

stood upon a pedestal of green marble, was a conspicuous object, and every recess was filled with forms of beauty cut from the Parian stone, that seemed "to mock with art," the gazer's eye. Charts, plans of sieges and campaigns, and warlike trophies, were interspersed among these gems of genius; and on an antique table, occupying the centre of the apartment, among books and parchments confusedly piled together, lay some beautiful enamels of Francis Clouet's, the brilliant badge of the order of St. Michael, with which the duke had been invested by his sovereign, and the diamond-hilted sword of France.

The brief September day was already drawing to a close, and the red rays of the setting sun streamed through the richly stained glass of a high gothic window, upon the tessellated marble of the floor, and glanced effulgently from the brilliants that encrusted the weapon. When Bourbon entered the chamber, his thoughts were dwelling on one pale and lovely image,—and wounded pride and honour, and blighted name, and lost station, were at that moment forgotten in the wild rush of agony that came over him with the fear, that his rupture with the king might be the means of severing forever the princess from his love. But as the blinding ray thus reflected from the jewelled sword smote his eyes, a new current was given to his thoughts, and impatiently seizing the ensign of his official dignity, he cast it into a cabinet.

"Lie there, glittering symbol of authority that is no longer mine," he said. "Lie there, till this day's insults are atoned for, or I am branded with a name which will forbid me ever more to grasp thee."

And turning away, he traversed the apartment with a rapidity that fearfully expressed the disorder of his agitated mind. Hour after hour passed thus, while swelling thoughts like dark and angry waves, seemed to bury in their frightful surges every gleam of brightness and of hope that yet lingered in his soul. Love! Glory! those stars of his horizon they had set in darkness! His recent treaties with the emperor were betrayed, and though as yet he had forborne to compromise his loyalty, he had lost his sovereign's confidence, and forfeited all claim to his favour. What alternative was left him then, but to become an alien and a traitor?

He shuddered at the thought; yet did not his bitter wrongs justify even this step? Would not the world defend his conduct, and cast its scorn upon the monarch who had driven him to such extremities? He would win glory in other lands, and France should learn to tremble at his name. Then, as if deprecating such a decision, rose to his view the imploring form of the fair and tender Renée, the bland countenance of the queen, the cherub faces of her royal children, to defend and support whom, he was bound by the double ties of loyalty and blood.

Thus vacillating, distracted by contending pas-

sions and duties, wore away the evening. He had disregarded the summons to supper,—the physical necessity for food was forgotten in the tumult of a soul, whose calm and lofty tone had rarely been so shaken and disturbed before. The attendants brought wine and other refreshments, and placed them on the table; of the former, Bourbon sparingly partook, but the grosser viands still remained untouched.

The night waned fast, and his mind settled into no fixed purpose for the future. A persuasion, that the king, sooner than drive him to open rebellion, would in the course of the following day, make some conciliatory overture, forced itself upon him, and he cherished the thought, till his irritated feelings resumed a degree of calmness, that surprised himself. But then, anxiety for the princess Renée harassed him—her death-like image, as he had beheld it in the forest, haunted him, and he awaited only the dawn, to dispatch a private messenger to Fontainebleau, who should bring him tidings of her state.

It wanted but one hour of midnight—the sound of mirth had died away in the banquetting hall, and the solitary tread of the warder alone disturbed the deep unbroken silence that reigned throughout the castle. The duke was not yet composed enough to seek his couch, but he had ceased his restless walk, and now sat, his face buried in his folded arms, leaning on the table, over which hung a silver lamp, the chain apparently held by cherubs, that, painted in one of Raffaele's most exquisite frescoes, formed the centre of the ceiling.

Presently his train of thought was disturbed by a low sound in the corridor—he raised his head, and distinctly heard a whisper—then an approaching step,—it paused at his door, which was locked on the inside, and starting to his feet, he stood for a moment, irresolute what course to pursue. A slight tap on the panel decided him, and hastily turning the key, he unclosed the door, when a solitary figure, wearing the loose garment and enveloping hood of a monk, glided into the apartment, and stood silently before him. The stature of the intruder was tall, though the proportions of the figure seemed alight; but the singularity of the visit at that hour, and after the stirring events of the day, somewhat startled the duke, who, suspicious of a foe beneath the sacred garb, retreated a pace or two, and sought in his girdle for the hunting knife which he had neglected to lay aside since his return from the chase.

At this gesture, the stranger's disguise was cast away, and glittering in the robes, with which she had been decked for the royal table, stood revealed to his astonished view, the commanding figure of his haughty and relentless persecutor, the Duchess D'Angoulême. Jewels gleamed amidst the dark braids of her hair, and her lofty brow wore the authority