

"You see," said the prince to Richard, "that you are at my mercy: Marie must and shall be mine; and now reflect: if you resist, she is mine by force, and the law will avail you nothing against me. Consent to an accommodation, and to-morrow you are the richest man in France, and my influence shall procure you a title to your name."

The husband's face was crimson as the dauphin spoke, and the haughty "Never!" that passed his lips in reply, went to the prince's heart, and again the latter grasped Marie by the arm.

Richard's breath came thick and fast. He gasped—"Prince, are you mad?"

"Beggars!" was the reply.

The prince had motioned the men aside while they spoke. Alessandro, for Richard now saw it was he, had left the horses' heads, and the opportunity was ripe for a desperate venture.

In a suppressed tone, and grinding his teeth with the words, the jeweller cried—"Beware, Monseigneur, and loose your hold."

"*Sacre!—Caille!*" shouted the prince in scorn.

The bridegroom uttered not a word—for one moment his cheek flushed with a burning rage, and in another instant the Englishman's sword was red with the dauphin's blood.

A cry escaped his followers as they saw him fall to the ground, and in the confusion Richard swung the fainting Marie into the carriage, secured the door, and leaped upon the coachman's box. Away went the horses over the rugged street, scattering the sparks from their hoofs as they dashed madly on—their nostrils extended, and the white foam flying from their mouths—till far behind was the scene of danger, and the house of Delvise was gained. Richard, forbidding the coachman to move, first reassured Marie, then dashing open the door of the house, and pale, agitated, and breathless, stood in the chamber of Delvise.

"Where is the passport, Delvise? Give me some money, for I must fly!"

"It is there!" he exclaimed, and as Richard took it from the table, asked in terror, "Richard! Richard! your looks alarm me—what have you done?"

"Nay—do not ask me, Delvise; I have drawn my sword in the streets of Paris—I have slain the Dauphin of France."

The old man groaned, and sank heavily back upon the chair; a light footstep was heard upon the staircase, and the terrified Marie stood by her father's side. The jeweller clasped his daughter to his bosom, and then the pent-up feelings found an utterance, and she sobbed upon his breast.

"O God! O God!" cried the wretched husband, "and *this* is my wedding night!"

He buried his face in his hands, and in the pause that followed, a thousand thoughts were chasing through his mind, and above all there arose the image of the galleys, or of immediate and shameful death. He started from his momentary lethargy, with a wildness in his look and accent, as he exclaimed:

"Father, I must away: every moment wasted now is a letter on my tombstone!—Marie, my wife! will you go with me?"

"To death, Richard!" was the proud response, as she placed her hands in his with unshaken confidence and love.

"Then we must know no rest till the seas are between us. The ship is ready at Calais. Once on board we are safe. Father, you will remain secure—they cannot harm you; and give us now your blessing."

"God bless you!" cried the old man, as the tears started to his eyes. Richard grasped his hand, Marie took a last embrace, and the clocks of Paris struck out the hour of one, as the carriage halted at the barrier, whilst the passport was examined—and then the open country was before them, and they were driving swiftly on towards Calais.

Paternoster Row was then, as now, a busy thoroughfare, but it was before the days of the booksellers, and various was the merchandise for which its houses were celebrated; but the mercantile firm of Bridgnorth & Son, which for years had been its leading feature, no longer transacted business there—its operations being now conducted in more spacious premises on the banks of the Thames; and the deserted house, refitted and re-arranged, had lately become the town residence of the youngest son of the family, who, after an absence of some years, had returned from France, with a rapidly acquired fortune, and with a lady who bore his name.

Richard and his wife had not been many days in their new habitation, before they received a letter from Delvise, which conveyed to them the joyful intelligence that the