

ing not nearly such a capable judge of human nature as I am. Monsieur de Cardillac deserves no praise. What he did was done from the most selfish of motives."

"My dear daughter!" protested the duke, thinking she had become demented through imprisonment and anxiety.

"Oh, I know whereof I speak, and can fathom Monsieur de Cardillac's cunning much more accurately than you do. He rescued the Queen in hope of a reward."

"My dearest Thérèse, he has well earned a reward, and shall have it without stint. All the treasure——"

"That is extremely generous of you, father. You have said enough, and what you say is extremely satisfactory, for it pleases your daughter, as doubtless it pleases Monsieur de Cardillac. That night in the forest, after our escape from the convent, I practically promised to marry Monsieur de Cardillac if he succeeded in rescuing the Queen."

"You *what!*" gasped the duke, with darkened brow. The poor man had aspired to a royal alliance for his only daughter.

"Father, this is a very critical moment with you. Be careful what you say. I am sure you would like to secure the good will of your future son-in-law, and it will be futile coming to me after-