

eyes that many of her female companions were filled with doleful presentiments.

Unfortunately for the count, there was another interest at work, more powerful even than the high aristocracy. The all-potent Abbe Dubois, the grand favorite and bosom counselor of the regent, was deeply interested in the scheme of Law, and the prosperity of his bank, and of course in the security of the stock-brokers. Indeed, the regent himself is said to have dipped deep in the Mississippi scheme. Dubois and Law, therefore, exerted their influence to the utmost to have the tragic affair pushed to the extremity of the law, and the murder of the broker punished in the most signal and appalling manner. Certain it is, the trial was neither long nor intricate. The count and his fellow-prisoner were equally inculpated in the crime, and both were condemned to a death the most horrible and ignominious—to be broken alive on the wheel!

As soon as the sentence of the court was made public, all the nobility, in any degree related to the house of Van Horn, went into mourning. Another grand aristocratical assemblage was held, and a petition to the regent, on behalf of the count, was drawn out and left with the Marquis de Crequi for signature. This petition set forth the previous insanity of the count, and showed that it was a hereditary malady of his family. It stated various circumstances in mitigation of his offense, and implored that his sentence might be commuted to perpetual imprisonment.

Upward of fifty names of the highest nobility, beginning with the Prince de Ligne, and including cardinals, archbishops, dukes, marquises, etc., together with ladies of equal rank, were signed to this petition. By one of the caprices of human pride and vanity, it became an object of ambition to get enrolled among the illustrious suplicants; a kind of testimonial of noble blood, to prove relationship to a murderer! The Marquis de Crequi was absolutely besieged by applicants to sign, and had to refer their claims to this singular honor to the Prince de Ligne, the grandfather of the count. Many who were excluded were highly incensed, and numerous feuds took place. Nay, the affronts thus given to the morbid pride of some aristocratical families passed from generation to generation; for, fifty years afterward, the Duchess of Mazarin complained of a slight which her father had received from the Marquis de Crequi; which proved to be something connected with the signature of this petition.