The eyes of the mendicant flashed with indignancy, but he suppressed this emotion.
"This evening, sir," he replied, "all will be ready."

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE TOWER OF ST. JACQUES-DE-LA-BOUCHERIE.

At a quarter to six o'clock, Monsieur de Gondy, having finished all his business, returned to the archiepiscopal palace.

At six o'clock the curate of St. Merri was announced.
The Coadjutor glanced rapidly behind, and saw that he was followed by another man. The curate then entered, followed by Planchet.
"Your holiness," said the curate, "here is the person of whom I have the honor to speak to you."
"And you are disposed to serve the cause of the people?" asked Gondy.
"Most undoubtedly," said Planchet. "I am a Frondeist from my heart. You see in me, such as I am, a person sentenced to be hung."
"And on what account?"
"I rescued from the hands of Mazarin's police a noble lord, whom they were conducting again to the Bastille, where he had been for five years."
"Will you name him?"
"Oh, you know him well, my lord—it is Count de Roehofort."
"Ah! really, yes," said the Coadjutor. "I have heard this affair mentioned. You raised the whole district they told me!"
"Very nearly," replied Planchet, with a self-satisfied air.
"And your business is—"
"That of a confectioner, in the Rue des Lombards."
"Explain to me how it happens that, following so peaceful a business, you had such warlike inclinations?"
"Why does my lord, belonging to the church, now receive me in the dress of an officer, with a sword at his side, and spurs to his boots?"
"Not badly answered, faith," said Gondy, laughing; "but I have, you must know, always had, in spite of my hands, warlike inclinations."
"Well, my lord, before I became a confectioner, I myself was three years sergeant in the Piedmontese regiment, and before I became sergeant I was for eighteen months the servant of Monsieur D'Artagnan."
"The lieutenant of the Musketeers?" asked Gondy.
"Himself, my lord,"
"But he is said to be a furious Mazarinist."
"Hew!" said Planchet.
"What do you mean by that?"
"Nothing, my lord; Monsieur D'Artagnan belongs to the service; Monsieur D'Artagnan makes it his business to defend the Cardinal, who pays him, as much as we make it ours—we citizens—to attack him, whom he rules."
"You are an intelligent fellow, my friend; can we count upon you?"
"You may count upon me, my lord, provided you want to make a total overturning in the city."
"'Tis that exactly. How many men, think you, you could collect together to-night?"
"Two hundred muskets and five hundred halberds."
"Let there be only one man in every district who can do as much, and by to-morrow we shall have a tolerably strong army. Are you disposed to obey Count de Rochefort?"
"I would follow him to hell; and this is not saying a little, as I believe him quite capable of descending there."
"Bravo."
"By what sign to-morrow shall we be able to distinguish friends from foes?"
"Every Protestant must put a knot of straw in his hat."
"Good! Give the watchword."
"Do you want money?"
"Money never comes amiss at any time, my lord; if one has it not, one must do without it; with it, matters go on much better and more rapidly."

Gondy went to a box and drew forth a bag.

"Here are five hundred pistoles," he said; "and if the action goes off well, you may reckon upon a similar sum to-morrow."
"I will give a faithful account of the sum to your lordship," said Planchet, putting the bag under his arm.
"That is right; I recommend the Cardinal to your attention."
"Make your mind easy, he is in good hands."

Planchet went out, and ten minutes later the curate of St. Sulpice was announced. As soon as the door of Gondy's study was opened, a man rushed in; it was Count de Rochefort.

"It is you then, my dear count," cried Gondy, offering his hand.
"You are decided at last, my lord?" said Rochefort.
"I have ever been so," said Gondy.
"Let us speak no more on that subject; you tell me so—I believe you. Well, we are going to give a ball to Mazarin."
"I hope so."
"And when will the dance begin?"
"The invitations are given for this evening," said the Count, "but the violins will only begin to play to-morrow morning."
"You may reckon upon me, and upon fifty soldiers which the Chevalier d'Humieres has promised to me, whenever I might need them."
"Upon fifty soldiers?"
"Yes, he is making recruits, and he will lead them to me; if any are missing when the file is over, I shall replace them."
"Good, my dear Rochefort; but that is not all. What have you done with Monsieur de Beaufort?"
"He is in Vendome, where he waits until I write to him to return to Paris."
"Write to him—now's the time."
"You are sure of your enterprise?"
"Yes, but he must hurry himself; for hardly shall the people of
Twenty Years After.

Paris has revolted, than we shall have ten princes to one, wishing to be at their head; if he defers he will find the place taken."
"And you will leave all command to him?"
"For the war, yes; but in politics—"
"You must know it is not his element."
"He must leave me to negotiate for my cardinal's hat in my own fashion."
"You care about it so much?"
"Since they force me to wear a hat of a form which does not become me," said Gondy, "I wish at least that the hat should be red."
"One must not dispute taste and colors," said Rochefort, laughing. "I answer for his consent."
"How soon can he be here?"
"In five days."
"Let him come, and he will find a change. I will answer for it."
"Therefore, go and collect your fifty men, and hold yourself in readiness."
"For what?"
"For everything."
"Is there any signal for rallying?"
"A knot of straw in the hat."
"Very good. Adieu, my lord."
"Adieu, my dear Rochefort."

"Ah, Monsieur Mazarin, Monsieur Mazarin," said Rochefort, leaning off his elbow, who had not found an opportunity of uttering a single word during the foregoing dialogue, "you will see whether I am too old to be a man of action."

It was half-past nine o'clock, and the Coadjutor required half an hour to go from the Archbishop's palace to the tower of St. Jacques-la-Boucherie. He remarked that a light burnt in one of the highest windows of the tower. "Good," said he, "our signal is at its post."

He knocked, and the door was opened. The vear himself awaited him, conducted him to the top of the tower, and when there, peering to a little door, placed the light which he had brought with him in a corner of the wall, that the Coadjutor might be able to find it on his return, and went down again. Although the key was in the door, the Coadjutor knocked.

"Come in," said a voice which he recognized as that of the mendicant, whom he found lying on a kind of trundle bed. He rose on the entrance of the Coadjutor, and at that moment ten o'clock struck.
"Well," said Gondy, "have you kept your word with me?"
"Not quite," replied the mendicant.
"How is that?"
"You asked me for five hundred men, did you not? Well, I shall have ten thousand for you."
"You are not boasting?"
"Do you wish for a proof?"
"Yes."

There were three candles alight—each of which burnt before a
window—one looking upon the City, the other upon the Palais Royal, and a third upon the Rue St. Denis.

The man went silently to each of the candles, and blew them out one after the other.

"What are you doing?" asked the Conjuror.

"I have given the signal."

"For what?"

"For the barricades. When you leave this, you will see my men at their work. Only take care not to break your legs in stumbling over some chain, nor to fall into some hole."

"Good! there is your money—the same sum as that which you have received already. Now remember that you are a general, and do not go and drink."

"For twenty years I have tasted nothing but water."

The man took the bag from the hands of the Conjuror, who heard the sound of his fingers counting and handling the gold pieces.

"Ah! ah!" said the Conjuror, "you are avaricious, my good fellow."

The mendicant sighed, and threw down the bag.

"Must I always be the same," said he, "and shall I never succeed in overcoming the old heavan? Oh, misery, oh, vanity!"

"You take it, however."

"Yes, but I make a vow in your presence, to employ all that remains to me in pious work."

His face was pale and drawn, like that of a man who had just undergone an inward struggle.

"Singular man!" muttered Gondy, taking his hat to go away, when he saw the beggar between him and the door. His first idea was that this man intended to do him some harm—but on the contrary he saw fall on his knees before him, with his hands clasped.

"Your blessing, your holiness, before you go, I beseech you!"

he cried.

"Your holiness!" said Gondy, "my friend, you take me for some one else."

"No, your holiness, I take you for what you are: that is to say, the Conjuror—I recognized you at the first glance." Gondy smiled. "And you want my blessing?" he said.

"Yes, I have need of it."

The mendicant uttered these words in a tone of such great humility, and such earnest repentance, that Gondy placed his hand upon him, and gave him his benediction with all the emotion of which he was capable.

"Now," said the Conjuror, "there is a communion between us. I have blessed you, and you are sacred to me. Come, have you committed some crime, pursued by human justice, from which I can protect you?"

The beggar shook his head. "This crime which I have committed, my lord, has no call upon human justice, and you can only deliver me from it in blessing me frequently, as you have just done."

"Come, be candid," said the Conjuror, "you have not all your life followed the trade which you do now?"

"No, my lord. I have pursued it for six years only."

"And, previously, where were you?"
"In the Bastille."
"And before you went to the Bastille?"
"I will tell you, my lord, on the day when you are willing to hear my confession."
"Good! at whatever hour of the day, or of the night on which you present yourself, remember that I shall be ready to give you absolution."
"Thank you, my lord," said the mendicant, in a hoarse voice.
"But I am not yet ready to receive it."
"Very well. Adieu."
"Adieu, your holiness," said the mendicant, opening the door, and bending low before the prelate.

CHAPTER XLV.
THE HINT.

It was about eleven o'clock at night. Gondy had not walked a hundred steps ere he perceived the strange change which had been made in the streets of Paris. The whole city seemed peopled with fantastic beings; silent shadows were seen unpaving the streets, and others dragging and upsetting great wagons, whilst others again were digging ditches large enough to engulf whole regiments of horsemen. These active beings flitted here and there like so many demons completing some unknown labor—these were the beggars of the Court of Miracles—the agents of the giver of holy water in the Square of St. Eustache—preparing the barricades for the morrow.

Gondy gazed on these men of darkness—these nocturnal laborers, with a kind of fear; he asked himself, if, after having called forth these foul creatures from their dens, he should have the power of making them retire again. He felt almost inclined to cross himself when one of these beings happened to approach him. He reached the Rue St. Honore, and went up it toward the Rue de la Ferriere; there, the aspect changed; here it was the tradesmen who were running from shop to shop, their doors seemed closed like their shutters, but they were only pushed to in such a manner as to open and allow the men, who seemed fearful of showing what they carried, to enter, closing immediately. These men were shopkeepers, who had arms to lend to those who had none.

One individual went from door to door, bending under the weight of swords, guns, muskets, and every kind of weapon, which he deposited as fast as he could. By the light of a lantern the Conjoint recognized Flanchet.

On reaching the Pont-Neuf, the Conjoint found this bridge guarded, and a man approached him.
"Who are you?" asked the man; "I do not know you for one of us."
"Then it is because you do not know your friends, my dear Monsieur Louviers," said the Conjoint, raising his hat.
Louviers recognized him, and bowed.
Gondy continued his way, and went as far as the Tour de Nesle.