

come on a former occasion, were there again. I mean the Marquis de Berizy and M. Daneau, the real nobleman and the real man of the people.

As before, the banker was again attentively reading a paper which seemed to affect him much, and in which he was so completely absorbed as not to notice the presence of his visitors, until the Marquis at length said—

“What is the matter? What bad news causes you so much concern?”

M. Durand instantly recovered himself, and vainly endeavouring to control his emotion, said—“Oh! nothing but a satire.”

“And does that affect you so much?” said M. Daneau.

“It is the hand that wrote it that wounds me, more than the blows he inflicts. This paper is the production of a young man whom I have myself brought up; of an orphan, who has made use of the education I gave him, and of the secrets to which my unreserved intimacy admitted him, to calumniate and ridicule me.”

“What!” cried Daneau, “can it be young Leopold Baron, to whom you allude? that lad who owes every thing to your bounty, and who once never spoke of you but in terms of adulation?”

“The same,” said the banker.

“Well, then,” replied M. Daneau, “I must now tell you, that from the first I suspected the fawning demeanour of that youth, nor am I surprised at this base ingratitude; for every flatterer is a detractor.”

“It is too true,” said the Marquis.”

“Let us quit this subject, I beg,” said Durand, whose feelings were too painful to bear further probing; “I guess the object of your visit, gentlemen; it is to claim your funds.”

They both began to speak at once, when each stopping to give way to the other, the banker took the opportunity of resuming—“But I think that the explanations I have to give will satisfy you both—”

“As you please,” interrupted the Marquis; “but my reason for wishing to be heard is, that you mistake the object of my visit, and I have strong suspicion that M. Daneau’s is misunderstood also.”

The builder nodded assent, and the Marquis continued—“You are an honest man, M. Durand, and you owe me two millions of francs. I am come to request that you will keep them all.”

“What!” cried the banker in astonishment.

“I am come to beg that you will still retain

the charge of my funds,” repeated the Marquis; “and rest assured that I shall not re-demand them, until I have good reason to know that you have no further need of them. It is evident that your enemies have taken advantage of the confusion of the times to effect your ruin, by calling in their funds at a moment’s notice; but I cannot make myself an accomplice to such ungenerous proceedings, nor, by yielding to the general panic, expedite the evil from which all are attempting to fly. We are political opponents, M. Durand, but this is a matter of honour and honesty, in which my political opinions have no voice.”

Whether pride and satisfaction at finding his integrity so fully relied on, or humiliation at feeling himself under such weighty obligations to one of a class whom he had used his utmost efforts to crush, were the predominant feeling of the banker at this proof of the Marquis’s consideration, seemed at first to be a matter of doubt even to himself. The better feeling, however, triumphed, and after a moment of hesitation, he held out his hand, saying—

“I thank you, Monsieur le Marquis, and I accept your offer.”

At this instant, M. Daneau advanced with an embarrassed air, and said, with some confusion—“You owe me, it is true, only six hundred thousand francs, but if the retention of that sum would be any accommodation to you, I shall rejoice in being able in any degree to contribute my mite in return for the aid you afforded me in my time of need.”

A tear glistened in the eye of the banker at this benevolent offer, which, under the circumstances, he could not consider himself fairly entitled to, and he exclaimed—

“Ah! this consoles me for all. I thank you, M. Daneau, from the bottom of my heart, but I cannot accept your offer. It is your all, and I should deprive you of the means of carrying on your business.”

“The interest will be sufficient for me,” said the builder, “and I am rich enough. Do not mortify me by refusing.”

“You are acting like a man and a christian, sir,” said the Marquis, turning to M. Daneau and cordially grasping his hand.

“And you too, my lord,” returned Daneau, whose enthusiasm led him to address him by a title, the abolition of which appeared to be one of the most precious achievements of the revolution. “And you too, my lord, much more so, for I, who have never been rich, shall not feel the want of my money as much as you, who have been brought up in luxury.”