

Tell him that at least one woman can be trusted." Again that sweet seductive smile, that timid glance from the fawn-like brown eyes, and the monarch was a slave to Diane de Poitiers.

"M. de Roberval," he said angrily, "anything you have to say to me may be said before this lady. She knows all my secrets, she is my wisest counsellor, my best adviser. Are you not, Diane?" brushing back a stray curling lock which had fallen on the lace ruffles about her neck.

M. de Roberval, that blunt nobleman turned very red and muttered something inaudible. He had not ridden thus far in hot haste to witness the love-making of the king. He had half a mind to shake the dust off his feet and leave this court as abruptly as he had come, for he was a devout Catholic and could not tolerate this conduct even in high places. How he hated this woman with her lovely face, her sphinx like smile, her soft white hands, and her mysterious deep brown eyes. He had sense enough, however, to disguise his repugnance and prudence whispered in his ear that it would be fatal to his project to denounce the favorite.

"M. de Roberval," said Francis impatiently. "We are waiting for you to begin."

"Sire," said the nobleman, "my cousin has lately returned from Spain and says that preparations are being made on a grand scale to send out a fleet to the New World and follow up the discoveries made by your Majesty's faithful servant some years ago, Cartier, the Captain of St. Malo."

"By all the Saints and Our Holy Mother, I can scarce credit it," said Francis, starting and laying his hand on his sword involuntarily. "But I might have known. What are promises, what are treaties, to that wily hypocrite, Charles of Spain? But he shall not succeed this time. New France shall remain in my dominions for ever."

"Well said!" exclaimed De Roberval and Diane smiled that inscrutable smile, which might mean much or again so little."

"And now my faithful vassal, Jean François de la Roque, have you any suggestion to make? Any means by which we can defeat our crafty brother of Spain and Germany?"

"Sire," replied De Roberval, "I have a suggestion to make, I rode in hot haste for many a mile to make it, and I pray that it will meet with your Majesty's approval."

"Speak on," said the king, approvingly.

"Your Majesty must know that for many generations the De Roberval's

have been his faithful vassals." The king nodded in assent. "In Picardy we are all loyal subject. But, Sire, I have long wished to do something to gain greater glory for France, to explore the New World, to build up a vast dominion for France, and our holy faith, beyond the great Atlantic."

"Thou speakest well," said Francis, and Diane leaned forward, her face reflecting the enthusiasm of De Roberval's.

"Yes, your Majesty, I have had speech with that intrepid voyager Cartier of St. Malo. He has told me of his former journeys up the wondrous river called after the martyred Saint Lawrence. He is positive that it leads to the kingdom of Cathay, and, had we but means to pursue the discoveries, your Majesty would have power and dominion beyond all monarchs upon earth. Sire, I beseech you, send out another expedition. Make me commander, and with the help of the brave Cartier we will make your Majesty's reign a glorious one in the annals of our country."

"It is a fair sounding project," said Francis. "What say you, Diane?"

De Roberval bit his lip. It was not thus that Kings of France should confer with their loyal vassals. It was outrageous that matters such as these should be weighed in the balance by a woman, yes a mere girl such as this Diane seemed to be. Here was he hanging on her answer, awaiting her decision, when he longed to order her out of the room and bid her mind her tapestry and leave weighty councils to the well tried vassals of the Crown.

"M. De Roberval speaks wisely," said the lady in her low sweet voice. "He is enthusiastic, but without enthusiasm little is effected. Sire, I think his project merits your consideration."

"Thank you, Madame," said De Roberval, addressing her directly for the first time and smiling sarcastically, "thank you, Madame, I am honored that it meets with your approbation."

"M. De Roberval," said the king, "you are weary with your journey. We will dismiss you now and see you later in the day to consider your counsels."

The old nobleman bowed himself out of the audience chamber and the King turned to Diane.

"What think you of this man, my best adviser?"

"He is no courtier, that I can safely say," she replied, smiling. "He disapproved of me, and he showed it very plainly. Perchance my enemies have spread reports even to the remote woods of Picardy."

"And if they did, what need you care, my sweet?" replied the king.

"What need I care? Can you ask that?" said Diane, rising. "Have I not sacrificed all and can I be happy knowing how I am distrusted and despised? Francis it was an evil day when I came to plead with you for my father's life."

"Diane what would you? I have heaped upon you riches, honours, jewels."

"Pooh! what are they?"

"Diane you are ungrateful, you are too ambitious, you want power. You love me for what I can bestow, not for myself, Diane."

"Your Majesty," she said coldly, rising and going towards the door, "the court is awaiting you to begin the hunt. This is no time for reproaches."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Dominion Illustrated.

The handsomely illustrated article on the Cuthberts, of Berthier, which appears in the last issue of *The Dominion Illustrated*, should be read by every one interested in the early history of Canada. In the same number is a delightful article by Miss MacLeod on the Augustan Days of Edinburgh recalling memories of Scott, Sydney Smith, Jeffrey, Brougham, Sir William Hamilton and a host of other great names. F. Blake Crofton contributes a charming illustrated poem. There are letters from London, Toronto and Halifax. The Sagamore gives his opinion of the recent Mercier demonstration. A full page portrait of the Emperor of Germany is reproduced, also views in St. John's, Nfld., and other fine engravings. The number is a fine one.

Canada's International Exhibition.

Arrangements are in progress for holding a Dairyman's Convention at St. John, N. B., during this exhibition and it is expected that several experts will be present and will give some lectures on dairy interests. Arrangements are also being made for showing several varieties of cream separators and other dairy apparatus in operation. It is also proposed to offer some special prizes for dairy products, and that the competition may be open to all the Provinces. Prof. Robertson, of the Dominion Experimental Farm, who is now visiting the creameries and cheese factories throughout the Maritime Province, is taking quite an active interest in this matter. The exhibition opens on Sept. 23rd and continues until Oct. 3rd.