

"Pardon me, M. Durand, but have you any intention of putting yourself in the ranks?"

"Of putting myself in the ranks! Certainly not."

"But, in short, would you accept of the candidatureship if it were offered to you?"

"That is a serious question. The office of Deputy would be a very heavy charge, especially for such a man as I. Only consider, sir, if I were in the chamber, I should consider myself the representative and champion of the labouring and mercantile classes; and it would be a rough contest, to endeavour to uphold the rights of those whom the higher powers persist in trampling on."

"And those rights could not have a more noble representative, nor a better defender."

"I must allow that I should strain every nerve to sustain them, being instigated so to do, both by conviction and sympathy; for I am myself one of the people, and feel a lively resentment at the indignities to which I see them constantly exposed."

"Well then, sir," said M. Daneau, "will you allow me to add my name to that of the elector who made this requisition?"

"By no means," said the banker; "even though I were disposed to encourage such a requisition, I should not wish his name to appear prominently in it. He is a good fellow, but has, from imprudence rather than ill intention, suffered his name to become somewhat blown upon in the mercantile world."

"It is through your kindness that mine is preserved from the same predicament," replied M. Daneau, "and it will make me still prouder of it than ever, if you deem it worthy of being written at the foot of this letter."

"Why," said the banker, in an indifferent tone, "I am aware that your name being there, would induce many others, and if such a letter as that were signed by a considerable number of electors, so that I might be assured that it spoke the sentiments and wishes of many, instead of one grateful person, it would have a great effect in removing my scruples, and might induce me to come forward."

"I promise you in two days two hundred signatures," said the builder, anxious to requite in some way, the disinterested kindness of the banker to him. "Do you permit me to try it?"

"I am afraid it would be a useless attempt."

"That is my business," exclaimed Daneau, quite elated at the victory he thought he had gained over the modesty of the banker.

"Your business be it then," replied the latter, smiling; "since you force me to this, I

would wish it to be well understood that I am myself a child of the people. It is to the people I address myself; it is from them I wish to receive my commission, and it is for them I am determined to use it."

"They shall know it, sir, and you shall see that the people are not ungrateful."

"It is well, Monsieur Daneau; you are an honest man and I can refuse you nothing; yet hide this paper for the present and say nothing more on the subject to-day. Now let me shew you my house and grounds. As an architect you ought to take an interest in the former at least;" and thus saying, the banker and mason wandered about for more than an hour over the spacious and magnificent park, which, being laid out in the most approved style of landscape gardening, abounding with rare trees and foreign shrubs, and watered with purling streams and translucent fish-ponds, offered at almost every step some new object of admiration to the delighted mechanic; until they came to the princely mansion itself, an antique structure, which had belonged to one of the oldest and most considerable families in France, and which still retained the feudal moat and drawbridge of former times. Here, after having taken some hasty refreshment, the builder took his leave of the banker, eager to stir himself in requital of his unhoped-for kindness and condescension.

CHAPTER IV.

THE evening being arrived, found a brilliant display of rank and fashion crowding the gay saloons of the Genoese marquis. Haughty nobles and wealthy citizens here met on neutral ground, yet not without some jealous heart-burning on the part of the female portion of both classes. The peeresses almost unconsciously preserved an air of distance and reserve towards their less aristocratic, though more purse-proud neighbours; which the latter,—fully alive to the indisputable claims of wealth in so luxurious and extravagant an age,—repaid by an air of defiance that drew a distinct line of separation between the two parties during the evening. This conventional line, however, though confined in great measure to the fair sex, did not appear to be universally observed even by them; for the two persons who, by their relative station and superior personal attractions, might fairly be entitled to rank as leaders of the two belligerent parties, were amicably seated side by side, and engaged in an animated conversation during the early part of the evening. The one of these, a tall and sedate looking girl, clothing the naturally