

THE QUEEN'S FRIEND.

One evening the young Queen, Marie Antoinette of France, was feeling even more utterly wearied than usual with the royal conventionalities and unmeaning solemnities of the court.

Two hours afterward, while the winds whistled among the trees of Trianon, and all was quiet in the palace, the Queen and her ladies were seated in the carriage.

They soon arrived at the barriers, and shortly after, amid a pelting rain, at a certain part of the Palais Royale, then used for theatrical representations and balls connected with the opera.

But this tumultuous crowd, these wild dances and familiarities of speech and manner, these rude imitations of the cries of various animals served but to intoxicate the senses of the Queen, and she roved wherever her fancy roamed.

Adopting a nasal Neapolitan accent, he said: "I invite one of these ladies to the gavotte."

"If these sweet ladies, whom I believe to be persons of rank, prefer the quadrille, I shall be equally pleased with their companionship in that dance," he continued.

"Leave us alone!" cried she, authoritatively, and as he attempted to seize her by the waist, she quickly repulsed him with a sounding box on the ear which caused the fall of his false nose and moustache.

"Very well, arrest them," said the Turk, a man of middle size, "but respect the fair sex and the incognito." And, addressing the crowd, "By my faith, gentlemen, surely for forgets that France is the country of gallantry and good taste.

Thus escorted, they arrived at the Rue St. Honore, where in a miserable station, the police were engaged in playing at cards on empty barrels by the light of a tallow candle.

"Remove your masks," commanded the sergeant. "Impossible," replied the Queen. "Your names?" "Martha and Mary only."

"I am sure of it. All I ask is a short private interview with you." "Ah! ah, alone," said the watchman, laughing maliciously.

"Why do you insist on my revealing my name? I have compromised myself by attending the ball. Should it be known that I have done so, I am ruined."

"I worship you." Then in a hurried and breathless manner, he added, "Yes, I am to you a stranger, a madman. But listen to me, I saw you for the first time when as the Dauphiness you made your solemn entry into Paris with your husband by the Porte de la Conférence.

Queen of France. The sovereign of all, and I'm but one of your most obscure and humble servants, yet no one has the power to forbid my adoring you, for I know you are loving and kind.

"When you desire any favor for yourself or relatives, you have only to appeal to me." "I ask nothing, your Majesty, but to watch over your happiness, and to pray heaven to protect you.

"I allowed them to escape." "But why?" "I have nothing to hide; I will not compromise these men. The ladies were friends of mine, and I preferred sacrificing myself to your anger to leaving them to their fate."

"The noble Breton accepted imprisonment and degradation almost joyfully in the service of his beloved Queen, sustained by the thought that he had suffered for her sake.

"The Queen's musings were interrupted by the stopping of the carriage as they reached an obscure faubourg of Versailles, when Martha considered it wise to proceed on foot, fearing lest the sound of carriage wheels might awaken the sleepers of Trianon."

"A few years rolled by, and on a calm October morning Marie Antoinette, her robes staid and her hair in a black gown, a muslin fichu and lawn cap, was seated beside the priest Girard in the cart which conveyed her to the scaffold, amidst an innumerable and hostile crowd which filled the streets from the Conciergerie to the Place de la Revolution.

"At the corner of the Church of St Koch, an insulting crowd assailed the fallen Queen, and at the same moment a cry of 'to arms' arose in one of the narrow streets which opened into the Rue St. Honore.

The cart had continued its course. The Queen turned, and, although she saw nothing, she knew that the brave Rosnoen had offered his life a willing sacrifice for her, and two tears of tenderness, despair, and perhaps love, rolled softly down her cheeks.

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