

IN EXILE.

In spite of all the world can say,
My soul is honest, my life white;
I worthy your belief, as when
You kissed me by the fire one night.

The hand you held against your heart,
The happy lips that yours have kissed,
Have written naught, said nought, but words,
Worthy true love's Evangelist.

The clouds will pass away at last,
The dear old sunshine come again;
The grass grow greener, and the birds
Sing all the sweeter, after rain.

I love you, and I have not erred,
My whole life is an open book;
Forgetting is not written there,
Nor sinning—if they would but look.

Castle Lonesome.

ALLID.

THE

TWO WIVES OF THE KING.

*Translated for the Saturday Reader from the
French of Paul Féval.*

Continued from page 171.

CHAPTER IV.

When madame Agnes de Meranie and Amaury Montruel left the chatelet, and were passing over the great bridge which led to the city, all the chimes of the churches grouped round Notre Dame rang out ten o'clock at night.

It was very late; for, as we have already said, the streets became deserted immediately after sunset.

The Seine at that day flowed between banks still encumbered with reeds and bushes—in our day it runs through two lines of noble quays; thousands of lights are reflected in the river—which, owing to the lamps on the bridges, and the lights from the windows of the houses on its banks, presents a scene more charming than the imagination can dream of.

In that day the river rolled on darkly, and reflected nothing but the stars; the view was broken by the abrupt angles of fortresses and old buildings, whose walls were washed by the tide. It was a different place then from now, and perhaps a more suitable one for the painter; for when the silver moon played upon the rippling waves, and under the mysterious and dark arches, you would have said it was one of those magic decorations that the scene-painter of a theatre invents to give effect to the drama.

Centuries succeed each other, and the beauties of Paris change with them, but Paris is, nevertheless, always beautiful!

Agnes and her chevalier crossed the great bridge, and passed the ancient palace which the sovereigns of France had abandoned for the Louvre. They entered the rue de la Calandre by the old Roman road that the Cæsars had made through the city, and which bore at that day the same name as to-day, the Barillerie.

At the time of which we are speaking the rue de la Calandre was full of small drinking booths and taverns, full of cut-throats; and the passenger, long before reaching it, could hear the screaming viol and the piercing flutes, mingled with loud bursts of drunken laughter.

It was the arena of brutal quarrels, an immense temple always full of frightful debauchery and blood.

The tavern of St. Landry was situated near the middle of the street; Montruel, after having proceeded a few steps down the street, felt constrained to hold his nostrils, but madame continued her way without any sign of repugnance or weakness.

It must be admitted, that madame Agnes had not chosen a very agreeable task for poor maitre Montruel; for in a street haunted by the cream of rascaldom, skimmed from the whole kingdom, and in which scarcely a night passed without witnessing some tragic adventure, Montruel was about to stand as sentinel at the door of the tavern of St. Landry.

Madame commanded and Montruel obeyed. It was his punishment on this earth, for all his accumulated mis-deeds.

When he had ascended the steps which led to the low apartment, where maitre Cadocu held his terrible court, Montruel shrunk into a corner and kept himself there as the only chance of escaping from strangulation or the poignard. The orgie was at its height, and that great artist, Callot himself, could, I think, hardly have done justice to the frantic movements of that delirious crowd.

Men, women and children, were leaping, embracing, fighting, and drinking, the steaming and impure atmosphere was as thick as a fog; and nothing could be distinctly seen, but a confused melée, into which every individual seemed, turn by turn, to plunge, and to be lost in that terrible tempest.

Maitre Francois Gauthier, the host of this place, was seated on a barrel, half a sleep, and rousing himself only a little, whenever two of the drunken brigands were crossing blades, or another punching the head of some unfortunate woman.

If Agnes had made her entrance with her face uncovered, nobody would have noticed her arrival, in spite of her cloth of gold or her ermine cloak, for the women who resorted to these places set all sumptuary laws at defiance, and indulged in the most luxurious apparel.

But Agnes wore a half-mask of black stuff, and some woman on perceiving it, cried out,—

"Who is this?"

Twenty other women joined this cry in full chorus, and before Agnes had reached the last step, she was surrounded by a mob of bacchantes, who scented in her one who was profaning their temple, and who would have asked no better amusement than to have torn her to pieces.

"Hold!" exclaimed Agnes, repulsing the woman who was nearest to her, "Hold! maitre Cadocu, wilt thou not protect the person who has come here at thy bidding?"

At the name of the chief, there was a sensation among the crowd of women, and they repeated in every variety of tone,—

"Who can this be?"

Some said, "Let us take her to Catherine, the captain's mistress: she will soon tear her eyes out!"

Cadocu was seated at a table covered with the pitchers he had emptied.

"Catherine, ma mie," said he, "I never heard a woman who could sing like thee."

And Catherine immediately struck up, in a really harmonious voice, the couplet of some gay song.

It was in the midst of this couplet that madame Agnes' voice was heard, above the tumult, calling upon the name of the chief of the brigands.

Cadocu raised himself on his elbow, and his half extinguished eye shot out a slight ray of remembrance.

The beautiful Catherine rose all pale, for she had forgotten nothing.

"Oh!" said Cadocu, "with whom have I appointed a rendezvous to-night?"

"I know not," replied Catherine drily.

"Good," said the brigand; "if thou knowest not, then it must be with some rival, for thou art madly in love with me, Cathos, ma mie!" Come! you crowd there!" added he with more strength than could have been expected from his condition and wandering eye, "Allow the woman to pass, since she says that I sent for her. We shall soon see if she lies; and if she does lie, I will hand her over to you, mes mignonnes, to be whipped."

He filled his great cup to restore himself a little.

Agnes crossed the apartment, still masked, and escorted by a crowd of jealous enemies. If a look could kill, the look that Catherine gave her would certainly have pierced her through and through. Cadocu was right, Catherine was madly in love with him, and there were many others in the same case.

"A mask!" growled he; "how does she expect me to recognize her? But I know so much and so much! . . ." Suddenly he reined

up, and indulged in a low chuckling laugh, which nearly shook him off his bench.

"Oh! ho!" said he, "she is come! that's a good joke,—approach, ma belle; for my part I love nothing but queens-and wantons!"

Agnes ran to his side. Catherine endeavoured to place herself between them; but Cadocu repulsed her roughly.

"Every one in their turn," said he.

The women looked on, whispering to each other. Some said, "Can this woman be a queen?" in a tone, which seemed to imply that the thing was impossible.

Catherine drew off humiliated, and with tears in her eyes.

Agnes whispered some rapid sentences into the ear of the chief, who was still shaking from his idiotic fit of laughter.

"Good! good!" said he aloud. "Have no fear, madame; I am not the man to betray thine incognito."

"Is it possible?" said those standing around.

Catherine stood at a distance, with her eyes fixed on the queen, and swore to be revenged.

Cadocu passed one of his arms round Agnes' waist, as he had just done with Catherine, and raised his enormous cup. Half an hour previously Cadocu would perhaps not have been so stupidly insolent, but there were now too many empty pitchers before him. He was one of those drinkers, whose excesses are always followed by extreme suffering, but who nevertheless cannot refrain from the thing that hurts them.

The bold cavalier, who was treated by the greatest vassals of the kingdom as one of their peers, who held the pope's legate in check, and even the king himself, was about to become, for some hours, a miserable brute, without strength or reason.

If Agnes de Meranie had arrived sooner, she might still have found that sentiment of covetousness and sensuality, that she had observed in the eyes of Cadocu, when he saw her in the cavalcade as it was leaving the purlieus of Notre Dame, and by favor of that same sensuality Cadocu, would have protected Agnes, and would have given her that kind of reception which gourmands always give to the preferred nuts of the feast.

Though he had just said he loved only queens and wantons, Cadocu was not much accustomed to see queens surrendering to his caprices; but there now remained to him neither caprice, or covetousness—his senses were all drowned in the thick wine of maitre Francois Gauthier.

Agnes had fallen on evil times. She did not resent the coarse speech of the brigand, but said gaily—

"Maitre Antoine, I came to ask you a favour, that the king himself could not accord to me."

Cadocu assumed an air of importance.

"There are many others," replied he, "who, like thee, come to maitre Antoine when the king cannot help them; but I know what's the matter, madame," added he, falling against the post which served as a back to his bench, "somebody stands in thy way; and amongst all the fine lords by whom thou art surrounded, there is not one with a willing arm. We will speak of this business another time madame; this place is for our amusement."

"Then let us amuse ourselves!" said Agnes, who, up to this, had superbly played the sad rôle that she had inflicted upon herself.

"Ma foi," murmured Cadocu, whose heavy head oscillated on his shoulders, "thou art a fine girl, madame. If I had known of thy coming, I would have drank deeper to keep up my gaiety."

He tottered and held on to the table.

Maitre Francois Gauthier gravely brought a large block of wood that he placed beside the post, propping Cadocu solidly between the two.

"What canst thou do to amuse me?" demanded maitre Antoine, who breathed a little more at his ease in this new position.

"I can do everything," said Agnes, without any hesitation.

"Then thou canst sing?"

"They called me the nightingale in my father's country."

"That was a brave man, thy father!" growled Cadocu, "the sire Berthond de Meran—a true