

d'Halluin. Well ! I have found a victorious rival to oppose Schomberg !"

"And that rival, my lord ?"

"Is myself !" he replied with a triumphant air.

I could scarcely believe this strange news ; I would have replied, but he interrupted me.

"Not a word, Bernard ! the matter is decided ; by this match I will retain an old friend steadfast, and marry without the permission of my brother—under the very beard, as it were, of his worthy minion, *Maitre Gonin*—Oh ! what a rage His Eminence will be in !"

"But the marriage will be annulled !"

"That remains to be seen. In the first place, however, I must be certain that the stories I have heard of the beauty of the young Countess are not exaggerated, and for this purpose I am about to send thee to Brussels, where the Count resides."

I endeavored to expostulate, but the Prince was peremptory. Four days afterwards I was in Brussels, and was received frankly and hospitably by the Count de Rochefort, who had no suspicion of the cause of my visit. But how was I overpowered by the sight of his charming daughter ! I had never felt true love till then. On her entrance I became confused and trembling ; I would have spoken, but could only stammer out a few unconnected phrases. I had always laughed at those sudden passions which strike the heart like a levin-bolt ; I now understood and felt their power. The beauty of Adelaide De Rochefort surpassed all my dreams of loveliness. I could not resolve to aid in uniting her to another. That very evening I wrote to *Monsieur* that he had been deceived, that Mademoiselle De Rochefort was at best but a fine statue, that her eyes were blue and piercing, but far too large, that her lips were rosy enough, but far too small ;—in short, I calumniated as much as possible the fair features that had enslaved me. To all this I added certain strong political reasons why he should give up his project. When my letter arrived at Nancy, where the Prince then was, Montresor was explaining to him the advantages which would arise from his union with the daughter of the Duke of Lorraine, and the contents of my despatch so enforced his arguments, that Gaston de Orleans abandoned his own plan in favor of that of Montresor.

But this was not all. I managed so as to induce *Monsieur* himself to command my espousals with the fair Adelaide, as another link to bind the Count de Rochefort to his party. I feigned to comply though pure obedience, and as if it were a great sacrifice on my part. I was not displeasing to the young lady herself ; the Count at once granted her hand to the favorite of the Duke of Orleans, and I passed at Brussels the six happiest

months of my life. But at the end of that time, a letter from Montresor announced that the Prince, taking pity on my situation, recalled me to Paris. I saw then the fault I had committed ; but it was too late—I had to tear myself from the paradise where I could have passed my whole life. When I announced my intention to Adelaide, she burst into tears.

"Ah ! you love me no longer," she exclaimed, "since you quit me thus."

"Nothing in the world shall ever abate my love," I returned, embracing her tenderly. "But can I betray the confidence of the Prince, or refuse him my counsels, and, if necessary, my blood ?"

"You do not love me," she replied sadly ; "you only think of your ambition. Happiness is here—to seek it elsewhere is to flee its presence ! Think you that the thoughts of your being in the service of the Duke of Orleans will console me for your absence ? Will the joy of *Monsieur* and of all your friends at your return dry one of the tears your departure will cause me to shed ? No, Bernard ! you do not love me !"

"I swear to you — !"

"Stay, Bernard ! such oaths are only made by those who wish to break them."

I was affected, and knew not how to reply.

"I am resolved, Bernard !" she resumed in a firmer tone. "You must either not deprive me of your presence here, or you must permit me to accompany you !"

The embarrassment of my position may easily be comprehended. I had at last no resource but to reveal the whole truth. I thought, by this means, at once to re-assure her of my love, and to suppress her wish of accompanying me to Paris. She listened to my avowal with a troubled countenance, and when I had finished, she remained for a few minutes thoughtful and contemplative.

"Return to the court, Bernard !" she said coldly ; "I will detain you no longer. I will remain in this town, which will seem a prison to me after your departure."

I endeavored to console her ; but she listened to me with an air of constraint, repeating sometimes with a forced smile—

"So ! I might have been Duchess of Orleans ! Even in my dreams I could never have anticipated so high a lot."

"And do you now regret it, Marchioness de Cossé ?" I enquired.

"Certainly not, Bernard !" she replied.

She then made an effort to throw off her air of abstraction, and asked me a thousand questions of the beauties of Paris—the splendours of the Court—the favorites of the Prince ;—but her enquiries went no higher. Then I paid no atten-