

into a belief of his lofty pretension: "If monseigneur the cardinal is sick, let him come to me, and I will cure him; if he is well, he has no need of me, I none of him." This reply had the desired effect, and the imbecile cardinal sought the acquaintance which the charlatan had seemed so indifferent to cultivate.

Shortly after, Cagliostro visited Paris, where he became involved with the Cardinal de Rohan and the Countess de la Motte-Valois in the celebrated swindling transaction of the diamond necklace, which attracted at the time the attention of all Europe, and still excites great interest among the learned.

The history, or rather the romance, of this diamond necklace is worth telling in brief words. Boehmer, the king's jeweler at Paris, had exhausted all his skill and resources in the construction of a diamond necklace, which he hoped to dispose of to the Duchess du Barry, one of the royal mistresses. But the necklace, when completed, was of such exorbitant value—not less than seventy thousand pounds, or almost half a million of dollars—as to be beyond the purchasing power of even a king's favorite. The necklace therefore remained on the jeweler's hands for three years, as so much dead and locked-up capital. In vain did he attempt to excite the cupidity of the queen, Marie Antoinette: she felt that it was a luxury in which she dared not indulge, in the crippled condition of the French finances. But there were others who had seen and longed for the possession of the costly gaud. The Countess de Valois, an adventuress about the court, resolved upon a stupendous scheme of fraud, through which she might obtain the coveted prize, and convert its gems into ready money. She invited to her assistance Cagliostro, who who was then in Paris, working at his Egyptian masonry, and, through his influence over the Cardinal Rohan, secured the complicity, innocent or guilty as it may be, of the credulous prince. A woman named d'Oliva—some say it was Valois herself, of whose name Oliva was most probably the anagram—was engaged to personate the queen, and through a contract, to which the forged signature of Marie Antoinette was affixed, and through the guarantee afforded by the cardinal—who however claimed that he was himself deceived—Boehmer was induced to surrender the necklace to the countess for the queen, as he supposed, on terms of payment in installments. But the first installment, and then the second, remaining unpaid, the jeweler, becoming impatient for his money, made a personal application to the queen, when for the first time the fraud was discovered. In the meantime the necklace had disappeared. But it was known that the countess, from a state of indigence, had suddenly risen to the possession of wealth; that her husband, de la Motte, had been in England selling diamonds; for the necklace, too costly to be sold as a whole, could be more readily disposed of when taken to pieces; and that Cagliostro, too, was in possession of funds, for which hardly the income of his Egyptian masonry would account. The Cardinal de Rohan alone appears to have derived no pecuniary advantage from the transaction. He was, however, arrested, and placed in the Bastille, whither he was speedily followed by his two accomplices, the countess and Cagliostro. The cardinal, either because no evidence could be found of his guilt—for he stoutly asserted his innocence—or because of his ecclesiastical character, was soon liberated. But as a suspicion still hovered over him, he was banished from the court. The countess and Cagliostro endured a longer imprisonment, but were subsequently released from