

mit blindly to the king's orders, however painful it may be for me to do so. But you, Monsieur de Harlai are not the king; I have the right to question you, and to demand answers to my questions. It shall not be said that I feebly allowed my honor as a soldier to be trampled on by a parliamentarian! I say boldly to your face, President of the Royal Commission, that you are a hypocrite!"

"Monsieur Sforzi!"  
"Silence!" cried Raoul, violently. "Could you really imagine that, as a compensation for the shame you have put upon me, I should rest content with your lying assurances of esteem? No! If you do not frankly avow to me the real motive of your conduct—that is to say, the real cause of my disgrace—I am resolved, so as not to be suspected of felony and cowardice, to pay no more heed to your ermine cloak than you have paid to my sword! In the face of the whole army I will proclaim you a vile and cowardly calumniator!"

"Unhappy madman!" cried Monsieur de Harlai, almost indescribably agitated; "I should have borne with the resignation of a Christian your cruellest insults had they been addressed only to the Seigneur de Beaumont; but the Procureur General of his majesty's parliament cannot allow the magistracy of the kingdom to be insulted in his person. Lay to your head—strong passion the distress which is now about to fall upon you! Chevalier Sforzi, if I take away the command of the army from you, it is to spare you the commission of a crime; the Marquis de la Tremblais is your own brother."  
At this revelation, terrible as it was unexpected, Sforzi turned deadly pale; then, as if he had been struck by a thunderbolt, fell to the ground insensible.

CHAPTER LVII.

EVE OF THE ASSAULT.

A fortnight passed from the time when Monsieur de Harlai revealed to Sforzi the secret of his birth. The unfortunate young man had remained bowed down with sorrow. In vain had Diane and De Maurevert, the one by gentle pleading and the other by gay conversation, endeavored to divert him from the gloom that weighed upon him.

"Dear Raoul," said De Maurevert, "your presence in the royal army has become impossible. You cannot change the course of events, and, whichever way they turn, the consequences must be painful to you. I conjure you to return to Clermont."

"To abandon my brother when he is in such a critical position," replied Raoul, "would be to give a warrant for my father's hatred of me. No, De Maurevert, I will not go. I must absolutely see my brother. Who knows but that by my entreaties and advice, I may succeed in bringing him to the submission and fidelity he owes to the king, and of saving him from destruction."

"Not even that hope is left you, Raoul! If the Marquis de la Tremblais held you in his power, instead of listening to you, he would hasten to have you strung up on a gibbet, and, instructed by past experience, would take care to have the strength of the rope thoroughly tested."

"I will never believe in the possibility of such a frightful crime!" cried Sforzi.

"I swear to you, on my honor, that the marquis expressed to me in the most precise language his intention of acting towards you as I have suggested. But, even supposing that he consented to follow your advice, do you imagine that Monsieur de Harlai would accept his compulsory submission? Not at all! Certain as he now is of being able to take the château, since I discovered the secret of its weak point, Monsieur de Harlai will not allow any pretext to come between him and his prey. Therefore, Raoul, I repeat, you must return to Clermont."

"Never, never! Do not insist, I beg!" cried Sforzi.

"Thousand legions of devils!" exclaimed De Maurevert, losing patience. "If you wish to be rid of my importunities—or, to speak more exactly, of my remonstrances—give me at least a good reason."

"My reason, captain, is one which you might long ago have guessed; should I not for ever dishonor myself by deserting my post on the eve of the combat?"

"Good!—Now you are thinking of drawing the sword against the brother whom a minute ago you were for saving at any price!"

"Draw my sword against the Marquis de la Tremblais!" repeated Sforzi, in a tone of horror and reproach. "Ah, De Maurevert, how could such an idea enter your mind? Have no such duty! I shall know how to fulfil at once my duty as a soldier and a brother. It will be bareheaded and with my sword in its sheath that I shall ascend to the assault."

"Madman!—triple madman!" muttered the captain.

After repeated conversations of the same sort, De Maurevert, vanquished by Raoul's obstinacy of purpose, gave up all further attempts to change his resolution.

The Grand Prévôt of Auvergne, invested by Monsieur de Harlai with the command-in-chief of the royal troops, had answered with his head for the capture of the château, and had lost not a moment in taking the direction of the siege. The breaching battery, instead of firing unavailingly at the shot-proof ramparts, had been turned against the crumbling rock upon which they were built, and the important results,

achieved almost as by enchantment, proved that the captain's anticipations had been entirely well founded.

From the failure of the frequent sorties he had made, the marquis at length saw clearly that his position was becoming desperate. He had several times, by signal, requested to be allowed to send a flag of truce into the royal camp; but De Maurevert pitilessly repulsed his advances.

A fortnight, to the day, and almost to the hour, a large portion of the ramparts of the château fell under the force of a volley of cannon-shot, amid shouts of wild delight raised by the royal troops.

"Death of my life!" cried De Maurevert, rubbing his hands in high glee, "the strong box is broken open; the rifling of its contents will quickly follow."

As day was closing when the breach was formed, De Maurevert deferred the assault until the following day; but, by way of precaution, he directed large fires to be lighted, and the cannonade to be continued throughout the night with redoubled vigor.

When he had given all his orders, the captain repaired to Raoul's tent with a very special object. He found the chevalier pale and thoughtful, but evidently glad to see him.

"Dear friend," said Sforzi, "I thank the chance which has brought you to me. Listen to me without interrupting me, and when you have heard what I have to say to you, do not answer me. I desire to consecrate to meditation and prayer the last few hours of my life. In spite of the difference of our character, De Maurevert, there is a strong and inexplicable sympathy between us. Dear companion, promise me that when I shall be no more, you will transfer to Mademoiselle d'Erlanges the affection you have always manifested for me. Swear that if ever she should require your arm or your intelligence, she shall not want either!"

This request furnished the captain an excellent opportunity for entering upon the subject which had occasioned his visit; nevertheless, he did not take advantage of it. Really touched by the sadness and resignation of his friend, it was with a warmth that was void of all mental reservation he cried:

"I swear, beloved Sforzi, if your dark presentiment be realized, to massacre, without mercy or pity, all aspirants to the good graces of Diane!"

"You have misunderstood me, captain," replied Sforzi, with a melancholy smile; "I do not wish you to oppress Mademoiselle d'Erlanges, but, on the contrary, to aid her with your experience and defend her with your sword. If Mademoiselle Diane thinks she will find her happiness in another love, and the man of her choice shall be worthy of her, you must look upon that man as your brother."

"Never!" cried De Maurevert, warmly. "By Orestes and Pylades, if you die I will never replace you! After having such a companion as you, it would be impossible for me to love anybody else. I promise to protect Mademoiselle d'Erlanges—let that suffice. Beyond that, I have a strong notion that, if you die, this pleasant young lady will go over to the good religion, and, for the purpose of glorifying your remembrance, take the veil."

These words caused Raoul a delight which he could not entirely conceal.

"Captain," he went on, "I have but a few words to add. Here is a will, by which I constitute you my universal legatee. I have so ill managed my fortune, however, you will find I leave you but a poor inheritance."

"Sforzi," cried De Maurevert, after rapidly scanning the contents of the will handed to him by Raoul, "if it would not be troubling you too much to take up the pen again and add another clause to this document, you would be rendering me a real service. Add, I beg, that you leave me, not only all that you possess, but also all effects, lands, moneys, and other valuables, that might have come to you had you lived; in a word, that you put me entirely in your place. Do not imagine, Raoul, that I love you the less because I take my precautions. Prudence and logic do not exclude sensibility."

Sforzi seated himself, and without hesitation modified his will to meet the wishes of his friend. When this labor was finished he took leave of the Grand Prévôt with a warm and long embrace.

"Dear companion," said De Maurevert to himself, as he went away, "in spite of the advantages I should gain by your death, I pray heaven from the very bottom of my heart to keep you safe and sound!"

At daybreak the sound of trumpets and drums mingled with the thunder of the cannonade; an extraordinary movement, a noisy and feverish activity reigned in the camp of the besiegers. De Maurevert shortly appeared arrayed in his best armor. The moment of the assault was fast approaching.

The most difficult and dangerous movement to be executed by the royal army was the descent into the ditches of the château, which were too deep and wide to be filled with fascines. Though protected by the royal batteries and furnished with long ladders, in spite of every precaution taken by De Maurevert, indeed, it was not without sensible loss that the column of attack was formed.

Bloody and obstinate was the engagement in the breach. For half an hour, detonations, cries of rage, and clashing of steel were incessant. At the end of that time, both sides, by tacit agreement, paused in their terrible work; but only for the briefest breathing space, and then the fight became a veritable butchery.

Raoul, bare-headed, dressed in a simple pour-

point, and armed only with a parade sword and dagger, pressed forward in the thickest of the fight.

"Heaven sustain, protect, and give me strength to resist the terrible temptation!" he murmured. "To take either side would be to render myself guilty of a crime against my brother or my king!"

"Chevalier!" said a gentle voice in his ear, at the moment when the *mêlée* had reached its utmost fury, "what joy it would be to be struck by one and the same bullet, so that we might die together!"

"Diane, I conjure you on my knees to fly!" Raoul almost shrieked.

"Never, Raoul! I have sworn to share the dangers of the brave men who are engaged in avenging the murder of my mother; and I will not break my oath. So long as there is a rebel in the breach, so long as there is a royal soldier there able to fight, I will not desert my post! Poor Raoul, how terrible must your sufferings be!"

"All that I have suffered till this moment is as nothing to the agony I now endure in seeing you exposed to danger! Oh, do not drive me to madness, dear Diane! Let me bear you to a place of safety! Come! come!—beloved Diane!"

Mademoiselle d'Erlanges tried to evade his embrace, but almost out of his senses with terror for her safety, he seized her and lifted her from the ground.

He had turned from the breach, when a hand of iron was laid upon his shoulder. Reduced to powerlessness by the precious load he was bearing, he uttered an exclamation of rage, and, sustaining Diane on one arm only, clutched at his dagger.

"By the god Mars!" cried a thundering voice—"it appears to me, chevalier, that you are failing both in respect to your chief and in your duty as a soldier!"

"Ah!—is it you, captain? Instead of staying me, help me to place Mademoiselle d'Erlanges in a place of security."

"Certainly not!" cried De Maurevert; "there is a time for everything, Raoul—for gallantry as well as glory. I sincerely regret that Mademoiselle d'Erlanges has obstinately insisted on partaking of our dangers, in spite of my urgent advice to her; but I cannot, and will not suffer you, Chevalier Sforzi, to abandon your post in such a cowardly manner, and set such a fatal example to the army. Fly, Raoul!—when the advantage of the day is still doubtful, when the rage of the rebels is decimating the royal troops—when blood is flowing in waves! Oh, it would be shameful! Rather than allow you to dishonor yourself so, I should prefer to blow out your brains with one of my pistols!"

While De Maurevert was thus addressing his companion, Diane contrived to free herself from Raoul's arms, and fled from him.

"Malediction!" cried Sforzi, "since it is the destiny of the Tremblais to be unable to avoid committing crimes, let my fate be accomplished! I go to fight against my brother!"

A few minutes later, De Maurevert and Raoul, leading the third column of attack, sprang with wild impetuosity into the breach; only Sforzi, before mounting, had thrown away his dagger.

At first, the new onset of the royal troops appeared to be unsuccessful.

"Thousand curses!" cried De Maurevert, his voice dominating all other sounds, "remember, companions, that to abandon your captain is to render yourselves guilty of felony, and to expose you to the penalty of being shot! Now that you are warned, do as you like. I am going forward, and I swear not to give ground!"

This address finished, De Maurevert sprang forward like a wild boar, going and overthrowing a pack of hounds on his way; or like a buffalo, head first, bursting through all opposition. The attacking column, electrified by his example, followed him with the noise and impetuosity of an avalanche. Ten minutes later, the white flag, sprinkled with *fleur-de-lys*, floated on the bastion of the château.

"Not even a scratch!" cried De Maurevert, joyously, on meeting Raoul. "You see, beloved companion, that your presentiment was idle! By all the ten thousand virgins of Paradise!—you, too have followed us, pleasant, courageous, and adorable Mademoiselle d'Erlanges! Your heroism, worthy of antiquity, will live in history!"

(To be continued.)

A DRAWING-ROOM AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

The Queen's levees are very much longer than those of the Prince of Wales. Then, at all ceremonials where there are ladies, men are compelled to wear, as I have said, silk stockings and knee breeches, slippers and shoe-buckles. One can support this costume in tolerable comfort in a warm room, but in getting from the carriage to the door it is often like walking knee-deep in a tub of cold water. A cold hall or a draught from an open door will give very unpleasant sensations. In many of the large rooms of the palaces huge fireplaces, with great logs of wood, roar behind tall brass fenders. Once in front of one of these, the courtier who isn't a Scotchman feels as if he would never care to go away. Fortunately, most of these ceremonials are in summer, but the first of them comes in February, and London is often cool well up into June.

The ceremony of a presentation to the Queen is quite the same as that at a Prince of Wales's levee. The spelling-class of royal ladies stand up in a rigid row. On the Queen's right is the

Lord Chamberlain, who reads off the names. Next to the Queen, on her left, is Alexandra, then the Queen's daughters and the Princess Mary of Cambridge. Next to them stand the princes, and the whole is a phalanx which stretches entirely across the room. Behind this line, drawn up in battle array, stand three or four ranks of court ladies.

The act of presentation is very easy and simple. Formerly—indeed, until within a few years—it must have been a very perilous and important feat. The courtier (the term is used inaccurately, but there is no noun to describe a person who goes to court for a single time) was compelled to walk up a long room, and to back, bowing, out of the Queen's presence. For ladies who had trails to manage the ordeal must have been a trying one. Now it has been made quite easy. There is but one point in which a presentation to the Queen differs from that already described at the Prince of Wales's levee. You may turn your back to the Prince, but after bowing to the Queen you step off into the crowd, still facing her. There (if you have had the good luck to be presented in the diplomatic circle) you may stand and watch a most interesting pageant. To the young royalties, perhaps, it is not very amusing, though they evidently have their little joke afterward over anything unusual that occurs. It is natural enough that they should, of course, and the fatigue which they sustain entitles them to all the amusement they can get out of what must be to them a very monotonous and familiar spectacle. There is plenty in it to occupy and interest the man who sees it for the first or second time. You do not have to ask, "Who is this?" and "Who is that?" The Lord Chamberlain announces each person as he or she appears. You hear the most heroic and romantic names in English history as some insignificant boy or wizened old woman appears to represent them. They are not all, by any means, insignificant boys and wizened old women. Many of the ladies are handsome enough to be well worth looking at, whether their names be Percy or Stanhope or Brown or Smith. The young slips of girls who come to be presented for the first time, frightened and pale or flushed, one admires and feels a sense of instinctive loyalty to.

The name of each is called out loudly by the Lord Chamberlain: "The Duchess of Fincastle," "The Countess of Dorchester," "Lady Arabella Darling on her marriage," etc. The ladies bow very low, and those to whom the Queen gives her hand to kiss nearly or quite touch their knee to the carpet. No act of homage to the Queen ever seems exaggerated, her behavior being so modest and the sympathy with her so wide and sincere; but ladies very nearly kneel in shaking hands with any member of the royal family, not only at court, but elsewhere. It is not so strange-looking, the kneeling to a royal lady, but to see a stately mother or some soft maiden rendering such an act of homage to a child of a boy or a gross young gentleman impresses one unpleasantly. The curtsy of a lady to a prince or princess is something between kneeling and that queer genuflection one meets in the English agricultural districts: the props of the boys and girls seem momentarily to be knocked away, and they suddenly catch themselves in descending. It astonished me, I remember, at a court party, to see one patrician young woman—"divinely tall" I should describe her if her decided chin and the evidently Roman turn of her nose and of her character had not put divinity out of the question—shake hands with not a very imposing young prince, and bend her regal knees into this curious and sudden little cramp. I saw her, this adventurous maid, some days afterwards in a handsome cab (shade of her grandmother, think of it!), directing with her imperious parasol the caddy to this and that shop. It struck me she should have been a Roman damsel, and have driven a chariot with three steeds abreast.—*Lippincott's Magazine.*

In the rogues' gallery in the New Orleans Police Department there is a picture of "Mollie Waterman and her dog." Mollie was no thief. She was never known to steal anything in her life, yet she was classed among thieves, because her dog had a habit of stealing. Mollie would go into a store and examine goods, jewelry, lace, &c., and the dog was always at her side. She had a way of telling the dog just what she wanted out of the store, and then she went out, and the dog hung around. When the shopman's back was turned the dog never failed to lay his teeth on the very article that Mollie wanted. He punctually brought it to his mistress at her rooms. Sometimes the dog took little things that he thought Mollie might want, without any hint from her. Mollie and her dog had a perfect understanding, worked together for several years, and were very dear friends, as events proved. One day the dog was caught stealing. Mollie flew to his rescue. She exonerated the dog and actually accused herself of being the thief. The police took her at her word. She said she was willing to do all the suffering and pay the penalty, but begged the jailers to spare the dog. The jailers had the photograph of Mollie Waterman and the dog taken and hung up among the rogues. They then told her the dog had to die without judge or jury. She prayed the inexorable police to take her life, but spare the dog's. They would not listen to her appeal, and killing the dog before her eyes, they flung his bleeding carcass into her cell and locked her up. The next morning Mollie Waterman was found dead in the cell, with the dog in her arms. There was an instance of devotion. That picture is worthy of a better place than a police-office rogues' gallery. Mr. Bergh ought to look after it.