

*Enter Bontemps.*

BOX.—(To Coun). Madam, I have informed Monsr. De Vardes.

COUN.—Well?

BOX.—He departs instantly for Paris, there to await further intelligence.

COUN.—Thanks, Bontemps! (*Bon. retires*). The first burst of indignation over—the King will relent—he will never allow the affair to transpire.

LA VAL.—The eyes of the courtiers are upon us.

KING.—Let them gaze! We would call the world to witness our enthralment. Confirm my delight, sweet girl, with one fond look.

LA VAL.—I dare not.

LOUIS.—One word, then!

LA VAL.—Oh, Louis!

KING.—Enough! The magic word is uttered. Dearest Louise! oh, intoxication of delight! My own Louise—my modest violet—no longer your sovereign—henceforth your slave!

DE L.—He is too much absorbed to think of the signal. De Guiche will escape. (*Dance over*).

LA VAL.—The dance is ended—the procession advances!

KING.—Already! adieu, then, to elysium for a time. *The procession defiles before the King. The courtiers advance and bow obsequiously to La Valliere. The King, after conversing with some of them, makes a sign to De Lauzun, who intercepts De Guiche advancing toward the King.*

DE L.—(To De G.) Sir—you are my prisoner.

DE G.—How, De Lauzun! you are out of order: this is not in the programme.

DE L.—I arrest you, at his Majesty's command.

COURTIERS.—Long live the King!

DE G.—I beseech you, Sir! This is some mistake!

KING.—True, sir, there has been a mistake—we have too long harboured traitors, near our person. Monsr. De Lauzun! remove the Count de Guiche—apprehend the Marquis de Vardes—conduct them forthwith to Vincennes.

COURTIERS.—Long live the King!

*De Guiche gives up his sword to De Lauzun—and is placed between a file of Musquetaires—Madame utters a cry and faints in the arms of ladies.*

LA VAL.—See, Sir! Her highness faints—(*rushes to Madame*)—she is dying.

KING.—(*leads La Val. to front*). Be not alarmed! she will speedily recover. (*Madame borne off*.)

LA VAL.—I beseech your Majesty to pardon them!

KING.—Guileless—compassionate creature! (*aside*). It would be good policy—avoid publicity—and keep the Queen in happy ignorance.

COUN.—(*Falls at King's feet*). Mercy, Sir, for De Guiche—for De Vardes—for myself!

LA VAL. (*kneels*). Permit me to unite my prayer with that of the Countess.

KING.—Rise, angelic girl! To your solicitation they are indebted. De Lauzun, release Monsr. De Guiche, we pardon him as also Monsr. De Vardes. Both, however, must bid adieu to the court, during our pleasure. (*De Guiche bows and exit*).

SOLDIERS.—Long live the King!