

causing suspicion; but let the gates be closed, and let no one pass until the morning—you understand me?"

Gabouri made a low and ceremonious inclination.

"You, Monsieur De Croissi," she continued, "will remain to-night in Gabouri's apartments, and tomorrow your prisoner, as soon as he is discovered, shall be placed in your hands. Now leave us!"

De Croissi was about to retire with his conductor, when the Queen Regent remarked a curl on the sarcastic lip of the Coadjutor.

"You smile, Monsieur!" she said; "might I know why?"

"I was amused, Madame!" replied De Gondi. "on thinking how unfortunate the poor Baron is; if I am not mistaken, this is the second prisoner he has lost to-day."

This allusion, which De Croissi seemed at once to comprehend, drew from him a suspicious and irritated glance.

"Believe me, Sir," he said, in a tone of suppressed anger, "that were I permitted to search out the author of the treason that has disappointed our plans, I should not, perhaps, be very long in discovering him."

"What says this model of brothers—this tender guardian of poor Fabian de Croissi?" inquired Paul de Gondi, in a tone of voice mischievously provoking.

The Baron lost his usual self-control.

"He says that a perfidious priest is the sole cause—"

"Silence, Sir! silence!" interposed the Queen, authoritatively. "What right have you thus to raise your voice in my presence, and insult a person so elevated in dignity and merit, as the worthy Coadjutor? Your insolence has more than once carried you too far this evening, Monsieur de Croissi. Because I have deigned to admit once into my council an obscure and petty nobleman, must he take upon himself to use such a tone in my presence? Hence, Sir! hence! And learn that when people like you are no longer necessary, they are cast off, and repulsed with contempt and disgust?"

The baffled courtier, overwhelmed by this reproof, gloomily followed Gabouri from the oratory. When the Queen was at length left alone with the Coadjutor, she threw herself into a chair, and exclaimed in deep despondency:

"They will drive me mad—they all betray me! I have more need than ever, holy Sir! of your services and counsel."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FLIGHT.

FABIAN DE CROISSI, in the mean time, hurried, with his unknown liberator, through the extensive galleries of the Saint Honoré cloisters, and, spite of his anxiety to escape, he could not help feeling some curiosity to learn the name of the person who took so great an interest in him; but his utterance of the first word was immediately succeeded by a rude push from his conductor. Reduced to silence by this mute signal, he endeavoured at least to distinguish the features of his mysterious friend. The part of the cloisters which they traversed was plunged in complete obscurity, and his guide must have possessed a very exact knowledge of the localities to proceed so rapidly as he did, and through so many different turnings. All that Fabian could remark, was that his conductor himself displayed tokens of great terror; his hand shook, and his voice, when he warned De Croissi in a whisper, to descend or mount a step, to turn to the right or left, trembled with fear. Several times he suddenly stopped, thinking he heard the distant sound of a foot-fall, or saw a light gleam at the extremity of a corridor. At last, after a long, though rapid circuit, he led Fabian into a small chamber, poorly enough furnished, and still worse lighted, and which seemed to appertain to some of the lower servants of the palace.

"Well, Boniface! have you succeeded? Do you bring him with you?" exclaimed an individual, who seemed to have been waiting for them, and who rose from his seat as the door opened.

"Here he is!" returned Boniface, in a voice still trembling, as he ushered in his young companion.

Fabian paused, and earnestly regarded the person who had thus welcomed them.

"Fear nothing," said his guide; "it is my cousin, Eustache Vireton, one of the best scholars of the Sorbonne. In the name of all the saints, Eustache, let us make haste! They will soon perceive this young gentleman's absence, and search the cloisters. Holy Saint Boniface! should they catch us before we reach the postern, we should soon have lodgings in the Bastille, and never see the outside of it again."

The party, reinforced by the young scholar, again set out, and were immediately hurrying once more through obscure and intricate passages.

"Ah! we are lost!" cried Boniface, with a sudden start; "here is some one!"