which they entered. Before leaving the convent of the Carmelites, Henrietta had desired her daughter to attend her at the palace, which she had inhabited for a long time, and which she had only left because their poverty seemed to them more difficult to bear in gilded chambers.

Mordant followed the carriage, and when he had watched it drive under the somber arches, he went and stationed himself under a wall over which the shadow was extended, and remained motionless, amidst the moldings of Jean Goujon, like a bas-relief, representing an equestrian statue.

---

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HOW, SOMETIMES, THE UNHAPPY MUSTAKE CHANCE FOR PROVIDENCE.

"Well, madame," said Du Winter, when the queen had dismissed her attendants,

"Well, my lord, what I had foreseen has come to pass."

"What? does the Cardinal refuse to receive the king? France refuse hospitality to an unfortunate prince? But it is for the first time, madame!"

"I did not say France, my lord, I said the Cardinal, and the Cardinal is not even a Frenchman."

"But did you see the queen?"

"It is useless," replied Henrietta: "the queen will not say yes when the Cardinal has said no. Are you not aware that this Italian directs everything, both indoors and out? And, moreover, I should not be surprised had we been forestalled by Cromwell; he was embarrassed talking to me, and yet quite firm in his determination to refuse. Then, did you not observe the agitation in the Palace Royal, the passing to and fro of busy people? Can they have received any news, my lord?"

"Not from England, madame. I made such haste that I am certain of not having been forestalled. I set out three days ago, passing incognito through the Puritan army, and I took post-horses with my servant Tony: the horses upon which we were mounted were bought in Paris. Besides, the king, I am certain, awaits your majesty’s reply before risking anything."

"You will tell him, my lord," replied the queen, despairingly,

"that I can do nothing: that I have suffered as much as himself—more than he has—obliged as I am to eat the bread of exile, and to ask hospitality from false friends who smile at my tears; and as regards his royal person, he must sacrifice it generously, and die like a king. I shall go and die by his side."

"Madame, madame," exclaimed De Winter, "your majesty abandons yourself to despair! and yet, perhaps, there still remains some hope."

"No friends left, my lord; no other friends left in the whole world but yourself! Oh, God!" exclaimed the poor queen, raising her eyes to Heaven, "have you indeed taken back all the generous hearts which existed in the world?"
"I hope not, madame," replied De Winter, thoughtfully; "I once spoke to you of four men."

"What can be done with four men?"

"Four devoted, resolute men can do much, be assured, madame; and those of whom I speak have done much at one time."

"And these men were your friends?"

"One of them held my life in his hands, and gave it to me. I know not whether he is still my friend; but since that time I have remained here."

"And these men are in France, my lord?"

"I believe so."

"Tell me their names; perhaps I may have heard them mentioned, and might be able to add you in finding them."

"One of them was called the Chevalier d'Artagnan."

"Oh! my lord, if I do not mistake, the Chevalier d'Artagnan is a leader of the guards; but take care, for I fear that this man is devoted entirely to the Cardinal."

"That would be a misfortune," said De Winter, "and I shall begin to think that we are really doomed."

"But the others," said the queen, who clung to this last hope as a shipwrecked man clings to the remains of his vessel; "the others, my lord?"

"The second—I heard his name by chance: for before fighting us, these four gentlemen told us their names; the second was called the Count de la Perre. As for the two others, I had so much the habit of calling them by nick-names, that I have forgotten their real ones."

"Oh, mon Dieu, it is a matter of great urgency to find them out," said the queen, "since you think these worthy gentlemen might be so useful to the king."

"Oh, yes," said De Winter, "for they are the same men."

"Well, then, my lord, they must be found; but what can four men, or rather three men, do—for I tell you, you must not count on Monsieur d'Artagnan."

"It will be one valiant sword the less, but there will remain still three, without reckoning my own; now four devoted men round the king to protect him from his enemies—to be at his side in battle, to aid him with counsel, to escort him in flight, are sufficient—and to make the king a conqueror, but to save him if conqueror; and whatever Mazarin may say—once on the shores of France, your royal husband may find as many retreats and asylum as the sea-bird finds in a storm."

"Seek them, my lord—seek these gentlemen; and if they will consent to go with you to England, I will give to each a duchy the day that we re-ascend the throne, besides as much gold as would pave Whitehall. Seek them, my lord. Seek them, I conjure you."

"I will search for them well, madame," said De Winter, "and doubtless I shall find them—but time fails me. Has your majesty forgotten that the king expects your reply, and awaits it in agony?"

"Then, indeed, we are lost," cried the queen, in the fullness of a broken heart.

At this moment the door opened, and the young Harlethes appeared; then the queen, with that wonderful strength which is the
herosin of a mother, repressed her tears, and motioned to De Winter to change the subject of conversation.

"What do you want, Henrietta?" she demanded.

"My mother," replied the young princess, "a cavalier has just entered the Louvre, and wishes to present his respects to your majesty; he arrives from the army, and has, he says, a letter to remit to you, on the part of the Marechal de Grammont, I think."

"Ah!" said the queen to De Winter, "he is one of my faithful adherents; but do you not observe, my dear lord, that we are so poorly served that it is my daughter who fills the office of introducer?"

"Madame, have pity on me," exclaimed De Winter; "you break my heart!"

"And who is this cavalier, Henrietta?" asked the queen.

"I saw him from the window, madame; he is a young man who appears scarcely sixteen years of age, and who is called the Viscount de Guiche."

The queen nodding, made a sign with her head: the young princess opened the door, and Raoul appeared on the threshold.

Advancing a few steps toward the queen, he knelt down.

"Madame," said he, "I hear to your majesty a letter from my friend the Count de Guiche, who told me he had the honor of being your servant; this letter contains important news, and the expression of his respect."

At the name of the Count de Guiche, a blush spread over the cheeks of the young princess, and the queen glanced at her with some degree of severity.

"You told me that the letter was from the Marechal de Grammont, Henrietta," said the queen.

"I thought so, madame," stammered the young girl.

"It is my fault, madame," said Raoul. "I did announce myself, in truth, as coming on the part of the Marechal de Grammont; but being wounded in the right arm, he was unable to write, and therefore the Count de Guiche acted as his secretary."

"There has been fighting, then?" asked the queen, motioning to Raoul to rise.

"Yes, madame," said the young man.

At this announcement of a battle having taken place, the young princess opened her lips as if to ask a question of interest; but her lips closed again without articulating a word, while the color gradually faded from her cheeks.

The queen saw this, and doubtless her maternal heart translated the emotion, for addressing Raoul again:

"And no evil has happened to the young Count de Guiche?" she asked. "For not only is he our servant, as you say, sir, but more: he is one of our friends."

"No, madame," replied Raoul; "on the contrary, he gained great glory on that day, and had the honor of being embraced by his highness, the prince, on the field of battle."

The young princess clapped her hands; and then, ashamed of having been betrayed into such a demonstration of joy, she half turned away, and bent over a vase of roses, as if to inhale their color.
"Let us see," said the queen, "what the count says." And she opened the letter, and read:

"Madame,—Being unable to have the honor of writing to you myself, by reason of a wound which I have received in my right hand, I have commanded my son, the Count de Guiche, who, with his father, is equally your humble servant, to write to tell you that we have just gained the battle of Leus, and that this victory cannot fail to give great power to the Cardinal Mazarin and to the queen over the affairs of Europe. If Her Majesty will have faith in my counsels, she ought to profit by this event to address at this moment, in favor of her august husband, the court of France. The Viscount de Bragelonne, who will have the honor of remitting this letter to your Majesty, is the friend of my son, to whom he owes his life; he is a gentleman in whom your Majesty can confide entirely, in the case when your Majesty may have some verbal or written order to forward to me.

"I have the honor to be, with respect, &c.,

"MARECHAL DE GRAMMONT."

At the moment when mention occurred of his having rendered a service to the count, Raoul could not help turning his eyes toward the young princess, and then he saw in her eyes an expression of infinite gratitude to the young man; he no longer doubted that the daughter of King Charles the First loved his friend.

"The battle of Leus gained!" said the queen; "they are lucky indeed for me—they can gain battles! Yes, the Marechal de Grammont is right; this will change the aspect of their affairs; but I much fear it will do nothing for ours, even if it does not harm them. This is recent news, sir," continued she, "and I thank you for having made such haste to bring it to me; without this letter, I should not have heard it till to-morrow—perhaps after to-morrow—the last of all Paris."

"Madame," said Raoul, "the Louvre is but the second palace which this news has reached; it is as yet unknown to all, and I had sworn to the Count de Guiche to remit this letter to your Majesty ere even I should embrace my guardian."

"Your guardian! is he too a Bragelonne?—Is he still alive?"

"No, sir, he is dead; and I believe it is from him that my guardian, whose near relation he was, inherited the estate from which I take my name."

"And your guardian, sir," asked the queen, who could not help feeling some interest in the handsome young man before her, "what is his name?"

"The Count de la Perse, madame," replied the young man, bowing.

De Winter made a gesture of surprise, and the queen turned to him with a start of joy.

"The Count de la Perse!" cried De Winter in his turn. "Oh, sir, reply, I entreat you—is not the Count de la Perse a noble, whom I remember handsome and brave, a Musketeer under Louis XIII.?
and who must be now about forty-seven or forty-eight years of age.”

"Yes, sir, you are right in every respect."

"And who served under a borrowed name?"

"Under the name of Artois. Lately I heard his friend, Monsieur d'Artagnan, give him that name."

"That is it, madame, that is the same. God be praised! And he is in Paris?" continued he, addressing Raoul; then turning to the queen: "We may still hope. Providence has declared for us since I have found this brave man again in so miraculous a manner. And, sir, when does he reside, pray?"

"The Comte de la Fere lodges in the Rue Quenegauf, Hotel du Grand-Roi Condéenume."

"Thanks, sir. Inform this dear friend that he may remain within. I shall go and see him immediately."

"Sir, I obey with pleasure, if her Majesty will permit me to depart."

"Stay, Monsieur de Bragelonne," said the queen, "and be assured of our affection."

Raoul bent respectfully before the two princesses, and, bowing to De Winter, departed.

The queen and De Winter continued to converse for some time in low voices, in order that the young princess should not overhear them; but the precaution was needless; she was in deep converse with her own thoughts.

Then when De Winter rose to take leave:

"Listen, my lord," said the queen; "I have preserved this diamond cross which came from my mother, and this order of St. Michael, which came from my husband. They are worth about fifty thousand pounds. I had sworn to die of hunger rather than to part with these precious pledges: but now that this ornament may be useful to him or to his defenders, everything must be sacrificed to the hope of it. Take them, and if you need money for your expedition, sell them fearlessly, my lord. But should you find the means of retaining them, remember, my lord, that I shall esteem you as having rendered the greatest service which a gentleman can render to a queen; and in the day of my prosperity, he who brings me this order and this cross will be blessed by me and my children."

"Madame," replied De Winter, "your Majesty will be served by a man devoted to you. I hasten to deposit these two objects in a safe place, nor should I accept them if the resources of our ancient fortunes were left to us; but our estates are confiscated, our ready money is exhausted, and we are reduced to turn into resources everything we possess. In an hour hence I shall be with the Comte de la Fere, and to-morrow your majesty shall have a definitive answer."

The queen tendered her hand to Lord de Winter, who, kissing it respectfully, went out, traversing alone unconducted those large dark and deserted apartments, and brushing away tears which, blest as he was by fifty years spent as a courtier, he could not help shedding at the spectacle of this royal distress, so dignified and yet so priestess.