"

Vauquelas could not finish his sentence. He stammered and blushed, feeling that his most secret thoughts had been divined.

"But to prevent that, it is here in this house that I shall await your return; and if to-morrow the soldiers, guided by you, come here to arrest me, they will find me in the cellar where your wealth is concealed; and it is I who will have the pleasure of initiating them into the secrets of your patriotic life."

Vauquelas uttered an exclamation of mingled astonishment and dismay.

"It is here," repeated Coursegol, "that I shall wait to receive from your hands the order of release that you have promised me. Now, it is for you to decide whether you will live or die."

As he spoke, Coursegol pushed open the door leading to the cellar used by Vauquelas as the repository of his riches and disappeared. Vauquelas rose from his kneeling posture, filled with consternation by what he had just heard. The extremity to which he was

reduced was a cruel one; he must bribe the incorruptible Robespierre. When he made the promise to Coursegol he did not intend to fulfil it: he intended to denounce him; but the shrewdness of his partner had placed him in a most embarrassing position. He was obliged to keep his promise, but he could do it only by compromising his influence and his reputation; and yet there was no help for it since Coursegol could ruin him by a single word. How much he regretted that the strength and vigor of his youth were now paralyzed by age. If he had been twenty years younger, how desperately he would have struggled with the man who had suddenly become a formidable enemy! What an effort he would have made to kill him and thus silence him forever. But such a plan was no longer feasible; nothing was left for him but submission. About an hour after Coursegol left him, he went to his room to obtain the rest of which he stood so greatly in need. He threw himself upon the bed; but sleep refused to come to his relief. At daybreak he was upon his feet once more. He wished, before leaving the house, to see Coursegol again. The latter had slept with his pistol in his hand, guarding the strong-box upon which his life as well as the lives of Dolores and Philip depended.

"Have you the order?" inquired Coursegol.

"I am going for it," responded Vauquelas, meekly.

"Do not return without it if you wish to leave this place alive."

Vauquelas hastily retired. Robespierre lived on the Rue Saint Honoré. Thither Vauquelas went, wondering under what form he should present his petition. The friendship existing between this

celebrated man and himself was lively and profound. It had its origin in former relations, in services mutually rendered, and in common interests, but so far as Robespierre was concerned, he would never allow friendship to conflict with what he considered his duty. Even in his most cruel decisions, he was honest and sincere. He was deeply impressed with a sense of his responsibility and no consideration foreign to what he regarded as the welfare of the Nation could move him. He never granted a pardon; he never allowed his heart to be touched with compassion; and when one reads his history, it is hard to decide which is most horrible, the acts of his life or the spirit of fanaticism that inspired them. Vauquelas understood the character of the man with whom he had to deal, and felt that there was no hope of exciting Robespierre's pity by the recital of the misfortunes of Philip and Dolores, or by an explanation of the embarrassing position in which he found himself; so he finally decided to resort to strategy to obtain what he desired.

When he reached the house, he found that Robespierre had just gone out. Vauquelas did not seem at all annoyed. He entered the office—that dread place from which emanated those accusations that carried death and despair to so many households. The visitor was well-known to the servants of the household and he was permitted to roam about at will. As he declared his intention of awaiting Robespierre's return, the servant who ushered him into the room withdrew, leaving him quite alone. He hastened to Robespierre's desk and began rummaging among the papers with which it was strewn, keeping one eye all the while upon the door lest some one should enter and detect him. There were intended orders, lists of proscriptions,

documents and reports from the provinces, as well as police reports, but Vauquelas paid no attention to these. He continued his search until Robespierre's signature on the bottom of a blank sheet of paper met his eyes, and drew from him an exclamation of joy.

This sheet was the last belonging to a police report which had been approved by the committee, and the only one upon which the clerk to whom the copying of the document had been entrusted had as yet written nothing. It was upon this sheet that Robespierre had placed his signature. His name, written by his own hand and ornamented with the flourish which he always appended to his signature, lay upon the immaculate whiteness of the paper like a blood stain. Without the slightest hesitation, Vauquelas tore this precious page loose from the others; then in a feigned hand he wrote these words "Permission to leave the prison is hereby granted to the man and woman bearing this order." These lines written above the signature transformed the paper into the safe-conduct which Coursegol had demanded. Greatly agitated by the audacious act he had just accomplished, Vauquelas placed the document he had fabricated in his pocket, hid the mutilated report in the bottom of a desk drawer under a pile of memorandum books; then, after giving his agitation time to subside, he left the house, lingering a moment to chat with those on guard at the door, and remarking as he left them:

"I have not time to wait just now; I will call again."

But as soon as he had gained the street he quickened his pace, as if fearing pursuit. On reaching home he hastened to the cellar and, addressing Coursegol who

had not once quitted his post, he said:

"Here is what you desired. Go!"

Coursegol took the paper without a word, scrutinized it closely to convince himself that the signature was genuine: then satisfied with his examination he replied:

"I am going with the hope that I shall be able to save Dolores and Philip; but do not consider yourself forgiven for the injury you have done them. Remember this; if my efforts fail and any harm befalls them it is on you that my vengeance will fall."

He rose to go; then changing his mind, he added:

"For six months we have worked together, and as I shall probably need a good deal of money to carry this undertaking to a successful termination, I wish you to give me my share of the profits."

"Make your own estimate," replied Vauquelas, who was too thoroughly frightened to haggle as to terms.

"Give me fifty thousand francs; half in gold, half in assignats."

Vauquelas breathed a sigh of relief. He had feared that Coursegol would demand an amount ten times as large. He counted out fifty thousand francs. Coursegol put the assignats in his pocket, and secreted the gold in a leather belt he wore; then without another word, he started in quest of Philip and Dolores.

How could he reach them? He must first discover where they were. Prisons were very numerous in those days. There were the Luxembourg, the Abbaye, the Force, the Carmes, the Madelonnettes, Saint-

Lazare and many others. In which of them were Philip and Dolores immured? Had they been sent to the same prison or had they been separated? Vauquelas had been unable to furnish any information on this subject, and Coursegol could only conjecture. He repaired immediately to the house of the Bridouls, where he made arrangements to remain for a time. He apprised these tried friends of the events that had occurred since the evening before. Cornelia could not restrain her tears when she heard that her young friend was in prison. As for Bridoul, he soon decided upon the course to be pursued. In most of the prisons there were many persons charged with no particular offence. It was not at all probable that they would ever be brought to trial, and, in spite of the surveillance to which they were subjected, they enjoyed comparative freedom. They were not absolutely forbidden to hold communication with the world outside, and if they possessed pecuniary resources it was possible for them to purchase the good-will of the jailers and to obtain permission to receive letters, food and even visits from their friends. It may have been that the number of prisons and of prisoners prevented the maintenance of very severe discipline; it may have been that the Committee of Public Safety, having decided to execute all convicted prisoners, did not desire to exercise a too rigid surveillance. However this may have been, many of the prisoners were in daily communication with the outer world. Wives and children obtained permission to visit their husbands and fathers without much difficulty; and there had been established, for the convenience of the prisoners, a corps of regularly appointed messengers who came and went at all hours of the day on condition that they paid the jailers a certain

percentage on their earnings. Coursegol was ignorant of these details, but Bridoul acquainted him with them.

"One of these messengers is a friend of mine," added Bridoul, "and for a fair compensation, he will consent to take you with him as his assistant. In his company, you can visit the different prisons without the slightest danger."

This plan delighted Coursegol. That same evening they made the desired arrangement with the man of whom Bridoul had spoken. The next day, he began his search, and three days later he ascertained that Dolores was confined in the Conciergerie and Philip in the Madelonnettes.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CONCIERGERIE.

After their arrest Philip and Dolores were taken to the nearest station-house and ushered into a room where three persons, arrested like themselves during the evening, were awaiting examination. Unfortunately the official charged with conducting these investigations had already gone home. As he would not return until the next morning, the sergeant of police decided that the prisoners must pass the night there. Some mattresses were spread upon the floor for those who chose to use them. Dolores refused to lie down. She seated herself in a

broken-down arm chair which Philip obtained for her, not without considerable difficulty, and declared that she would spend the night there. Philip placed himself on a stool at her feet and thus they waited the break of day.

Their companions were stretched upon their couches fast asleep, and the night, which promised to be heavy with cruel wakefulness and fatigue, passed like some delightful dream.

They could not close their eyes to the fate that was in store for them. Philip had plotted to save the queen; he had returned from his refuge in foreign lands solely for this purpose. By sheltering him, Dolores had become his accomplice. Such crimes would meet with, no indulgence. In the morning they would be interrogated by an official, whose mind had been poisoned against them in advance, and who would show no mercy to their youth. Accused of desiring the overthrow of the Republic and the return of the Bourbons, they would be sent to prison, taken from their cells to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and condemned to the guillotine. Such was the summary mode of procedure during the Reign of Terror. To hope that any exception would be made in their case was folly. All that was left for them, therefore, was to prepare to die. If the prospect of such a fate brought the tears to their eyes at first, it was not because either of them was wanting in courage. No, it was only for the fate that was to befall the other that each wept. But when they had talked together, and learned that they were mutually resigned, their sorrow was appeased; and as if their sentence had already been pronounced, they thought only of making their last hours on earth pass as calmly and sweetly as possible.

"Why should I fear to die?" said Dolores, when Philip tried to encourage her by hopes in which he himself had not the slightest confidence. "Death has terrors only for those who leave some loved one behind them; but when I am gone, who will be left to mourn for me? Antoinette? Have I not for a long time been the same as dead to her? I can leave the world without creating a void in any heart, without causing any one a pang. Hence I can, without regret, go to seek the eternal rest for which I have sighed so long."

"Have you truly longed for death?" asked Philip.

"I have seen so many loved ones fall around me," replied Dolores, "my eyes have witnessed so many sorrows, I have suffered so much, and my life since my happy childhood has been so unspeakably lonely and sad that I have often and often entreated God to recall me to Himself."

"But, Dolores, if you had only listened to me when I pleaded in vain, if you had but placed your hand in mine, what misery we should have been spared."

"It would not have averted our misfortunes."

"No; but we might have borne them together, and after our sorrows found consolation in each other."

"I could not be your wife."

"Is it true, then, that you do not love me?"

Dolores made no answer. Emboldened by the solemn calmness of these moments which were, as they supposed, ushering them into eternity, Philip continued:

"Whenever I pressed my suit, you pleaded my father's wishes as an excuse for not listening to my prayers.

To gratify a foolish ambition he desired me to marry Antoinette. Ah, well! my father's will no longer stands between us; and the engagement that binds me to her is broken by the changed situation in which we find ourselves. We are free now in the shadow of death. Will you not tell me the truth? Will you not open your heart to me as I have opened mine to you?"

Dolores listened, her glowing eyes riveted upon Philip's face, her bosom heaving with emotion. The words; "We are free now in the shadow of death," rang in her ears. She felt that she could not refuse her lover the last joy and consolation that he claimed; and that she, whose past had been one long sacrifice of her happiness and of her hopes, had a right to reveal the secret so long buried in her soul. Gently, almost solemnly, these words fell from her lips:

"Listen, Philip, since you ask me for the truth, now, at this supreme hour, I have always loved you as I love you now; and I love you now as ardently as I am beloved!"

There was so much tenderness in her manner that Philip sprang up, his eyes sparkling with rapture.

"And this is the avowal you have refused to make for five long years!" he cried. "I knew that my love was returned. You have confessed it; and if I were compelled to give my life in exchange for the happiness of hearing this from your lips, I should not think that I paid too dearly for it. But you have restored my energy and my courage. I feel strong enough, now, to defy the whole world in a struggle for the felicity that is rightfully ours. We shall live,

Dolores, to belong to each other, to comfort each other."

"Do not, I entreat you, ask me to live," exclaimed Dolores, "since the certainty of death alone decided me to speak."

"But," pleaded Philip, "if I should succeed in rescuing you from the peril that surrounds us, would you be more rigorous than destiny? Would you not feel that God smiled upon our love, and that it was He who had mercifully united us again?"

"Philip! Philip!" murmured Dolores. She could say no more, but yielding at last to the sweet power of the love against which she had struggled so long, she laid her weary head upon the heart that worshipped her with such a tender and all-absorbing passion.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when the officer who was to conduct the examination made his appearance. The expectations of Philip and Dolores were realized. He questioned them hastily, listened to the report of the sergeant who had arrested them, took a few notes, then ordered the culprits to be sent, one to the Conciergerie, the other to the Madelonnettes.

"Can we not be together?" asked Philip, filled with dismay by the prospect of a separation.

"The Committee will decide. For the present, I shall be obliged to separate you" was the officer's reply.

Philip approached Dolores.

"Do not lose courage," he whispered. "I shall soon rejoin you."

Dolores was to be taken to the Conciergerie.

Several gendarmes formed her escort. At her request, one of them sent for a carriage. She entered it and her guards seated themselves opposite her and on the box with the driver. To reach the Conciergerie, they were obliged to pass the Palais de Justice. Upon the steps of the palace, not far from the prison, was a crowd of women that assembled there every day to witness the departure of the prisoners who were condemned to death. They saw Dolores when she alighted from the carriage, and immediately began to clap their hands and utter shrill cries of delight. She was compelled to pass through a storm of hisses, gibes and insults in making her way to the prison; and it was not without considerable difficulty that the men acting as her escort protected her from the infuriated throng. At last the dread door opened before her. She was ushered into the office, a small room where the prison register was kept. Her full name and age were recorded by the clerk, and she was then placed in charge of one of the jailers, who was ordered to find accommodations for her in that part of the prison over which he had jurisdiction.

"I have two favors to ask of you," Dolores said to this man, whose benevolent face inspired her with confidence.

"What do you desire, citoyenne?"

"First, to have a cell to myself, if possible. I will pay for it."

"That will be a difficult matter; but I think I can arrange it. And what else?"

"I wish to send a letter to a person who is very dear to me."

"His name?"

"Coursegol. He lives at the house of Citizen Vauquelas, where I was living myself when I was arrested in his absence. You may see the contents of the letter and assure yourself that it contains nothing objectionable."

"Very well," replied the jailer, moved with compassion by the misfortunes of this beautiful young girl. "I will conduct you to a cell where you will be alone, and where you will have an opportunity to write your letter."

As he spoke, he led Dolores to a small room on the second floor, lighted by a grated window, opening upon the court-yard.

"You can remain here as long as you like. No one shall come to trouble you. Meals are served in the refectory, unless a prisoner desires them in his own apartment, at a charge of six francs per day."

"I shall have no money until the letter I am about to write reaches its destination," said Dolores. "It took all I had to pay for the carriage that brought me here."

"I will give you credit," replied the jailer. "No no; do not thank me. It always pays to be accommodating. I will now go for pen, ink and paper."

The worthy man withdrew but soon returned, bringing the desired articles. Dolores wrote a hasty note to Coursegol, informing him of her arrest and that of Philip, and begging him to send her some money at once. The jailer promised that the letter should be delivered some time during the day. Then he departed. Dolores, left in solitude, fell upon her

knees and prayed for Philip. She had never loved him so fondly as now; and the misfortune that had befallen her would have been nothing had it been alleviated by the joy of knowing that her lover was near her.

She spent the day alone, and she was really surprised at her own calmness. Comforted by the immortal hopes that are ever awakened in the Christian's soul by the prospect of death, and elevated to an ideal world by the exciting events of the previous evening and by the eloquent confession of Philip, as well as by her own, life seemed despicable, unworthy of her; and she felt that she could leave it without a regret. Toward evening, the jailer returned. He brought back the letter she had given him. Coursegol could not be found; he was no longer with Vauquelas, and the latter knew nothing of his whereabouts.

This news brought Dolores back to the stern reality of her situation. She feared that Coursegol had excited the anger of Vauquelas by his threats, and that he had drawn down some misfortune upon himself. Moreover, the disappearance of her protector cut off her pecuniary resources; and as the prisoners could not obtain the slightest favor without the aid of gold, she was deprived of the means to alleviate the hardships of her lot. The jailer pitied her distress.

"Do not worry, citoyenne," he said to Dolores. "You shall have your meals here, and you shall not be disturbed. By and by, you will be able to compensate me for my services."

Grateful for this unexpected kindness, Dolores removed a small cross set with diamonds which she wore about her neck, and, offering it to the jailer,

said:

"Accept this as security for the expense that I shall cause you. If I die, you can keep it; if I live, I will redeem it."

The man refused at first; but the girl's entreaties conquered his scruples, and he finally accepted it.

"What is your name?" she asked.

"I am called Aubry. You will find me ever ready to serve you, citoyenne."

Such were the incidents that marked our heroine's arrival at the Conciergerie. This first day in prison passed slowly. She did not leave her cell, but toward evening Aubry brought up two dishes which were as unpleasing to the taste as to the eye. As he placed them before her and saw the movement of disgust which Dolores could not repress, Aubry was almost ashamed of the meagre fare.

"Things here are not as they were in your château," he remarked, rather tartly.

"No matter, my good Aubry, I am content;" responded Dolores, pleasantly.

She ate the food, however, for she had fasted since the evening before; then, drawing the table to the wall pierced by the small, high window, she mounted it to obtain a few breaths of fresh air. She opened the sash; the breeze came in through the heavy bars, but Dolores could only catch a glimpse of the gray sky already overcast by the mists of evening.

An hour later, Dolores was sleeping calmly; and the

next morning, as if to render her first awakening in prison less gloomy, a bright sunbeam peeped in to salute her.

When Aubry entered about ten o'clock with her breakfast, she was walking about her cell.

"Citoyenne," he began; "I must tell you that as I was leaving the prison, this morning, I met a man who inquired if I had seen, among the prisoners, a pretty young girl with golden hair and dark eyes. The description corresponded with you in every particular."

"Describe the man," said Dolores, eagerly.

"He was very tall; he had gray hair, and he seemed to be in great trouble."

"It was Coursegol—the person for whom my letter was intended. Shall you see him again?"

"His evident distress excited my pity, and I promised to aid him in his search. He agreed to come to the office at ten o'clock this morning, ostensibly to seek employment in the prison; and I promised to make some excuse for taking you there at the same hour, so you can see each other; but you are not to exchange a word or even a sign of recognition."

So in a few moments Dolores found herself face to face with Coursegol. Of course, they did not attempt to exchange a single word: but, by a look, Coursegol made her understand that he was employing every effort to effect her deliverance; and she returned to her cell cheered by the thought that a devoted heart was watching over her and over Philip. The next day, when she was least expecting it, the door opened and

Coursegol entered.

"I have taken Aubry's place to-day," he remarked.

Dolores sprang towards him, and he clasped her in his arms. They had been separated only three days, but those three days had seemed a century to both.

"Have you seen Philip?" inquired Dolores.

"I saw him yesterday, after leaving here, my child."

"Is he still in the Madelonnettes?"

"Yes; but next week he will be brought here."

Nothing could have afforded Dolores greater pleasure than this intelligence; and she gratefully thanked the protector whose devotion thus alleviated the hardships of her lot; then he told her what had occurred since her arrest, and how he had compelled Vauquelas to obtain an order for the release of those he had betrayed.

"This order is now in my possession," he continued; "but it cannot be used until Philip is an inmate of the same prison in which you are confined. He will be here in a few days and then you can both make your escape. In the meantime I will make all the necessary arrangements to enable you to leave Paris as soon as you are set at liberty."

This interview, which lasted nearly an hour, literally transformed Dolores. For the first time in many years she allowed herself to contemplate the possibility of happiness here below; and the grave and solemn thoughts that had been occupying her mind gave place to bright anticipations of a blissful future with Philip.

For the first time since her arrival at the Conciergerie, she went down into the public hall. This hall was separated only by an iron grating from the long and narrow corridor upon which the cells assigned to the men opened, and in which they spent most of their time. It was against this grating that they leaned when they wished to converse with their lady friends; and, during the day, it not unfrequently happened that the doors were left open, and prisoners of both sexes were allowed to mingle together. Then, ladies and gentlemen promenaded gayly to and fro; acquaintances exchanged greetings; and handsome men and beautiful women chatted as blithely as if they were in their elegant drawing-rooms.

The ancient nobility of France thus entered its protest against the persecutions of which it was the victim, and convinced even its bitterest enemies that it was not lacking in spirit and in courage in the very jaws of death. All the historians who have attempted a description of the prison life of that time unite in declaring that contempt of death was never evinced more forcibly than by the victims of that bloody epoch.

The ladies displayed habits of luxury that were worthy of the days of the Regency. In the morning they generally appeared in bewitching négligés; in the afternoon they made more careful and elegant toilettes, and when evening came they donned the costly, trailing robes which they had worn at Court, only a few short weeks before. Those who, by the circumstances attendant upon their arrest, had been prevented from bringing a varied assortment of dresses with them, expended any amount of energy and ingenuity in their attempts to rival their more

fortunate companions in the splendor of their costumes. Hence, the prison resembled a ball-room rather than an antechamber of death. The ladies were coquettish and bewitching; the men were gallant and impassioned; and more than one love was born in those days of alternate hope and terror—more than one love whose ardor was not impaired by fears for the morrow, and whose delights sweetened the last hours of those who shared it. There was, of course, little real enjoyment or happiness in those clays which were constantly disturbed by the arrival of new victims. One came mourning for her children; another, for her husband. At intervals, the jailer appeared to summon those condemned to die. Heart-rending shrieks and despairing farewells attended these separations; the executioner led away his victims, and all was over. Those who remained filled up the ranks, and, looking at one another with an anguish that deprived them of none of their courage, whispered:

"Who of us will die to-morrow?"

But a secret flame burned in every heart, imparting strength to the weak and resignation to the strong. Cowardice was as rare as voluntary sacrifice was common; and that which rendered the sight of such fortitude and courage in the presence of danger still more touching, was the tender sympathy that united all the prisoners, without regard to former differences in social position.

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when Dolores, reassured by her interview with Coursegol, made her appearance in the hall frequented by the inmates of the prison. More than a hundred persons had gathered there. They were now scattered about

in little groups; and the conversation was very animated. Here sat an ancient dowager, delighting some gentlemen with piquant anecdotes of the Court of Louis XV.; there, stood a jovial priest, composing rhymes for the amusement of a half-dozen young girls; at a little distance were several statesmen, earnestly discussing the recent acts of the Convention —all doing their best to kill time, as travellers detained at some wayside inn strive to divert one another, while they wait for the sunshine that will enable them to pursue their journey.

Dolores was not remarked at first among the crowd of prisoners. Each day brought so many new faces there that one more unfortunate excited little comment. But soon this young girl, who seemed to be entirely alone, and who gazed half-timidly, half-curiously, at the scene before her, attracted the attention of several prisoners. A woman, endowed with such rare loveliness of form and feature as Nature had bestowed upon Dolores, cannot long remain unnoticed. Her golden hair lay in soft rings upon her smooth, open brow, and drooped in heavy braids upon her white neck. Her dark brown dress and the little fichu knotted at the waist behind, were very simple in texture and in make; but she wore them with such grace, and there was such an air of elegance and distinction in her bearing, that she soon became an object of general curiosity.

"What! So young, so beautiful, and in prison!" said one.

"Youth and beauty do not soften the hearts of tigers!" another replied.

A murmur of pity was heard as she passed, and some

young men placed themselves in her path in order to obtain a closer look at her. Not until then did she note the sensation she had created. She became embarrassed, and took a step backward as if to retire; but, at that very moment, a lady, still young, in spite of the premature whiteness of her locks, approached her and said:

"Why do you draw back, my child? Do we frighten you?"

"No, madame," replied Dolores; "but I am a stranger, and, finding, myself alone among so many, I thought to retire to my own cell; but I will gladly remain if you will act as my protectress."

"Take my arm, my dear. I will present you to my friends here. I am the Marquise de Beaufort. And you?"

"My name is Dolores. I have neither father nor mother. The Marquis de Chamondrin adopted me; and I was reared in his house as his own daughter."

"The Marquis de Chamondrin? Why! his son Philip ——"

"My adopted brother! You know him, madame?"

"He is one of my friends and often came to my salon —when I had a salon," added the Marquise, smiling.

"Philip emigrated," remarked Dolores, "but unfortunately, he recently returned to France. He, with several other gentlemen, attempted to save the queen. He was with me, yesterday, when we were arrested; he, as an Émigré; I, for giving him shelter."

This short explanation sufficed to awaken the liveliest sympathy among her listeners. She was

immediately surrounded and respectfully entreated to accept certain comforts and delicacies that those who had money were allowed to purchase for themselves. She refused these proffered kindnesses; but remained until evening beside the Marquise de Beaufort, who seemed to take an almost motherly interest in the young girl.

The days that followed were in no way remarkable; but Dolores was deeply affected by scenes which no longer moved her companions. Every evening a man entered, called several persons by name and handed them a folded paper, a badly written and often illegible scrawl in which not even the spelling of the names was correct, and which, consequently, not unfrequently failed to reach the one for whom it was intended. This was an act of accusation. The person who received it was allowed no time to prepare his defence, but was compelled to appear before the Revolutionary Tribunal the following day, and on that day or the next, he was usually led forth to die.

How many innocent persons Dolores saw leave the prison never to return! But the victims, whatever might be their age or sex, displayed the same fortitude, courage and firmness. They met their doom with such proud audacity that those who survived them, but who well knew that the same fate awaited them, in their turn, watched them depart with sad, but not despairing, eyes.

These scenes, of which she was an almost hourly witness, strengthened the soul of Dolores and increased her distaste for life and her scorn of death. Still, she experienced a feeling of profound sorrow when, on the morning of the ninth day of her captivity, she was obliged to bid farewell to the

Marquise de Beaufort, who, in company with the former abbess of the Convent of Bellecombe, in Auvergne, and a venerable priest, had been summoned before the Tribunal. They were absent scarcely three hours; they returned, condemned. Their execution was to take place that same day at sunset. They spent the time that remained, in prayer; and Dolores, kneeling beside them, wept bitterly.

"Do not mourn, my dear child," said the Marquise, tenderly. "I die without regret. There was nothing left me here on earth. I have lost my husband, my son—all who were dear to me. I am going to rejoin them. I could ask no greater happiness."

She spoke thus as she obeyed the call of the executioner, who summoned her and her companions to array themselves for their final journey. When her toilet was completed, she knelt before the aged priest.

"Bless me, my father!" said she.

And the priest, who was to die with her, extended his hands and blessed her. When she rose, her face was radiant. She took Dolores in her arms.

"Farewell, my child;" she said, tenderly. "You are young. I hope you will escape the fury of these misguided wretches. Pray for me!"

And as the prisoners crowded around her with outstretched hands, she cried, cheerfully:

"Au revoir, my friends, au revoir!"

She was led away. Just as she was disappearing from sight, she turned once more and sent Dolores a last supreme farewell in a smile and kiss. Then, in a

clear, strong voice, that rang out like a song of victory, she cried:

"Vive le Roi!"

The very next day Dolores saw two young men led out to die. Their bearing was no less brave than that of the Marquise. They were not royalists. They died accused of Modérantisme, that frightful word with which the revolution sealed the doom of so many of its most devoted children. The Marquise de Beaufort had cried: "Vive le Roi!" They cried:

"Vive la République!"

CHAPTER XII.

ANTOINETTE DE MIRANDOL.

A fortnight had elapsed since Dolores first entered the Conciergerie. In the many trying experiences through which she had been obliged to pass, she had been sustained by the hope of a speedy meeting with Philip. She dare not believe that Coursegol's efforts, or even the order of release which he had obtained through Vauquelas, could save them; but it seemed to her if she could only see her lover once more before she died, she could mount the scaffold without a regret.

One morning, on entering the public hall, she saw Coursegol behind the grating in the corridor. She

hastened to him, and he whispered through the bars that Philip was to be brought to the Conciergerie the next day. Dolores was overcome with joy at this news.

"As soon as M. Philip arrives here," added Coursegol; "we will arrange to make use of the order of release and to remove you from prison."

"Will that be possible?" inquired Dolores.

"Certainly. All prisoners who are set at liberty are released by order of the Committee; and the order given me by Vauquelas is a fac-simile of those always used."

"With this difference, however: the names of those to be released have not yet been inserted," objected Dolores.

"What of that?" exclaimed Coursegol, "I will insert the names myself, and then the order will be in favor of citoyen and citoyenne Chamondrin."

"But if we should succeed in escaping from this prison, Coursegol, where shall we go?"

"To Bridoul's at first, where you will be safe for at least twenty-four hours. From there I shall conduct you to a cottage in the Forest of Chévreuse, some little distance from Versailles. The place is almost a wilderness; no one will ever think of looking for us there."

Coursegol's words made a deep impression upon the girl's mind. After resigning herself to an eternal separation from the object of her love; after trampling her own heart and all her hopes of happiness under foot, and just as her peace, her

future, her very life itself seemed irretrievably lost, hope sprang up from the ruins like some gorgeous flower and unfolded its brilliant petals one by one before her wondering and enraptured eyes.

"And Antoinette?" some one asks, "Had Dolores forgotten Antoinette's right to Philip's devotion?" No; the reader knows how heroically Dolores had sacrificed her happiness for her friend's sake, and how earnestly she had endeavored to compel Philip to fulfil his father's wishes; but when Philip met her at the house of Vauquelas after their long separation, he made no allusion to the recent promise which bound him more closely than ever to Mlle. de Mirandol; and, knowing that Dolores was aware of the engagement which had formerly existed between himself and Antoinette, he did his best to make that bond appear of a trivial nature in order to induce her to listen to his suit with favor. So he had merely told Dolores that he did not love Antoinette, that he could never love Antoinette, that it was she, Dolores, whom he passionately adored and whom he was resolved to make his wife. If we remember the influence such words as these could not fail to exercise over the mind of Dolores, and the influence exerted by the peculiar circumstances of their meeting, and by the perils that surrounded them; if we recollect, too, that Antoinette was far away and presumably beyond the reach of danger or of want, it is easy to understand how they came to forget everything but their own happiness, and to regard their marriage—until now deemed an impossibility—as a most natural and proper thing.

It was in this condition of mind that Dolores listened to Coursegol's description of the little house in the Chévreuse valley, in which they were to take refuge;

but the vision of happiness conjured up by his words was rudely dispelled by a sudden commotion around her which recalled her to the grim reality of the dangers that still threatened her on every side. The jailer was reading the names of the prisoners who were to appear before the Revolutionary Tribunal the next day.

That evening, when Dolores re-entered her cell, eagerly longing for the morrow which would bring Philip once more to her side, she was followed by Aubry, who was carrying a small iron bedstead which he placed near the one occupied by Dolores.

"What are you doing?" inquired the young girl.

"I am placing a bed here for the companion I shall be compelled to give you to-morrow, citoyenne. I have resorted to every sort of stratagem to gratify your desire to be alone, but now there is no help for it. We are expecting a party of prisoners from La Vendée. There are several women among them; and some place must be found for them, although the prison is filled to overflowing. While you were down-stairs the inspector came here and ordered me to put another prisoner in this cell. It is annoying, but, never mind; when the new-comers arrive I will choose your room-mate, and you will be pleased with her."

This intelligence was exceedingly unwelcome to Dolores, but the hope of seeing Philip the next day greatly mitigated her regret. She had just left her bed the next morning, when she heard footsteps in the corridor. She hastily completed her toilet, and had hardly done so when the key turned in the lock. The door opened and Aubry entered. He was not alone; but Dolores could not distinguish the features of the lady who accompanied him, on account of the dim

light and the thick veil that shrouded her face.

"Here is your companion," Aubry whispered to Dolores. "I hope you will be pleased with my selection. Poor little thing, she seems worn out and terribly dejected."

The stranger, without lifting her veil, had seated herself upon her bed in an attitude which indicated intense fatigue or despondency. Aubry gave her a few directions to which she listened abstractedly, without replying or even looking at the jailer, who then withdrew. Dolores, after a moment, approached the stranger and said:

"Since we are to be together for a time more or less long, shall we not be friends?"

At the sound of the girl's voice, the stranger trembled; then she rose and looked Dolores full in the face with a strange intentness.

"Shall we not be friends!" she repeated. "Dolores, do you not know me?"

It was Dolores' turn to tremble. She clasped her hands, uttered a cry of astonishment in which one could detect both consternation and joy; then, springing forward, she hastily lifted the veil which hid the face of the speaker.

"Antoinette! Antoinette!"

"Dolores, you here!"

They were again in each other's arms after four long years of separation, kissing each other, questioning each other, smiling and weeping by turns.

"Tell me about yourself!" cried Antoinette.

"All in good time, my dearest," replied Dolores. "First, lie down and rest. You look weary and are pale with fatigue."

"I was travelling all night!"

Dolores helped her remove her damp clothing and made her lie down upon her own bed; then she left her a moment to ask Aubry to bring a cup of coffee to her weary friend. That worthy man exhibited his accustomed zeal, and soon the two young-girls, one reclining on her couch, the other seated by her bedside were talking of the past. But their conversation had hardly begun when Antoinette inquired:

"Have you seen Philip?"

A slight pallor overspread the cheeks of Dolores, but the next instant she responded, calmly:

"I have seen Philip. He, too, has been arrested, and he will be brought here to-day."

Antoinette was eager to know the circumstances of Philip's arrest. Dolores related them, and to do so she was obliged to give her companion some account of her own life since she left the Château de Chamondrin four years before. Antoinette was affected to tears by the story of her friend's misfortunes. She interrupted her again and again to pity and caress her, and Dolores could not summon up courage to speak of her love for Philip, or of what had passed between them.

Then, it was Antoinette's turn to speak of herself and of her own past; and she soon revealed the fact that

Philip had solemnly plighted his troth to her at last. She also told her friend that she could not endure her life in England, separated from him, and that anxiety for his safety had induced her to leave the Reed mansion by stealth and come to France in quest of him.

In London, she had sought the protection of the Chevalier de Millemont, an aged nobleman, and Philip's devoted friend. That gentleman, after vainly attempting to dissuade her, at last consented to make such arrangements as would enable her to reach France in safety. It was through his efforts that Antoinette was allowed to take passage in a small vessel that was sent to bear a message from the princes to La Vendée. On reaching the coast of Brittany where the vessel landed, she and her travelling companions parted. She was eager to reach Paris, but found that the journey would be no easy task. She finally succeeded in finding a man who agreed to take her as far as Nantes in his carriage. He procured two passports, one for his own use, and in which he figured as a grain merchant; the other for Antoinette, who was represented to be his daughter. Unfortunately, they stopped for refreshments at a small village near Nantes; and Antoinette's unmistakable air of distinction and the whiteness of her hands led people to suspect that she was not the child of a petty village merchant. The man discovered this; his fears were aroused, and while Antoinette was sitting in the parlor of the inn, he harnessed his horses and drove off at full speed. This cowardly desertion filled the girl with dismay. On finding herself alone, she could not conceal her disquietude, and this increased the suspicions that had already been aroused. The inn-keeper, who was a zealous patriot, compelled her to go with him to

the district Commissioner. Her presence of mind deserted her; and her incoherent replies and her reticence caused her arrest. The Commissioner intended to send her to Nantes; but she begged so hard to be sent to Paris, instead, that he finally granted her request. That same evening a party of prisoners from La Vendée passed through the village; and Antoinette was entrusted to the care of the officer in charge of them. After a long and painful journey, she at last reached Paris, where the Conciergerie opened to receive her.

Such was the story she related to Dolores. The latter listened to it in silence. When it was ended, she said to her friend:

"Now you must sleep and regain your strength. Have no fears, I will watch over you."

"If I could only see Philip!" sighed Antoinette.

"You shall see him; I promise you that."

Antoinette submissively closed her eyes and soon fell asleep. Dolores sat motionless, her thoughts busy with what she had just heard. In all this narrative she had clearly understood only two things: first, that it was the hope of discovering and saving Philip, whom she still passionately loved, that had induced Mlle. de Mirandol to make this journey which had terminated so disastrously, and secondly, that Philip only a few weeks before had solemnly renewed an engagement which he had concealed from her.

"What shall I do?" asked the poor girl, as she remembered with a breaking heart her blissful dreams of the evening before.

Her own great love stood face to face with that of

Antoinette. Which should be sacrificed? Antoinette's most assuredly, since Philip loved Dolores. But she dare not contemplate such a solution of the problem.

"What!" she thought; "after the Marquis de Chamondrin has reared me as his own child, I repay his kindness by encouraging his son to disobey his last wishes? No, no! It is impossible! He made him promise to marry Antoinette; and Philip did promise, first his father and afterwards Antoinette. What does it matter if he does love me! When he no longer sees me, he will forget me! Antoinette will again become dear to him. They will be happy. What am I, that I should destroy the plans that were so dear to the heart of my benefactor? Have I not made one sacrifice, and can I not make another? Come, Dolores, be brave, be strong! If you wed Philip, Antoinette will be miserable. Her disappointment would break her heart; and all your life long, the phantom form of the dear sister whose happiness you had wrecked would stand between your husband and yourself. She is innocent; she does not even know that I love Philip. I have never admitted it to her; I have always concealed the truth. She will be happy; she will feel no remorse, and she will cause peace, resignation and love to descend with healing wings upon the heart of him she so fondly loves."

Never was there a nobler example of self-denial and renunciation. She had only to utter a single word and Philip was hers forever; but if she must pain Antoinette's tender heart, and fail in respect to her benefactor in order to win happiness, she would have none of it. Such were her reflections as she watched over her sleeping friend.

"Ah!" she murmured, as she sadly gazed upon her; "why did you not remain in England? Why did you come here? You little know how much misery you have caused me!"

One cannot wonder that a rebellious cry rose from her tortured heart; but the cry did not escape her lips. It was stifled in her inmost soul with the hopes she had just relinquished forever. Suddenly the door opened, and the jailer entered. It was now about ten o'clock in the morning.

"There is a prisoner below who has just arrived, and who wishes to see you, citoyenne."

"It is he!" thought Dolores, turning pale at the thought of meeting Philip again.

Nevertheless, she armed herself with courage, and went down-stairs with a firm step to welcome Philip. He was awaiting her with feverish impatience. On seeing her, he uttered a cry of joy and sprang forward, crying:

"Dolores, Dolores, at last we meet never again to part!"

"Never?" she asked, faintly.

"Do you not remember my words? If God, who has united us once more, after a long and cruel separation, saves us from the dangers that threaten us with destruction, shall you not believe that he smiles upon our love? Ah, well! thanks to Coursegol, we shall succeed in making our escape from this place. We shall soon be free!"

"And what is to be Antoinette's fate?'

"Antoinette?"

Dolores looked him full in the eyes and said, with all the firmness she could command:

"You left Antoinette in England, Philip, promising to marry her on your return. She is now in France, in Paris, in this prison. She comes to claim the fulfilment of your promise."

While Dolores was speaking, Philip's face underwent an entire change, so great was the surprise and emotion caused by this intelligence. When she had finished, he could make no response; he could only lean against the wall of the prison, speechless and motionless.

CHAPTER XIII.

LOVE'S CONFLICTS.

What Philip had just heard filled his heart with grief and consternation. How had Antoinette succeeded in reaching Paris? What had been her object in coming? Dolores repeated the story exactly as Antoinette had told it. When it was ended she simply added:

"Philip, why did you not tell me of the engagement that existed between you? What! you left Antoinette scarcely six weeks ago—left her, promising to marry her on your return, and now you entreat me to be your wife!"

Philip hastily interrupted her.

"Ah, Dolores, do not reproach me. I have been neither false nor treacherous. There has been a terrible, a fatal mistake. Yes, separated from you, convinced that I should never see you again—that you were dead or forever lost to me, I made Antoinette the same promise I made my father four years ago, when I believed you consecrated to God; but when I found you once more, you whom I adore, how could I forget that you first—that you alone, possessed my heart? Even as a child, I loved you as one loves a wife, not as one loves a sister; and this passion has grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength, until it has become the ruling power of my life."

"Alas!" murmured Dolores.

"And when a thrice-blessed change has brought us together once more, now that I can at last cover your dear hands with kisses, and feast my hungry eyes upon your beauty, you would forbid me in the name of Antoinette to tell you what has been in my heart so many years? No, Dolores, no. You are strong, I know. You possess sufficient energy and determination to conquer yourself and to remain apparently cold and unmoved while your heart is writhing in anguish; but I have no such fortitude. I cannot hide my suffering; I love you, I must tell you so."

As he spoke, Philip became more and more agitated. Tears gathered in his eyes and his features worked convulsively.

"Do you not see," he resumed, after a short silence, "that the scruples which led us to conceal the truth were the causes of all our misery? If, hand in hand, we had knelt before him and said: 'Father, we love

each other, give us your blessing,' he would have been content."

"You are mistaken, Philip. Just before I left for the convent, I told the Marquis with my own lips of your love for me, and he did not bid me stay."

Philip stood as if stupefied.

"My father knew—"

"Yes."

"And yet, on his deathbed, he compelled me to promise that I would marry Antoinette!"

"He thought you would forget me."

"Can those who truly love ever forget?" cried Philip. "But what is to be done?" he asked.

Dolores made no response. She stood before him with eyes downcast that he might not see the conflict which was raging in her soul. Philip took advantage of her hesitation to plead his cause anew.

"Listen, Dolores; it is not right that we should all sacrifice ourselves to my father's ambition; and if I wed Antoinette, still loving you, I cannot make her happy. Besides, what would become of you?"

"But if I listen to you, what will become of Antoinette?"

"She will forget. She loves me because she met me before she met any other young man, before she had seen the world; but she will soon forget me. After a few tears that cannot compare in bitterness with those that I have shed, and with those I shall shed, if I am compelled to give you up, she will bestow her

love elsewhere."

"Do not wrong her, Philip. For four long years she has considered herself your wife in the sight of God, and now you would leave her to mourn your infidelity!"

"My infidelity!"

"Yes, Philip, for you have plighted your troth to her. You have made no promise to me."

"And you?"

"I have promised nothing."

"But your silence the other evening when I entreated you to grant my suit—was not your silence then an avowal?"

"You misunderstood me!" replied Dolores, courageously.

The girl could endure no more; her strength was exhausted; but her decision was made, and her sole aim now was to assure Antoinette's happiness by compelling Philip to marry her. She said, gently:

"Coursegol must bring the order of release by the aid of which you and I were to leave the prison. It will be of service when we plan Antoinette's escape."

Philip uttered an exclamation of remonstrance. She pretended not to hear it and continued:

"You will go with her. When you are once outside these walls, thanks to Coursegol, it will be easy for you to reach a place of safety. I do not ask you to marry Antoinette as soon as you have left me; but when time has calmed the fever that is now raging in

your heart, and peace has descended upon your troubled soul, you will bravely fulfil the promise you have made, as befits an honest man. This is my request."

Philip shook his head.

"What is to be your fate?" he inquired.

"If I ever leave this prison, or rather, if I escape the guillotine, I shall go to some foreign land and there, resuming the vocation to which I have consecrated myself, I shall pass the remainder of my life in a convent where I shall pray for you. But I shall not take the vows of eternal seclusion from the world; and if, some day, you feel strong enough to endure my presence without danger to your peace of mind, I will see you again, Philip, and give your children a second mother by the renewal of my friendship with Antoinette."

"I refuse to obey you! No; I will not marry Antoinette, and since you would compel me to do so, she shall decide what course I ought to pursue. I will tell her all; I will tell her that we love each other, that we have always loved each other."

"Hush!" said Dolores, beseechingly; "she must never know—you have no right to reveal a secret that is as much mine as it is yours."

Their conversation had lasted some time. The yard and the hall that opened into it were beginning to fill with the inmates of the prison. They came down from their cells by no means certain that evening would find them still alive; and yet this uncertainty did not mar the serenity of their features or of their minds. Several, on passing Philip and Dolores, looked

at them with evident curiosity, as if anxious to know the theme of such an animated conversation.

"I must return to Antoinette," said Dolores. "I will bring her down with me, and I entreat you, in the name of your love, to say nothing that will cause her pain. There is no haste. We are in prison, and, in spite of Coursegol's efforts, none of us may succeed in making our escape. An act of accusation may fall upon one of us, if not upon all three of us, at any moment. What the future has in store for us we do not know, but let us not embitter the present by reproaches and differences. Let us live here, as we lived at Chamondrin, in perfect harmony, encouraging and sustaining one another in our misfortunes, so we can endure them cheerfully, and wait with patience until time shall solve this difficulty for us."

"What energy you possess!" replied Philip, gladly accepting this proposal, since it gave him a gleam of hope.

Dolores left him to go to Antoinette, and Philip mingled with the other prisoners, among whom he found many noblemen and titled ladies whose acquaintance he had made at court and at the house of the Duke de Penthieore. Antoinette was just waking when Dolores returned to the cell they shared in common, and she did not notice the emotion that was still visible on her friend's face. She smiled, extended her hand and kissed her.

"Philip?" she asked.

This was the first word she uttered.

"Philip has come. I have seen him; he is waiting for

you below."

This news made Antoinette spring hastily to her feet; and arm in arm the two girls went down to join Philip. Dolores felt Antoinette's heart throb violently, so deeply was she moved by the thought of seeing him whom she regarded as her betrothed. She flew to his arms with such artless delight that he was really touched with remorse when he remembered that, only a moment before, he had almost hated this lovely young girl whose only fault was her love for him.

"Poor child," he said, almost tenderly, "why did you not remain in England? Why did you expose yourself to such danger?"

"Was it not my duty to come to you that I might die with you? When, after vainly waiting a fortnight for news of you, I heard of the death of the queen, I said to myself that, in your fruitless efforts to save her, you must have incurred great peril, and that you had probably been arrested. You see that I was not mistaken. So I started to find you, and I deem myself fortunate to be with you once more."

This response, which Dolores heard distinctly, was only another proof of the promises Philip had made to Antoinette. These promises, consecrated as they had been by the blessing of the Abbé Peretty, beside the deathbed of the Marquis de Chamondrin, seemed of so sacred a nature in the eyes of Antoinette that she really felt it her duty to treat Philip as if their marriage was an accomplished fact.

Dolores glanced at Philip; her look seemed to say:

"Would you dare to tell her that you do not love her?

No; think only of making yourself worthy of her, and of assuring the happiness to which she is justly entitled."

Philip was greatly embarrassed. Antoinette seemed to expect that he would greet her arrival with some word expressive of joy or of love; but, in spite of his efforts, he could not utter a word. The presence of Dolores from whom he could no longer conceal the truth, intimidated him and rendered him mute. Some minutes passed thus. The prisoners were passing and repassing. Those who had been surprised by the arrival of Philip a short time before, were now wondering who this young girl, for whom Dolores evinced all a sister's tenderness, could be.

We have already said that each of the prisons which had been crowded with victims by the Reign of Terror was a faithful reproduction of the aristocratic society of Paris, now decimated by death and by exile, but which was famous for its intrigues, its wit, its indiscretions, its luxury and its gallantries. Behind the prison bars the ladies still remained grandes dames; the men, courtiers: and neither sex had lost any of its interest in small events as well as great. On the contrary, the monotony of prison life and the desire to kill time intensified this interest so natural to the French mind. An incident of trifling importance furnished them with a topic of conversation for hours. The new dress in which the duchess had appeared, the pleasure with which the marquise seemed to receive the attentions of the chevalier, interested this little world, which had not been cured of its frivolity by its misfortunes, as much as the heroism which the last person condemned had displayed on ascending the scaffold.

This serves to explain how and why a general curiosity was awakened by the appearance of Antoinette de Mirandol. A few moments before, they had noticed the Marquis de Chamondrin engaged in animated conversation with Dolores. The malicious scented an intrigue; the ladies undertook the defence of Dolores; the old people remembered that she had been educated with Philip, and thought it quite natural that they should have much to say to each other after a long separation; but when Dolores, after absenting herself a few moments, returned with a charming young girl upon her arm, a stranger, whom she led straight to Philip, every one was eager to know the name of the new-comer. They watched the group with evident curiosity, as if trying to divine what was passing; they commented on the emotion betrayed in Philip's face, and the acquaintances of Dolores were anxiously waiting for an opportunity to question her.

"I think we are creating quite a sensation," Dolores said, at last, in a low tone and with a smile.

Philip turned, and seeing they were the subject of universal comment, and desiring an opportunity to collect his scattered thoughts, he said:

"We will meet again presently."

Then, without another word, he left them.

Dolores looked at Antoinette. She was very pale, and she trembled violently. Dolores led her gently back to the cell which they occupied in common. When Antoinette found herself again alone with her friend she made no attempt to restrain her tears.

"He did not even answer me," she sobbed. "My arrival

seemed to cause him sorrow rather than joy."

"It is because he loves you and it makes him wretched to see you threatened by the same dangers that surround us," replied Dolores, striving to console her.

"Does he love me? I am quite sure, had I been in his place, that I should have awaited his coming with impatience and greeted him with joy. I should have seen in it only a proof of love, and I should have forgotten the dangers he had incurred in the rapture of meeting. When two persons love, there is no sorrow so great as to be separated by death. The one who survives can but be wretched for the rest of his life; and the kindest and most generous wish the departing soul can frame is that the loved one left behind, may soon follow."

Dolores made no reply. She understood the deep despondency which had taken possession of Antoinette's mind. Her own sorrow was no less poignant, but it was mitigated by a feeling of serenity and resignation, which was constantly gaining strength now that what has just passed had convinced her of the necessity of her sacrifice; and, from that moment, there reigned in the heart of Dolores, a boundless self-abnegation, a constant desire to insure the happiness of her friend by the surrender of her own. The remainder of the day passed uneventfully. Dolores and Antoinette made only one more visit to the hall below, and then Philip avoided them.

"He is suffering," said Antoinette. "What troubles him?"

She could learn this only by learning, at the same

time, that Philip was not only indifferent to her, but that his love was given to Dolores. The latter, faithful to her vow, carefully concealed Philip's secret from her friend. That evening, before they retired, the two girls talked long and sadly of the past. They lived over again the happy hours they had spent together; and when, overcome with weariness, sleep at last overtook them, they fancied themselves once more in the Château de Chamondrin. Dolores was listening to the Marquis, as he divulged the hopes he had centred on Philip, and planned a noble and wealthy alliance which would restore the glory of his name. But Antoinette's thoughts had taken a different course. When she awoke in the morning, her mind reverted to the days which had immediately followed her arrival at the château five years before—the days when love suddenly sprang up and blossomed in her soul. Then, she recalled a morning when Philip requested an interview with her. She believed herself beloved, and stole to the trysting-place in a transport of unspeakable joy. What consternation filled her heart when Philip told her of his love for Dolores, and entreated her to plead his cause! The painful impression produced by this scene gradually faded after Dolores left the château to enter the convent at Avignon, and when Antoinette saw Philip becoming, each day, more and more favorably disposed toward herself; but now this impression returned again even more strongly and vividly than before, and awakened fresh sorrow and despair in the poor girl's soul. Philip's desire to postpone their marriage and his failure to keep his promises were now explained. The cold reception he had accorded her enlightened the poor child as to the real sentiments of the man whom she only yesterday regarded as her husband. She found herself in the same position she had occupied

years before; the same danger threatened her happiness with destruction—Philip loved Dolores. When the revelation burst upon her, she could not repress a moan, and burying her face in her pillow, she sobbed and wept unheard by Dolores, who was sleeping peacefully only a few feet from her. All the pangs of anguish that had tortured her five years before now returned; and her suffering was even more poignant, for her love had increased and her hopes had grown stronger. Her first outbreak of despair was followed by a season of calmness which enabled her to decide upon her future course; and, after fighting against her doubts and fears for a long time, she finally concluded to go to Dolores and ascertain the extent of her misfortune from this faithful friend. The first gray light of morning was stealing into the gloomy cell when Antoinette arrived at this conclusion, and the next moment she was up and dressed. She approached the bed upon which Dolores was lying, still asleep. Antoinette seated herself at the foot of the bed and waited. It was her pale face and eyes swimming with tears that first met her companion's gaze when she awoke.

"You have been weeping, Antoinette?" she exclaimed with tender solicitude.

"Yes; I have passed a miserable night."

"Why? How?"

"Philip's indifference has wounded me to the heart!"

"Do not grieve about that, my dearest. What you think indifference, is perhaps, an excess of tenderness. Philip regrets that you did not remain in England. The terrible position in which you are placed grieves and, at the same time, irritates him."

She thus endeavored to quiet Antoinette's suspicions, but the latter could no longer be deceived. She heard her to the end; then she asked.

"Are you sure that these are really Philip's sentiments? Is it not more probable that there is another love in his heart?"

"Another love!" repeated Dolores, frightened by these words; "do not believe it. Philip is your betrothed husband; he knows it. He is as conscious of his present as of his future duties; and he loves you only."

"You are wrong, Dolores. It is you he loves!"

"Loves me! Who has told you this?"

"So it is true! Ah! I was sure of it," murmured Antoinette. "He has met you again after a separation of four years, and I am forgotten."

Dolores rose, took her friend in her arms as if she were a child, and said gently:

"Be comforted, I entreat you. Your imagination deceives you and leads you far from the truth. It is possible that Philip, on meeting me again, was moved by some of the emotions that are often awakened in the heart by memories of the past; but these emotions are fleeting and do not endanger your happiness. If Philip once cherished fancies that troubled your peace, you know that my departure sufficed to cure him of them; and should these foolish fancies revive, my departure will again suffice to dispel them and to restore to you the heart to which you, and you alone, have an inalienable claim."

These words reassured Antoinette. She ceased to weep, and her whole heart seemed to go out in gratitude to Dolores. The latter continued:

"If God wills that we recover our freedom, you shall depart with Philip. As for me, I shall take refuge in some convent in a foreign land. My place is there, and I solemnly assure you that I shall never marry."

"Ah! how I thank you!" cried Antoinette. "You have restored my happiness and my peace of mind."

Love is selfish, and Antoinette knew nothing of Dolores' struggles. She did not attempt to fathom the motives of her friend, and relieved by the assurance she had just received, and no longer doubting her ability to regain her lost influence over Philip, she passed suddenly from the poignant suffering we have described to a state of peaceful security.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE THUNDERBOLT.

Three days passed, leaving the situation of affairs unchanged. Antoinette and Dolores saw Philip but seldom, though they were living under the same roof, so persistently did he avoid them. If he chanced to enter the hall when they were there, he took refuge with some of the groups of gentlemen, where the two girls would not be likely to approach him

unless they had something of great importance to communicate to their ungracious friend.

What Philip utterly lacked, after the events recounted in the last chapter, was resignation. He felt, that Dolores was irrevocably lost to him, and that even if she left the prison alive, she would instantly place an impassable barrier between them; but though he was convinced of this, he could not make up his mind to submit to a decision that destroyed all his hopes of happiness; so he hoped and despaired by turns, sometimes assuring himself that he could find words sufficiently eloquent to move Dolores, sometimes admitting with a sort of desperation that nothing could shake the firmness of the young girl who had resolved to sacrifice her happiness for the sake of duty.

Antoinette and Dolores respected his sadness and his evident desire for solitude. They spent most of their time together in their own little room, happy in being again united, and bearing the trials that beset them on every side with wonderful fortitude. Each evening found them astonished that they had not been summoned before the Revolutionary Tribunal; and each evening they said, not without anguish:

"The summons will come, perhaps, to-morrow."

The fourth day after Philip's arrival at the Conciergerie, Aubry, the jailer, who had shown Dolores so much kindness and attention, obtained leave of absence for the day, and engaged Coursegol to take his place. Once before he had made a similar arrangement, and Coursegol had thus been able to spend almost an entire day with Dolores.

His anxiety to see her now, was increased by his

desire to fix upon a plan whereby he could rescue her and also Philip from the danger that threatened them. He brought with him the order in which he had inserted their names, and which would set "Citoyen and Citoyenne Chamondrin" at liberty. He was not aware of Antoinette's arrest, and when he entered the cell and saw Mlle. de Mirandol, he uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"You here, mademoiselle!" he cried.

"Yes, I have been here three days."

"But the order releases only two persons!" he exclaimed, sorrowfully.

Antoinette did not understand him; she had heard nothing about the order to which he alluded; but Dolores quickly approached Coursegol and said, hurriedly, in a low voice:

"Not another word. Give me the order. When the proper time comes, it shall be used by those who have the best right to it."

Coursegol reluctantly obeyed. He was convinced that Dolores would concentrate all her efforts upon the deliverance of Philip and Antoinette; and he almost hated the latter who, for the second time, imperiled the life and happiness of one so dear to him.

"Before, it was her presence in the château that prevented the marriage of my dear Dolores to the man she loved; to-day, after I have worked so hard to secure their liberty and the realization of their hopes, it is she who destroys all my plans," he thought. Perhaps he would have given vent to his feelings had not Dolores, who seemed to read what was passing in

his mind, made an imperative sign; so he withdrew and went to join Philip, and to tell him that the order was in the hands of Dolores.

"It will not be used," said Philip, sadly. "If it would open the prison doors for two women, I could induce them to go; but since I must go out with one of them, and as neither will consent to save her life at the cost of the other's, we shall all remain."

"Then all my efforts will be lost," cried Coursegol, despairingly; "and I shall be compelled to see you perish after I have accomplished miracles in order to save you."

And tears of anger and disappointment sprang to his eyes.

Philip calmed him by explaining how impossible it would be for two to avail themselves of an opportunity to escape and abandon their friend to her fate. If one was forsaken by the others, eternal remorse would be the portion of those who deserted her; hence, they must make their escape together or await the dénouement.

Coursegol promised to do his best to obtain an order which could be used by three persons; and he left the prison towards evening, telling his friends that he would see them again in a few days and even sooner, if possible.

While he was there, Antoinette, Dolores, and Philip had repaired, as if by common consent, to the main hall; and when he had gone, the three young people found themselves together.

"Shall we still persist in shunning one another?" Antoinette asked Philip.

"No, no," he replied, touched by the tender sorrow in her voice; "let us be together while we can; then, should death be our portion, we shall not be obliged to regret that we have not consecrated to friendship the few moments left at our disposal."

"That is well, Philip," rejoined Dolores, and as she could say no more in Antoinette's presence without revealing the secret she wished to conceal, she extended her hand to her friend as if in approval of his decision.

They remained together until the usual signal warned the prisoners that they must retire to their cells and extinguish their lights; but no allusion was made to the order of release. Philip and Dolores seemed to have tacitly agreed to conceal from Antoinette the fact that her unforeseen arrival had prevented their immediate restoration to liberty.

The next morning Dolores went down to the public hall, and there held a long conversation with Philip.

"Since God has united us here," she said to him; "let us enjoy the time he has given us, and allow no differences to creep in between us and destroy the peace and harmony that are our only consolation. I do not wish to know your feelings, whatever they may be. You must constantly bear in mind these two things, Philip—that I can never, never be your wife, and that you owe Antoinette reparation. This is the duty that life imposes upon you. So accept your destiny, and no longer pain us by the sight of your despondency. It only renders me miserable and it can change nothing."

Philip listened with bowed head to these firm words.

He said to himself:

"She is right. Why should we concern ourselves about the future, since the present allows me to remain by her side? We are ever on the threshold of the grave, here. Alas! we must escape from the shadow of death that is hanging over us before we make any plans for the future."

But he was touched, and while he mentally resolved to keep his love and his hopes a secret in his own heart, he bowed over the hand of Dolores, and raising it to his lips, said:

"You speak wisely, my sister. I will be worthy of you."

This day was the first that passed happily for the three whose life-history we are attempting to relate. Unfortunately, this long-sought happiness was to endure but for a day. The very next afternoon after the just described, all the prisoners were assembled in the main hall. It was the last of December, and night comes quickly in winter. It was only four o'clock, and already the gathering twilight warned the prisoners that the hour for returning to their cells was fast approaching.

Suddenly there was a movement in the crowd. The prisoners nearest the door pushed against those who were further away, and soon they found themselves ranged along the wall, while a large vacant space was left in the centre of the room.

A man had just entered. He was attired in black, and he wore a large red cockade on his hat. In his hand he held a roll of papers. Four soldiers accompanied him. It was easy to recognize in this personage a

clerk of the Revolutionary Tribunal; and it was his duty as an officer of that body, to visit the prisons and read the names of those condemned to death and of those who were summoned to appear before the Tribunal to answer the charges against them. Like an avenging spirit, he appeared every day at the same hour, rigid, inflexible, cruel, deaf to supplications and tears, a grim avant-courier of the executioner, selecting his victims and marking them for death.

Accustomed as they were to see him, his appearance among the prisoners always caused a thrill of horror. There was so much youth, beauty, innocence, grace, and devotion there! Why should they be doomed? They were enemies to whom? To what projects were they an obstacle? Useless questions! It is because Robespierre laid his merciless hand upon the good, upon the weak and upon the timid that his name will be eternally held in execration by all generous hearts.

When this official entered, Antoinette and Philip, who were as yet unversed in the customs of the prison, were pushed back by the crowd into the yard, without understanding why. Dolores, who knew what was to come, remained in the hall and chanced to be in the foremost row.

The clerk came forward, unrolled a long list and began to read in a loud voice the names of all who were to appear before the Tribunal the following day. What a strange medley of names! Names of plebeians and of nobles; of nuns and of priests; of royalists and of republicans; of old men and of children; of men and of women; it was all the same, provided the guillotine was not compelled to wait for its prey.

Each time a prisoner's name was called a murmur, more or less prolonged according as the rank, the age or the sex of the victim inspired more or less sympathy or pity, ran through the crowd. Then, the person named came forward and received from the hands of the official a paper, enumerating the real or imaginary crimes with which he was charged and ordering him to appear before his judges the following day. If his father, his wife or his children were in prison with him, the air was filled with tears and lamentations.

One could hear such words as these:

"If they had but taken me!"

"Would I could die in your stead!"

These heart-breaking scenes began even before the departure of the officer, and generally lasted the entire night until the hour of final adieu; but if the prisoner designated was alone and without family, he came forward with a firm step, stoically accepted his sentence of death, and hummed a lively air as he returned to the crowd where a dozen unknown, but friendly, hands were extended as if to encourage and strengthen him.

Dolores had been a sympathetic witness of many such scenes, and that evening she was neither more nor less moved than on previous occasions. The eyes and the heart soon become accustomed to anything. But suddenly she trembled. Those near her saw her totter and turn pale. She had just heard the officer call the name of Antoinette de Mirandol. She glanced around her but did not see her friend. Antoinette was with Philip, outside the door. She did not reply to

her name. The clerk repeated it in a still louder voice.

"Antoinette de Mirandol," he repeated a third time.

Dolores stepped forward.

"Here I am," said she. "Pardon me, I did not hear at first."

"Are you Citoyenne Mirandol?"

"The same."

This generous response, twice repeated, caused a murmur of admiration, surprise and consternation among those who knew Dolores. She did not hear it, but her eyes glowed with heroic resolve as, with a firm hand, she took the act of accusation extended to her, and slowly returned to her place.

The name of Antoinette to which she had just responded was the last upon the sad list.

"All whose names I have called will be tried to-morrow morning at ten o'clock."

With these words, the messenger of the Tribunal withdrew. Then came a sigh of relief from those who had not been summoned.

The friends of Dolores assembled around her.

"Unfortunate child, what have you done?" asked one.

"Are you, then, so anxious to die?"

"Why did you go forward when it was not your name that he called?"

She glanced calmly at her questioners; then, in a

voice in which entreaty was mingled with the energy that denotes an immutable resolve, she said:

"I beg that no one will interfere in this matter, or make me unhappy by endeavoring to persuade me to reconsider my decision. Above all, I earnestly entreat you to keep my secret."

No one made any response. The wish she had expressed was equivalent to a command; and as such, deeds of heroism were not uncommon, the one which she had performed so bravely, and which would cost her her life, was forgotten in a few moments by her companions in misfortune, who were naturally absorbed in the question as to when their own turn was to come.

Dolores passed through the little group that had gathered around her, each person stepping aside with a grave bow to make way for her, and rejoined Antoinette and Philip, who knew nothing of what had taken place. When she appeared before them no trace of emotion was visible upon her face, and she had concealed the fated paper beneath the fichu that covered her bosom. She chatted cheerfully with her friends until the sound of the drum warned the prisoners that they must retire to their cells. Then, she smilingly extended her hand to Philip.

"Good-night!" she said, simply.

And taking Antoinette's arm in hers, she led her back to the cell they occupied in common. Antoinette entered first, leaving Dolores alone an instant in the main corridor. The latter turned and swiftly retraced her steps. She was seeking Aubry, the jailer. She soon met him. He, too, was ignorant of all that had occurred.

"Where are you going?" he inquired, in a half-good-natured, half-grumbling tone.

"I was looking for you," Dolores replied. "I must send a message to Coursegol this very night."

"I am not sure that I can get permission to leave the prison."

"You must," she eagerly rejoined. "It is absolutely necessary that I see Coursegol to-morrow morning at nine o'clock. If he comes later, he will not find me here."

And as Aubry looked at her in astonishment, she added:

"I am to appear to-morrow before the Tribunal."

"You! I hoped they had forgotten you."

"Hush! not a word to any one, above all, to the young girl who shares my cell. If you have any regard for me, give my message to Coursegol. You will do a good deed for which you shall be rewarded."

She left the kind-hearted jailer without another word, and hastened back to the cell where Antoinette was awaiting her.

Dolores passed the night in a profound and peaceful slumber and awoke with a heart overflowing with pure and holy joy at the thought that she was about to heroically crown a life devoted to duty and to abnegation. She did not underrate the sacrifice she was to make; but she knew that the death would not be without moral grandeur, and even while she comprehended that she had exceeded the limit of the obligations which duty imposed upon her, she felt no

agitation, no regret.

She rose early and arrayed herself with more than usual care. The dress she selected was of gray cashmere. Her shoulders were covered with a silk fichu of the same color, knotted behind at the waist. Upon her head she wore one of the tall, plumed felt hats in fashion at the time, and from which her golden hair descended in heavy braids upon her white neck. Never had she been more beautiful. The light of immortality seemed to beam in her lovely face; and the serenity of her heart, the enthusiasm that inspired her and the fervor of her religious faith imparted an inexpressible charm to her features. When her toilet was completed, she knelt, and for an hour her soul ascended in fervent aspiration to the God in whom she had placed her trust. Her heart was deeply touched: but there were no tears in her eyes.

"Death," she thought, "is only a journey to a better life. In the unknown world to which my soul will take flight, I shall rejoin those whom I love and who have gone before: the Marquis, whose benevolence sheltered me from misery and want; his wife, who lavished all a mother's tenderness upon me; my mother, herself, who died soon after giving me birth. For those I leave behind me I shall wait on high, watching over them, and praying for their peace and happiness."

These consoling thoughts crowded in upon her as if to strengthen her in her last moments by hopes which render the weakest natures strong and indomitable, even before the most frightful suffering. She rose calm and tranquil, and approached Antoinette's bedside. She was sleeping soundly. Dolores looked at her a moment with loving, pitying

eyes.

"May my death assure your happiness," she murmured, softly; "and may Philip love you as fondly as I have loved him!"

She left the cell. In the corridor, she met Aubry, who was in search of her.

"Your friend Coursegol is waiting for you below," he said, sadly.

"Oh! thank you," she quickly and cheerfully rejoined.

She hastened down. Coursegol was there. He was very pale, his face was haggard, and his eyes were terribly swollen. Warned the evening before by Aubry, the poor man had spent the entire night in the street, crouching against the wall of the prison, weeping and moaning while he waited for the hour when he could see Dolores.

"What do I hear, mademoiselle," he exclaimed, on meeting her. "You are summoned before the Tribunal! Oh! it is impossible. There must be some mistake. They can accuse you of no crime, nor can they think of punishing you as if you had been an Émigré or a conspirator."

"Nevertheless, I received a summons yesterday and also a paper containing the charge against me."

"Alas, alas!" groaned Coursegol, "why did you not listen to me? Why have you not made use of the order I procured for you? You would now be at liberty and happy."

"But Antoinette had no means of escape."

"And what do I care for Mademoiselle de Mirandol? She is nothing to me, while you are almost my daughter. If you die, I shall not survive you. I have accomplished miracles to insure your escape from prison. I also flattered myself that I had assured your life's happiness, but by your imprudence you have rendered all my efforts futile. Oh, God is not just!"

"Coursegol, in pity say no more!"

But he would not heed her. He was really beside himself, and he continued his lamentations and reproaches with increasing violence, though his voice was choked with sobs. He gesticulated wildly; he formed a thousand plans, each more insane than the preceding. Now, he declared his intention of forcibly removing Dolores; now he declared he would appeal to the judges for mercy; again he swore that Vauquelas should interfere in her behalf. But the girl forbade any attempt to save her.

"No, my good Coursegol," she said; "the thought of death does not appall me; and those who mourn for me will find consolation in the hope of meeting me elsewhere."

"And do you think this hope will suffice for me?" cried Coursegol. "Since I took you from the breast of your dying mother on the threshold of the Château de Chamondrin, I have loved you more and more each day. I lived for you and for you alone. My every hope and ambition were centred in you. You were my joy, my happiness, the only charm life had for me; and to see you condemned, you, the innocent—"

Sobs choked his utterance.

"Show me the charges against you," he demanded,

suddenly.

"What is the use?" rejoined Dolores, desiring to conceal the truth from him until the last.

"I wish to know the crimes of which you are accused," persisted Coursegol. "There are no proofs against you. I will find a lawyer to defend you—if need be, I, myself will defend you."

"It would be useless, my friend. Your efforts would only compromise you, without saving me."

As she spoke, she heard quick footsteps behind her. She turned. The officer who was there the evening before had returned to conduct the prisoners to the Tribunal. He began to call their names.

"Farewell, farewell," murmured Dolores, huskily.

In this parting from the friend who had loved her so long and faithfully, she experienced the first pang of anguish that had assailed her heart since she had decided to sacrifice her own life for Antoinette's sake.

"Not farewell," responded Coursegol, "but au revoir!"

And without another word, he departed.

Dolores glanced around the hall; but saw nothing of Philip or Antoinette. She was greatly relieved, for she had feared that their emotion would unnerve her; but now she could reasonably hope to carry with her to the grave the secret of the devotion which was to cost her her life. She did not wish Philip ever to know that she had died in place of Antoinette, lest her friend should become hateful in his sight, and Antoinette herself be condemned to eternal remorse.

It was now nine o'clock, and about twenty persons had assembled in the hall. The majority of them were unfortunates who, like Dolores, were to appear that morning before the tribunal; but all did not enjoy a serenity like hers. One, a young man, seated upon a chair, a little apart from his companions, allowed his eyes to rove restlessly around without pausing upon any of the objects that surrounded him. Though his body was there, his mind assuredly, was far away. He was thinking, doubtless, of days gone by, memories of which always flock into the minds of those who are about to die; not far from him, a venerable man condemned to death, was striving to conquer his emotion in order to console a young girl —his daughter—who hung about his neck, wiping bitterly; there, stood a priest, repeating his breviary, pausing every now and then to reply to each of the prisoners who came to implore the benediction which, according to the tenets of the Romish Church, insures the soul the eternal joys of Paradise. So these prisoners, all differently occupied, were grouped about the hall; and those who were to die displayed far more fortitude and resignation than those who would survive them. Dolores approached the priest.

"Father," said she, "on returning from the Tribunal, I shall beg you to listen to my confession and to grant me absolution."

As he looked upon this beautiful young girl who confronted death so calmly and serenely, the priest closed his book and said, in a voice trembling with compassion:

"What! are you, too, a victim for the guillotine? You cannot be a conspirator. Do these wretches respect nothing?"

"I am glad to die," Dolores said, simply.

Did he comprehend that this resignation concealed some great sacrifice? Perhaps so. He looked at her with admiration, and bowed respectfully before her, as he replied:

"You set us all an example of courage, my child. If you are condemned, I will give you absolution; and I shall ask you to address to Him, who never turns a deaf ear to the petitions of the innocent, a prayer for me."

There was so much sadness in his voice that all the sympathies of Dolores were aroused. She pitied those who were doomed to die without even remembering to weep over her own sad fate.

When the name of Mademoiselle de Mirandol was called, Dolores stepped forward as she had done the evening before, and took her place with the other prisoners between the double file of soldiers who were to conduct them to the Tribunal. Then the gloomy cortége started. When they entered the court-room a loud shout rent the air. The hall was filled with sans-culottes and tricoteuses who came every day to feast their eyes upon the agony of the prisoners, and to accompany them to the guillotine. Never was there such an intense and long-continued thirst for blood as prevailed in those horrible days.

The prisoners were obliged to pass through this hooting and yelling crowd, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the soldiers protected them from its violence. Several wooden benches occupied the space between the bar and the chairs of the judges; and upon these the prisoners were seated, eleven on each bench and so close together that it

was almost impossible for them to make the slightest movement. On their right stood the arm chair of the prosecuting attorney, or "accusateur;" on their left, were the seats of the jurors. Ten minutes passed, and the noise and confusion increased until it became positively deafening. Suddenly, a door opened and the court entered. The judges came first, dressed in black, with plumed hats, and with red sashes about their waists. The government attorney took his seat; the jurors installed themselves noisily in their places, and the session began.

Nothing could be more summary than the proceedings of this tribunal. The prisoner at the bar was generally ignorant of the charges against him, for the so-called act of accusation was in most cases, a scrap of paper covered with cramped and illegible hand-writing that frequently proved undecipherable. The president read a name. The person designated, rose and replied to such questions as were addressed to him. If the responses were confused, the prisoner's embarrassment was regarded as a conclusive proof of his guilt; if they were long, he was imperiously ordered to be silent. Witnesses were heard, of course; but those who testified in favor of the accused were roughly handled. Then the prosecuting attorney spoke five minutes, perhaps; the jury rendered its verdict, and the judge sentenced the prisoner or set him at liberty as the case might be. That day, eleven persons were tried and condemned to death in less than two hours. Dolores' turn came last.

"Your name?" asked the president.

"Antoinette de Mirandol."

As she made this reply, she heard an ill-suppressed cry behind her. She turned quickly, and saw

Coursegol. He was leaning upon the arm of Bridoul, and his hands were clenched and his face flushed. He now comprehended, for the first time, the girl's heroic sacrifice. Fearing he would betray her, she gave him a warning glance, as if to impose silence. It was unnecessary. He well knew that any statement of the real facts would be useless now; and that the truth would ruin Antoinette without saving Dolores. Such mistakes were not rare during the Reign of Terror. Almost daily, precipitancy caused errors of which no one was conscious until it was too late to repair them. Only a few days before, a son had been condemned in place of his father; and another unfortunate man had paid with his head, for the similarity between his name and that of another prisoner in whose stead he had been summoned before the Tribunal, and with whom he was executed; for Fouquier-Tinville, not knowing which was the real culprit, chose rather to doom two innocent men to death than to allow one guilty man to escape. Dolores was sentenced to be beheaded under the name of Antoinette de Mirandol When her sentence was pronounced, the business of the Court was concluded, and the judges were about to retire when suddenly a man made his way through the crowd to the bar, and cried a stentorian voice:

"The sentence you have just pronounced is infamous. You are not judges, but assassins and executioners."

Then he crossed his arms upon his breast and glowered defiance on the indignant and wrathful judges.

"Arrest that man!" thundered the public accusateur.

Two gendarmes sprang forward, and the officer who had just spoken added:

"Citizen judges, I place this prisoner at your bar. Question him that the citizen jurors may decide upon his fate."

It was Coursegol, who, hearing Dolores condemned, had suddenly resolved not to survive her, but to die with her.

"Unfortunate man!" murmured the young girl, and for the first time that morning her eyes filled with tears.

Coursegol looked at her as if to ask if she thought him worthy of her. In answer to the question put by the chief judge, he curtly replied:

"It is useless to seek any other explanation of my conduct than that which I am about to give. I am weary of the horrors which I have witnessed. I hate the Republic and its supporters. I am a Royalist; and I have no other wish than to seal with my blood, the opinions I have here proclaimed.

"Citizen jurors," cried his accuser, angrily; "I ask for this man a punishment which shall be an example to any who may desire to imitate him."

"He is mad!" objected one of the jurors.

"No, I am not mad!" cried Coursegol. "Down with the Republic and long live the King!"

There was such boldness in this defiance that a profound stillness made itself felt in the crowded hall. Judges and jurors conferred together in wrathful whispers. In a few moments, Coursegol was condemned to suffer death upon the guillotine for having been guilty of the heinous crime of insulting the court in the exercise of its functions, and of

uttering seditious words in its presence. Then he approached Dolores. She was sobbing violently, entirely overcome by this scene which had moved her much more deeply than her own misfortunes.

"Forgive me, mademoiselle," said he, "for being so bold as to resolve not to survive you; but even in death, my place is beside you."

"My friend! my protector! my father!" sobbed Dolores.

And yielding to an irresistible impulse, she threw herself into Coursegol's arms. He held her pressed tightly to his breast until he was ordered to make ready to start for the prison with the other victims. They were to remain there until the hour of execution.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LAST FAREWELL.

While these events were taking place in the Tribunal, Antoinette de Mirandol awoke later than usual to find her friend absent; but the discovery caused her little surprise, for this was not the first time that Dolores, who was a much earlier riser than herself, had left the cell without disturbing her slumbers. Antoinette dressed herself with all possible speed, but it was nearly twelve o'clock before she was ready to go down to the main hall in search of Dolores. She did not see her in the hall or in the corridors, and she entered the refectory certain that her friend was already seated at the table where they had taken their meals since the increasing coldness of the weather had driven them from their cell in the daytime. She cast a quick glance through the dining-hall. The prisoners were chatting gayly over their meagre fare, as if wishing to console themselves for the plainness of their food by the cheerfulness and brilliancy of their conversation. Dolores was not there.

The discovery brought with it a feeling of vague alarm; not that Antoinette had any suspicion of the truth, but because she was seized with a grim presentiment of approaching misfortune. She hastily turned away and started in pursuit of Philip, hoping to find Dolores with him. She soon met him, but he was alone.

"Dolores? where is Dolores?" she cried.

"I have not seen her," replied Philip, surprised at the question, and alarmed by Antoinette's manner.

"My God!" the girl whispered, turning suddenly pale; then, overcome with an inexplicable terror, she stood silent and motionless.

"What has happened?" cried Philip. "You frighten me."

"A terrible misfortune, I fear," she gasped.

She tottered and would have fallen had not Philip supported her; but she finally recovered her composure sufficiently to explain the cause of her alarm. The presentiment which had assailed the girl also assailed him. Together, they began a frantic search for their missing friend, exploring every nook and corner of that portion of the prison in which they were allowed to circulate, and questioning their acquaintances, who either through compassion or through ignorance gave them no information concerning Dolores. Suddenly, at a turn in the corridor, they encountered Aubry.

"What! do you not know?" he asked, stupefied with amazement.

"Know what?" cried Philip, impetuously.

"That Citoyenne Dolores was ordered to appear before the Tribunal at ten o'clock this morning."

Two cries rang out on the still air: a cry of rage from Philip, a cry of anguish from Antoinette; then, with tears and exclamations of despair they entreated Aubry to explain. All he could tell them was that Dolores had informed him the evening before that

she had been summoned before the Tribunal; that she had requested him to inform Coursegol of the fact; that she had left her cell, that morning, at nine o'clock, calm and beautiful; that she had held a long conversation with Coursegol, who was waiting for her below, after which she had left the prison to go to the Tribunal in company with several others.

This intelligence plunged Philip and Antoinette into a state of indescribable despair. Unable to utter a word, they looked at each other in wild but speechless terror; and yet, in the anguish that wrung their hearts, their thoughts followed the same course. Both were asking themselves why Dolores had concealed the truth from them; why she had not allowed them to die with her. It would have been so sweet to depart together from a world from which all light seemed to have fled! Who would have been cruel enough to refuse them the happiness of ascending the scaffold together?

"She feared to cause us pain," said Philip, at last. "She departed alone, not realizing that by doing so she caused us greater anguish than she would have done had she told us the frightful truth."

As he said this, Aubry, who had left them a moment before, returned.

"The prisoners have come back. Citoyenne Dolores is with them in the Hall of the Condemned. She wishes to see you."

"In the Hall of the Condemned!" repeated Antoinette.

That terrible word rang in their ears like the thud of the executioner's axe. With hearts torn with anguish and despair, they wended their way to the grim hall

below. When they entered it, they found the doomed prisoners scattered about the room, striving to conquer their emotion, and to summon up all their strength for the terrible ordeal from which they were separated by only three short hours. Those who, like Dolores, had relatives or friends in the prison, had sent for them; but those who could count on no loving farewell, sat silent and mournful, casting glances of envy upon their more fortunate companions. Some asked and obtained permission to go to their cells in order to write a last letter to their friends, or give directions concerning the few articles that remained at their disposal. Some had ordered choice viands and rare wines, not wishing to die before they had again enjoyed the pleasures of the table, in default of something better; while coming and going in the midst of them, were the clerks of the Tribunal, the executioner's assistants and the turnkeys of the prison, who hung about, hoping the condemned would bestow some gratuity upon them before leaving the prison. Dolores had seated herself upon a bench that stood against the wall. The passion of weeping to which she had yielded after Coursegol's heroic deed, had calmed her. He was standing by her side, looking down upon her with a in which there was neither bitterness nor Nothing could be more peaceful than the delicate features of the young girl and the energetic face that bent over her, though traces of the tears which had been wrung from them in a moment of despair were still visible.

Antoinette, followed by Philip, rushed toward Dolores, threw herself at her feet, and, resting her head on the lap of her friend, sobbed unrestrainedly.

"Antoinette, do not, I entreat you, deprive me of courage at a moment when I stand so greatly in need

of it," said Dolores.

"How cruel in you not to have told us!" cried Antoinette.

"I wished to save you pain. We must be resigned and submit to the fate that awaits us; and we must not allow emotion to deprive us of the strength to die bravely and courageously."

As she spoke, Dolores compelled Antoinette to rise and take a seat beside her; then she talked to her gently, but firmly. Their roles seemed to be changed; she who was about to die, consoled her whose life was spared. While this conversation was going on between Antoinette and Dolores, Philip, terribly pale, questioned Coursegol and learned from him what had taken place. He envied this devoted servant who was about to die with Dolores. He vainly strove to discover some means by which he could draw down upon his own head the wrath of the accusateur, Fouquier-Tinville, and be sent at once to the scaffold. Coursegol told his story simply and modestly. Rendered desperate by the condemnation of Dolores, he resolved to share her fate, feeling no desire to survive the loss of one so dear to him.

"How greatly preferable your destiny is to mine!" cried Philip, bitterly. "Would I could die in your place."

Dolores heard these words, and leaving Antoinette, she approached Philip and said:

"Do not speak thus, Philip. To-day, God declares His will to you. Unintentionally, I was an obstacle to the fulfilment of the vows you had made. God recalls me to Him. You long to die with me, you say. You must

not die, you must live, for your life belongs to one who has put her trust in you. Your life belongs to her, and your name; and no one is more worthy than Antoinette to bear your name."

Philip passionately interrupted her:

"I am no saint, I am a man! Why do you talk to me of promises and of duty? Whatever I may have said, whatever I may have promised, if I have not told you that I loved you, if I have not told you that I should always love you, I have lied. Read my—heart; you will behold your name, your name alone, written there; and tell me, courageous creature, noble-hearted woman, how can one stifle the aspirations of a love which has been the only joy, the only torment of one's life? Remember the past, Dolores—our childhood, the blissful existence in which love was first awakened in our hearts. I do not know what was passing in yours; but mine has nourished but one thought, cherished but one hope: to belong to you and to possess you. Upon this hope have I lived. It has been the strength and the weakness of my life; its deepest sorrow and its purest joy."

While he was thus speaking in low tones that he might not be overheard, Antoinette, after exchanging a few remarks with Coursegol, approached them. Not a single word uttered by Philip had escaped her, and her terror-stricken eyes and drawn features betrayed her agony.

"Was this dream of mine so unutterably wild and hopeless?" continued Philip, not perceiving Antoinette, and refusing to heed Dolores' warning sign. "Does a man display a culpable ambition when he longs for a calm and happy life with an adored wife who is worthy of him? And yet, the first time I

spoke of this love, you said to me: 'Antoinette loves you; marry her;' and when I still pleaded, you added: 'I belong to God.'"

"Was this not the truth?" asked Dolores, timidly.

"No, for you loved me and you sacrificed yourself for the sake of some foolish scheme upon the accomplishment of which my father would not have insisted if, sustained by you, I had ventured to confess the truth. You would not consent to this; you left us: then, Providence once more brought us face to face. This time, you granted me a hope only to take it from me again when Antoinette reappeared. Now, behold your work. Here are all three of us equally miserable; you, in dying; I, in surviving you; Antoinette, in loving me."

"I am glad to die," replied Dolores, who had regained her firmness and composure.

"Then why did you not allow me to share this happiness? Yesterday, when you received the fatal news, why did you not say to me: 'We have been unhappy here on earth; death will save us from many and undeserved misfortunes; come, let us die together.'"

"What! be the cause of your death?"

"It would be less cruel than to leave me behind you. Do you know what my life will be when I can no longer hope to see you again here below? One long supplication for death to quickly relieve me of the burden of existence."

"Philip, Philip!" murmured Dolores, reproachfully. "Can it be you who speak thus, you who have linked

a soul to yours; you who are a husband already, for at the bedside of your dying father did not you and Antoinette kneel together to receive the blessing of God's anointed priest?"

Philip made no reply.

"You have reproached me," continued Dolores, "and why? Who is the real culprit here? Is it I? Have I not always discouraged you? Have I not always told you that duty stood between us? Have I not always striven to convince you that your hopes were futile? Had not you, yourself, renounced them? Then, why should I reproach myself? Besides, I have not sought death. I die because Heaven wills it, but I am resigned, and if this resignation is any evidence of courage, let it strengthen and reanimate your soul. Bravely act the only part that is worthy of your past, of your heart and of your name. There, and there only your soul-will find happiness and peace."

Philip's anger vanished before such words as these. He was no longer irritated, but entirely overcome. Suddenly a sob resounded behind them. They turned. Antoinette was upon her knees.

"Pardon," said she, in a voice broken with sobs.

Dolores sprang forward to raise her.

"Philip, do you forgive me?" entreated Antoinette.

He too was weeping. He extended his hand to the young girl, who took it and covered it with her tears.

"Spare me, spare me!" exclaimed Dolores. "You rend my soul now when I have need for all my strength. Your grief and despair at my fate lead you both beyond reality. You, my dear friend, my dear sister

Antoinette, have received a sacred promise which you, Philip, made freely and with the intention to fulfil it. That is the only thing you must remember now."

She uttered these words in a sweet and penetrating voice, and with an energy that calmed and silenced both of them. She spoke of the chief duties of life, of the necessity of resignation, devotion and self-denial.

"I wish to carry with me to the grave," she added, "the assurance that you will console each other after my death by loving each other in remembrance of me."

And they promised all that she asked, for it was impossible to resist so much grace, so much eloquence and so much humility. Then she took from her pocket the order of release which Coursegol had obtained through Vauquelas. She handed this to Philip.

"There is your freedom," she resumed. "With the assistance of Bridoul, who will aid you in Coursegol's stead, this paper will enable you to escape from prison. You will be conducted to a safe retreat where you can await the fall of these wicked men and the triumph of truth and of virtue. That hour will surely come; for the future does not belong to the violent and audacious; it is for the meek, the generous, the good."

She conversed with them an hour longer, then begged them to leave her. She desired to prepare for death. Antoinette's sobs and Philip's despair increased in violence.

"Have pity on me!" she entreated. "Before I go, I will

call you to bid you a last farewell."

They left her. She remained alone with the other prisoners who had been condemned to death. Among them was the priest of whom we have already spoken; the same who had consoled and blessed her. He was seated in a corner of the room and many of the poor creatures, whose moments on earth were now numbered, had knelt before him to confess their sins and receive absolution. Dolores followed the example of her companions in misfortune. Purified by suffering and sanctified by the approach of death, her full confession revealed such nobility of character that the worthy priest was filled with admiration.

"Now I am ready," she said to Coursegol. "Death may come."

"So young and so beautiful, and to die!" he exclaimed, sadly.

"Are you going to bewail my fate?" she inquired, with a smile. "It is unnecessary, for I am very happy."

"It is the thought of the sacrifice you have accomplished that renders you thus happy!"

"Hush!" she said, quickly. "Who has spoken to you of a sacrifice? It must never be mentioned. Antoinette and Philip must never know that I died in place of another."

"A saint might utter words like those," he murmured. Then beholding her cheerful, courageous and inspired with the holy enthusiasm of the martyrs, he added: "I am glad to die with you. You will open the portals of Heaven for me; and I will cling so closely

to you, pure soul, that they will let me follow you in."

Thus were these two souls elevated to the grandest heroism by the very simplicity of their devotion. There was certainly not a drop of noble blood in the veins of either of them, and yet they went to meet death valiantly, like saints.

It was three o'clock, and a lovely winter's day. The sky was clear and the sun radiant.

"We have fine weather for our journey to the scaffold," thought Coursegol.

Dolores was absorbed in prayer. Her heart ascended to God in fervent supplication that He would bless her sacrifice, and make it redound to the peace and happiness of the two beloved friends that were left behind. Suddenly, several men entered the hall: the executioner and his assistants. Moans and cries of terror arose from the condemned.

"Already!" exclaimed a young woman, who had until now borne herself courageously.

She fainted. She was half-dead with fear when she was carried up the steps of the guillotine an hour later. Dolores lost none of her composure on beholding the executioner. She quietly removed her hat; and while the three assistants cut off the hair of the prisoners around her, she unbound the magnificent golden tresses which enveloped her like a rippling veil. There was a universal shudder when the scissors despoiled that charming head of its superb adornment; and Coursegol could not repress an exclamation of wrath at this act of barbarity. Dolores checked him with a gesture.

"I would like to have my hair," she said to the assistant executioner, pointing to the tresses lying upon the floor.

"It belongs to me," he responded, roughly. "That is the custom."

"Will this suffice to pay for it?" inquired Dolores, showing him a ring that she wore upon one of her fingers.

"Undoubtedly."

"Very well, I will buy it then."

The man gathered up the golden curls and handed them to Dolores.

"It is a pity," she said, gently and with a tinge of sadness. "They became me well."

It was her only sign of regret for the sad fate to which her youth and beauty were condemned.

When she saw that the moment of departure was near at hand, she asked to see Philip and Antoinette again. They had been standing just outside the door, half-crazed with grief. They entered, followed by Aubry, who, though accustomed to such scenes, was deeply moved. It was to him that she turned first.

"I thank you for all your kindness," she said to him. "On my arrival at the prison, I confided a cross to your keeping."

"Here it is. I return it to you, citoyenne."

"Keep it, my friend; it will remind you of a prisoner to whom you showed compassion, and who will pray for you."

"Oh, citoyenne, I could have done no less!" faltered the poor man.

Then Dolores turned to Antoinette and Philip. Their despair verged upon madness. That of Antoinette was violent, and vented itself in moans and tears; that of Philip was still more terrible, for the wretched man seemed to have grown ten years older in the past few hours.

"Farewell, my dear friends," said Dolores, cheerfully. "Do not mourn. Try to think that I am going on a journey, and to a country where you will soon come to join me. In its relations to life, death is nothing more."

But, while she was thus endeavoring to console them, her own tears mingled with theirs. She took them both in her arms, and clasped them to her heart in a close embrace.

"Love each other always, and do not forget me."

These were her last words of counsel.

Coursegol approached. Philip opened his arms.

"Coursegol," said he, "you are a man and an old soldier. Death has no terrors for you; you will lose none of your calmness. Take good care of her to the last, will you not?"

"That she might not be compelled to go alone was why I resolved to die with her," replied Coursegol, simply.

"Dolores, give me your blessing."

It was Antoinette who spoke.

"Yes, my sister, I bless thee!"

And Dolores extended her hand over the grief-stricken head of her friend.

"En route! en route!"

This cry was uttered by a stentorian voice. The moment of parting had come. One last kiss was exchanged.

"Farewell, farewell! We shall meet again in Heaven!"

And Dolores tore herself from their clinging arms. Coursegol followed her, but not so quickly that he failed to see Antoinette swoon with a cry of heart-broken anguish, and Philip spring forward to support her. A cart was awaiting the victims in the court-yard of the prison. The twelve who were doomed to death took their places in it with their hands bound behind their backs. A number of soldiers on horseback and some on foot acted as an escort. They fell into line and the little procession started.

From the Conciergerie to the Place de la Révolution the cart was followed by a hooting, jelling crowd of men, women and children, who sang coarse songs and hurled insults in the faces of their victims. These last seemed insensible to the indignities heaped upon them. On one side of the cart an aged man and a youth were seated side by side. Crowded close one against the other, they did not, along the entire route, once cease to cry: "Vive le Roi!" One of their companions, a Republican, accused of *Modérantisme*, regarded them with an air of ironical compassion. A priest stood in the centre of the cart, surrounded by three women, reciting prayers and canticles with them. Dolores, who was leaning upon Coursegol's

shoulder, seemed to be entirely unconscious of what was passing around her. Grief, cold, fatigue and the rough jolting of the vehicle had reduced her to a condition of pitiable weakness. Coursegol was distressed to see her in this state, and to be powerless to succor her. He did not think of himself; he thought only of her.

When they came in sight of the Place de la Révolution, where the terrible guillotine towered up grim and ghastly against the horizon, Dolores trembled, and, closing her eyes, whispered:

"I am afraid!"

"Oh! my dearest little one, do not lose courage," said Coursegol, with all a father's tenderness. "I am here, but I can do nothing to save you from these horrors. But be brave and hopeful. Only a moment more and we shall find peace in the grave and in the arms of our blessed Lord."

The cart jolted onward through the dense and jeering crowd until it reached the foot of the steps leading to the awful guillotine. The aged man and his youthful companion were yet crying "Vive le Roi!" The Republican, accursed of *Modérantisme*, was still regarding them with an air of ironical compassion. The priest was yet reciting prayers and canticles with the three women. None of these unfortunates paid the slightest attention either to the hooting mob or the dreadful doom from which but a few instants separated them.

The cart suddenly stopped and the condemned were roughly ordered to leave it. They did so mechanically and without resistance. The executioner's assistants

seized upon them, dragging them into an open space, as if, instead of human beings, they had been merely dumb animals, awaiting slaughter in a butcher's shambles. The sans-culottes cheered; the tricoteuses, seated in knots, clapped their hands wildly in savage joy, delighted that more blood was speedily to be spilled. It was an appalling scene, steeped in horror.

Coursegol moved towards Dolores to put his arm about her and sustain her trembling form. He was rudely pulled back by the assistant who had him in charge.

"If you are a man and have a heart, show some mercy!" he pleaded. "Let me go to my daughter who is about to die!"

The assistant gave a demoniac scowl.

"There is no mercy for the enemies of the Republic!" he snarled. "Remain where you are!"

Dolores glanced at Coursegol tenderly. The utmost thankfulness was in her look. But she uttered not a word. She felt that speech would merely augment her companion's misery and her own.

Those of the mob who were near enough to catch the assistant's brutal reply to Coursegol applauded it. Their hearts seemed turned to stone. Not a morsel of pity or human feeling was left in them. They were like so many wild beasts eager to lap blood.

The executioner had bared his brawny arms for his fiendish task. His face glowed with intense satisfaction.

"Come," said he, addressing his assistants. "We are wasting the Nation's time and keeping hosts of

patriots waiting for their just revenge. Death to the enemies of the Republic!"

An officer unfolded a soiled and crumpled paper. He began to call the death-roll.

The aged Royalist went to the guillotine first. In an instant the huge knife descended; his life blood gushed forth and his head fell into the basket. The executioner grasped the head by its white locks and held it up, streaming with gore, to the gaze of the howling concourse.

"So perish all who hate France and liberty!" he shouted.

His shout was taken up and repeated from one end of the Place de la Révolution to the other.

"So perish all who hate France and liberty!"

It was a sublime mockery of justice, a deliberate treading under foot of all the rights of man. The sans-culottes and the tricoteuses rivaled each other in the loudness and strength of their applause.

The youthful Royalist was the next victim, and the preceding scene with all its horrors was repeated.

Then the Republican, accused of *Modérantisme*, met his fate, then the priest, and then, one by one, the three women, each execution having a similar finale.

Dolores and Coursegol alone were left of all the condemned. They looked at each other, encouraging each other to be brave by signs and glances.

The officer with the death-roll read Dolores' name. Coursegol bowed his head, trembling in every limb.

The supreme moment had come. The fainting girl was dragged forward. Her foot was already on the first step of the guillotine platform, when suddenly there was a great commotion in the crowd and a stentorian voice cried out:

"In the name of the Republic, hold!"

At the same instant the throng parted like a wave of the ocean and three men appeared at the foot of the guillotine. Two of them were clerks from Robespierre's bureau, clad in the well-known uniform and wearing the revolutionary cockade. The third was Bridoul. He wore the dress of the terrible Committee of Public Safety. It was he who had uttered the stentorian cry:

"In the name of the Republic, hold!"

The assistant who was dragging Dolores forward paused, astounded. The executioner dropped his arms to his sides and glanced at the three men in speechless amazement. An interruption of the guillotine's deadly work was something that had never yet come his knowledge or experience in the bloody days of the Reign of Terror. He could not comprehend it. The suddenly silenced mob was equally unable to grasp the situation. What could be the matter? Had the flinty and inexorable Robespierre turned fainthearted at last? No! That was impossible! The patriots waited with open mouths for an explanation of this bewildering phenomenon.

As for Dolores, she saw nothing, heard nothing. At the foot of the guillotine steps she had fainted dead away in the assistant's arms.

Coursegol had seen Bridoul and heard his words, but they were as much of an enigma to him as to the rest. How was it that Bridoul was with Robespierre's clerks, and how was it that he wore the dress of the Committee of Public Safety? Coursegol, however, realized one thing—that Bridoul had in some inexplicable way acquired power and had come at the last moment to save Dolores and himself!

Meanwhile Bridoul and the clerks had mounted the guillotine steps and were standing on the platform of death, facing the awed and amazed mob. Bridoul produced a huge document and held it up to the people. On it was seen the great red seal of the Republic. At the bottom, those nearest could make out the well-known signature of Robespierre!

Bridoul proceeded to read the document. It declared that a mistake had been made in the condemnation of Citoyenne Antoinette de Mirandol and Citoyen Coursegol, that they were altogether innocent of any crime whatever against the Republic, and ordered them to be set at liberty immediately.

A subdued murmur followed the reading of this surprising paper, but, though the mob was dissatisfied and disappointed, no one dare dispute the command of the formidable and dreaded Dictator!

Bridoul folded the precious document and placed it in his pocket; then he turned to the assistant who was supporting Dolores and ordered him to deliver his charge to Robespierre's clerks; the man at once obeyed.

Bridoul then came down from the platform and went

to Coursegol. The latter began at once to question him.

"Hush!" said he. "Not a word now! I will explain all in time! For the present the girl and yourself are safe! That must suffice you! Come with me!"

A carriage was waiting a few paces away. Bridoul led Coursegol to it and thither also Dolores was borne by the two clerks, who, after placing her on a seat, bowed respectfully to Bridoul and departed.

"We are going to my house," said Bridoul, as the vehicle started off at the top of its horses' speed, the crowd leaving it an open passage.

Dolores revived and opened her eyes just as they reached the wine-shop.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN THE CHÉVREUSE VALLEY.

The first thing Dolores saw was the kindly face of Cornelia Bridoul, who was bending over her with tears of joy in her eyes. The good woman had been waiting at the door of the "Bonnet Rouge" and had sprang into the carriage the moment it stopped. Dolores was still very faint and utterly bewildered. She glanced at Cornelia, at Bridoul and then at Coursegol. Then she swooned again. Taking her in his arms, the wine-shop keeper carried her to the

chamber she had formerly occupied, where he placed her upon the bed, leaving his wife to bestow such care on her as in her weak condition she might require. This done, he repaired to the back shop, where, by his direction, Coursegol had preceded him.

"You want to know what all this means and how it was accomplished," said he, as he entered the room and carefully closed the door behind him. "I am now ready to tell you. But first you must have something to strengthen you, for you have just passed through a trial sufficient to break down even Hercules himself."

As he spoke he took a flask of brandy from a closet and filled glasses for his companion and himself. After they had drunk the liquor and seated themselves, he continued:

"Time is precious, and it will not do for Dolores and yourself to remain long here, or, for that matter, in Paris! You are safe for the moment, but at what instant you may again be in deadly peril it is impossible to say! I have succeeded in cheating the guillotine of its prey, and I will tell you how in as few words as I can. When I learned that Dolores was in prison and heard of your own arrest, I determined to move heaven and earth to save you, but was at a loss to know either where to turn or what to do. Just at that critical juncture word was brought me that I had been chosen a member of the Committee of Public Safety, on the recommendation of no less a personage than Robespierre himself, and that the Dictator wished to see me at once. I saw my opportunity and hastened to him without an instant's delay.

"Robespierre received me cordially and informed me

that I could be of the greatest service to him and the Republic. I answered that as a true patriot I was not only willing but anxious to do all that lay in my power. He smiled and said that he had a mission of the utmost importance to entrust to me, that he had selected me for it because of my well-known zeal for the Nation's welfare and my equally well-known integrity. I bowed, and he went on to say that certain members of the Committee of Public Safety were plotting against himself and the continuance of his power. My mission was to win over those members to his interest and restore harmony in the Committee. I accepted the mission and succeeded.

"The Dictator's delight and exultation were boundless. He told me to name the price of my distinguished service and, whatever it might be, it should instantly be paid. He undoubtedly expected that I would demand money and position, but I demanded neither. I simply asked for his warrant, under his own signature and the great seal of the Republic, to save from prison and the guillotine two of my friends who were accused of crimes of which they were entirely innocent. Robespierre was surprised. He hesitated; then he asked the names of my friends. I gave them and he showed further hesitation. Finally, he drew up the warrant, signed it, placed the great seal upon it, and directed me to take two of his clerks and have it at once carried into effect. You may well imagine that I did not let the grass grow under my feet. I took the precious document and, accompanied by the clerks, fairly flew to the Conciergerie, where I had learned you were confined previous to going to the guillotine.

"When I arrived I was informed, to my terror and dismay that the cart laden with the condemned had

already started for the Place de la Révolution and that Dolores and yourself were among the victims. I procured a carriage and with my companions drove at headlong speed to the very steps of the guillotine. The rest you know. Now, Robespierre is treacherous and forgetful of services when his end has been attained. He may revoke his warrant and order your re-arrest at any moment. Hence I say that time is precious and that it will not do for you to remain long either here or elsewhere in Paris. You must seek safety as soon as possible in the little cottage in the Chévreuse valley, where the Dictator and his myrmidoms will not think of searching for you. This is imperative!"

Coursegol grasped his friend's hand.

"You are a man, Bridoul!" said he. "You have saved our lives and won our undying gratitude! We will follow your advice to the letter! But you must do something more. Antoinette de Mirandol and Philip de Chamondrin are still in the Conciergerie. They have an order for their release, but cannot use it without your help. You must aid them to escape and join us in the Chévreuse valley!"

"I will do it!" said Bridoul, solemnly. "I swear it!"

"Enough," replied Coursegol. "Dolores and myself will leave for the refuge this very night!"

Madame Bridoul was summoned and acquainted with the decision that had been reached. She reported that Dolores had recovered consciousness and strength and would be ready for the departure when required.

"One thing more," said Coursegol to Bridoul and his

wife. "Neither Philip nor Antoinette must know that we have escaped the guillotine until they find us alive and well in the Chévreuse valley!"

This was agreed to, and, at nightfall, Coursegol and Dolores, provided with the requisite passports, quitted Paris. In due time they reached the little cottage in the Chévreuse valley in safety.

About a fortnight after the supposed execution of Dolores and Coursegol, Philip and Antoinette, with the aid of Bridoul and the order of release wrested from Vauquelas, succeeded in obtaining their freedom. No sooner were they out of the Conciergerie than they hastened to the refuge provided for them in the Chévreuse valley. What pen can describe their joy and gratitude to God when, on their arrival, they found that the little cottage contained two other tenants, and that those tenants were their beloved friends whom they had mourned as victims of the hideous guillotine?

Dolores, after the first transports of delight at the reunion were over, endeavored to continue her rôle of martyr and to induce Philip to keep his promise to her to marry Antoinette, but the latter had greatly changed since that dreadful parting at the Conciergerie. She had become capable of as great a sacrifice as Dolores, and firmly refused to stand longer between Philip and the woman he had loved for so many years. She still loved Philip, it is true, but her love had grown pure and unselfish—it was now a sister's love, not that of a woman who wished to be his wife.

To say that Philip was overjoyed by this unexpected turn of affairs is only to state the simple truth.

Dolores at first demurred, urging the wish of the late Marquis, also that she was devoted to God, but Antoinette's only reply was to join their hands and bless them, and Dolores finally consented to the marriage that at her heart's core she so ardently desired.

Philip and Dolores were quietly united in wedlock a few weeks later. Coursegol, the Bridouls and Antoinette were the only persons present at the ceremony besides the bride and groom and the officiating priest. Shortly afterwards the Marquis de Chamondrin and his wife, accompanied by Coursegol, Antoinette and the Bridouls, the latter having sold their wine-shop, went to England and from there to Louisiana, where Mlle. de Mirandol owned extensive estates. Antoinette decided to remain in Louisiana, having persuaded Madame Bridoul to take charge of her house and Bridoul to assume the management of her business.

Philip and Dolores spent ten years in America and then returned to France. They had two children, a son and a daughter, the latter named Antoinette, and their life, though always slightly tinged with melancholy, was serene and peaceful. After his return to his native land, Philip rebuilt the Château de Chamondrin and took up his permanent abode there, determined to lead the life of a country gentleman and student and to take no part in the political controversies of the time, nor could he be induced to reconsider this decision though he was twice offered a seat in the Chamber of Deputies. After the exciting and terrible scenes of the Reign of Terror through which he had passed, he longed for quiet and repose. Coursegol was made the steward of his estate and managed it with such shrewdness and

intelligence that Philip became rich and all the prestige of the Chamondrins was restored.

In the month of May, 1822, while in Paris, to which city he had been called by important business, the Marquis de Chamondrin met an old nobleman who had been a fellow prisoner in the Conciergerie. They talked together a long time over the past and the frenzy, perils and heroism which had stamped those eventful days, and a chance word, let fall by his companion, first acquainted Philip with the fact that Dolores had endeavored to sacrifice her own life in order to save that of Antoinette de Mirandol. The Marquis de Chamondrin turned pale as death and pressed his hand convulsively against his heart, but he speedily recovered his color and self-possession and the old nobleman did not even suspect the emotion to which his revelation had given rise.

Philip never mentioned the knowledge he had acquired to his wife, but his love and reverence for her were vastly augmented by it, and, whenever he thought of the sacrifice that God in His mercy had not permitted to be made, he murmured to himself:

"Dolores has a noble and heroic soul! An angel from Heaven could not have acted more grandly!"

THE END.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK WHICH? OR, BETWEEN TWO WOMEN ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without

charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project

Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work,

or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project

Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability

to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR

IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free

distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41

Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the

solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.