

conducted her to the commissioner. Here she had to give an account of the whole history of the car-boxing, which greatly amused Tallien, and she was just in the act of enumerating Cardourel's invectives and curses against Thérèse Cabarrus, when one of the *Sans-culottes* announced the president of the revolutionary committee, citizen Cardourel.

"Just à propos!" cried Tallien, casting a meaning look on Thérèse, who was in high expectation of what was to follow. But Lucie, unaware of the preceding occurrence, could not conceal her anxiety to be surprised there by Cardourel.

Gilbert, on his part, was not a little puzzled at meeting Thérèse Cabarrus and the betrothed of his cousin. His frowning looks distinctly showed his ill-humour at this first reception in his official capacity, and he seemed also to guess why Lucie had made her appearance there.

"You come, citizen Cardourel," the commissioner said accosting him in an easy manner, "to examine the list of those who may be released?"

"As you have agreed," replied Cardourel,

"I have none to submit to you. Only one has been recommended to my mercy, the release of only one has been requested of me for justice's sake."

As Tallien stopped, Gilbert examined the physiognomy of the three persons, whose expression appeared eloquent.

"I think I can guess the name of the one," said he scornfully.

"It is Henry Tourguet," continued Tallien with malicious tranquillity; "and, as I am told that he is your cousin, I have no doubt you will approve of his release—for the denunciation is not worthy of a serious accusation."

"You are mistaken, citizen commissioner," replied Gilbert, who, unprepared for such a trick, had lost his self-possession by flying in a passion. "I myself have denounced my cousin, as he is a bad patriot, and I will prove it at the tribunal."

"Is it for the reason that he has boxed your ears?" asked Tallien with mock sympathy.

Gilbert trembled with anger, his face had become crimson. "Citizen," he burst forth, "this is an odd way of attending to our business. It seems you have forgotten that we came yesterday to a different agreement."

"Not so, citizen Cardourel, I have not forgotten anything; I only ask you if you consent to liberate citizen Tourguet, who is certainly not guilty? I, for my part, am decidedly of this opinion, he is not accused of any crime, of any offence."

"But I say, no!" cried Gilbert; "I will bring facts; I demand that so suspicious a person be accused."

"Citizen Cardourel," said Tallien soothingly, "he is your cousin; do not be so hard! Be lenient, citizen, I entreat you."

"No, no! I am a patriot who knows no weakness. I will never consent that this prisoner escapes his trial."

"Well then," answered Tallien, apparently giving in.

He hastily wrote a few lines on a piece of paper, which he handed to Lucie.

"Here, my child," remarked he, "the commissioner of the convention releases your betrothed from prison. Go for him yourself."

"Ha!" burst forth Gilbert in a towering passion. "This is vile treachery! But you shall repent it."

With these words he rushed out of the room.

"For God's sake, Tallien, shield yourself from this wretch," said Thérèse impressively to her lover.

"He will not escape me, my darling," quietly answered he.

His pen flew again over the paper, then he pulled the bell over his desk.

"This warrant," called he to the *Sans-culotte* who had entered, delivering him the paper, "is to be executed immediately."

CHAPTER VII.

THE MESSAGE.

When Gilbert Cardourel had left the commissioner of the convention, he was fully convinced that he had lost his game at the first trial. He had every reason to dread the power of Tallien, it being evident that Thérèse's insinuations had turned her lover's timidity into a self-conscious energy. He could not doubt, that the young deputy was influenced by Thérèse, who, with the instinct of an offended woman, perceived she had to deal with a vindictive foe. Judging from the manner with which she treated his defeat, when he made the attempt of carrying out his self-imposed mission, his calculation was upset by her resolution. The presence of Lucie, who could not conceal her mischievous joy, showed him clearly his position, and he saw himself threatened in his very person.

The danger of which he had not altogether lost sight, urged him to a sudden resolution. It was probable that Tallien would verify his threat, uttered in anger against him, and seize his person—this was the first thing to be guarded against. If he kept his liberty, he could act and domineer; the insult he had received awakened a burning desire in him to carry out his threat of revenging himself on Tallien, but still more on the Spaniard. What first appeared to him a fore-boding, an unaccomplished plan for further action, suddenly formed itself into decided resolutions. He did not wish to flee, but to attack, or rather he hoped that his escape would afford him the means of making a decisive blow against the persons who, he had sworn, should experience his hatred.

The Jacobin, when he left the Ombrière, had first taken the road to his dwelling, but when almost within its reach he had a presentiment that, if his arrest was decided upon, he would be sought after. Turning into a side-street, he went to the residence of the chief of the Jacobin Club in Bordeaux. He informed him of what had taken place, and what he was anxious about, and presenting his mandate for the accusation of Tallien, signed by the members of the revolutionary committee, expressed his intention of going himself to Paris. In this manner, he stated, he would escape the expected prosecution, and make a better impression with his complaint among the rulers in Paris, especially if his undertaking was supported, through the Jacobin Club, by the mother-society in Paris.

His confederate expressed himself thoroughly satisfied, and promised that the club would not fail to assist him; as he was at the same time the treasurer of the club, he handed Cardourel sufficient money to defray his travelling expenses, and wrote for him a letter of introduction to the Jacobin Club in Paris. Furnished with these very important articles, Cardourel, without further delay, hastened to leave Bordeaux. In the meantime, the pikemen and police officers, entrusted with the warrant against him, had vainly sought him in his

dwellings, and had reported to the commissioner of the convention that he was nowhere to be found. This report caused Tallien more anxiety than grief.

"He has escaped," said he to Thérèse Cabarrus; "he has gone to Paris to accuse me." By Tallien's command, officers were sent to search the road which Cardourel was supposed to have taken; next day they returned, without having found any trace of him. The same result, of course, followed the search in Bordeaux, which, by Tallien's special order, extended even to the examining of several of the Jacobins' houses—a circumstance which very much irritated the whole party, considerably increasing their mistrust against the commissioner, who had so visibly changed his character. Gilbert, who was not aware that policemen had been sent on his track, was very fortunate in escaping all these searches. As he had often enough assisted in the capture of fugitives, knowing the first measures the police generally took, he had not chosen the direct road to Paris, but had walked in an opposite direction to the next town, where he hired a carriage to take a distant station. By a circuitous route through Agen, Cahors and Aurillac, he reached on the third day the road which leads from Toulouse to Paris, and to which the search had been extended.

This fortunate escape seriously annoyed Tallien for several days, and the Spaniard had to exert all her eloquence to re-assure him.

"Why," she exclaimed, "this dread of an inferior, who is so much less important in Paris than in Bordeaux?"

"An accuser, who expressly travels from Bordeaux to Paris, gains thereby a certain importance," answered Tallien.

"Well, of what can you be accused? Have you committed a crime? Is such a man able to question all the services you have done to the republic?"

"They are mistrustful in Paris, my dear," replied he. "Robespierre is not my friend; at least I cannot rely upon him from one day to another. As long as we live in the province, it is easy for our enemies in Paris to strike a blow."

"What fancies! I do not know a reason that justifies such fears. You have opened the prison to those who were innocent—you have prevented useless bloodshed."

"This is sufficient crime for such as wish to ruin me," interrupted he.

"Who wishes to ruin you, Tallien?" she asked. "What induces you to think so? Oh, my friend, an useless anxiety has for some time oppressed your heart, and I, who so sincerely sympathise with you in all that concerns your interest, only perceive that you have gained a clear conscience in your terrible duties."

She clung tenderly to his shoulder, her eager eyes gazing lovingly into his gloomy countenance. Her enchanting power burst the cloud, letting forth a sunbeam of joy.

"My angel!" exclaimed he affectionately, yet anxiously. "Not every man has such a woman for his good genius; it is not every one who comprehends what you feel and what I feel with you, as your love has taught me. The reign of terror does not relax, it rather becomes more formidable. Will the men in Paris, for whom I have done my duty, now consider me remiss? Friends who withdraw their confidence are often the worst enemies. He who stops to-day is more despised, and has more to fear than he who remained neutral from the beginning. The arm that tries to catch the spokes of a rolling-wheel is sure to be broken."

"Dearest friend!" replied she, "I recollect a sentence by Seneca which says: 'He who sees misfortune in the future deserves to be pitted.' Why do you look on the future with such anxiety? It should rather fill you with proud hopes and self-confidence. He who can be content with himself at the present time has a right to hope for the future. I trust, my dear Lambert, to accompany you in your career of activity to higher aims."

"Oh, flatterer, you have captivated me!" said he smiling.

"A flatterer? Not so, my dear. I am your friend, a true and sincere friend, who feels proud if her actions please you. Away with care, Lambert—a narrow heart does not grow, but a wide one will expand! No more whims, Lambert! What is this Cardourel, who causes you such anxiety, and whom you have still the power to destroy? You have denounced him to the authorities in Paris as a fugitive from justice in Bordeaux—do you suppose that your official step will have less success than the talk of this wretch? And then, Tallien, is not every one at liberty to do what Cardourel does? Can you not as well be suspected here as by a vagabond in Paris? Perhaps it has been already done several times. You are only afraid of this man, whose villainess would find a hundred witnesses?"

Tallien indeed felt that in the position he held his fears were groundless, and comprehended that Thérèse's reasoning was right; nevertheless Cardourel came over and anon before his mind, appearing to him like a demon menacing his happiness. Great dangers, like great menaces, prove themselves mostly as phantoms when you openly confront them, but strong minds often tremble at small, well-calculated acts of vengeance, and try to shield themselves from malicious attacks. Tallien could not doubt that Cardourel was brewing a plot against him and his beloved—his malignity made him anxious, as he could not guess what plan he was concerting and what turn it might take. Great danger would have roused his courage and awakened his energy; against this apparently small one, but which might every moment increase, he could not fight, and had to wait for its development.

Weeks passed, and nothing occurred to re-awaken Tallien's anxiety; on the contrary every day offered him reward for his mild rule. The dreaded man of terror of former days had now become the most popular, and Thérèse Cabarrus was everywhere the good genius of Bordeaux. When both, as they often did, took short excursions in an open carriage to the country, or showed themselves in the streets, the people greeted them most cordially, availing themselves of this opportunity of expressing their gratitude. It seemed as if peace had come to the country after a long war and that everyone could now breathe freely. The fear which till lately was depicted on all faces and had oppressed all minds, had disappeared, and while a smile hovered round the lips of one, the face of another lost the ugly, rude expression it had assumed to show that it was the face of a persecuting and blood-thirsty patriot. Genuine good deeds reconcile every one, create harmony of sentiments and level contrasts. Tallien ruled with justice, which was a great gain and made Bordeaux the envied city of France. The laws were maintained, no more watched over by a body of blood-thirsty *Sans-culottes*, who dragged to the guillotine victims whose death should make them abhorred. The mob which had once stood round the guillotine, insulting

and scoffing the condemned, had disappeared and were ashamed of expressing themselves in this mode. The generous management of the law ennobles the mass of the people. Tallien did not commence any new prosecutions that were not based on decidedly criminal actions, the consequence of which was that the denunciations ceased, and the general notion of patriotism and securing liberty was lost, even banished in the public opinion. The guillotine stood still, the arm of the headsman rested; the tribunal decided only on criminal cases, and the law assumed again an imposing character.

At first the Jacobins had attempted to resist the abolishing of the reign of terror; in their club they had drawn up protests, accused the commissioner of disloyalty and weakness, and pointed out Thérèse Cabarrus as the Delila who had shorn Samson of his strength. But the old terrible Tallien, recovering his all energy, came upon them and had the heads of the rebellion arrested. The Jacobins were furious, but terror reined their actions, they swallowed down their anger, raised their fists threateningly against Tallien and sent their reports and complaints to the mother-society in Paris. The noise died out more quickly than could have been imagined; most Jacobins were content that their cruelty was no more required, and with all partiality for their own conviction, it was no more necessary to mock human feelings. They made on Tallien and Thérèse satirical songs which rather showed their good temper, and were, if possible, the most zealous, to prepare public omissions for them. There was among the different parties a kind of jealousy, a vying with each other who could do most in displaying their sympathies for Tallien and the beautiful Spaniard and gaining thereby honour and favour.

All these enjoyments had on Tallien's young mind an intoxicating effect; he imagined himself like a king who made his people happy, finding in this consciousness, in this merriment, his best reward. He reflected how easily monarchs, if they were intellectual and well-disposed, could diffuse happiness and bliss, and how this consciousness must fill them with the kingly desire of never doing enough of benevolent deeds. He found, however, amongst a hundred, scarcely one who had made himself worthy of such a royalty, but most of them had made their royalty a scourge; the others had been imbeciles, offending the people by the very recollection of their reign. Tallien's republican spirit broke forth, and he saw with satisfaction France delivered from the hazardous game of a dynastic rule, the nation freed from the unnatural sensations which royalty used and nursed, not to lose its ground with its Asiatic notions. As a republican he had introduced a happy government and with a feeling of pride thought of the future which might be destined for France. If terror produced for the whole country the harmony between liberty and that order which self-esteem and self-dignity engender, and which was the result of his own bloody government, pardonable on account of the passionate party-struggles—then the revolution had attained its object, and France was the land of the happiest people. Her men of terror became the reconcilers of the factions, their dictatorial power dissolved into the maintenance of the laws, and these laws were decreed by a free nation through its delegates.

Thérèse Cabarrus being the cause of this new order as well as of the change in Tallien's own character, he now loved her more enthusiastically than ever. It was no more her beauty that captivated him, it was rather her rich, wonderful mind that inspired him. With her magic power she had effected the change—he knew it well and was thankful to her for it. He could no more imagine that he had once been the formidable man of terror who, allied only with an enthusiastic hatred against all enemies of the republic, considers streams of blood necessary for liberty. He now thought differently, and more conscientiously of himself and his task, his mind soaring beyond the time of terror, depicted with noble pride the last and happy formation of France. Thérèse Cabarrus had given his mind this elevation, she had awakened his ambition, and had staked out the aim, the emulation to which is the task of a whole life, and its attainment the proud prize of human activity. His mind and soul had developed anew under her powerful influence. She had awakened in his breast sentiments which had laid dormant; the rude reality of life had tended to freeze in the young heart of Tallien the tender buds of feeling and virtue which ennobles man, but she had breathed upon them with the warm breath of life and caused them to blossom; the blossoms diffusing a narcotic fragrance which intoxicated him. He lived, as it were, in another world, where ideas are more powerful and passions effect happiness. Thus he comprehended what man's regeneration is: harmony of mind and heart. And the fairy, who had made this possible was basking in the happiness she had created, and which, as it seemed to him, must become extinct the moment she left him.

Thérèse Cabarrus herself felt that happiness was emptying its cornucopia over her, as an incident at this time occurred which should remove the only grief she had from her heart. The mail, which came twice a week to Bordeaux, had brought her letters from Spain. By the writing of the one, she saw that it was from her father who had for four years been kept in close confinement, during which time he had not been allowed the least intercourse with his family. With a joyful fore-boding she tore open the letter and greeted its first lines with exultation, with tears of bliss and filial love. Her father had not been found guilty of the charge of the embezzlement of public funds, and had been re-instated into all his offices of responsibility and dignities. Yet, still more; the king, after his displeasure had deposited him, had in his changed humour been pleased to give him a higher position; he had made him a count and his court-banker, also the intendant-general of roads and canals and director general of the royal manufactures. Overpowered with pleasure, she flew to her lover. But her violently throbbing heart stood still, when she perceived him, her crimson cheeks became ashy-pale, the bliss in her eyes chilled with terror.

Tallien was sitting at his desk, his head resting upon his hands, the red hair standing wildly round his forehead, his gaze being fixed in terror upon a letter which lay open before him. He did not observe the approach of Thérèse—he appeared entirely absorbed.

Thérèse Cabarrus sprang to his side, and seizing his shoulder, cried:

"Tallien, what is the matter? What has happened?"

She glanced over the letter which lay before him. "It was a decree of the committee of the public safety, saying: 'Citizen commissioner! you are hereby removed from your office in Bordeaux, and have immediately to repair to Paris.' It was signed by Robespierre."

(To be continued.)