

"By my patron!" cried De Maurevert, "men condemned to death are all alike! It is impossible for them to bring themselves to see that in a little time they will be nothing more than lifeless bodies. But, all things considered, I am not sorry you refuse my offer. It would have been a frightful task for me to perform."

He stopped suddenly in the midst of his reflection, and uttered a cry of joy.

"By the pitchfork of Beelzebub!—friend Raoul, a triumphant inspiration has come to me! Thousands and legions of devils! I was just going to forget that I have promised on my honor not to give you any suggestion as to obtaining your liberty. I must hold my tongue. However, be quite sure, my dear friend, that all hope is not yet lost. You have done well not to let me stab you!"

"Captain," said Benoit, "the time fixed by Monsieur le Marquis, my master, for the duration of this interview has more than expired. Will you be good enough to take leave of Monsieur le Chevalier, and follow me?"

De Maurevert several times tenderly embraced the unfortunate Raoul; then, after advising him to be patient, and repeating that his position was not yet desperate, he quitted the dark and foul dungeon.

The adventurer felt an instinctive joy on once again reaching open daylight; the sight and warmth of the sun caused him an agreeable emotion. Lehardy was waiting with great impatience the return of the Generalissimo of the League of Equity.

"Have you seen Monsieur le Chevalier?" he inquired, as soon as he perceived the captain.

"Hush!" replied De Maurevert, as he mounted his horse. "It is said—and I believe it—that in strongholds like this the very walls have ears."

A few minutes later, thanks to his presence of mind, the captain passed, safe and sound, out of the tiger's den.

"Ah!" said he, "once clear of the outer enclose, I can now breathe at ease! If the Marquis de la Tremblais had ever so little doubted the interest taken in me by the Messieurs de Guise, it is a hundred to one that at this moment I should be keeping company with my poor companion in arms. I am delighted with the success of my tact. If my unfortunate friend Raoul should be hanged, I shall at least have gained a magnificent gold collar."

CHAPTER XIX.

A LAST ATTEMPT.

It is to the goatherd's cabin, in which Diane had taken refuge since the capture of the Château de Taive, we now conduct the reader. The young girl and De Maurevert were seated face to face on two rough stools—Lehardy, while lending sustained attention to the conversation, employing himself in decorating the miserable hut with posies of mountain flowers.

"For five days, then, captain, since you returned from the Château de la Tremblais, you have heard nothing of Monsieur de Sforzi?"

"Nothing, mademoiselle; and I am delighted that it is so. This silence proves that the dear marquis has not yet put his throat into execution, and that up to to-day, our beloved Raoul has neither been pilloried, scourged, nor hanged."

These words, pronounced by the captain with perfect coolness, made Diane shudder, and spread a crimson blush over her pale face.

"Captain!" she cried, "if I were a man, and heaven had accorded to me the honor of being the companion in arms of Monsieur de Sforzi, the chevalier would at this moment be free, or I should be dead! Your inaction—forgive me for making this reproval, too well warranted by the gravity of the chevalier's present position—is neither that of a gentleman nor that of a friend."

"Mademoiselle," replied De Maurevert, coldly, "if heaven had made me a woman and in love with the Chevalier Raoul, it is probable that I should use exactly such language as yourself. Our opposite manner of looking at the question proves, beyond doubt, the difference of our positions. You speak with your heart—I with my experience. The man who is true does not attempt to fashion events to his own liking, but only takes good care to turn them to his advantage. The inaction of which you accuse me has at least the effect of not aggravating Raoul's position, which only mistaken activity might render desperate!"

This answer, somewhat rude as it was, did not help to diminish the bright carnation tint which overspread Diane's cheeks. Her love for Raoul, so chaastely hidden in the recesses of her soul, and which the adventurer so roughly drew into the light of day, filled her with confusion. Her embarrassment was of short duration, however. Very quickly she raised her head, her eyes beaming with generous and pure enthusiasm.

"Yes, captain," she cried—"yes, I love the Chevalier Sforzi! Has not Monsieur Raoul bravely espoused the cause of my poor mother? Has he not thrown himself between the oppressor and the oppressed—the executioner and his victim? Who, among the two or three thousand gentlemen of the province of Auvergne, has dared to raise a voice in our favor? Who has not shrunk before the dread of calling down upon himself the enmity of the terrible marquis? The chevalier alone has not quailed before the danger. Is the sentiment, which has been awakened in my heart by so much courage and generosity, love? I know not; but, before heaven which hears me, captain, I am proud of

this sentiment. I know it will be eternal. You smile? You do not understand me. What I feel for Monsieur de Sforzi is something between the affection of a sister and the friendship of a man. To-morrow Monsieur Raoul may passionately love a woman insensible to his tenderness. I should not hesitate to throw myself at the feet of that woman, and beg her love for the chevalier."

While Diane was speaking, a singular change took place in the attitude of the adventurer. His look, which had been cynical and sneering, gave place to a grave and serious air. Presently, an expression of kindness, almost of tenderness, softened the iron rigor of his face, and, by the time Diane had ceased speaking, a tear stole from beneath his heavy eyelids. He rose from his seat, advanced towards the young girl, and, bowing lowly before her, imprinted a respectful kiss upon her hand.

"Mademoiselle," he said, in a gentle tone of voice, that sounded strange in his own ears, "forgive me; I ask pardon for my foolish remarks. Until to-day, Captain Maurevert, expert as he is in many things, never suspected what treasures of delicacy and devotion might be enclosed in the bosom of a virtuous maiden! Ah, mademoiselle! he went on, after a short pause, "if you knew what a horrible ruffian I am, what abominable ideas I have had concerning you, you would drive me away with contempt and abhorrence. By all the devils, I intend, for my own punishment, to confess the whole of my baseness! Imagine, Mademoiselle d'Erlanges, that I meditated offering you in marriage to the marquis in exchange for the chevalier's liberty! I believe even—may Beelzebub wring my neck—that I counted on making five hundred crowns by the infamous transaction! I certainly feel towards Raoul an infinite affection. Well, may all the misfortunes and sufferings of this earth fall on me if I would not rather, a thousand times, see him hanged than know you were in the hands of the marquis! I declare to you that from this moment you have the right to the entire disposal of my will and my arm. I only request permission to discuss your projects when they appear impracticable, binding myself all the same to take part in them if you persist in carrying them into execution."

"Captain," replied Diane, really touched by this strange and unexpected devotion, "I thank you for your support, and accept it with the warmest gratitude. I will always submit my ideas to you for consideration without binding you to obedience. I own it seems to me that, as Generalissimo of the League of Equity, and having a numerous army under your command, it is possible for you to besiege the Château de la Tremblais, and set the Chevalier Sforzi free."

"Dear Mademoiselle d'Erlanges," said De Maurevert, shaking his head sadly, "you take your wishes for the reality. The mob of peasants under my command do not merit even the name of an army. If I had not taken the extreme care in choosing the ground for their encampment, and in avoiding all engagements in the plain, it would long ago have ceased to exist. These rustic rebels leave a great deal to be desired on the score of discipline. Hanging a dozen of them as examples has had hardly any improving effect, but, on the contrary, has actually served to make me unpopular amongst them. They suspect me, and I should not be in the least surprised to find that they meditate betraying me. But, even supposing I were at the head of a real army, your project of besieging the Château de la Tremblais would be none the less mad-brained. The first thing the marquis would do would be to throw the head of Raoul from his ramparts into our camp. No; force can do nothing for us—it is address alone we must employ!"

"Why have you not tried, captain, to interest the Lieutenant-General of the province of Auvergne, Monsieur de Canilhac, in our cause? Do you not think that such representations as he would have the right to make to the marquis might produce a happy result? Think over this suggestion. I have requested, through Lehardy, an interview with Monsieur de Canilhac."

"Which he has refused you?"

"Which he has granted me. I am to see him at two o'clock to-day."

"Where?"

"A league from here."

"Why a league from this spot, and not at Clermont?"

"Because Monsieur de Canilhac feared that my arrival in the city might become known to the marquis."

"Which signifies, Mademoiselle Diane, that Monsieur de Canilhac, Governor of the province of Auvergne as he is, dares not face the anger of the Marquis de la Tremblais. However, who knows? Perhaps something may be done to utilize this meeting. Let me reflect a little."

De Maurevert re-seated himself on his stool, resting his elbows on his knees, his large head between his hands, and remained a long time plunged in thought.

"Mademoiselle," he said, at length, "is it possible for you to furnish me with pen, ink, and paper?"

"Yes, captain; when I had to write to Monsieur de Canilhac, Lehardy procured all these things for me."

Soon afterwards, De Maurevert, seated at a low table—the only piece of furniture in the goatherd's cabin—traced in large characters, and in a heavy and laborious handwriting, the following letter:

"Monsieur le Marquis,—I have thoroughly reflected since our interview, and now see that I was wrong to reject the handsome proposition

you made me with regard to Mademoiselle d'Erlanges. My association with the Chevalier Raoul Sforzi binds me only to the latter person: I have entered into no engagement to protect his mistresses. I have ascertained from a trustworthy source the Mademoiselle d'Erlanges quitted Auvergne a fortnight ago, and that she has taken refuge in Paris. If you consent to remunerate me fittingly for my trouble, I undertake to bring back the said Mademoiselle, within six weeks at most, and to deliver her into your hands."

"Suffer me now to make one last appeal to you, in favor of my poor companion, the Chevalier Raoul Sforzi. It is true that he has outrageously ill-treated you, and that if you pardon him he will feel towards you an eternal grudge for his imprisonment; and the noblesse may, also, mistake your clemency for fear. What does this matter, however—the satisfaction of your own conscience will be a sufficient repayment for these calumnies, dangers, and gossipings."

"As soon as I receive your answer I shall hasten, if my offer meet with your acceptance, to talk over with you the subject of the above-mentioned remuneration."

"I am, marquis, your very humble and mortal enemy."

"Be good enough to cast your eyes over this missive, mademoiselle," said De Maurevert, handing to Diane the singular letter he had finished writing.

"But, captain!" cried Diane, "this letter is simply a sentence of death to Monsieur Sforzi!"

"On the contrary, mademoiselle, it is his only remaining chance of safety. This letter—though I am no great hand at writing—appears to me to be very cunningly calculated. It is certain that, after having read it, the marquis will summon his executioner, Maitre Benoit, and order him to proceed instantly to execute sentence on our dear Raoul."

"But, in that case, captain—"

"That is exactly what I wish to bring about. Let them only proceed to hang poor Sforzi, and all will be right!"

Diane gazed on her interlocutor in bewilderment.

"What!" continued De Maurevert coolly, "do you not understand, mademoiselle, that so long as Raoul is held prisoner—that is to say, buried a hundred feet under ground—we can do nothing for him? What we have to do is to contrive that, at any cost, he shall be got out of the château, even though on his way to the gallows. I am so managing that that ceremony shall not take place in one of the courtyards of the château, but that the marquis shall choose for the place of execution the chief spot in his jurisdiction; then, with heaven's help, there will be a tumult, a battle, and—we will do our best."

"Ah, captain, this expedient appears to me very hazardous!"

"Not half so hazardous as the siege you proposed to me just now. Blood and carnage!—it is time we know whether this gibbet which troubles us in our dreams at night is, or is not, to be the fate of our Raoul! But the hour of your interview with Monsieur de Canilhac is approaching; it is time for you to be on your way. Allow me, mademoiselle, to offer you my horse."

Obliged, in spite of her refusal, to accept the captain's offer, Diane took her seat on his powerful charger.

De Maurevert, with his heavy breast-plate hung over his shoulder on the end of his sword, led the horse by the bridle, Lehardy, carrying the adventurer's arquebuse, marching by his side.

After a difficult march through the mountain paths, Diane and her escort reached the place fixed on for the meeting. Monsieur de Canilhac was already there.

At sight of De Maurevert, the Governor of the province of Auvergne made a movement of surprise, almost of anger, showing how little he was gratified by this meeting. The captain, however, advanced towards him and saluted him warmly.

"Monsieur de Maurevert," he said, "it is simply Monsieur de Maurevert, and not the Generalissimo of the Army of the League of Equity, who has now the honor of presenting to you his humble homage. Will it please you to afford me a moment's conversation? I have a presentiment that what I have to say will not be at all unpleasant to you to hear."

"After I have heard Mademoiselle d'Erlanges I will listen to you, Monsieur de Maurevert," replied the Governor, offering his hand to Diane, to assist her to dismount. He then pointed to a rock covered with moss, which might serve her for a seat. He himself remained standing.

The Marquis de Canilhac was at that period about five-and-forty years of age; his air was haughty, his manners grand and distinguished. Of irascible and violent temper, he bore with difficulty the pride and arrogance of the nobles of the province; at the same time, a taste for pleasure, an extreme indulgence of his passions, and certain actions of a somewhat irregular nature, imposed on him the obligation of living at peace with the redoubtable seigneurs under his authority, and not to be very severe with them on account of the illegalities, violence, and vexations of which they were daily guilty towards the people.

Monsieur de Canilhac respected only one thing—the noblesse. It was, therefore, solely to her illustrious origin, to the weight of her name, that Diane owed the signal favor of this interview with Monsieur le Lieutenant-Governor of the province of Auvergne.

(To be continued.)

LOST AND LOVED.

BY J. W. THIRLWALL.

Ah! now, I never hear the name
That once unto mine ear,
Was sweeter music than the strains
Of reed, or trembling string,
But memory oft recalls it,
With a thrill, a sigh, or tear;
No dearer name has yet been found,
Love can no dearer bring.

We cannot linger by the way,
Time bears us surely on,
Spring buds, the summer blossom,
Autumn ripens, winter blasts,
We know the brightness of bright hours
When all their glory's gone,
And count our blisses when the storm,
Its desolation casts.

Our early bliss, half understood,
Too late, is fully known;
We treasure up the casket
When the gem so bright is gone;
With fond regret we view the cage,
When once the bird is flown,
Engaged, with others 'twas compared,
When free, compeers had none.

HOMBURG: A RETROSPECT.

Nowhere could Doctor Pangloss boast of more disciples than at Homburg in the summer months. And what a marvellous field those brilliant saloons afforded to the observer of human nature! What scores of singular types of physiognomy and character! What a strange and bewildering medley of Royal dukes and blackleg authors and pickpockets, peccesses and heroines of the Palais Royal footlights! Watch that rusty little old man with the downcast look and plodding gait, who is shuffling slowly up and down the *Rouge et Noir* saloon, ever and anon casting a side glance at the table where the great Garcia is putting calmly away at the rate of sixty thousand francs a coup. Poor old man! he looks shabby and miserable enough, and, if you are charitably disposed, you might feel inclined to slip a stray five-franc piece into his wrinkled and palsied hand. Don't do so, my good friend! Keep your five francs to put on a number at *roulette*. The poor old gentleman does not want them. He is the great M. E. no himself, and could buy you and me up with half his year's income. Twenty years ago he came to Homburg, looking just as old, and, if anything, a trifle rustier than he does now, and obtained leave to open a small *roulette* table in the building which is now the Orangery. His whole capital was then ten thousand francs; now he is lord and master of Homburg. The splendid Kursaal is his; his the pretty theatre and the far-stretching park and grounds. The fairy-like hanging gardens of Monaco sprang into bloom at the potent touch of his golden wand. He pensions the sovereign of that Lilliputian State, builds hospitals, constructs railways, and pockets, over and above all these expenses, something like two hundred thousand pounds per annum. Keep your five francs, my charitable friend! M. Blanc does not want them. The red-faced, thickset man, with stolid wooden features, who is seated next to the croupier, is Garcia, the great Spanish gambler. His history is a strange one. A few months ago he was a wealthy merchant in Barcelona. A speculation turned out badly, and he was ruined. With the wreck of his fortune—some four thousand pounds—he came to Homburg, and won largely. By a special agreement with M. Blanc he is now allowed to stake sixty thousand francs a coup, five times the regular maximum. Fortune is still true to him. As we gaze he points to the enormous heap of notes, the result of four successful coups, which lie before him on *rouge* and calls *Solemnité mille francs aux billets*. The cards fall one by one. *Rouge gagne et couleur!* He was won again. The croupiers rise from their chairs. The bank is broken, and play will not be resumed for an hour. Garcia folds his notes up carefully and buttons them up in his breast-pocket. As he saunters from the room he catches a glimpse of his own face reflected in a glass, and smiles approvingly at himself. Well he may! In three weeks he has won a million of francs. Could that mirror but reflect a near futurity, it would show him the image of a ruined gamester, lying penniless and dying on a wretched pallet in the attic of a back street in Geneva.—*Charing Cross.*

A STORY is going the rounds of the papers just now, for the truth of which we cannot vouch, but which is at least worth telling. It concerns a dog which, instead of barking, each morning lullulates the crowing of a rooster. His owner accounts for this strange peculiarity by stating that the dog was born and bred in the country, and from his earlier puphood was separated from all other cubs, enjoying only the companionship of barnyard fowls. Hearing no other sounds so frequently as the crowing of the cock, and doubtless never knowing that his species enjoyed the sole ownership of another and different sort of music, he began to imitate the matutinal exercises of his feathered companions, in which he has at last acquired a proficiency which surpasses and charms every one who has had the felicity of listening to his performance.