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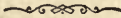
OF

THE COUNTESS DE LA MOTTE.

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THE DIAMOND NECKLACE.



CHAPTER I.

ELIZABETH, of Vienna, my grandmother, born at Bar-sur-Seine, had formed a particular intimacy with a lady of the same place, and of a similar age and disposition; Elizabeth had one son and her friend a daughter. Both of these children were very young when their mothers' friendship commenced, and they resolved to perpetuate their amicable intercourse by a matrimonial union between their children, and executed, accordingly, a contract for that purpose.

The young pair were given to understand that they were destined for each other from the first moment they began to prattle; till at length the buds of friendship, cherished by frequent intercourse and strengthened by mutual endearments, ripened into love. In this situation, with all the transports which youthful minds feel at the prospect of approaching bliss, scarce had they attained the age of sixteen, when a sudden and most unaccountable disagreement between the parents clouded the sunshine of their felicity, and blasted their future hopes: the match was instantly broken off, and an immediate separation ensued.

A short time after, the Countess . . . visited Paris, hoping that absence, and the unceasing variety which that gay capital affords, would erase from her

daughter's mind the memory of her promised husband ; while my father, unable to forget the mistress of his youth, for a long time rejected every overture of alliance proposed by his parents ; till at length time, assisted by the absence of the beloved object, so weakened the ardour of his former flame, that another favourite insensibly stole into his heart, obliterated the traces of his former attachment, and finally fixed his attentions.

Maria Jossel, a girl who had the charge of the house at Fontette, was the person who had attracted his eye. The laxity of manners prevalent at the time was some excuse for the wrong he did her ; but being naturally good-hearted, my father wishing at once to make her an honourable reparation and legitimize his child, was induced to ask my grandfather's consent to marry her. He, thinking such an union degrading to an illustrious line of ancestry, gave a pointed and formal refusal. This opposition did but increase my father's ardour ; who, after many unsuccessful efforts to win my grandfather to compliance, and remaining unmarried till he was thirty-six years of age, at length solemnized the marriage at Langres, in Champagne, under the names of James de Luz and Maria Jossel, where my father had purchased an estate, upon which he resided some time previous to the nuptials. In about a year after, my grandfather, upon his death-bed, forgave the indiscretion of his son ; after whose decease, my father and mother left Langres, to take possession of the estate at Fontette.

From this period I date the commencement of my troubles. No sooner was my grandfather in his grave, and my father in possession of his paternal

inheritance, than, freed from all restraint, Maria began to display her real character, and fully evinced the meanness of her birth by an unlimited indulgence in that folly and extravagance which is ever predominant in vulgar minds on sudden elevation: she listened eagerly to the flattering insinuations of those who addressed themselves to her vanity, and persuaded her that she did herself great injustice in continuing in the country, where she was only known as Maria Jossel; that she should repair to Paris, where she would figure in the first circles as the Baroness de Valois, a title which her accomplishments would not disgrace.

There needed no more to determine a female already intoxicated with vanity, and suddenly raised from obscurity to affluence. She resolved to follow their advice, painted in glowing colours the advantages which would certainly result from a residence in the metropolis, and exerted her influence so effectually, that the unsuspecting goodness of my father fell too easily a prey to the insinuating address of this cunning female, who, having previously found means, at different intervals, to strip him of almost all his possessions, and to feed her poor relations with the spoils of the paternal inheritance, was sufficiently crafty to make that very poverty which she herself had occasioned an argument in favour of her design. My father listened to what appeared to him so very plausible, that a journey to Paris, and regaining the title and demesnes thereto annexed, was the only means of repairing his shattered fortunes, and restoring an illustrious name to its original splendour. With suggestions similar to these, and appa-

rently so plausible, did she gloss over her interested design, and urge my father to this desperate attempt.

Here I hope the candid reader will bear with me a moment, while, in extenuation of my father's indiscretion, I attempt to give a slight description of those natural accomplishments in my mother which united to constitute that fatal influence, so replete with misery to her wretched offspring. Her form was elegant; her fine blue eyes appearing through long silken eye-lashes, and her eye-brows finely arched, rendered her face extremely interesting and strikingly expressive; while her dark tresses, falling in graceful profusion over her shoulders, displayed to the greatest advantage the natural whiteness of her skin. With these fatal charms, she possessed a strong understanding and a ready wit. Vain, from her personal charms, she was volatile in her temper, impatient and revengeful.

Such is the outline of my mother, and such attractions might have ensnared much older, and perhaps wiser, men. Her solicitations at length prevailed; and after my father had disposed of the small remainder of his property, we all set out together on our journey to the metropolis.

In a dreary night, the most gloomy in my remembrance, we took our last farewell of the peaceful plains of Fontette; forsook the calm pleasures of the country, led aside by a meteor beam, which gleamed deceitfully in the eyes of my father, but to allure him to his fate: he abandoned the quiet shades of his paternal inheritance, to mix among the crowd, where disappointment frustrates the lofty views of aspiring ambition. Such was the night chosen, not impro-

perly, for my parents to begin their journey, accompanied by my brother and myself, then about four years of age; but my youngest sister was left exposed to charity in the house of one Durand, a wealthy and avaricious farmer, who being in possession of a great part of my father's estate, and having stood sponsor to this unfortunate infant, was therefore deemed the most proper person to be her future protector.

Here I must pause, unable to suppress the agitation of a mind overwhelmed with sorrow, at the recollection of the danger to which this helpless infant was exposed, though at that time I was unconscious of it. And, gentle reader, if thy heart be not a stranger to the dictates of humanity, if ever thou hast known the feelings of a father, or should this recital moisten with the tear of sensibility the eye of that female who has experienced the timidity of a mother, even upon the bare apprehension of danger to her child—what indignation must fill thy breast against the author of this detestable transaction! And how small a share of credibility can I hope will be given to me, when I assert that the infant innocence of my sister (whose endearing smiles must have melted into pity the most obdurate heart) could not so engage the affections of her natural protector, as to prevent her being abandoned and exposed to the cruelty or humanity of every casual passenger; and left (oh, heaven! I shudder to name it,) on the outside of the mansion, where griping usury and inhumanity, with their concomitant evils, dwelt within.

But a watchful Providence guarded her innocence, and she now lives to drop the tear of pity on my mis-

fortunes, which have almost obliterated the remembrance of her own.

It will naturally be asked, had she no father? Yes, I will answer; but that father, the weakness of whose intellect reduced him almost to childhood, was so overcome by the misery of his situation, and the idea of being about to leave that inheritance which his ancestors had so long possessed, and whose honour he had tarnished by his mean alliance, that he knew nothing of the transaction till it was beyond his power to prevent it.

This was the first unnatural proof of my father's unequal marriage, and the melancholy commencement of the struggle of poverty in pursuit of the title and appendages of Valois.

Those who are conversant with French history, know that after the death of Henry II., who was killed at a tilting-match by the Count de Montgomeri, the three subsequent reigns were harassed by religious wars, and the cabals of the league. All the princes of the house of Valois were singularly unfortunate. Henry III., the last king of that line, was assassinated by Clement, a young enthusiastic monk of the Benedictine order; this calamity made way for the advancement of Henry IV., of the house of Bourbon, who, next to the family of Valois, had the best right to the crown; the descendants of this ancient and illustrious family, therefore, fearing to render themselves obnoxious to the power of the Bourbon, discontinued the name, contenting themselves with that of St. Remy, till my grandfather again resumed it, but being all his life in the country, he was not so acknowledged at Court.

The limited state of my father's resources obliged us to undertake part of our journey on foot, the rest was occasionally performed in a public carriage. Fresh in my memory (though then but four years of age), and not to be effaced by time or prosperity, are the cruelties inflicted on me by this mother, who had commenced her career with ingratitude, and like a serpent, stung to the heart the kindness that cherished her; but who abandoned an innocent and helpless child to the mercy of an unfeeling usurer. What could be expected from such a woman as this?—the next miserable victim was myself.

We stopped at a village on the road to Paris, where we dined; and my mother, having left my father and brother at the inn, took me with her into the fields, and after upbraiding me for some trifling fault, treated me with the utmost severity, the marks of which were very plainly to be seen. When I had undergone this inhuman discipline, she commanded me to dry my tears, and we returned together, as though we had been good friends. Notwithstanding all her precaution, however, I could not forget the treatment I had received, which my countenance more strongly discovered, in spite of every effort to conceal it; in vain did my father press me to eat at dinner, nor could he account for an uneasiness which he saw pictured in the face of his darling daughter. After dinner, being left alone with him, he conjured me, as I loved him, to explain the cause of my grief. Trembling, and entreating him not to tell my mother, which he at length promised, I related to him her behaviour to me. She, however, soon after compelled him, not only

to break his promise, but at the same time to treat her with a severity she had never before experienced.

Whether the fear of still further offending my father, or that she judged it would more effectually conceal from him her real disposition towards me, induced her to adopt a very different line of conduct, I am at a loss to guess; but her pretended fondness and caresses so far filled my little bosom with affection for her, that I followed her almost everywhere, and totally forgot all that I had before suffered. But, alas! this happiness was but of short duration; it vanished, only to give place to still greater severities, which were inflicted upon me, without a conscious offence, by this unfeeling parent.

A spirit of revenge, I soon fatally experienced, had been lurking in my mother's breast, under the specious guise of kindness and affection; nor can I assign one plausible reason in extenuation of her conduct for again giving way to the impetuosity of her temper, except my having communicated to my father what she had already done to me. She again treated me with the utmost barbarity, and failed in the attempt to conceal from the vigilance of paternal affection this fresh and unprovoked attack upon me; my father again read my distress in my eyes, and discovering the effects of her resentment, was so transported with rage that he could not refrain from striking her in such a manner that, if living, the marks must still be visible.

One would have thought this might have proved a sufficient correction; alas! no: she long after preserved the deadly remembrance, and took occasion to

manifest her hatred with redoubled fury. We proceeded on our journey till we arrived at Vangirard and Hyscys, two places in the environs of Paris, where we stayed a few days. Soon after our arrival, my mother took me to one of the *guingettes*—a place of entertainment for the lower orders—where I was astonished at the vast crowds of people who were diverting themselves.

But a short period had elapsed, when my mother (with indignation I remember the humiliating circumstance) instructed and commanded me to run after the people who passed by, repeating these words, which she had put into my mouth—

“Gentlemen, or Ladies, take compassion on a poor orphan, descended in a direct line from Henry the Second, of Valois, king of France.”

Some asked me many questions, and took pity on my infancy, while others reproved and threatened me. This I reported to my mother, who, callous to every sense of shame, still encouraged me to proceed, though she never did this in presence of my father, with whom my brother constantly resided. Sometimes she would follow me at a short distance, and set me an example, holding out the pedigree of our family, which she presented to every one that passed; at other times, she took me by the hand, and would burst into tears, by way of exciting the compassion of observers; at which I, too young to be an accomplice in her dissimulation, used also to weep.

Though the original intent of our journey was to claim the rank and possessions belonging to my father's dormant title, yet his own melancholy reflections upon his situation and circumstances had so

preyed upon his understanding, that he was, as I have already observed, reduced to a state of dotage and puerility, and totally under the government of my mother, who, about six months after our arrival in the vicinity of Paris, judged it necessary to remove to Versailles, where the police, being much more strict, prevented her from again putting in practice her begging occupation. We remained here three months in perfect security, and from thence went on to Boulogne and St. Cloud, the former of which being determined on for our residence, we took a ready-furnished apartment at an inn, kept by a M. Chamberry.

My mother's first business was to wait upon M. L'Enoque, the curate of that place, taking with her the pedigree of our family, which she left with him. That worthy pastor undertook the charge of making the necessary arrangements, and putting the document in a proper condition for the inspection of persons of distinction in the vicinity, so that, moved by our distresses, they might lend their assistance towards my father's restoration.

During this interval, the Lords and Ladies De Choiseul, D'Ambouville and D'Almanbec, their grandchildren, persons of the first rank, arrived at Boulogne, all of whom crowded to see us, paid us great attention, and contributed to our relief; but their sudden return to Paris prevented our receiving further marks of their benevolence.



CHAPTER II.

SOON after this my father, taking his customary walk in the Bois de Boulogne, at length found himself within sight of Save, when, greatly to his astonishment, he was arrested by Lieutenant Breton, of the Marshalsea of Boulogne, and notwithstanding the dignity of his birth, treated as a criminal, confined in a loathsome prison, and allowed only bread and water, and a bed of straw. On the eighth day of this cruel imprisonment, he was permitted to write to the friendly curate, whom he called upon as his deliverer, to come and see him, to comfort his wife and children during his absence, and assure them that he was not dead.

M. L'Enoque lost no time, and taking me in his hand (not choosing to inform my mother, for fear the intelligence might produce a sudden illness), immediately went to see him. Though then but an infant of five years and three months old, yet deeply is the shocking picture impressed upon my memory. My poor father lay extended on a bed of straw, his body emaciated, his complexion sallow and meagre, his eyes languid and sunken, yet a faint and transient gleam seemed to speak the joy of his heart, and welcome our approach. Unable to sustain the sight, I flew into his arms, which were stretched out to receive me, while streaming tears confessed the energy of my grief.

The good curate sympathised in our affliction, and having procured for my father some necessary sustenance, exerted every means to console him under

his misfortune. He then questioned the marshal concerning the cause of my father's commitment, but received such evasive answers, that he was necessitated to draw up a petition to the Duke of Orleans, which a gentleman of his acquaintance engaged to deliver; but access to people of rank being much more difficult at Versailles than in other places, my unfortunate father was obliged to remain six weeks in this loathsome dungeon before the charitable endeavours of the worthy pastor, who had exerted every nerve to effect his purpose, could terminate in his liberation. Grief and indignation, however, at the severe treatment he had received, increased by disorders contracted while in prison, preyed upon my father's health, and with more than common speed, hurried him on to dissolution.

Like another Samaritan, this benevolent man conveyed my father, now a most piteous object, and in the most languid condition, to his own house in a carriage, the expense of which he most charitably defrayed. A few days after, in consequence of his application to the Almanbecs, he procured an order to conduct him in a chariot (a distinction due to the dignity of his descent) to the Hotel de Dieu, at Paris, where, two days after, it pleased the Almighty to release him from all his troubles.

The day after his removal, my mother carried me and my brother to see him. Never shall I forget my parting interview with this affectionate and repentant parent, whose last injunction yet thrills in my ears. He took both my hands in his, and pressing them to his lips, said, in a faint voice,—

“Ah! my dear child! I fear my conduct will oc-

casion you much future misery; but let me entreat you, under every vicissitude, to remember that you are VALOIS! Cherish throughout life sentiments worthy of the name, and never forget your birth! I tremble," continued he, in broken accents, while tears trickled fast down his cheeks, "I tremble at the thought of leaving you in the care of such a mother."

These were the last words I ever heard him speak. That night we parted, alas! for ever, for next morning he breathed his last.

The death of my father was a great affliction to me. His kindness, his protection from the cruelties of my mother, had endeared him to my heart. When he died, forsaken and defenceless, an inundation of miseries burst in upon me, and bore me down a stream which only his assistance could have enabled me to resist.

Two days after, my mother went to make inquiries respecting his health, at the house of the friendly curate, who, from motives of compassionate kindness, had concealed the mournful intelligence of my father's death. My mother proposed going to see him, from which the curate dissuaded her. She still persisted, and he more strenuously objected; which at length so confirmed her fears, that she instantly fainted away. Shortly afterwards she became the mother of a daughter, to whom Madame L'Almanbec, and her grandson, then at Boulogne, who had kindly taken us under their protection, condescended to stand sponsors.

About three months after this event, my mother departed for Versailles, taking us along with her,

and hired a ready-furnished lodging at La Porte du Bucque, where she again resumed the trade of begging by sending me out to solicit charity. This odious occupation had now become still more hateful. Though so young, I thought it very inconsistent with the last words of my dying father, and nothing but fear could have induced me to disobey them. I recollect going once (ignorant of the risk I ran of being apprehended) to the house of M. Deionice, Exempt-General of the Marshalsea of Versailles. Pleased with my infant playfulness, he called me in to speak to him, and, after asking me many questions, gave me a crown-piece, a dinner, and some toys. Won by these attentions, so agreeable to children, I often repeated my visits, and was taken great notice of by his wife and daughter, who called me the little St. Remy.

M. Deionice hearing that my mother was handsome, had the curiosity to visit her. I recollect once finding him there on my return home. But she very soon deprived herself of the countenance of this benevolent family, by forming an unaccountable connection with one Jean Baptiste Ramond, a native of Sardinia, and a soldier, whom she seemed to consider as her second husband. The Deionice family asked me a great many questions, and I, from their kindness to me, conceiving I ought to tell them everything, in my childish prattle one day divulged the circumstance of my mother's new acquaintance. They desired me sometimes to listen to their conversation, which I did, and having heard them talk of marriage, reported it to my benefactors. This induced my kind friends to take every measure to prevent

their union, by desiring the adjacent parishes to refuse them, if they should present themselves for marriage.

Soon afterwards they offered themselves, and were rejected. Mortified by their repulse in this district, they went to Chaillot, where they lived together without further molestation, in a neatly furnished apartment which my mother had previously hired.

Here it was that my mother assigned to me the task of bringing home every day ten sous, and on Sundays and holidays twice that sum; but this was what I could very seldom accomplish. I now began to feel the noble blood of Valois flowing within my veins, and opposing, like an indignant torrent, such a degradation of a descendant of that illustrious family. I pondered much on the last words of my dying father; yet the fear I was under, increased by the severest treatment, probably for the very purpose of making the most vivid impressions of terror, constrained me to obey, and again to solicit charity "for a poor little orphan, descended from Henry II."

Gracious heaven! could the spirits of my illustrious ancestors have anticipated this degradation of their wretched offspring—could they behold the brightness of their achievements, the sterling glory of the Valois, thus tarnished and basely alloyed, what would they feel, at hearing those odious words, "Take pity on a poor orphan, a descendant from Henry II. de Valois!"

Persons who heard me, supposing me instructed by some beggar, said to me—

"Take care, my little girl! you are not aware of the danger you are exposed to by those who advise you to make use of that name!"

"I know not," replied I, "if I tell you wrong; but my father, on his death-bed, told me so; and the curate of Boulogne used always to confirm what he said."

I then told them my whole story, without considering how it might affect my mother, or the man who passed for her husband.

"You impose upon us, little girl;" said one. "Your father is not dead: you only tell us so, to excite our compassion!"

"Indeed, but he is!" replied I, bursting into tears; "and if you think I deceive you, inquire of M. L'Enoque, curate of Boulogne: he will tell you the same thing; and Madame D'Almanbec and her grandson, who stood godfather and godmother to my little sister."

I am uncertain whether they took the pains to inform themselves; or whether, seeing me a child, and therefore supposing me incapable of deceit, together with the variety and connection of the incidents I related, they were fully convinced of my veracity.

About this time the mistress of the house, having occasion for our lodging for her own family, gave my mother notice to quit; in consequence of which she hired a miserable place, open to beggars of the very lowest order, for twopence per night; dinner and supper at the same rate. In this wretched receptacle, my mother took care to procure a bed for herself and Ramond, while my brother, myself, and little sister, were obliged to be content with a bed of straw. But even this was a comfort from which I was often excluded; for frequently, not having procured my

daily supply, and terrified at the severity of a punishment that was certain to be inflicted on such occasions, I used to take up my lodgings in the street, or in any shelter I could creep into, choosing rather to submit to every hardship, and trust myself to all the inclemencies of the season, than to receive from the hand of a parent a punishment, the very idea of which was so terrible. Sometimes Ramond would come out to seek me, and having found me sleeping under a window, or on the steps of some door, would lead me home, trembling like a lamb to the slaughter, where we were no sooner arrived, than my mother, shutting the door, would punish me with her accustomed severity. Thus was I early, in the school of adversity, taught lessons of patience.

The day following she would again send me away, charging me not to do as I had done the day before, and to be sure to bring home money. I accordingly used to go out, and make my application to some good people of the place, who seemed interested in my behalf, and had often given me victuals to carry home to my mother. Amongst these, I particularly remember a M. and Mdme. Ruel, a financier and his wife, who lived at the lower part of Chaillot; and a Mdme. Ouchard, who kept an eating-house.

A few months after, this man, who passed for my mother's husband, was arrested by a police officer, at Paris, in coming out of the Place de Louis Quinze, near the Tuilleries, and conveyed in a hackney-coach to the Chatelet. As soon as my mother was apprised of his imprisonment, she prepared to visit him, taking me along with her, and commanding me to call him father; to which I objected, saying that my father

was dead. "You are surely dreaming!" she replied.

When we approached within sight of the prison, I began to be greatly terrified; she dragged me forward; and when we had come to the place where he was confined, I was not a little surprised at finding my brother, who was kindly endeavouring to console him, as though he had really been his father.

"How do you do, my dear daughter?" said Ramond, upon seeing me. "Good morning, sir," replied I. He caressed me; but I remember well that my sensations at this moment were far from being in unision with his. "I am not sorry that you are here," thought I to myself. "I shall, perhaps, be better treated."

Was it unnatural that I should rejoice at his confinement?—he who used to assist my mother in the exercise of her barbarity, and would continue the cruel treatment which nature had denied her strength to execute.

Gentle reader, this is not an exaggerated picture, drawn by an over-heated imagination, to excite thy indignation, or extort thy pity; it is the language of truth; it is the narrative of one who has really felt that which cannot but affect thy sensibility even to read.

After staying some time in the prison, my mother returned to Chaillot, taking me along with her, but left my brother with his reputed parent, under the name of Baron de Valois. It was a master-piece of cunning in this man, who had thoroughly studied his part, and had taken every precaution to have him always in his company, that if he was apprehended

with our titles, my brother, whose property they were, might reclaim them. This was the reason why he had the audacity to beg in the Tuilleries.

My tranquillity, on account of this relaxation of severity, lasted not long; for in a fortnight after he was released, and notwithstanding the punishment he had received, he returned to his customary occupation, and again, accompanied by my brother, appeared upon his former station; while I was obliged to seek out provisions for all the family, bearing my little sister, about a year younger and almost as big as myself, fastened on my back, at which those who passed by remarked that I carried a burden heavier than myself.

A fortnight after this, every day of which was devoted to the same employment, Ramond was again apprehended and confined in prison, where he remained about a month, during which time I was very barbarously treated by my mother, who hated me, and took every opportunity of exercising her revenge for the imprisonment of her paramour, which she said was owing to my perverseness in refusing to acknowledge him for my father. At times she would put me into her own bed, perhaps with a view of disguising her cruel intentions, and in the middle of the night, or early in the morning, she would get up and beat me terribly, dashing my head against the wall, and scratching me to that degree that the blood flowed. This conduct frightened me so much that I dared not return to the house, and this night and the next took up my lodging in a stable.

While labouring in my vocation of begging charity from door to door, I met a little girl coming out of a

cook's shop with some roast meat. I had entreated the mistress of the house to give me only a little water, which she denied me with a tone of asperity, upon which this young person said, "Come along with me, my little girl, and I will take you to a house where you shall have some." I took her at her word, and followed her, when, instead of water, she gave me some bread and wine. After regaling me well, and giving me six sous, she called her sisters together to hear me tell my story, at which they all wept.

After this I pursued my route, begging at almost all the great houses, where I met with various receptions; some listened to and relieved my necessities, whilst others drove me away from the door, and called me an impostor, to which I could only reply by my tears. Thus was I treated till, coming near Hauteville, I met in my road a poor vine-dresser, who pitied my wretchedness.

"Poor little creature," said she, in compassionate accents; "come along with me to my house, and you shall sleep in our garret."

This benevolent woman then took me home with her, listened attentively to my story, of the manner in which I gained my livelihood, the death of my father, and the cruelties of my mother, which I related simply, without exaggeration. This good creature then gave me some supper, of which I ate very heartily; but the tale I had told, in the language of infant simplicity, had totally deprived her of appetite.

"Only think," said she to her two children, with tears in her eyes, "this little girl is daughter to a great man!" and observing that I collected together,

and put into my mouth, the crumbs which the children let fall, "See! see!" continued she, "what distress may bring us to! Mind, and make no waste of the bread, which you may one day want yourselves!"

The next morning she called in her neighbours to see me, many of whom advised me to go to St. Cloud, where there was a great fair. I took their advice, and journeyed thither, moistening the road with my tears. Here I had the good fortune to meet with another vine-dresser, who, finding me asleep at four o'clock in the morning under a fruiterer's window, took me up trembling in her arms, brought me to her house, and laid me on her own bed; then giving me some warm wine and sugar, and covering me up, I fell into a perspiration, and awoke two hours after greatly refreshed. She then brought me a shift, and a jacket and petticoat belonging to one of her own children. "One of my little girls," said she, "is dead; if she had lived, I intended to have given her these clothes, which I now give to you. But make yourself happy, my poor little girl! you shall stay with me; my husband will be pleased with you!" Then weeping, and almost devouring me with kisses, "See this poor little girl!" said she, to her children: "she is descended from a king! Her mother used to beat her: she wanted to make her bring ten sous a day, and on holidays twenty; but we will take better care of her, and not use her so cruelly!"

CHAPTER III.

HERE I remained for a few days, and felt the most delightful contrast to my former wretchedness, rejoicing in the participation of the comforts of these honest peasants, who, in their quiet retreat, enjoyed all the happiness which ambition idly pants to grasp amid the discordant din of populous cities. If at any period of my life I ever enjoyed complete felicity, it was in this contented cottage; but I was reserved for greater misfortunes, and destined to experience extreme vicissitudes.

A few days had thus insensibly glided away in the enjoyment of comforts to which I had hitherto been a stranger, when my brother, whom my evil genius had conducted thither, espied me out amid the concourse of people at the fair.

“Ha! ha! are you there?” he exclaimed. “What are you doing here? My mother now lives in a grand lodging, and a great lord has taken charge of us. She has taken a good deal of trouble to get Mr. Ramond out of prison, but can’t succeed; however, I am not sorry. Come along home; everything is quiet. My mother is continually with him; she sleeps there, and I am alone with my little sister. Come then, sister! come, and let us go home together!”

Let me lament, for a moment, how a noble mind may be perverted by bad education and corrupt examples.

My brother, whose sentiments, as will hereafter appear, sufficiently evinced the nobility of his descent,

had been taught by my mother to despise and ridicule everything his persecuted sister either said or did. For this he was sure to meet with encouragement; but notwithstanding this bad education, and the mean example of his parents, his noble spirit broke forth amid every surrounding cloud, and he was not more renowned for the defence of his country, and the more arduous exertions in the public service, than esteemed by all who knew him for his amiable disposition, and fulfilling all the moral duties of private and social life.

When my brother invited me to go with him, I had no thought that he was deceiving me, and immediately returned to the good vintagers; and offering to restore their clothes, which they refused, I bid them farewell, at which they embraced me tenderly, and we all shed tears together.

I then went home with my brother; but what was my astonishment when, the moment I entered, I saw my mother in the same wretched apartments in which I left her!

She took very little notice then; but the next morning, when I was going to rise, I found the decent dress the vintagers had given me was taken away, and in its place an old tattered garment and a pair of wooden shoes.

“Get out!” exclaimed this unnatural parent; “take your little sister on your back, and get us some victuals; and if you do not return before nine o’clock, I will order the marshal to put you into a prison, much more terrible than that in which you saw M. Ramond.”

Alas! that word, prison, terrified me so much, that

I waddled out as fast as I could, with my little sister Margaretta on my back.

Here, for a short period, I experienced some little abatement in my mother's severity; but this calm did not last long, only during the short interval of Ramond's liberty, which was short indeed, for about eight days after he was a third time apprehended, and I experienced my former punishment.

It must here be remarked, that Ramond, though twice before imprisoned, had still the audacity to beg, as usual, with my brother, near the Tuilleries.

The story I told, in my perambulations for charity, of the death of my father, and my refusal to acknowledge Ramond as such, so exasperated my mother, that she vented her fury upon me, insisting that my conduct had been the cause of his confinement. I was accordingly blamed for everything; and refusing to call him father, she alleged was the sole reason of his being treated as an impostor. Indeed, from my own recollection, corroborated with what I have since heard in the country, he was not ill-qualified for this business. His figure was graceful and commanding: at the same time, when he presented the vouchers of his descent, his insinuating address led many to pity him as a nobleman in distress.

These accomplishments, added to his boldness, in begging even in the very face of the palace, after two imprisonments, had rendered him so popular, that he was again apprehended. This imprisonment was much more serious than the former two; he was confined fifteen days, at the expiration of which he was sentenced by the Court to be exposed twenty-four hours at the Place de Louis Quinze, the scene of his

imposture, with inscriptions, and copies of the titles he assumed, hung round his body; after which he was banished for five years from Paris.

My mother, for what reason I know not, led me to behold the spectacle. She appeared greatly affected. "'Tis all your fault!" said she to me, weeping; "'tis all your fault!"

Ramond was allowed to remain eight days, to settle his affairs and to re-establish his health; the seventh after he had been thus exposed he set forward on his journey, and my mother determining to go with him, told us, with much seeming regret, that she was going to accompany M. Ramond, assuring us that she did not mean to stay longer than five days, but would return within eight at farthest. She communicated this to their landlord Dufresne, and Theresa his niece, and then departed with Ramond, leaving us three little children without a morsel of victuals, except a small bag of nuts.

Three weeks passed away without any news.

The fourth we had the good fortune (may I call it good fortune?) to meet the Marquis and Marchioness de Boulainvilliers in their carriage-and-four, on their journey to their estate at Passy.

As the carriage drove on slowly, I went up to it, with my little sister on my back, and asked alms.

Madame de Boulainvilliers, having examined me attentively, wished to hear my story.

"I am a poor orphan," replied I, "without father or mother to take care of me." In short, I told everything I knew. M. de Boulainvilliers, extremely incredulous, reproved her for stopping the carriage so long to speak to beggars; but the tender-hearted

Marchioness endured the rebuke of her husband to pay attention to the cries of the wretched. "Pooh! pooh! Madame," said the Marquis, "don't listen to them; 'tis the common trick of poverty to forge lies, to excite compassion."

"No, indeed, sir," I replied, "it is not a lie; and I entreat Madame the Marchioness to have the goodness to send to Chaillot, and inquire of M. Dufresne, where we lodge."

"Very well, little girl," replied the Marchioness; "and if you speak the truth, I will be a mother to you." She then ordered her servants to relieve me, and said, "Take care, little girl, that you don't tell a story!"

"Oh, no!" replied I, "I would not attempt to impose on Madame de Boulainvilliers, who feels so much compassion for unprotected orphans."

The carriage then drove off, leaving me so much delighted at being taken such notice of by so great a lady, that it engrossed all my thoughts until I arrived at the house, whither I hastened to inform my brother, Dufresne, and Theresa, of my good fortune.

I first addressed myself to Theresa, telling her, in accents of infant exultation, how a great lady, and a grand gentleman with a star and riband, in a fine coach-and-four, with four servants, had stopped their carriage, and given me three livres; and that the lady had said she would send to inquire about us. I thought not, at that time, she would have so faithfully kept her word.

The next day I was called by Theresa, and on coming down, immediately recognized the servant I had seen the day before, who made many inquiries.

Theresa and her uncle confirmed the story I had told before, recounting the hardships my mother made me undergo when I did not bring home the sum required, and satisfied him on every point, and of the manner and reason of the imprisonments and subsequent banishment of M. Ramond. "You may," added Theresa, "make any inquiries you think proper; almost everybody in the neighbourhood knows them, and have contributed to their relief."

Dufresne then remarked, that Ramond was the occasion of my mother's having treated me so cruelly; and that everybody had read our titles: observing, moreover, that if they had not been genuine, the Government would not have restored them; but that as they were now in the possession of my mother, who had taken them away with her, probably to proceed in her imposture elsewhere, referred him to M. L'Enoque, curate of Boulogne, who could give the most authentic and undeniable information.

The domestic, who was commissioned to ascertain the truth, then went round to all the neighbours, who confirmed everything I have before related, and he returned with the most satisfactory intelligence.

Previous to his departure, Dufresne took him up stairs, and showed him the bed of straw upon which we all slept together: he likewise made him take notice of a stool, and other implements for blacking shoes, which had been bought for my brother to exercise the trade of a shoe-black. He then observed, that I had the sole charge and management of the family; that I washed the linen in the river, and every day picked up my little bundle of sticks from the hedge, to make the fire. "Go," said the servant,

“and thank Mdme. Hoeguard, and take your leave of her, and the baker who lives opposite, who has often given you bread, and after you have done this, inquire for the castle at Passy.”

Very soon after the servant's departure, little preparations being necessary for our journey, I put my little sister on my back, and we all set out together for the castle.

When we arrived at Passy, we addressed ourselves to the porter, whose room was filled with the people of the house and their friends, all assembled together to see us.

The moment we approached, they greeted us with an acclamation of welcome—

“Ha! ha! here they are! Here are the poor little orphans!”

Immediately upon our arrival, one of the domestics ran to acquaint Madame Boulainvilliers.

Passing into the house, we entered a spacious hall, in the centre of which rose a grand staircase, richly ornamented with gold, where a large company of ladies and gentlemen were standing to view us.

Madame de Boulainvilliers, descending to the middle of the staircase, addressed me: “Well, my dear little child, do you remember me?” to which I replied in the affirmative.

The company unanimously expressed a wish to see us clean, none of them daring to come near us, soiled as we were with the attributes of beggary—rags, filth, and vermin: the Marchioness gave orders that we should be cleaned.

We were accordingly removed, and myself and my sister underwent a good scrubbing by the maids,

Under the inspection of three young ladies, daughters of the Marchioness, who condescended to superintend the operation, and vied with each other who should do us the most service, adding that their mamma had told them we were to be their sisters.

While I and Margaretta were thus being cleaned by the maids, the male-servants were equally busied about my brother.

When we were washed, and accommodated with the best linen the exigencies of the moment would admit, we were put into an excellent bed, which was to us so great a luxury, that we slept longer than I think proper to mention; for I will not expose my veracity even to the very slightest suspicion, by the relation of facts which wear only the appearance of probability: suffice it to say, that we slept soundly for a very long time.

As soon as we awoke we were provided with some nourishing broth and some bread, which we ate very heartily. They then applied themselves to the cure of the diseases of the skin, with which we were all more or less infected, in consequence of our wretched situation: till this was effected, the Marchioness would not suffer us to stir abroad.

About fifteen days subsequent to this period (doubtless from curiosity excited by the representations of the Marchioness) we had many visitors, who brought us presents of clothes, and other things; and even the nobility and gentry, who paid their respects to Madame de Boulainvilliers at the castle, were not wanting in their attentions to us.

They made us recount our misfortunes, at the melancholy recital of which the tear of pity sufficiently

evinced that, while their curiosity was gratified with the knowledge of our history, their feelings were powerfully interested in our favour, and they complimented the Marchioness on the benevolence of her conduct towards us.

The disorders we had contracted during that state of wretchedness from which the worthy Marchioness had relieved us having now entirely disappeared, she determined to give us an education; and accordingly Madame Le Clerc and her daughter, who kept a young ladies' boarding-school near Passy, received my little sister and myself for that purpose.

I here experienced a return of my former disorder, notwithstanding the medicines I had taken to prevent it again appearing; nor was I suffered to associate with the other children till my health was perfectly re-established. We were then taught to work, in common with the rest, and Madame Le Clerc soon had the satisfaction of reporting to my benefactress the rapid progress I made in every branch of female education, particularly in writing; that my memory was uncommonly strong; and greatly regretted that she had not had charge of me earlier.

This lady's reports of my little sister were equally favourable; indeed, she herself gave several specimens of her improvement, particularly in repeating, at the annual *fête* of our worthy patroness, the customary compliment on such occasions, which she did with so much grace and propriety, that every one was charmed with her; and it was matter of admiration that an infant, scarcely five years of age, could remember so long a complimentary address.

No sooner had she finished than, lifting up the

Marchioness's gown, she kissed the hem of it. This was noticed by every one present, and afforded Madame de Boulainvilliers so much satisfaction that she immediately embraced her, saying, with the utmost warmth of feeling, "Call me your mother, my dear! I will always be a mother to you!"

"Ah! madam," replied she, "my mother was not so good to me as you are: she used to beat me and my sister, but you treat us with kindness, you caress us. Oh! no; you never beat my sister!" continued she, kissing her hand.

The company were so affected with this scene of infantine simplicity, with its genuine effusions of gratitude, that the sympathising tear flowed from every eye.

Soon after, this child, who was almost adored by those that knew her, was taken ill of the small-pox, and died when about five years of age.

Happy babe! let me suppress, if possible, these selfish, impious tears, and submit, in patient resignation, to that Being whose afflicting dispensations are eventually blessings, which we are too short-sighted to discover, or too perverse to acknowledge. Let me not lament thy departure, but rather congratulate thee upon being snatched away from such miseries as have constantly pursued thy unfortunate sister!

The Marchioness and her daughters, ignorant of the circumstance, were contemplating to surprise us by a sudden visit, when intelligence was received that the small-pox was raging at Passy. The Marchioness was so alarmed at this information, that she immediately set out for Paris, whither the Marquis also strongly advised her to go.

Thus was I doubly unfortunate ; the same event that tore away from me a beloved sister, deprived me also of my only friend, the benevolent Marchioness, whom I saw no more till after a tedious absence of five years, when I received my first communion, and asked a blessing of this mother by adoption.



CHAPTER IV.

I REMAINED now under the care of Madame Le Clerc, two of whose daughters quitting the family to pursue their business separately, I was obliged to supply their absence by doing their duty in the house, in which they had also instructed me.

Though Madame de Boulainvilliers defrayed the charge of my education, I was employed during her absence in the business of a servant, to wait upon the rest of the children. I fetched water ; I rubbed the chairs, made the beds : in short, I did every menial office about the house, from the age of twelve to fourteen, in the different occupations of washing, ironing, house-keeping, nursing, &c.

This employment, against which it was useless to remonstrate, was but ill-adapted to those elevated notions which reflections on my birth had inspired. Was it a happiness to know that I was descended from the first family in France, yet reduced to be a servant to people of the very lowest rank, nay, even servants themselves ?

With these aspiring views derived from my birth, which nature had considerably strengthened, and those growing hopes which the kindness of Madame Boulainvilliers had cherished, was it not painful to

reflect, that all my exertions were crippled by the trammels of servitude? Why, why was I descended from Valois! Oh, name replete with misery! from thee I derive my pride, for thee I drop my tears, to thee I owe my misfortunes!

Madame Le Clerc used frequently to go to Paris, to the Hotel de Boulainvilliers, as did also her eldest daughter, to visit the servants of the Marchioness. They spoke much in my favour; my affability, and readiness at work were likewise particularly recommended; though they took good care not to mention the menial offices in which they had thought proper to employ me.

One of the Marchioness's maids, named Cicely, who knew very well the good disposition and benevolence of her mistress, was always particularly kind to me, and searched the wardrobe for everything that might be proper for a young girl in my situation, which she sent either by Madame Le Clerc or her daughter; saying, "'Tis for our poor child!"

Poor child, indeed; she was seldom any richer for the presents which were sent; they were applied to a very different purpose—they were generally appropriated to the use of the mother or the daughter.

Knowing how kind Cicely had formerly been, and conscious of never having offended her, I knew not to what cause to attribute her apparent neglect, until some time afterwards Madame Le Clerc's youngest daughter let me into the secret.

I shed some tears at this discovery, but consoled myself with the reflection of the comparative advantages of my present position. Even this, I thought, with all my hard labour, with all the oppressions of

those who should protect me, is yet better than being cruelly beaten, and exposed all night in the street.

I recollected my former situation, and even thought myself happy, till envious memory again presented the dying words of my father, "Remember that you are Valois!"

I reflected that Madame Boulainvilliers had obtained from the good curate of Boulogne the most authentic and satisfactory credentials of my birth. I even wronged my benefactress by thinking that she had forgotten me: it was not to her that this imputation of neglect could be due, but to the man to whom it was her duty to submit her wishes—the Marquis de Boulainvilliers.

I have already hinted that I was neglected, and the reader will be hereafter satisfied from what cause one of my benefactors, the Marquis de Boulainvilliers, became my enemy. This was exceedingly unfortunate, and placed the Marchioness in the most disagreeable situation; for however willing she might appear still to serve me, however satisfied in my own breast of the firmness of her generous and benevolent sentiments in my favour, I could not hope that she would, at the hazard, perhaps, of incurring the displeasure of a husband she was bound to obey, continue to extend her bounty to one whom he feared would one day become burthensome.

To recount the numerous indignities I suffered, without any friend to sympathize in my afflictions, the menial offices and drudgery I was obliged to go through during the time I remained with Madame Le Clerc, would but unnecessarily tire the patience of my readers. My position, however, at length became

so intolerable, that I determined to write a full account to my old friend Cicely, and beg her to acquaint the Marchioness.

My application succeeded so well, that I was soon after conducted by Madame Le Clerc to the Hotel de Boulainvilliers, at Paris, from whence I was that same day carried to the house of Mademoiselle La Marche, mantua-maker to the Marchioness—a person in the most genteel line of business, and of unexceptionable character, who lived very near the hotel. To this lady I was articled for three years; but the uneasiness of mind I continually suffered prevented my bestowing very much attention in learning the business.

Some of the young women employed in the same occupation, observing me always in deep melancholy, kindly made use of every means in their power to console me; at the same time they were prompted by curiosity to hear my story, which becoming a topic of common conversation amongst them, induced some ladies to speak of me to the Marchioness, expressing their astonishment that my rank and situation should so materially differ.

It is a tribute of gratitude due to that worthy lady, hereafter to name some of the circumstances which might have operated in controlling the exertions of that generosity which would have been unbounded, if her ability had been equal to her benevolence: her disposition was very different from that of her husband, whose liberality did no honour to his title.

Soon after my being placed with Mademoiselle La Marche, I went to see the worthy curate of Boulogne, who informed me that he had received from Fontette

some papers of considerable consequence respecting my ancestry, which he had transmitted to Madame de Boulainvilliers, together with some copies of the evidence of our title, which my mother had fortunately left in his hands. Fortunately, did he say? Alas! was it not the very titles which, amidst my dangers, brought to recollection the blood of Valois, which first introduced me to persons of distinction, and finally terminated in my ruin? Had it not been for this title, my life had glided away in quiet obscurity. I might, indeed, have been poor; but then I should at least have been contented.

About a week after my return from Boulogne, I was sent for by the Marchioness, and I remember the servant said to me, "Mademoiselle Valois, you will not, I believe, continue long in your present situation; for there are many people of distinction speaking of your birth, and making many inquiries about you, at our hotel."

On my arrival, the Marchioness, who always received me with great cordiality, presented me to the company, whose countenances seemed to express concern. They put many questions to me about my father, particularly asking me if I recollected him perfectly. I gave them a full account of everything, dwelling emphatically on his death and dying words, which were too strongly impressed on my memory ever to be forgotten.

Appearing to participate in my affliction, they recommended patience to me, and that all would soon be well.

"Alas!" replied I, in a prophetic whisper, "that time will, I fear, never arrive."

When I took my leave, the company, with the utmost politeness and ceremony, conducted me to the stairs. After receiving all these honours from persons of such distinction, and treated as the descendant of a king, I could very ill brook the idea of returning to the servile station of a mantua-maker's apprentice.

I have before mentioned that Mademoiselle La Marche was a mantua-maker of the first reputation, with a very extensive business, the hurry of which was by no means adapted to a person in my condition.

Reflections on my situation, added to the fatigue of late hours, so preyed both on mind and body, that I was attacked with symptoms of a putrid fever, in consequence of which I was removed to the Hotel de Boulainvilliers, where I had a very elegant apartment allotted to me, directly over that of the Marquis.

I continued ill for six weeks, and was just able to walk about, when, before I was perfectly recovered, I was again sent back to Mademoiselle La Marche, who was at that time attacked with the same disorder.

The Marchioness then commissioned her maid to look out for another situation for me, which being soon found, I was placed with one Madame de Boussol, in the Faubourg de St. Germain, at the salary of 200 livres per annum (eight guineas and a half.)

This situation was worse than the former; her business was still more extensive than Mademoiselle La Marche's, consequently occasioned later hours, which, added to my bad state of health when removed

thither, soon brought on a relapse, and I was again conveyed to the Hotel de Boulainvilliers, where I had the same apartment allotted me as before.

My disorder now became so serious and alarming, that two nurses were appointed to attend me; who having observed, from the involuntary expressions which fell from me during repeated fits of delirium, that my illness proceeded from uneasiness of mind, tried every method to console me.

The malady had now continued four months, and I was reduced to a perfect spectacle of wretchedness; when, on Madame de Boussol's intimating that she could no longer be without an assistant in her business, I was carried back to my mistress, where I continued so very weak that I frequently fainted over my work.

These circumstances are related merely as a narrative of sufferings which, as a friend to truth, and in the history of my life, ought not to be omitted.

Let not Madame de Boussol be censured: she behaved as kindly to me as her situation and circumstances would permit; for the same money she paid me, an assistant might have been procured that would have answered her purpose infinitely better.

Was the Marchioness to blame? Let me, as a sacrifice to gratitude, blot the guilty page that dares even to suggest such a question.

Who then was the cause? I will answer in vindication of that more than parent; I will reply, with the energy of truth, that though dignified by his union with a lady whose very name is her panegyric, the Marquis de Boulainvilliers was the cause of my sufferings.

Madame de Boussol finding me of no service, and wishing to part with me, I again changed my situation; but I constantly changed for the worse, and was now sent to be the servant of a woman who had formerly waited upon the Marchioness de Narbonne, and now lived upon a legacy which that lady bequeathed her.

Here I was not only obliged to drudge through the hardest menial offices, but compelled to carry water from the bottom of a house four stories high, to prepare a bath which her indisposition obliged her to use. This was a situation more intolerable than any I had experienced. The unhappy descendant of an ancient family, whose ancestors had graced the first offices about the throne—nay, filled the throne itself—was now reduced to the situation of *servant to a servant!*

I will not endeavour to describe my reflections upon this occasion: those who experience the exertions of a noble spirit striving to oppose a torrent of exigencies, will feel, more emphatically than I can express, the agitation of mind, and afflictions of the heart, inseparable from a situation where pride and poverty are engaged in a continual struggle.

This woman, either being recovered from her illness or finding another girl whom she thought more capable of such labour, discharged me, and I remained some time unemployed. I was sent to Madame Coulon, sister to the Marchioness's housekeeper, who supported herself by taking in plain needlework.

It was imagined I could be of some assistance, and I was accordingly engaged at twelve sous per day, out of which I could afford myself but a miserable sustenance. This, added to the desponding state of my

mind, soon brought on a return of my former malady, and occasioned my removal once more to the Hotel de Boulainvilliers, where some dangerous symptoms appearing, it was the opinion of the physicians that my recovery was very doubtful, if not altogether impossible. The strength of my constitution, however, prevailed, and bore me from the very gates of death, to experience vicissitudes, compared to which death would have been happiness.

As soon as my health was sufficiently re-established, I was again sent to work at my former profession of mantua-maker, in the exercise of which I had been but a short time, when a circumstance occurred that occasioned a considerable change in my affairs: this was the arrival of my brother, who, having received the rudiments of his education under M. Le Clerc, husband to our governess, had been sent to sea.

But before I proceed in my narrative, it will be necessary to explain many things which must hitherto have appeared mysterious.

It is by no means a pleasing task to speak of the misconduct of one who ought to have been a protector, a guardian, and a parent—one who availed himself of these relations to disguise his real disposition, and sully that virtue which every man in such a situation should defend and protect.

Are my animadversions too severe? Let it be remembered that I am not speaking the language of resentment, but of truth—truth, which I have bound myself most strictly to adhere to; truth, which it is at once my duty and interest to reveal.

It is a tribute of gratitude due to the worthy Marchioness, to whom I am deeply indebted, to use the

language of accusation, leaving the reader to judge, from the facts I shall relate, whether I am not sufficiently warranted in pointing out the Marquis de Boulainvilliers as the cause of my unhappiness.

When I had left school, at the age of fourteen years, I had nearly attained my full stature; but as it would ill become me to pronounce a panegyric on myself, I shall pass over those encomiums on my person, probably dictated by flattery, which were supposed by the insinuating utterers to be most acceptable to my vanity, and, of course, to the promotion of their respective interests. Let it suffice to observe that my qualifications, however slender in reality, were sufficient to excite a dishonourable attention in the Marquis, who began his insidious machinations by commendations, accompanied with some of those little presents he thought best calculated to hush suspicion in the heart he intended to surprise. And the advances he made were covered with so much art, that it was impossible for me to perceive his design at first, innocently imagining I was receiving tokens of kindness from a parent, for whose liberality my heart overflowed with gratitude.

The Marquis, but too plainly observing the effect his attention had upon my mind, while I imagined it sprung from disinterested motives, thought it the most favourable opportunity for increasing my obligations to him, and securing my esteem, by heaping upon me a variety of those little presents which could not fail to prove agreeable to a young girl just emancipated from the duties of a boarding-school. But could I for a moment have suspected that these gifts were destined to be the price of my honour, al-

though disguised under the appearance of parental beneficence, I would have spurned the presents with all the dignity of insulted virtue; but I was as yet unacquainted with the treachery of human nature, nor versed in the arts of those who smile but to betray.

My own natural simplicity, added to the circumstance of the Marquis being husband to a lady whom I looked upon as more than a mother, so completely filled my breast with admiration of his character, that I did not perceive the real motive which actuated him till he convinced me, by his conduct, that his intentions were dishonourable, and the very reverse of those which had induced his worthy lady to patronize me.

I proceed to the relation of some of those facts which first occasioned my suspicion, leaving the reader to judge between us whether they are sufficiently warranted, premising that his conduct was at first so artful as even to elude the penetration of the Marchioness herself.

Being one day at his house, he wished, he said, to speak to me respecting some articles of apparel which he intended to give me, and appointed me to meet him a few days afterwards in the garden, at a particular hour, when I should find the gate open. I obeyed his commands. We met accordingly, and he took me into a room where nothing could be seen from the house.

As I had ever been taught to respect him as a father, this privacy made me conjecture that he was angry with me, and meant to reprimand me for some fault. Perceiving my fears, he gave me six livres,

spoke very kindly, and told me not to be alarmed; yet he appeared a good deal flurried, often running to and from the gate, as if fearful of somebody's coming.

He then kissed me, desiring me to make no noise, lest the Marchioness should hear: "and be sure," said he, very earnestly, "that you don't say a word to Cicely and the other maids, concerning what I have given you: they will only endeavour to get it from you! Come and see me often, and I will be very good to you; but be particularly careful that you don't say a word to any one!"

These strict injunctions of secrecy appeared to me rather strange.

"Come often, my dear girl! I shall always be glad to see you! Be discreet! Next Monday I shall send Julia to fetch you; I mean to present you with some clothes, for Madame de Boulainvilliers, I fear, does not take proper care of you!"

He then particularly questioned me respecting what clothes I had, which I told him were all new.

"I'll take care," he continued, "that you shall have every thing proper; and when you bring anything to the Marchioness, mind and come up the little staircase, as if you were going to see Cicely, and I will meet you, and give you something for yourself!"

On this staircase was a door leading to his private apartment.

The Monday following I was sent for, as he promised. The servant directed me to Madame de Boulainvilliers' apartment, who received me that morning with particular affability.

"You must thank the Marquis," exclaimed she;

“he is going to make you a present of some clothes.”

I immediately accompanied the servant to his apartment, where I found him with some pieces of silk and chintz.

After looking over several patterns, he sent the maid with one to the Marchioness for her opinion, at the same time desiring me to stay with him.

“Here’s a beautiful chintz,” said he, “my dear! I’m sure this will please you!” He then squeezed my hand, and kissed me, saying he would be very kind to me, if I would come and visit him often; at the same time giving me money, and cautioning me to be sure not to tell anybody.

When Julia returned, we left the apartment together; but he gave me no clothes. I hastened to Mademoiselle La Marche, anxious to make her acquainted with the Marquis’s bounty, from whom I had now, at different times, received about the amount of a louis-d’or. That lady thought, like myself, that these gifts were merely tokens of paternal affection. She therefore said nothing about it then; but the next day, when she went to the Hotel de Boulainvilliers, she mentioned to the maids how very generous the Marquis had been to me. At length it very naturally, considering the channel it had got into, came to the ears of the Marchioness.

Madame de Boulainvilliers, a little chagrined, and wishing to receive the intelligence from its proper source, instantly dispatched her maid in quest of me.

When I arrived, she received me with an air of displeasure to which I had been unaccustomed. I was not conscious of any fault, yet I thought I must

have done something wrong, or there would not have been such a change in my worthy benefactress.

“How is it, Mademoiselle,” she asked, in a tone of reproof; “how is it, that you give your confidence to Mademoiselle La Marche, in preference to me and my maid, who has been so kind to you?”

I tremblingly replied that the Marquis had forbidden me to mention it.

“But, Mademoiselle,” rejoined she, “if the Marquis has desired you to conceal it from me, he has given the same injunction with respect to Mademoiselle La Marche! Why is she entitled to your confidence in preference to your mother? Why are the servants intrusted with your secrets? Do they act the part of a mother? Is it they who provide you with everything? I am not pleased with you!”

Unable to endure this chiding, I burst into tears, when the Marchioness, observing how much I was affected, softened her tone, and spoke to me more kindly. She desired me to dry my tears, and relate to her all the circumstances I had mentioned to Mademoiselle La Marche.

I obeyed, and very ingenuously related every circumstance that had passed between the Marquis and myself: our private interview in the garden, his behaviour, presents, and injunctions to secrecy.

The Marchioness heard me attentively, without the least apparent agitation. She proved herself a woman of sense, and acted with the highest degree of prudence.

When I had finished my narration, she sent me away with a maternal admonition, and an assurance of her favour. “Very well, my good girl! Be

always virtuous, and God your father will certainly reward you!"

Soon after this circumstance I was attacked with my first disorder, and was three days ill before it was determined between Monsieur and Madame de Bou-lainvilliers whether I should reside at the hotel; the worthy Marchioness not wishing to expose my youth and innocence to such temptations as the Marquis, availing himself of his station and circumstances, perhaps might offer.

It was therefore proposed to send me to the hospital: a proposition which would have been rejected with disdain by my worthy mother, had it not been that she felt her benevolent efforts crippled by the narrow pittance allowed her by the Marquis, though she had herself raised him to affluence by her fortune, and aggrandized him by her title.

She was reduced to a dilemma, which to a woman of her sensibility was extremely distressing, either to abandon totally the favoured object of her protection to the poor accommodations of an hospital, or send for me to the hotel, where I should be exposed to the power of temptation.

Her benevolence, my situation not permitting delay, influenced her in favour of the latter. The room I have before mentioned was the only apartment proper for my reception; that apartment was accordingly prepared, and in a very languid condition I became its possessor.



CHAPTER V.

THE Marchioness, thoroughly acquainted with the disposition of her husband, was but too well satisfied of the design he had formed; and fully persuaded he would carry it into execution, whenever time and opportunity should concur to favour his wishes, she determined to frustrate him; and judging that the most prudent method would be to confine the secret to her own breast, she never dropped the least hint, nor ever appeared uneasy in his presence, trusting to the success of a plan she had in agitation, of removing me beyond his reach so soon as I might be able to bear the fatigue of application to business.

Notwithstanding the vigilance of the Marchioness, who had taken every precaution to prevent his visiting me (so fertile is the imagination of the bad man in expedients to accomplish his purpose,) the Marquis saw me frequently, and apparently with the greatest concern.

He assumed all the tenderness of parental regard, and gave particular orders that I should be attended with the greatest care; nay, even that my wants should be anticipated.

During these visits, he would sometimes seat himself by my bed-side, making the most anxious inquiries respecting the symptoms of my disorder, and where it affected me most: he would occasionally feel my pulse, my temples, and my stomach, under pretence of forming some judgment as to the nature of my complaint.

Although I deemed this conduct very indelicate, yet, under the specious pretence that he disguised it, it would have appeared unreasonable to remonstrate.

His worthy lady, whose conduct on this occasion I can never sufficiently admire, finding it altogether impossible to prevent the Marquis seeing me, while I remained in a house subject to his unlimited control, determined I should quit it, and try some occupation till she was able to ascertain whether there might be any probability of the success of her application to have me acknowledged at Court; or, what is perhaps more probable, that she judged it best, at this juncture, rather to depress than elevate those notions which brighter fortune would not fail to inspire.

Happy in every opportunity of doing justice to the benevolent kindness of my good mother, I with pleasure mention the following circumstance, which deserves to be recorded for the honour of human nature.

The Marchioness privately supported my brother and myself with the *pin-money* settled on her by the Marquis—a sum not only inadequate to her munificence, to which millions would have been unequal, but very incompatible with her rank and the fortune of which she was possessed.

It was the intention of the Marchioness to have provided me with lodgings during my illness, that I might be freed from the solicitations of her husband, but she was prevented from fulfilling her kind intentions by the cause which has been already assigned; and it was doubtless for the same reason she often expressed her uneasiness, that it was not in her power to give me an education suitable to the rank she hoped I might one day be found worthy to fill.

It will possibly be remarked that the circumstances I have mentioned are not sufficient to prove that the

Marquis had any evil designs, and that I accuse him beyond the measure of the offence. With respect to the first, I shall answer by relating hereafter a circumstance in which his conduct was no longer equivocal. My love of truth and my regard for virtue shall reply to the latter; the one convincing me that I should conceal nothing, and the other that I should point out to its votaries those who would exert every means in their power to destroy it.

About this period there appeared signs of my convalescence; and the apprehensions of my friends had nearly subsided, when the Marchioness received from the Minister of Marine intelligence of my brother's arrival; consequently she prepared for his reception by collecting together all the documents that could throw a light upon the antiquity of his descent, and introduce him to the royal favour as the Baron de Valois.

The Marchioness had formidable obstacles to oppose her generous intentions. It was feared the King would acknowledge my brother's claim to this title with great reluctance, as its appendages had been long enjoyed by the Duke de Chartres, which induced Madame de Boulainvilliers to avail herself of all the interest she could make at Court, and of every evidence that might substantiate our claim.

Although everything was now ready, and we could adduce the most clear and irrefragable proofs of our descent, the matter was conducted with the utmost secrecy, the Marchioness sagaciously foreseeing that the sudden appearance of my brother's pretensions, backed by the influence of powerful friends near the royal person, would prevail against the objections of

those who were interested in securing possessions they enjoyed, not hereditarily, but merely by right of possession.

At this juncture another circumstance occurred to further the intentions of the Marchioness, and reflected the highest credit on my brother and those who befriended him.

During the time of his absence, his conduct recommended him to the notice of the Marquis de Chabert, the admiral under whom he sailed: who, observing his assiduity in the service, was induced to make some inquiries respecting his birth.

This worthy officer received such satisfactory proofs of what had been communicated to him, that he caused a genealogical memorial to be prepared, stating my brother's pretensions to the name of Valois, which he transmitted to his cousin, M. D'Ozier de Serigny, Judge-at-Arms of the nobility of France, to secure the sanction of his authority.

Our affairs thus wearing so favourable an aspect, and every arrangement being completed that ingenuity could dictate, the Marchioness prepared for herself a feast for the heart. She concealed from me her knowledge of my brother's return, that she might enjoy those pleasing and virtuous emotions which sensibility participates in—the meeting of two persons so near in blood, so dear in friendship, and separated by long, tedious absence.

The day preceding his arrival, and that on which he was expected, a servant was dispatched to the mantua-maker's with orders for me to dress myself, and immediately repair to the hotel.

A little disturbed at this sudden summons, and

naturally timid in my disposition, I began to fear I had done something amiss; but the affable manner in which the Marchioness received me banished my apprehensions, and left no other impression than a grateful sense of her condescension, heightened by surprise when she desired me to stay and dine.

Never before having had that honour, and totally ignorant of the cause to which I was indebted for it on the present occasion, I was involved in a state of anxious suspense, from which I naturally expected to be relieved by the Marchioness, in communicating the purport of this fresh instance of her benevolence.

There was at dinner a company of twelve persons, mostly strangers, who seemed to regard me with particular attention, and were pleased to compliment me on the easy manner in which I conducted myself; in my reply to which I took occasion to remark, that I owed everything to the bounty of the Marchioness, whose fostering regard had attended me from childhood.

From the many encomiums they were pleased to pass on me, the conversation turned upon my brother, when the Marchioness asked me if I did not wish to see him; adding, that she had seen a person of his acquaintance, charged with a commission from him, whom she expected very soon.

There appeared to be something mysterious in this interrogatory and declaration of the Marchioness, which I in vain laboured to penetrate. The attention of the company, and their conversation respecting my brother, were circumstances at which I could not remain unconcerned, and that impressed my imagination with a belief there was some extraordinary pro-

ceeding about to be introduced, with the knowledge of which, however, my impatient curiosity was not gratified for that day.

Being again sent for, about eight o'clock the following evening, I was introduced to the Marchioness's apartment. She was accompanied by her youngest daughter, Madame de Tonneres, the Marchioness de Chabert, another lady, and a young man.

Madame de Boulainvilliers, after some kind inquiries concerning my health, &c., added that she hoped she should always have the pleasure of seeing me as well as I then appeared to be. Nothing could be farther from my thoughts than that the person present was my brother. He said nothing till, the Marchioness having first addressed him, he answered in such a hoarse, sonorous voice, that, observing him very attentively, I could not help exclaiming inwardly, "Where, and for what purpose, can Madame de Boulainvilliers have picked up so uncouth a man?"

He wore, instead of a cravat, a red silk handkerchief, and a very old, coarse over-coat; the rest of his dress in keeping.

The Marchioness observing my surprise, and seeing how attentively I surveyed him, said to me, "This gentleman, my dear, has seen your brother."

At this moment an unaccountable sensation took possession of my bosom, and awakened all that sympathy which the children of the same parent naturally feel for each other.

I imagined I saw some features in his face which were once familiar. "But surely," I thought, "this can never be him! My brother was more delicate, more handsome: this man is too coarse!"

Wishing to be relieved from my doubts, I began to put some questions, and ask if my brother was grown tall. Unable to conceal himself any longer, he flew into my arms, and embraced me. I shrieked aloud, in a mingled tone of joy and surprise.

“Behold!” he exclaimed, “behold, my dear sister, the brother whom our honoured mother has cherished, and brought here at a great expense!”

The spectators of this tender interview were not unconcerned; every countenance was expressive of the pleasure they enjoyed, and my brother and myself were the objects of their attention.

“Yes, my dear children,” exclaimed the Marchioness, embracing us, “I will ever give you proofs of my affection; nor is it possible to describe what I feel on the present occasion.”

About eleven o’clock I was conducted back to the mantua-maker’s. My reflections upon this were by no means pleasing; but my joy at seeing my brother, and the hope he inspired me with in a parting whisper, was at once food for my curiosity, and alleviated those sensations which would otherwise have been insupportable.

“All is ready, my dear sister; all is ready to make us known. But don’t mention it to any one!”

Ignorant of what was in contemplation, I thought it extremely singular. “All is in readiness to make us known!” What can this mean? thought I, and to what purpose is my brother sent for at so great an expense? and why is everything so very secret? A thousand conjectures crowded upon my mind, and deprived me of sleep that night.

The next morning my brother came to see me,

spoke with the greatest tenderness, and bid me make myself easy, encouraging me to hope for a favourable change in my circumstances. He now appeared in a very different costume, dressed in every respect like a gentleman, and fit to be presented, as it was then intended he should be, to M. Maurepas and the other ministers, and afterwards at Court.

My brother visited me every day for about a week, and the Saturday following set off for Versailles, with the Marquis de Boulainvilliers.

With reluctance I feel myself reduced to the necessity of entering more fully into the character of the Marquis, having pledged myself to prove satisfactorily his nefarious designs, lest I should be censured for assertion without proof: in vindication of myself, therefore, I am necessitated to declare the truth.

About a month after the arrival of my brother, I was removed to the Hotel de Boulainvilliers. The same apartment in which I had formerly slept was assigned me, and a little girl appointed to attend upon me, in consequence of my severe illness.

During my residence at the Hotel, the Marquis embraced every opportunity of rendering himself agreeable. Ignorant at that early period, my heart, a stranger to love, felt but the emotions of gratitude for parental bounty and affection.

Such were my sensations when he made his first advances. I knew that the Marchioness took every precaution to prevent his being alone with me, but my eyes were not open to his designs. Was it strange that I should not be able to penetrate his dissimulation?

His intentions indeed required disguise, and he

tried every art of seduction to win me to his purpose. Eternal Spirit, who presideth over virtue, let the voice of lamentation be lost in expressions of gratitude! Thy arm indeed has scourged me, but thy arm has protected my innocence!

During the time of my indisposition, I sometimes sent my little girl for confectionery, or whatever else might tempt my sickly appetite; and frequently the Marquis met her on the stairs, and inquired what she wanted. On being informed, he would say, "No; that is not good for her complaint." The girl, intimidated by his answers, concealed this circumstance, and influenced by her fears of the Marquis, would return to me with excuses, that the cook was gone out, and that there was nobody to give her what she wanted.

Soon after the Marquis, who generally paid me one or two visits every day, would himself come to my chamber, and assuming the appearance of parental solicitude, artfully inquire if I had taken anything that day. Upon being answered in the negative, he would exclaim, in a very earnest manner, "But, my dear child, you certainly ought!"

"I have sent my servant," replied I; "but there is nobody at home to give her anything."

"I will go myself to the kitchen, and order it," he would answer, in a manner expressive of the deepest concern.

Through these little offices he expected to work upon my gratitude. He varied his manœuvres, and attempted to win over my vanity to his interest.

He soon afterwards showed me two pieces of beautiful blue and rose-coloured silk, as I passed to make

inquiries and pay my respects to the Marchioness; but not finding his hopes likely to succeed, the sight of the silks was the only gratification I received.

He at length, however, determined to put me to the severest test, and finding his machinations hitherto ineffectual, he thought to crown all by a *coup-d'eclat* and actually sent me one day, by his *valet de chambre*, an elegant repeating watch set with diamonds, worth at least 150 louis. On receiving it, I ran to the apartment of the Marchioness, and informing her that the Marquis had sent it to me, showed her my fine watch.

Whatever her thoughts might have been, she appeared pleased with this mark of her husband's attention; but I thought so valuable a present did not appear very agreeable to Mademoiselle de Passy, the Marchioness's youngest daughter, who remarked that my influence with the Marquis was greater than either her's or her sister's, their father never having given them a watch of more than six or eight louis value; they all, however, complimented me on the occasion.

Nevertheless, during the time this watch was in my possession, I thought I experienced a coolness to which I had been unaccustomed in that family. I could read it in their countenances: what followed convinced me I was right.

The sequel of my narrative will sufficiently prove by what motives the Marquis was actuated, whose years and position might have taught him better. He imagined so magnificent a present would dazzle the eyes of a youthful female, and entice her from the path of honour, to experience all the horrors of self-

reproaching conscience; but those good angels who constantly hover round, ready to protect distressed virtue, whispered my heart, and steeled it against temptation.

Without any hope of obtaining his ends by flattery or presents, he resolved to make another effort—one which requires no comment, and will render any apology for the apparent severity of my former accusation, I hope, unnecessary.

During the secure and quiet hours of sleep, in defiance of those laws of hospitality which even savages hold sacred, he made his last attempt; and the obstinate resistance he met with cannot fail of substantiating my innocence, while at the same time it proclaims his guilt.

Night, the season best adapted for the execution of so nefarious a design, was chosen by this violator of all the laws of humanity and hospitality for the completion of his long-intended purpose:

Despairing of ever being able to gain his point by flattery or presents, he had recourse to an expedient which must draw upon him the severest censure of the good and virtuous, and was carried out by means of the power he undoubtedly possessed, of having free access throughout his own house, in which, as his guest, I was then resident.

This appeared to have been a determined step on the part of the Marquis, who had used the utmost precaution in removing every obstacle to the execution of his project: he approached in darkness, except what little assistance he derived from the faint glimmerings of a lamp, and with the least possible noise removed a commode, which had been placed against

the servant's chamber-door to prevent any person from passing, and with the utmost caution directed his steps towards my apartment, where, after imploring the protection of heaven, I had resigned myself to repose.

Starting suddenly from my sleep, on hearing a noise in my bed-chamber, to my astonishment and terror I beheld the Marquis de Boulainvilliers, with the lamp I have already mentioned in his hand, and in his night-gown and slippers.

All the kindness he had pretended, all the presents he had bestowed, at once appeared dissimulation and treachery; and recovering from the surprise into which so extraordinary an event had naturally plunged me, anger and resentment took place of gratitude and esteem, and I determined, be the consequence what it might, to defeat his villany.

Perceiving my agitation, he in a soothing voice begged me not to be alarmed; he promised, expostulated, and threatened, with equal success. Deaf to his entreaties, I summoned resolution to tell him, in a determined manner, that if he did not instantly quit the chamber, I would by my cries alarm the family.

This menace had its desired effect. Guilt and cowardice are generally allied; the latter operated in my favour. Fearful that I should make the Marchioness acquainted with his conduct, he departed, muttering curses upon my obstinacy, and saying I should yet feel his resentment.

From this moment, malice and revenge occupied the place of kind offices, presents, &c., and influenced his future conduct. Eager to seize every opportunity of doing me an injury, he still wore that air of dis-

simulation which he well knew how to practise; and while he appeared publicly anxious for my welfare, he secretly plotted my ruin.

But a short time had elapsed before the same valet who had brought me the watch, came with his master's compliments, and begged me to lend it him, as he was going to Versailles.

Without hesitation I complied with his request; but never again had the watch in my possession, nor did the Marquis ever speak a syllable to me concerning it. In this instance of his meanness, however, he unintentionally did me a piece of essential service; for while that watch remained in my possession, an unusual coolness pervaded the countenances of the Marchioness and her daughters; now it was gone I hoped to regain their esteem and affection, nor was I deceived. One of the young ladies, perceiving I did not wear my watch as usual, had the curiosity to ask what was become of it, and on being informed that the Marquis had sent for it, and had not returned it, pleasure seemed to beam from their eyes, that shyness which I had for some time observed left them, and, in short, I received their caresses, and experienced their friendship, in a greater degree, if possible, than before.

I digressed from the relation of my brother's arrival, to remove some difficulties which might have arisen in the minds of my readers relative to the Marquis. I feel much satisfaction, however, in quitting the Marquis to return to my brother.

Soon after my brother's arrival, the credentials of his birth being properly arranged, a day was fixed to present him to the King, in consequence of which he

was conducted by the Marquis de Boulainvilliers to Versailles, and remained some time at the hotel of M. le Count de Vergennes.

One day, as my brother was taking a turn on the parade, the Marquis de Marigny, who had formerly taken great notice of his conduct, accosted him very familiarly.

“What, Remy, is that you? What brings you here?” Then attentively surveying him, he exclaimed with surprise, “How very fine you are!” The Marquis asked a great many questions: to those relating to his journey to Versailles, my brother gave no satisfactory answer, only observing that he had met with a friend who countenanced and protected him.



CHAPTER VI.

THE long-expected day at length arrived, when my brother was introduced to the King. This ceremony was performed by the Marquis de Boulainvilliers, M. Chabert, the Count de Maurepas, and M. Neckar. He was presented as the Baron de Valois.

His Majesty having acknowledged his title, and knowing him to be the undoubted descendant of a family who had once swayed the sceptre of France (a family whose name, perhaps, he would not wish to see revived), recommended him to devote himself to the church.

My brother intimated his predilection for the army.

The King thanked him for his inclination to serve him, but at the same time more strongly recommended him to serve his God.

“Sire,” replied my brother, “I am serving my God while I am serving my King.”

The august monarch, pleased with this answer, condescended to promise him every encouragement to acquit himself of his duty to both.

Soon after, a grand dinner was given by M. Chabert, to which the Marquis de Boulainvilliers and my brother were invited. The Marquis arrived first. My brother, having been detained by some friends whom he had met on his way, did not make his appearance till the company were seated. He was announced as the Baron de Valois, a title which the greater part of the company were surprised at hearing.

“The Baron de Valois!” whispered one to the other. “We know none of that name but the son of the Duke de Chartres!”

Their astonishment still increased, when M. de Chabert, filling a bumper, gave—“A health to the new Baron de Valois!”

M. de Marigny, being engaged in conversation when my brother was announced, and now first hearing the name of Valois, eagerly looked round, and at length discovering my brother, upon whom the eyes of all the company were at this moment fixed, he inquired of the gentlemen near him, “What is the meaning of all this?”

The instant he was informed that my brother was acknowledged by the King as a descendant from the Valois, he was so transported with joy, that he suddenly started from his chair, and ran to embrace him.

The guests, charmed with the sensibility of the

parties, and apprised of the sudden revolution in our fortune, were curious to hear the cause which occasioned it.

My brother complied with their wishes, related his story, and gave satisfactory answers to every inquiry.

It is with the greatest pleasure that I mention the names of the Marquis and Marchioness de Chabert, and M. de Marigny. They were all the particular friends of the worthy Madame de Boulainvilliers—a circumstance alone sufficient to rank them high in the estimation of every good mind. They stood next to her, as our friends and protectors. Never will their kindness be effaced from my remembrance! Never shall I think of their names, but with the warmest emotions of gratitude!

I shall not apologise for this digression in favour of my benefactors, which, however much criticism may censure, I trust humanity will not condemn.

Few men possessed so much sensibility, so much goodness, as the Marquis de Chabert. It was he who took the trouble of collecting and properly arranging our papers; it was he who forwarded them to his cousin, M. D'Ozier, Judge-of-Arms of the nobility of France, for his certificate.

Not content with what he had already done, and not wishing to be exceeded in benevolence, even by the Marchioness de Boulainvilliers herself, he wished to bear a part in all the subsequent expenses. He pulled out his purse, observing, "Madame, your charge is certainly considerable, and your bounty has been of long continuance! You have been singular in your benevolence! I do not aspire to an equality; suffer me only to partake with you the pleasing reflections

which ever accompany good actions. I beg you will allow me to contribute one half of what you have bestowed on these children!"

I have already mentioned several instances of this worthy lady's bounty, but it would require a volume to do justice to the numerous and strikingly benevolent marks of attention she was continually heaping upon us, denying herself a participation in her most favourite amusements, to compensate for the narrow limits of her private purse, out of which she supported us.

"I am persuaded," said this worthy lady, "that God has sent these three children as a blessing to my family!" And having often asked me if she should send for my sister, upon my answering that there was nothing I more earnestly desired, "Then I assure you, my dear child," she replied, "I will exert my utmost endeavours with M. Boulainvilliers to effect my object."

It was this promise that, in the hours of illness, operated as a cordial medicine, and by reviving the dying embers of hope, tended to accelerate the progress of returning health. This benevolent lady never lost a favourable opportunity of urging her suit to the Marquis, who, wearied by her importunity, yielded to her request, and my sister was accordingly sent for.

Behold, then, at length, the recognition of the Valois! They had the title, it is true, but not the means of supporting it. The pension of 800 livres was very inadequate to support the dignity of one of the first houses of France.

Monsieur de Maurepas, whom the King had instructed to make such arrangements as he thought

proper, was not to blame for this pension being so trifling; and I owe him the justice to declare, had our cause been properly supported, the descendants of an illustrious family, so long kept out of their rights, so long exposed to every indignity, would have been better rewarded for their sufferings, than with the pitiful pension of 800 livres per annum.

The sovereign's sense of justice would not have allowed this; the generosity of M. Maurepas would at least have doubled it. Who then set himself in opposition to the justice of the sovereign and the generosity of his friend? It was the Marquis de Boulainvilliers: it was he who, acquainted with the economical views of the King, and conversant in the arts of a courtier, wished to recommend himself to the royal attention, supposing every other man to be influenced by the same parsimonious motives as governed his own conduct: it was this seeming friend, who wished to arrogate to himself the merit of appearing generous without sufficient spirit to be so.

He himself proposed this pension of 800 livres, under the specious mask of patriotism: the state, he alleged, was overwhelmed with debt. - "But," replied the Count de Maurepas, "eight hundred livres is given by his Majesty upon the most ordinary occasions. Allow it to be more than that: let me make some addition."

"No," insisted M. Boulainvilliers, "we will content ourselves with 800 livres. But I beg you will take the trouble to represent to the King that, as the state is so loaded with debt, I wish to enter, as much as possible, into his Majesty's views of economy. I will myself, therefore, supply the deficiency; for I look

upon them as my own children, and they shall want for nothing."

Thus was this pension finally determined, and we received a brevet wherein 800 livres were expressed, payable to each of us, to commence from December, 1775, without any deduction.

How great an alteration does change of circumstances create in the ideas and actions of men! No sooner were we acknowledged at Court than all the *noblesse* immediately desired our acquaintance, and crowded every day to pay their respects to the Baron and myself.

I cannot say that I felt myself at all transported by the compliments I received on this occasion: my ideas had ever been elevated to as high a station as that which I at present enjoyed. I was, however, pleased, and grateful to my benefactress, and reflected that, without her protection and powerful assistance, I had not been restored to my birth-right.

I contrasted the splendour of my present with the ragged wretchedness of my infant condition, rooted by misfortune on the winter-clad side of a bleak mountain, without hope of protection or relief, and where, but for the fostering care of the good Marchioness, I should have remained struggling with adverse fortune, which would have ended only with my life

We were now in the meridian of prosperity, receiving the compliments of the nobility, and the friends of Madame de Boulainvilliers introduced us to the entire circle of their acquaintance. Every one congratulated us on our good fortune, and the resto-

ration of so ancient a family, with a pension sufficient to support its dignity.

All the gazettes were filled with this topic: they spoke of the recognition of the three children, and were profuse in panegyric on the royal munificence and royal humanity, in acknowledging the children of Valois, and granting them an annuity of 3000 livres, and an equipment. The story was in everybody's mouth; compliments redoubled; every one was lavish in praise of the King's goodness, and were proud, as they insinuated, to see it so well applied.

It will doubtless appear singular that Monsieur Boulainvilliers should never have contradicted these reports, and it is strange that everybody should have believed them; but it was the system of M. de Boulainvilliers ever to appear what he was not, and seldom or never to be what he appeared.

Monsieur de Boulainvilliers took great care to send his secretary round to the different coffee-houses, to make extracts from the gazettes, and from these materials to form reports favourable to himself; for he was much more anxious to receive the credit of a good action, and acquire popularity from ostentation, than my worthy mother, who was much better pleased with the consciousness of having done well, than with that empty praise which more frequently attends hypocrisy than virtue. Her benevolence was reduced to a system, her good actions were habitual, and her practice was ever conformable to her precepts.

This good lady was anxious to remedy the negligence of her husband; she went round among her friends, particularly those who had the best access to the royal ear, and influenced them to apply for an

addition to our pension; she specially visited M. and Madame Neckar, who expressed much good-will towards us, and, doubtless from the representation of the Marchioness, interested themselves warmly in our favour, not only promising a continuance of their friendship and support, but M. Neckar actually presented my brother with an equipment of four or five thousand livres, and an ensign's commission.

In the meantime Madame de Boulainvilliers interested herself with the minister to obtain an addition to my pension. She was not aware that this small sum of 800 livres, which appeared to her so inadequate, had been absolutely fixed by her husband, to recommend himself to the King, at a period when, it is perhaps necessary to remark, that every retrenchment in the expenditure of the revenue was the chief object of a minister who, born in a republic, well knew the advantages of industry and economy, and whose sudden elevation to the head of the finances of France was a matter of astonishment to the different courts of Europe.

This able minister perfectly coincided with the King in his plans of economy, and the sanction of his royal master gave efficacy to his regulations.

The Marchioness knew not that the Marquis had thus influenced the ministers, though she was soon after made acquainted with it; nor would this circumstance probably have been disclosed, if my brother had not waited upon Count de Maurepas and M. Neckar, to return his acknowledgments, and beg a continuance of their kindness. They were the first to mention the very words which I have before re-

lated to have been used by M. Boulainvilliers, in fixing the amount of our pension.

M. Neckar and my brother could scarcely believe what they heard ; and my brother felt himself so materially hurt at an act he supposed to be impossible, that he did not even pay the Marquis a visit of thanks, in common with the rest of his friends who had stood forward on this occasion. He was the more induced to take this step, from never having observed any effort on the part of that nobleman to serve us ; who had contributed nothing towards defraying the expense of my education, which was borne alone by my worthy mother out of the parsimonious allowance of her husband, though (as already stated) her name and fortune had raised him to the rank he enjoyed.

I was confined to my apartment by indisposition, when Madame de Boulainvilliers and the Abbé Tacher, brother to Madame Chabert, came together, to inform me of the pension granted to me and my sister, which they said was the same as that granted to my brother.

With the most heartfelt gratitude I expressed my obligations to the Marchioness for this and every other instance of her attention to my welfare ; at the same time regretting that they should have had so much trouble to acquire so small a pension. Her answer, however, was the same as M. Neckar gave my brother, that the recognition of our title was a great point gained ; that time would bring about everything ; and that our being acknowledged would give a sanction for greater demands, of which we must avail ourselves when opportunity offered.

Amongst the numerous visitors who constantly

crowded to the Hotel de Boulainvilliers, probably to gratify curiosity by seeing us, was the Countess de Strokonomke, who was very intimate with the Marchioness; also the Duchess de Choiseul, Lady of the Bed-chamber to the Queen.

In a conversation between these two ladies, it was hinted that I should be married very soon; that with this fortune of 1000 crowns, I should very readily get a husband; and that the King would certainly give a brevet of rank, and the title of colonel, to the person of whom I should make choice.

Astonished at hearing them talking of a pension of 1000 crowns, I answered that I really did not understand what they meant, adding that I had only 800 livres, and my sister the same, as far as I had been able to judge from the words of the brevet.

“How, my dear!” replied they. “Do you not know that it has been circulated through all the gazettes in Europe? and if it is not really true, M. de Boulainvilliers would certainly have contradicted it. It is thought so by the King, and the royal family, who read the papers; they believe it; and, instead of pitying you, all the world is loud in praise of the King, respecting his conduct towards you. The public, therefore, are very well persuaded that you have each of you 1000 crowns; and that, if it was not true, Monsieur de Boulainvilliers, who was capable of giving the best intelligence, would certainly have contradicted it, and not suffered the public to be imposed upon, who must lament that so small a pension should be given to support the dignity of so illustrious a name—a pension only equal to that generally granted by his Majesty to one of his domes-

tics, after twenty years' service, and scarcely sufficient even to support the little exigencies of obscurity !”

I have already stated that the person most culpable was M. de Boulainvilliers, who, under the peculiar circumstances in which he had placed himself, could not, with any shadow of propriety, undertake to contradict the public prints. For that would immediately have led to a detection of his artifice, in giving the ministers an opportunity of vindicating themselves by assigning the true reason for this limited pension, which must necessarily have criminated him, and enabled me, or my virtuous mother, who held a lie in the utmost abhorrence, to contradict the report.

Truly may I assert that, instead of doing me a favour in causing me to be acknowledged as a descendant of the Valois, the inadequacy of the pension granted to support the dignity of a noble and royal house, who had sacrificed their lives and fortunes in defence of the state, had plunged me into distress more poignant, if possible, than that I had already experienced while I remained in obscurity. At the very time that the Marquis de Boulainvilliers had given me to understand I should want for nothing at his house, I in fact wanted everything; and the bad management of the Marquis in this affair will appear evident, when I relate that our pension was made to commence from December, 1776, and during that whole year he never offered to accommodate me with a single sou.

Under these circumstances, not wishing to remain a burden on the generosity of my worthy benefactress, and desirous to conceal from her those wants she had so long prevented me from experiencing, and which

now, however it might deprive her of the means of supplying her own, she would instantly have administered to, I accepted the offer of the Marquis, to advance upon my pension what sums I stood in need of; which, generally exceeding the limits of it, I was constantly in arrear, and at the conclusion of the year never had money for my wants.

M. de Boulainvilliers ought not to have influenced the ministers, and prevented them from doing as they wished.

In the month of March, a season remarkably fine, Monsieur, the king's brother, gave a grand gala, upon the purchase of an estate called Brunois, most delightfully situated, which M. Brunois had decorated at an immense expense. His grandfather was agent and partner with the famous Samuel Bernard, the Jew, and father of the Marquis de Boulainvilliers.

A grand entertainment was given, consisting of two tournaments and a comedy: an amphitheatre was fitted up for the reception of the royal family, who were present, attended by most of the French nobility.

The story of our misfortunes and recognition, circulated in almost every gazette, had reached the ear of the Lady Elizabeth of France. She expressed a desire to see us. The Marchioness de Pont de Cassel, one of my particular well-wishers, apprised Madame de Boulainvilliers of this circumstance, who, wishing to gratify the Princess, took a few turns on her terrace, accompanied by myself and my brother, in full uniform, and her youngest daughter, Mademoiselle de Passy, to represent the three children.

As the Court passed (which it was obliged to do in

coming from Paris), the estate of the Marquis de Boulainvilliers, at Montgeron, the Princesses passed first, and condescended to salute us. Madame de Pond, who was in the character of Dame de Palais to the royal sisters, pointed us out, and was the cause of our being taken notice of.

We then went to Brunois, and were present at the comedy which was performed in compliment to the King. The royal family were seated promiscuously, and it was our good fortune to be placed near them, particularly the Princess Elizabeth, who had said, on speaking of us, as the Marchioness de Boulainvilliers was informed that same day, that, as we were acknowledged by his Majesty, we were her cousins.

In consequence of the attention paid to us by the Princess Elizabeth, the captain of the guard placed us near her at the banquet, and Madame de Boulainvilliers and her daughter had the satisfaction to observe that she honoured me with her regard.

When the play was ended, the royal family adjourned to the tournament, and seated themselves at the upper end of the lists, near the amphitheatre, whither we also followed, and again had the good fortune to obtain a seat near that of the Princess Elizabeth, who on this occasion honoured us with more partial attention than before.

It will be easily imagined that the notice of so exalted a personage drew towards us the compliments of almost all the Court, who were so profuse in their encomiums on the humanity and judgment of the Marchioness, that they could not fail of reaching the royal ear, and their Majesties graciously condescended to join in the general wishes of the *noblesse* for our welfare.

Madame de Polignac, now governess to the royal children, was present at the amphitheatre, and was at that time but young in the Queen's favour.

These circumstances are not related merely from ostentation, or with a view to induce the reader to suppose I possess uncommon attractions; they are mentioned in justice to my family, and will at the same time sufficiently evince that I have been the sport of Fortune, elevated and depressed at the pleasure of that capricious dame.

It is my wish also, from a statement of these facts, to impress upon the minds of my readers how very inadequate a trifling pension of little more than three-and-thirty pounds a year must have been to support the dignity of a family lately acknowledged by the King to be one of the first in France, and nearly related to his own, and who, but for the interference of lukewarm friends, would have extended his munificence sufficiently to have enabled us to support its dignity.

Let me not be accused of trespassing on the patience of my readers by detailing incidents apparently frivolous, but be permitted to observe, that there is scarcely anything so trifling that may not be attended with some advantage.

I have engaged to write my life, and am giving a portrait, where several touches of the pencil, singly taken, appear insignificant; collectively they are essential to the piece. I shall not suppress these foibles, which will doubtless meet the censure they merit; therefore, reader, whosoever thou art, I have some claim to thy attention, and would wish to excite thy interest, while I pursue a singular narrative, which, however trivial it may appear at its outset,

will in its progress excite, and in its conclusion gratify, thy curiosity.

Some days after the *fête*, Madame de Pond, and others belonging to the Court, represented to us how much the royal family complimented Madame de Boulainvilliers; that the Princesses had been much affected by the history of our misfortunes, and were pleased to hear that our descent had been so well authenticated.

Madame de Pond, willing to take advantage of this happy disposition of the Court in our favour, consulted with Madame de Boulainvilliers to solicit, not merely an equipment, but an absolute and certain augmentation of our pension, which she was sure could not fail of success.

The worthy Marchioness, whose heart ever felt for the distressed, but particularly for the objects of her benevolence, cagerly embraced this proposal, and with my brother waited upon M. and Madame Neckar, and M. Amelot (at that time entrusted with the management of affairs of state) and his lady. After this visit, my brother departed for Brest, about April, 1776.

I will now attempt to make good what I have heretofore repeatedly asserted, that difficulties of every kind thwarted the attempts of those who were anxious for my advancement, and dangers of every description besieged me in the execution of my designs, and rendered them abortive.

From the moment I became satisfied of the narrowness of my pension, I frequently reflected how inadequate it was to the services of my ancestors, and the compliments which were paid us—compliments

which, under such circumstances, I even construed into reproaches. In short, the unavoidable expense attending our present situation was so greatly in excess of the means allowed for supporting it, that I began to suppose it absolutely impossible for us to continue in it.

I affected to wear the smile of gaiety on my countenance, while discontent preyed upon my heart.

At length my health fell a sacrifice to my uneasiness of mind; my complexion exchanged the bloom of health for the sallow hue of melancholy; and I was frequently attacked by convulsions, probably brought on by the concealment of what was passing in my breast.

During this time I had all the medical assistance that could be procured, which was attended with considerable expense to the Marchioness; nevertheless, that worthy lady spared neither expense nor attention that might in the smallest degree be conducive to my welfare. Eagerly intent on my restoration to health, she was busy among her friends at Court to procure the necessary means of enjoying it.

The Marchioness de Boulainvilliers had interested herself so powerfully in our behalf, that her applications were in a fair way of terminating successfully. Everything was in a train for securing an augmentation of our pension, when a circumstance occurred which considerably diminished the influence of that amiable lady, and banished all my hopes.

The character of the Marquis had suffered so severely in public estimation, that it extended to all his connections, and the very name of Boulainvilliers became a mark for opprobrium, and the reputation of the

Marchioness was included in the general censure. Generous lady! in vain shall calumny attempt to sully thy spotless fame! Thy actions alone can testify thy virtue, and that virtue is almost sufficient to extenuate the follies of thy husband.

The circumstance I allude to at that time made a great noise. At this period, perhaps, amidst the tumults which prevail, it may be almost forgotten.

Madame de Boulainvilliers was engaged on a visit to the villa of M. Narbonne, bishop of Evreux. She had scarcely been a fortnight absent when the Marquis followed her, leaving me in a very weak state of health at the Hotel de Boulainvilliers, with the housekeeper and two other servants.

In deep caverns under the Marquis's house and grounds, which extended to a considerable distance, was a distillery, furnished with everything necessary for transacting the business with as few persons and as secretly as possible; at this time so powerful a smell issued from the openings into the caverns, that it became almost intolerable.

My curiosity was strongly excited, but none of those about me were capable of giving me any satisfactory answer to the questions I put to them. All seemed greatly agitated; everything was in confusion.

Wishing to unravel this mystery, I went out under pretence of paying a visit to Mademoiselle de Passy, the Marchioness's youngest daughter, at that time a boarder in the convent of St. Omer. As I passed the porter he seemed much confused, and looked very pale; at the same time I saw his son running along the garden, as I understood afterwards, to apprise M. Dennis, secretary to M. de Boulainvilliers, of

what had happened. The moment he received the intelligence, he opened a large reservoir of water, which almost instantaneously filled those fissures in the cavern from whence the stench issued, and destroyed the greater part of the compounds, so that a very small quantity was actually found.

Going out of the gate, I saw the *Gué à pied*, and great crowds of people collected together, all reprobating the conduct of the Marquis.

I was sensibly affected for the uneasiness this behaviour of her husband would give my worthy benefactress; and was shocked at the sight of the *Gué à pied*, and the immense stills and other implements which were dragged out by the enraged populace, who loudly exclaimed against such a mean debasement of the French nobility.

I again demanded of the Swiss the reason of this uproar, but could get no other answer than that he had sold some wine without permission. Dissatisfied with this reply, and fatigued with the disturbance, I retired to my chamber.

It may easily be imagined that a circumstance of this kind could not long remain a secret: it was soon circulated through all Paris, and became the general topic of conversation. I judged it my duty to acquaint the Marchioness, and had actually begun a letter for that purpose, but a convulsion-fit seized me before I could complete my task.

The report quickly reached the ears of the Marquis, who immediately posted to Paris; he was met on the road by his secretary; and the Marchioness arrived soon after. They were, however, obliged to enter the town by night, to avoid the insults of the populace.

This unfortunate affair prevented their appearing at Court for a considerable time, which greatly mortified the Marchioness, who was not privy to the subterranean speculation, which her ample fortune had rendered unnecessary, and in one of her birth would have been disgraceful. It was this untoward circumstance which had rendered all her plans on my behalf abortive, although nearly mature for success; and induced persons of distinction, who had formerly been particularly intimate, to withhold their visits.

The discovery of this subterranean occupation was by some attributed to the Count de Boulainvilliers, a relation of the Marchioness, to whom she was also guardian, and will serve to elucidate my remark, that the Marquis became possessed of his title in right of his wife, whose family was of great distinction. The Marquis was a son of the President D'Hurent, by a daughter of the famous Jew, Samuel Bernard, whose riches, though great, were only equalled by his philanthropy and beneficence. The Marchioness was heiress to M. de Balaincourt, Marquis de Boulainvilliers, and there being no male heir to inherit the title, the Marquis made interest to procure it for himself.

The general character and conduct of the Count de Boulainvilliers was the very opposite to that of an informer. On the contrary, he exerted himself to the utmost to console the Marchioness, and entreated the Prince de Conti to use his influence with the King in behalf of the Marquis: a circumstance alone sufficient to vindicate him from so unjust an aspersion.

His Majesty was so much incensed at the conduct of the Marquis, which he considered a stain upon the

French nobility, that he gave public marks of his displeasure by prohibiting him from appearing at Court.

The displeasure of the monarch so far biassed the opinion of the nobility, that the Marquis was shunned by all ranks. The Prince de Conti discontinued his visits; but having, through the intercession of the Count de Boulainvilliers, undertaken to restore him to the royal favour, by way of affording him all the countenance and friendship in his power, he renewed his visits, with a view of gaining over the rest of the nobility (ever ready to follow the example of persons of distinction) in favour of the cause he had espoused.

I had the honour to be present when this distinguished personage paid his second visit. We were in the saloon when the Prince was announced, and it being in some measure a visit of business, as soon as he entered the Marchioness made a sign for me to retire. I rose to obey; but as I had previously had the honour of being introduced to him, he addressed himself to the Marchioness, saying, with the greatest politeness and affability, "No, Madame! I consider Mademoiselle de Valois as one of your children—there is no necessity for her to withdraw; from this day she must be still dearer, as the King is disposed to forgive the offence of the Marquis, and has declared that his principal inducement is the attention paid by your family to the descendants of the Valois."

I felt a disagreeable sensation as the Prince uttered this, and wished I had not been present, lest such a declaration should hurt the feelings of my worthy benefactress.

Whether he had heard of the Marquis's conduct in

our pension, and wished to interest him more in our behalf, or whether the humanity and beneficence of the Marchioness, of which all Paris was sensible, in a great degree counterpoised the meanness of the Marquis, and influenced the royal breast to this reconciliation, I cannot exactly determine.



CHAPTER VII.

I MUST now call to the recollection of my reader my sister Marianne, of whom I have yet said but little. She was left, as before stated, exposed to the charity of Durand, a wealthy farmer, who had found means to possess himself of a considerable part of the estate at Fontette.

I have hinted that my mother's extravagance had rendered my father necessitous. Durand had money, and as people in distress seldom consider the exorbitance of interest, my father unfortunately fell within his gripe, and Durand failed not to take advantage of his necessities. My mother knew this, and she considered that it was his duty to take the charge of supporting a part of the family. I have been able to collect these conjectures from a paper which my mother pinned upon the garment of my infant sister, expressive of her thoughts on the subject, and desiring that Durand would take care of her.

Durand, indeed, took her into his house, but he determined to make her as little of an expense as possible, and thought that, instead of being saddled with a burthen, he might even be saved the expense of a servant. She was accordingly, as early as possible,

taught to do every menial office about the house. This, however, was habitual, and had she remained ignorant of her birth, her life perhaps had passed in happy and quiet obscurity; but as she grew up, many people in the neighbourhood, acquainted with the circumstances, gave her information of the misfortunes which had induced her family to leave the cradle of their ancestors, their patrimonial inheritance, in quest of preferment at Court, but had never been heard of since.

This tale awakened her sensibility. They pointed out the mansion where she was born: the spark was kindled, which, with increasing years, spread into a flame, and warmed her bosom with reflections on her birth, and the difference between her present situation and that to which she was entitled. She still preserved the name of St. Remy, and mourned her miserable and orphan condition, deprived of her protectors ere she was yet acquainted with them; but she estimated her loss by her situation, in which she despaired of seeing any change.

I have before mentioned, that at the time of my brother's being received at Court, and at that of the grant of the pension, the Marchioness conceived the benevolent intention of sending for my sister, hoping thereby to alleviate my sufferings, occasioned by my bad state of health. She accordingly performed her promise by writing to Durand for that purpose.

Eleven months elapsed without any intelligence being received. The Marchioness, surprised at this delay, wrote about fourteen months after her first application to Durand to the rector of Fontette, who

returned for answer that Durand had certainly received her letters, but he supposed that Durand had been at a great expense in bringing my sister up; that she was so very serviceable about his house, that he could not conveniently part with her; and that he judged it his interest at all events to retain her in the country.

Durand had heard of the pension granted to my sister, and thought it, on that account, his interest to keep her near him; but he had a much stronger, and what his avarice deemed a more weighty, reason. He knew by what means he had become possessed of the estate of Fontette; he knew they would not stand the test of legal investigation, and he did not choose that my sister should leave him, lest her evidence might materially affect his interest.

Madame de Boulainvilliers wrote him more than one letter. Durand dreaded the power of the Marchioness, and studied to counteract it by craft. My sister left his house, and he was thus deprived of a servant; but he determined to retain her in the country, and for this purpose he proposed to marry her to a neighbouring peasant, named Colas Jolie, thinking thereby to make himself secure.

The Marchioness hearing of his intention, and finding no time was to be lost, instantly wrote to M. Rouellier d'Orvenille, intendant of Champagne, requesting him to give Durand orders either to send my sister instantly to Paris, or to bring her thither himself. This peremptory order was complied with through fear, and we received an answer fixing the day when he would bring her.

Madame de Boulainvilliers, ever compassionate,

concealed from me this good news, fearing, from the indisposition with which I was almost always afflicted, that a too sudden transition from grief to joy might be attended with the worst consequences. She therefore contrived, by degrees, to acquaint me of the approaching arrival of my sister, to whom, as well as to myself, a pension of eight hundred livres had been granted, mentioning the day she was expected, and explaining to me what steps she had taken to oblige Durand to bring her to Paris, as also the motives which induced him to detain her.

Overjoyed at this unexpected good news, and overwhelmed with gratitude to my benefactress, I impatiently waited the arrival of my sister. I imagined it would alleviate the grief to which I had so long been a prey, but which would now cease to weigh me down, when shared by a sister in whom I could place my confidence.

Those who are not ignorant of the pangs of silent sorrow have probably felt, or their sensibility may lead them to imagine, the sensations I experienced at the hope of folding to my heart a beloved sister who had just been relieved from such a distressing situation.

The day on which my sister was expected at length approached, and she arrived about one o'clock. Madame de Boulainvilliers, Madame the Marchioness de Chabert, Madame de Pond de Cosset, and the three daughters of Madame de Boulainvilliers, were assembled: they placed me in the midst of them, and my sister being brought in, she said—

“Tell me, my dear, which of these ladies do you take to be your sister?”

She surveyed the company attentively, and throwing herself on my neck—

“This is she!” replied Marianne; “my heart tells me this is she!”

The company had no desire to conceal the emotions which did honour to their sensibility. The author of this scene, the worthy Marchioness, surveyed us with a look of tenderness, her eyes glistening with the triumph of beneficence and humanity.

Soon after, the company retired and left me alone with my sister, who almost stifled me with caresses; but our tongues mutually refused their office. We had a thousand things to say, a thousand questions to ask, but the fulness of our hearts rendered us incapable of gratifying our wishes.

The company returned after a short absence: they remarked the effect this interview had on my spirits; and my eyes, expressive of the contentment of my heart, proved the cordial influence a mind at ease has in subduing the indisposition of the body.

Though I had not time to recount to my sister the adventures of my life, I was as eager to make her acquainted with the kindness of my worthy mother, as she was to be beneficent, or my sister to acknowledge it.

As we returned with the company, Marianne inquired which of those ladies had been so kind to her sister. When she was informed, she threw herself at the feet of the Marchioness, and kissing her gown and hands, thanked her for the favours she had done her brother and sister, and entreated she would have the goodness to take her also under her protection, which she would do everything in her power to merit; adding that she should entertain the highest respect for

M. de Boulainvilliers, and every other member of the family.

The Marchioness, pleased with these effusions of gratitude, promised her protection and support. Their congratulations on our felicity appeared to be the genuine effusions of sensibility. I recounted to Marianne the hardships I had suffered: she pitied me, and then related her own; while half the pang on either side was dispelled by mutual communication.

The Marquis de Boulainvilliers, notwithstanding the discouragements he received, entertained hopes even from his repeated disappointments. He still continued his odious addresses, and persisted in his attempts to bend me to his purpose. All my remonstrances, all my resistance, were fruitless, and to avoid his importunity I had no alternative but to retire to a convent.

I had made this proposal about a year previously, and begged permission to retire to the convent of D'Hire, about half a league from Montgeron. The Marchioness even spoke to the Abbess on the subject; but the Marquis had wearied me with arguments to dissuade me from my intention, and the tender affection of my mother would not permit her to part with me.

On the arrival of my sister, whom I found inclined to favour the step, I determined to go to the convent; and the Marquis, finding it impossible to dissuade me from my purpose, assumed a different tone: he reproached me for what he termed obstinacy, and was noticed by the whole house as entertaining a strong degree of resentment against me.

One morning, M. de Boulainvilliers came to my

apartment, spoke to me with great apparent frankness, and made a profusion of fine promises. On his second visit he was not so polite; he made some disagreeable propositions; in short, his language wore a threatening aspect.

“Since,” said he, “you are determined to go to the convent, you shall remain there all your life! I shall make a point of preventing Madame de Boulainvilliers, my daughters, and all my acquaintance from ever coming near you!” He took care to send out my sister and the maid at this time, that they might not be witnesses to his behaviour, or of his threats; and added, when quitting my chamber—

“Prepare yourself, then. I am very sorry that you should be so indisposed; but since you hate me, you shall be punished for your ingratitude, and that suddenly: it is proper that we should part!”

He then went out to order the horses to be put to the coach; “for,” he exclaimed, “I am going to conduct the Valois to their convent!” He then sent one of the women to help me to dress, and assist me in packing up. After this I inquired for my mother, to request of her permission to come and bid her farewell; but she was not to be found.

I have since learned from herself that she was afraid she could not endure the pang of parting; and that it was M. de Boulainvilliers who told her and all the house that it was myself who proposed this scheme, upon which I was most obstinately bent, and that he found it idle to oppose it.

The abbey being but a short distance, we soon arrived, and found the Marquis and the Count de Franclin, the brother and nephew of the Abbess.

They were surprised to see the Marquis de Boulaingvilliers, who accompanied us, with the Chevalier de L'Hil. This man, as all Paris knows, is the creature of the Marquis; and he had the assurance to propose him to me as my husband, saying—

“You may then be always at the hotel; your reputation will be safe; and you may carry on an intrigue without exciting suspicion.”

That very morning they had been to inform the Abbess that my ill state of health would not permit me to come in less than a month. As it was necessary, however, for the Marquis to assign some reason for the sudden return of the Chevalier and himself, he assured the Abbess it was absolutely my own determination, from which he had done all in his power to dissuade me, but in vain.

The Lady Abbess informed him that, coming so unexpectedly, things were not in readiness for our reception.

The Marquis replied: “Then they must do as well as they can;” adding, “they will experience the bad effects of their obstinacy. It is not my fault.” Then turning to the Abbess, he told her he had something particular to communicate to me, and we were left alone in the parlour.

“You are,” he said, “at your own disposal, either to go or stay. If you will return, and act as I would wish you, for your own advantage, I will arrange everything for the best with your mother.”

“No!” I replied, indignantly; “I will submit to every inconvenience: to be unfortunate is better than to be criminal!”

The Abbess, the Chevalier, and my sister, having

returned into the parlour, the Marquis took his leave, expressing great concern for our welfare, saying that he would see us very soon, and bring the Marchioness along with him.

The next day I wrote to my tender mother, who answered my letter in the kindest terms. Her letters gave me great consolation, and she frequently visited me, accompanied by her daughters. But the Marquis de Boulainvilliers, whose neglect indeed gave me no very great concern, called on me but once, as he went to his estate at Passy.

Attached to the convent, I became delighted with this new phase of life, where everything seemed peaceful, calm, and contented. I was not persecuted with the odious addresses of the Marquis; I was not harassed by the hurry and bustle of the busy world, nor tormented with that complimentary language which speaks everything and means nothing; my mind was more at ease, and my health gradually returned.

The Lady Abbess regarded me with the tenderness of a parent. Polite, sensible, generous, and humane, her kindness, and the assiduous attention of the young ladies, my companions, rendered my life so agreeable in the convent, that in about three or four months after my residence among them, I signified to the Lady Abbess my intention of taking the veil, with two other young ladies who were going to devote themselves to religion.

I followed strictly every religious exercise; I complied with every duty; I prayed, fasted, watched, and wept. Seven or eight months afterwards I wrote to several friends of the Marchioness, requesting that

they would exert themselves on my behalf, to gain her consent that I should take the veil.

The good Abbess had many conversations with me on the subject, and assured me that it required the deepest consideration before, in the full bloom of my youth, I sacrificed all my future prospects to be confined for life within the very narrow limits of a convent. She contrasted the charms of social with the recluse austerity of a religious life; told me it was a vow that could never be recalled, and advised me to proceed with the utmost deliberation.

Her representations, however, were ineffectual, and notwithstanding every remonstrance, I remained in the same mind, of devoting the remainder of my days to the service of my Creator.

The Marchioness would by no means give her consent; in consequence of which the Lady Abbess, who had made every remonstrance in her power, advised me to write to the archbishop of Paris, and interest him in my favour to win over Madame de Boulaivilliers to comply with my request.

That reverend prelate exerted himself so successfully, that he had nearly brought my good mother to compliance, when I received a letter from the Marchioness du Pond Cassel, to whom I had also written to use her solicitations in my favour. This worthy lady, so far from coinciding with my desires, was of a directly opposite opinion. Religious without being enthusiastic, she thought that the Creator might be much better glorified by active benevolence, and the fulfilling of all the duties of social life, than by the gloomy penances, fasts, prayers, and mortifications attendant on religious life; she painted its incon-

veniences in glowing colours; she conjured me to do nothing hastily; told me I was too young to determine; and suggested that if, after taking the veil, my sentiments should alter, my peace of mind would be irretrievably lost.

Much as I esteemed Madame du Pond, dearly as I loved the Marchioness, the remonstrances of the one and the tender solicitations of the other were equally ineffectual. I had seen nothing in this world that could fix my attachment; I directed my thoughts to a better; my best friends pleaded in vain to divert my attention from the service of my Creator. Would to heaven that my resolutions had remained unshaken!

Madame de Boulainvilliers, finding her arguments and solicitations equally ineffectual, had recourse to a stratagem, with a view to postpone the execution of so rash a step, and avail herself of the interval to wean me from my determination. She was acquainted with monastic regulations, and knew that a lady going out of the convent on any pretence whatever during her noviciate becomes thereby incapacitated: it terminates that moment, and she is obliged again to commence it, and continue the same time, before she is permitted to take the habit. I was not aware of this, and the Marchioness availed herself of my ignorance to carry out her intentions.

She prevailed on her husband to go to the convent, and invite my sister and myself to dine with them at Montgeron. She desired him to enforce her invitation by representing that this would probably be the last opportunity they should have of seeing me, as the estate at Montgeron was to be disposed of, and that

next year they would be at another. He added, that there was a large party who wished to see me before I took the veil, from which, finding me absolutely bent upon it, no further solicitations would be used to dissuade me.

The Marquis had his views in wishing me to return, and he executed his commission with all the eloquence he was master of; but neither his persuasion nor plausibility influenced me in accepting this invitation.

Desirous to see my worthy mother, at whose instance I well knew the Marquis had visited me, not without a wish to take a last farewell of those friends who expressed their concern for my welfare, and totally ignorant of what was in contemplation, I determined with my sister to accompany the Marquis to Montgeron.

When we arrived, a large company of both sexes was assembled. The Marchioness and her daughters, doubtful of the success of the Marquis's application, appeared particularly pleased to see us. My health being now almost restored, my usual vivacity returned with it; I felt the joys of the social circle in which I was engaged; the conversation was varied and entertaining, and the hours glided swiftly away. At length I bethought myself that it was time to return to the convent, and signified my wish to depart.

The company were unanimous in wishing me to remain; from persuasions they condescended to use entreaties, but my resolution still remaining inflexible, Madame de Boulainvilliers informed me, in a tone blended with the kindness of friendship, that she could by no means permit me to depart, and that

orders had been given for the carriage not to be horsed.

In consequence of this, finding it equally rude and ineffectual to persist, I made a virtue of necessity, and consented to stay.



CHAPTER VIII.

DAY after day passed on in the same manner. My worthy mother, of whose society I was most fond, made use of every means in her power to wean me from my resolution; every one strove to give me the most engaging picture of social intercourse and the pleasures of the world, to which they knew, from my disposition, I was not insensible.

During this time, the Marquis de Boulainvilliers took every opportunity of being alone with me, under pretence of reasoning me out of my predilection for the convent; but, in fact, he was urging his own iniquitous suit.

In one of these visits, while the Marquis, under the pretence of the purest friendship and paternal kindness, was pressing my hand to his lips, the Marquis de Brancas and the Abbé Tacher entered the room. We were both confused, but our confusion proceeded from different sources: the blush of conscious innocence coloured my cheek; the hue of conscious guilt stained that of the Marquis.

I was so peculiarly circumstanced, that I had never dared to communicate any part of his conduct to my mother. I knew it would give her uneasiness, and that such a communication would have been prejudicial to the interest of our family. In this delicate

predicament I was obliged to endure what I knew not how to remedy.

The Marquis de Brancas and the Abbé Tacher well knew the disposition of the Marquis de Boulainvilliers : they did not imagine that I gave him encouragement ; their candour acquitted me both of impropriety of conduct and evil intentions ; neither their candour nor their friendship could prevail against their judgment, which accused him of both. His importunities had before determined me to retire to a convent ; I was delighted with the life I led there. Improved by the instructions of the worthy Abbess, and charmed with the assiduities of my companions, the Marquis, instead of prevailing on me to stay, by his persecutions increased my inclination to depart.

At the expiration of eight days, unable to resist my entreaties, the Marchioness consented that I should go, upon condition that I would not persist in my resolution of taking the veil, but wait at least till I was twenty-five years of age. She expressed a wish that I should change my convent, that I might be nearer the family, and pointed out the Abbé Royal de Longchamps, about three leagues and a half from Paris, as the most eligible situation. I acceded to this proposal with the less regret, as many of my companions at the convent D'Hire having taken the veil, I should be deprived of their society ; and the loss I should sustain on being removed from the instruction of the good Abbess would be counterpoised by the visits and correspondence of the Marchioness de Boulainvilliers.

On the 20th of March, 1778, I removed to the Abbé Royal de Longchamps, where I was frequently visited

by the family of Boulainvilliers and their friends. The Marquis came frequently in the morning, on horse-back; he was always admitted to visit me; but these visits, where love was always the topic, became at length so very disgusting, added to the remarks of the boarders in the convent, to whom visits from the other sex were very unusual, that I entreated the Abbess, who was friendly to me, in general terms, not to suffer gentlemen to visit me on any pretence whatever.

The Abbess complied with my wishes, and the Marquis was denied admittance. Enraged at this repulse, he had recourse to threats, and said that neither my mother, nor any of the family, or friends of the family, should come to visit me, neither should I ever come to visit them at Passy.

This threat was not an unmeaning one: four months passed without seeing or hearing from any body. I wrote often to my mother, but my letters were intercepted; and, as I afterwards learned, whenever the Marchioness proposed paying me a visit, the Marquis was sure either to invite company, or remind her of some engagement. He remarked, by way of raising her displeasure, that we never wrote, though I had actually written several letters, and was greatly surprised at receiving no answer, which appeared singular in the eyes of the inmates of the convent, and occasioned a variety of comments.

At length, Coquelin, the Marquis's *valet de chambre*, the same person who formerly brought me the watch, called one day to see us. I charged him to deliver a letter to the Marchioness, and represent how much the discontinuance of her visits was regretted by my

sister and myself, and to entreat her to answer our letter.

It is here necessary to remark, that the Marchioness, the most amiable of women, fulfilled all the duties of domestic life in a most exemplary manner. She paid the most implicit obedience to her husband, whose designs did not elude her penetration, though she had the prudence not to appear to see them.

About the year 1774, the Marquis de Boulainvilliers was attacked with fistula. In the extremity of pain occasioned by that disorder, and in a fit of devotion, he made a religious vow, that if it should please God to restore him to health, he would make a pilgrimage to St. Reme's to return thanks.

It is necessary to explain that in all Catholic countries this is very common. Some saint is supposed to preside over every disorder and relieve the patients, who in all dangerous cases make offerings, and return thanks at the shrine of the saint whose influence has effected the cure.

The Marquis's disorder was a fistula. St. Reme, a female, is the tutelar saint. Her complexion is rather dark, from whence she is probably called *La Vierge Noir*. She has a chapel appropriated to herself, her shrine is profusely decorated, and she is habited in the richest attire, finely embroidered and ornamented with pearls and precious stones. In one hand she holds a rosary, and in the other a lighted taper. Her figure is majestic, her countenance engaging and serene. Those who prostrate themselves before her always bring offerings, according to their circumstances, expressive of their gratitude for the favours they, through her intercession, have receive This

ceremony continues nine days, from whence it is called *Neuvenne*; it is performed every morning, fasting; mass is said, and prayers are made to this virgin saint to grant the supplicants everything that may be beneficial to their interest.

About this period the Marquis was preparing to fulfil his pious resolution, when Coquelin brought me an answer from my worthy mother, acquainting me with the circumstance, and assuring me, at the same time, that she would send for us immediately after his departure.

What could have refreshed his memory, and roused his religious impulses after they had lain dormant for years, I am at a loss to determine, unless the returning symptoms of his disorder.

Pleased with the answer of my mother, and delighted to think that, whatever might have been the intentions of her husband, she at least had not forgotten me, I waited with impatience for the departure of the Marquis, which soon took place.

The day subsequent to his departure my good mother performed her promise, and sent her coach to fetch us. She received us, on our arrival, with all the tenderness of an affectionate parent, made us presents of dresses, and entertained us very agreeably for three weeks, during the time of the penitent's pilgrimage, till news arrived that the Marquis was on his return. On receiving this intelligence we prepared to depart.

The Marquis arrived three days after his letter, and surprised us just as we were on the point of returning. Our worthy mother, perceiving his displeasure, kindly undertook to settle all differences, and promote a re-

conciliation. She made use of every means to win over the Marquis to her purpose; told him that we had written several letters, expressing a desire to see him before his departure, and wish him a good journey. This worthy lady interceded so successfully that a temporary reconciliation was effected, and she obtained permission, with great difficulty, that we should stay two days longer.

The next morning the Marquis came into my chamber and renewed his odious solicitations; but finding me still impregnable to his attack, and giving him my usual answers, he was quite exasperated, and gave the Marchioness many trivial reasons for our immediate departure; such as, that the coach could not be spared another day; that he expected company, who would have occasion for our chamber. The affection of the Marchioness led her to make some remonstrances, the reasonableness of which being unable to contradict, he flew into a passion. Uneasy at being the cause of this disturbance, my anxiety was obvious, and noticed by all the family, but especially by the Marchioness and her daughters, who on that account treated me with particular kindness.

There was no alternative; expostulations and entreaties proved equally ineffectual. We returned to the convent, where I still felt the strongest propensity to take the veil. My companions were all friendly, and the Abbess was a very worthy woman. I continued there, happily situated, till the death of the Abbess caused a considerable diminution in my felicity, for most of the long-standing boarders with whom I was on terms of intimacy soon after her death quitted the convent.

CHAPTER IX.

IN the year 1778, Mademoiselle de Passy, the Marchioness's youngest daughter, upon the eve of being married to the Viscount de Tonneres, requested us to be present at the ceremony, and presented us with very elegant dresses for the occasion. The nuptials were solemnized in the church of St. Eustace, which was crowded by persons of distinction of both sexes. We were placed in the church on each side of Madame de Boulainvilliers, it being the custom in France for adopted daughters to be placed on each side their mother during the ceremony. This circumstance caused us to be particularly remarked, and we became afterwards the subject of much conversation; some observing, that from the countenance and protection we experienced, we should have fortunes equal to our birth, and (thanks to Mademoiselle de Passy's elegant present) the brilliancy of our appearance.

M. de Fort de Beaufort, who had been the means of bringing about the match between the Viscount de Tonneres and Mademoiselle de Passy, a gentleman who was naturally fond of negociations of this nature, came soon after to the Marquis and Marchioness de Boulainvilliers, deputed by a young gentleman who was reported to be a natural son of Louis XV. His name I do not recollect, but his mother was a German Baroness, of the name of *Kinkelle*, who ended her days in a convent. I recollect once having seen this gentleman at the opera: he was about one-and-

twenty years of age, and appeared to be very elegant and accomplished.

The substance of this proposal was, that as Mademoiselle Valois was without fortune, Madame Boulainvilliers should exert her influence at Court to obtain for him a lieutenancy in case he should marry her. This accomplished, and his interest strengthened by his connection with the family of Boulainvilliers, he would make vigorous efforts to recover the possessions of my ancestors.

It is doubtless scarcely necessary to mention to the English reader, that by the civil law which prevails upon the Continent, contracts of marriage are frequently made between the parents or guardians, without the children having any knowledge of the transaction.

M. de Fort de Beaufort had permission of the Marchioness to speak to me of this circumstance in her presence. He availed himself of this permission, and asked me if I should have any objection to this young gentleman for a husband. Upon my expressing no great disinclination to the proposal, my worthy mother wished to put everything in train for completion, and to avoid expense proposed that the wedding should be kept at the castle at Passy; but my good friend the Marquis, ever ready to mar the benevolent intentions of the Marchioness, and eager to thwart the designs of those who wished to render me service, would hear nothing of this proposition, and declared that he did not choose to concern himself with the matter. In consequence of such a declaration, neither this nor any future proposal took effect during my continuance at his house.

Madame de Boulainvilliers expressed much regret on this occasion, but endeavoured to console me. "Marriage, my dear child," said that worthy mother, "is perhaps not so very eligible as your youthful imagination may suggest: but you see I am not to blame in this business, which I have not been backward in promoting, because I found it agreeable to your wishes. Don't make yourself unhappy under this disappointment. Consider, when you marry you subject yourself to a master! Were I, my dear, in your situation, I would not think of changing my name."

"For the very reasons, my dear mother," I replied, "you have just given me, I conceived an inclination to take the veil, hoping in a few years after to be made an abbess, by which means I might enjoy the pleasures of society, and retain my name;" adding that "I only waited the consent of my dear mother to commence as a *religieuse*."

The Marchioness, finding me still press my request, changed the conversation, and spoke no more to me on the subject of marriage.

About six weeks afterwards we returned to our convent, which did not appear so agreeable as before. Everything seemed to wear a new face; all was dull, insipid, and tasteless; from mixing in the gay circles of Paris, amidst a continued round of diversions, in the elegances of politer life, I could ill reconcile myself to the cheerless gloom of a convent. I experienced a change which I know not how to express: my heart panted for the scenes I had quitted. Whirled in the vortex of dissipation, for a moment I forgot my resolution of taking the veil.

A few weeks reconciled me. The tumultuous ideas which filled my bosom upon my first return to the convent, began to subside. I saw the luxury of the metropolis, and the bustle of the great world, through their proper medium. My companions were anxious by their assiduities to dissipate my melancholy; they succeeded, and my peace returned.

The family of Boulainvilliers was now frequently at Paris, and indulging in all the luxuries usual with persons of distinction. We had the mortification of feeling the inadequacy of our pension to enable us to join the young ladies in their fashionable amusements; and after a short visit to Passy, my mother strongly opposing my inclinations to take the veil, I was induced to listen to a proposal, made by my sister, of retiring to a convent at Bar-sur-Aube, where our pension would be just sufficient to support us.

After taking a dutiful farewell of our dear and honoured mother, and bidding a respectful adieu to those friends whose attention claimed our gratitude—friends whom we could not leave without regret, we were conducted by M. Denis and his wife (who, during our six weeks' visit on the marriage of Mademoiselle de Passy, showed us many civilities), to Nogen, from whence we took a place in the diligence, which conveyed us directly to Bar-sur-Aube, where we entered a convent belonging to the Benedictine order.

Here we received many visitors in the neighbourhood, who came to pay their compliments. They made entertainments on our account, and seemed to express their joy at seeing us by the elegant variety of amusements they prepared to welcome our arrival.

Since they had heard of our reception at Court, and of our connection with the Marchioness de Boalainvilliers, to whom we gratefully attributed the splendour of that reception, they all seemed to vie with each other who should pay us the greatest attention. We were even solicited by many to reside in their houses, that we might more commodiously enjoy the entertainments prepared for us, which were, in fact, as far as the country would permit, one continued round of diversion.

In the midst of this round of merriment, I was not inattentive to the cries of the oppressed. The Countess de Ligneville, detained by *letter-de-cachet*, had been cruelly treated by those *religieuses*, who from the mild dictates of Christianity should have learned a better lesson than that of persecution. I remembered that I myself had been once exposed to the stings of misfortune, the sport of every blast. I had been myself the victim of oppression; and adversity tends to soften the heart. I resolved to interest myself in her favour: I had not been more than eight days in the cloister before I saw how much this unfortunate lady was oppressed. She had written to her friends, who had been as unfeeling as the *religieuses*; and the neglect of those who should have protected her, instead of inclining them to the kinder offices of consolation which religion dictates, sanctioned the continuance of their oppression.

Her situation commanded my compassion, and I gave full and explicit information of their conduct to her female relatives. To the Countess de Bussiot, her cousin, whom I had very often the honour of seeing at Paris, the Duc de Deux Ponts, and her brother the

Count de Ligneville, I wrote a very clear and unexaggerated statement of the Countess's grievances, conjuring them to interest themselves in procuring her redress with all possible expedition; and they did me the honour to answer me immediately, assuring me that there should be an alteration.

About a fortnight after, the Countess de Ligneville was sent back to Ligny, in Lorraine, to a convent of the Augustines, where she was treated with much greater lenity, and had liberty to go out to any part within the confines of the town. I have had the pleasure of seeing her several times since, and she has expressed her thanks for the favours she received, which she gratefully attributed to my intercession.

Madame de Boulainvilliers, who from her rank had a very extensive acquaintance, had given us letters of recommendation, through which we were universally well received. Among those with whom we were more particularly intimate, was Madame Clause de Suremont, aunt to M. de la Motte, of whom, hereafter, I shall have much to say. This lady, by her insinuating address and amiable manners, soon contrived to disgust us with the convent: in short, she enticed us away to board at her house, where we were very elegantly entertained at four hundred livres per annum.

In small towns, inhabited by a few families, who think themselves equal, if not superior, to their neighbours, envy is not uncommon, and scandal too frequently predominant. To illustrate this assertion, I must observe that many of those who visited us at our convent now suddenly ceased visiting us. Displeased at our rejecting their solicitations, and giving

the preference to Madamede Suremont, they whispered their surprise that we should reject so many offers of elegant houses and better accommodations, and at length take up our residence in what they were pleased to term the worst.

When we went to the assemblies, which were indeed very frequent at Bar-sur-Aube, where, though but thinly inhabited, families vied with each other in luxury and dissipation, scandal was busy with whispers, and they seemed to drop their private dissensions, delighting in any ridicule against Madame de Suremont, my sister, and myself.

Madame de Suremont saw their behaviour, and took occasion to remark that, far from being chagrined, she was sensible they paid her a compliment.

She treated us with particular complaisance, anticipated all our wishes, and accommodated us with everything we had occasion for. Being a woman of spirit and fond of amusements, she spared no expence at her entertainments, over which she did us the honour to appoint us presidents; and the young people in the neighbourhood expressed their satisfaction by a numerous and constant attendance.

Soon after this, we paid our respects to the Bishop of Langres, where we continued only a few days, but were treated with the greatest cordiality, and the utmost politeness. We next visited the Baroness de Pontcher, to whom we were recommended by our friend Madame de C'labert; here we were not received with the politeness we expected, which the extreme age of the Baroness, then almost a hundred years old, and the subsequent apology for her conduct, sufficiently excused. The company were at dinner

when we arrived; but the Baroness neglecting even to ask us to be seated, we immediately set off from De Chassie, her villa, to the Countess de Vilbertin's, about eight leagues distant. We arrived about six o'clock in the evening, and the politeness of that lady's reception made ample amends for the disappointment we had experienced. After spending a week at the Countess de Vilbertin's, we returned to Bar-sur-Aube, where we re-commenced our customary diversions. Amongst many other amusements, we frequently performed comedies, in one of which I engaged to take a part. The evening appointed for the representation of this play approaching, it became necessary that I should lose no time in preparation. M. de la Motte, an officer in the gendarmes, and nephew of Madame de Suremont, being on a visit to Bar-sur-Aube, acquired great reputation for his performances, and became remarked for his assiduity and endeavours to please. The part of a valet was assigned to him, and that of a waiting-maid to myself; we divided the applause of the company, for having, as they were pleased to express it, "sustained our characters with so much propriety." This encouragement excited my partiality for a diversion to which I had already a predilection, and in which M. de la Motte also displayed great taste.

From the moment of our first interview, M. de la Motte paid me very particular and pointed attention; he eagerly seized every opportunity of showing how solicitous he was to please; his compliments were not glaring, but of that delicate nature which could only proceed from the genuine dictates of an honest heart. Elegant in person and manners, insinuating

in address, the honourable intention which he manifested could not prove disagreeable to me. I listened, and, what is, I believe, generally the consequence where any of our sex listen to the persuasions of youth, elegance, and accomplishments in the other, was very soon in love with him.

At length mutual attention produced mutual affection. The observations of the men on this subject, however they might be pleasing to M. de la Motte, I shall not repeat, but content myself with observing that some of the women regarded me as an object of envy.

Madame de Suremont perceived the growing attachment of her nephew, and afforded him every opportunity of urging his suit. She frequently left us together when the company were gone, engaging M. de la Motte to remain and write out my parts, and give me instructions in acting them.

Young and inexperienced, let me anticipate the objections of prudery, and obviate them by my replies. Was it consistent with the delicacy of the female character, that I should permit a young man to be alone with me, at such hours, and upon such pretences? At that period, unconscious of guilt, I was consequently unacquainted with fear. My heart, filled with the pleasure it received from his conversation, taught me to believe that I was not acting wrong; and that Madame de Suremont would not have permitted these interviews, if she had thought otherwise.

I will candidly confess that I loved M. de la Motte. He possessed a sincerity of heart seldom to be found but in the country, blended with those polished

manners which are not often excelled in the metropolis. He seized every opportunity of rendering himself agreeable, and I had every reason to suppose he entertained favourable sentiments for me; at least I wished so, and the gradation is so natural, that it will not appear strange if I believed it.

M. de la Motte, I had remarked for some days, appeared thoughtful and melancholy; but as he had never communicated to me the cause, though I was uneasy at the effect of it, I forbore to make inquiry. He advised me to go to Paris to see my brother, and to make his pretensions known to the Marchioness, my worthy mother, and endeavour to obtain her consent to our union.

Fearful that breaking this matter suddenly to the Marchioness, after having carried it on so far without her knowledge, might give her offence, I hesitated some time ere I could form a resolution to acquaint her; but, trusting to her goodness, I at length yielded to his arguments in favour of a determination which was also consonant to the dictates of my own heart.

When I had resolved on a journey to Paris, which highly gratified M. de la Motte, I left him to write a letter to Madame de Boulainvilliers and my brother, informing the Marchioness that having heard of my brother's arrival, and anxious to see him, I should be at Paris the Saturday following by eight o'clock. The interval was occupied by M. de la Motte in giving me directions for my behaviour, and earnestly pressing me to return as soon as possible, and complete his happiness by the celebration of the nuptials.

Not a single person in the house, not even my

SISTER, was acquainted with what was in contemplation. The attentions of M. de la Motte had long been observed, and our marriage was whispered only as a conjecture.

On the Wednesday following, about three in the morning, I set off in the diligence, and after a tedious and disagreeable journey, over roads which proved both the neglect of the government and the patience of the people, I arrived near Paris, and found Julia, the Marchioness's first woman, waiting with a coach at the gate of St. Antoine. I was not a little pleased at being so near the end of my journey, and felt no regret at quitting my disagreeable vehicle, for the one which conveyed me to the Hotel de Boulainvilliers.

I was impatient to see my brother, but I was disappointed; he had received orders to join his department at Brest. This intelligence Julia did not give me: probably she had received injunctions from the Marchioness to conceal it.

Madame de Boulainvilliers received me with that cordiality and affection with which the tenderest of mothers would receive her daughter after a long absence. She told me that my brother would not have written to inform me of his arrival, if it could have been foreseen how soon he was to depart.

This information gave me much uneasiness, which Madame de Boulainvilliers, who seemed delighted to see me, was very assiduous to dissipate. How different was our reception by this amiable mother to that of her husband! The Marquis de Boulainvilliers, whom I saw but a short time, received me with coldness and indifference; but this was entirely obliterated by the kindness and condescension of the Marchioness.

The evening was occupied by many questions which the Marchioness de Boulainvilliers asked me relative to Bar-sur-Aube, concerning our reception, and the diversions and entertainments of the place. I took advantage of this opportunity to mention the comedy. I perceived from her glances at Madame de Tonneres, her daughter, that she had some private correspondent in that place, who had informed her of more than I knew, and that the information I gave them was by no means novel. This did not a little surprise me.

A day or two after they resumed this topic, and Madame de Tonneres asked me what was the character which I played. I told her that of a waiting-maid. She seemed surprised that I should choose a part like that, when there were many others for which I was much better adapted.

“But who,” said Madame de Boulainvilliers, “was the young man who played the part of Jasmin? Is he a young man? Pray how old is he?”

I could not well comprehend the drift of these questions, which, nevertheless, I found myself constrained to answer.

“He is a young gentleman,” replied I, “who has a commission in the gendarmes;” and I gave them information respecting his family.

“And what do you think of him?”

“That he has a pleasing address, is much of a gentleman, and has received a very good education; understands music, dances to perfection; everybody gives him the character of being a very accomplished young man, and that he played his character like an experienced actor.”

Perceiving me warm in my encomiums, the Marchioness smiled. Her daughter observed it, and they exchanged some very significant glances with each other.

Madame de Boulainvilliers resumed her questions. "Pray, my dear," said she, "who wrote your parts and rehearsed with you?"

"Monsieur de la Motte, my dear mamma," replied I. They then ceased to question me any more that day concerning M. de la Motte; and to avoid giving me any suspicions, changed the subject of the conversation.

Madame de Boulainvilliers desired the works of Racine to be brought, from which she asked me to recite some passages, apparently to judge of the manner in which I played them, but in fact to introduce an occasion of speaking of Monsieur de la Motte.

"And so he is very well bred," interrupted the Marchioness; "Monsieur de la Motte is very accomplished?"

"Yes, my dear mamma."

"Then he is not badly calculated for the part of Jasmin?"

"It may not, perhaps, be perfectly consonant with his position, nevertheless he filled it extremely well."

"Does he often engage you to dance with him?"

"He never, my dear mamma, dances without me."

Madame de Tonnerres, with whom I was frequently alone, examined me yet more closely than Madame de Boulainvilliers: the age of the former lady being nearer to mine, gave her an opportunity of prying much closer into my affairs.

"What!" said she, in a tone of raillery, "did this

presumptuous wretch ever aspire to be your husband?"

"Oh, yes! he proposed demanding me in marriage through his mother, at the same time informing me of his fortune and expectations."

"And what answer did you make, my dear?"

"That I would beg Madame de Boulainvilliers to give her consent."

"But did you make him no promises of your own accord? And are you really partial to him?"

I answered these questions in the affirmative.

"Well then, my dear, from your approbation, I will believe him worthy of your love."

"Then do me the favour," I replied, "to represent my affection to my dear mother at some convenient opportunity when I am not present, and you may, if you please, inform her at the same time that M. de la Luzerne, Bishop of Langres, can give her every information of the family, with which he is well acquainted, and indeed is requested by the mother of M. de la Motte to demand me in marriage."

It must be observed, that I had written to that reverend prelate, entreating him to use his interest with the Marchioness, and a lady of my acquaintance had advised me to place the greatest confidence in him, that he might have it in his power to argue closely with Madame de Boulainvilliers. I, indeed, had often thought of the propriety of this measure, and had as often deferred it, till at length I thought it best to act upon the advice of a female friend, who, not immediately interested, could give me the best counsel.

Madame de Tonneres kindly undertook my cause

with the Marchioness, who, having my happiness at heart, wished me, in a matter which could be resolved on but once, to take time for deliberation.

“Be not, my dear,” said that amiable and sensible lady, “in love with a man merely because he has performed the part of a lover in the same play; perhaps your imagination has been warmed by the character you played in concert. Ah, my dear child! absence is the touchstone of true love; suffer this young man to leave the country, examine your sentiments, and weigh them well; separation may perhaps efface your partiality, but if you find your affections absolutely engaged, assure yourself that I shall be the last person to oppose your happiness, if happiness can be found in the marriage state; but put your lover to the proof, consider if he has no essential defect which the blindness of passion may have overlooked.”

Thus did this tender and affectionate mother, who probably felt that marriage was not the happiest state in the world, though she had the prudence to conceal it, endeavour, by arguments clothed in accents of maternal tenderness, to persuade me to deliberate well before I entered into an engagement, among the most solemn and the most important—an engagement which either constitutes the joys of heaven, or the keenest tortures of the infernal world.

Though Madame de Boulainvilliers seemed rather to dissuade me from my purpose than consent to its accomplishment, she nevertheless consented to write to the Bishop of Langres, who the very next evening paid her a visit: that lady was pleased with the

opportunity of forming an acquaintance with a man of such abilities and merit. As soon as he arrived I made my obeisance and retired, leaving him and the Marchioness to their private conference.

I was in no small degree of anxiety to learn the result of a negociation of such importance to me, yet was at a loss of whom to inquire. Next morning I was relieved from my suspense by receiving a letter from the reverend prelate, informing me of their conversation the evening before; he gave me some hopes of obtaining the consent of the Marchioness; as to the Marquis, he declared that he would have nothing to do with making marriages—that he should not trouble himself in giving any advice, but that he thought Mademoiselle Valois was a giddy young girl. He never mentioned the subject to them again, but he passed his jokes on me, saying, with a sneer, “Don’t expect my consent, for I shall never give it.”

Madame de Boulainvilliers wished me to remain with her for a month, but being anxious to return, I pleaded in favour of my departure—the most effectual excuse to a lady of her religious sentiments—that I was constrained to take the communion at Bar-sur-Aube on the last day of Easter. Madame signified her approbation; she took me to the *Tenebrae* of Longchamps, to the *Concerto Spirituale*, and to every other place where she thought I might be amused. After many maternal admonitions she bade me an affectionate adieu, and presented me with twelve louis to pay my expenses on the road.

My reluctance at parting with my affectionate mother was increased by the mortification of not seeing my brother, and returning without the consent

of the Marchioness, which, though the express object of my journey, I could not consistently with delicacy or duty press any farther, lest I should appear too precipitately to reject the prudent advice, and incur, in her opinion also, the imputation of giddiness.

My return to Bar-sur-Aube was much more agreeable than my journey to Paris. I had written to my sister and M. de la Motte to apprise them of my arrival. She met me about two leagues from Bar-sur-Aube, at a beautiful seat, the residence of M. de la Motte's mother. That gentleman had proceeded on horseback as far as Vendhurst, a small village about three leagues from Bar-sur-Aube.

The news of my departure and the object of my journey had transpired, and extended to the village; every one spoke of my marriage with M. de la Motte. It was whispered that Mademoiselle de Valois had returned, with the consent of her brother and Madame de Boulainvilliers to solemnize this marriage; all received me with as much pleasure as if, instead of a week, I had been absent a year.

M. de la Motte received me with the most heartfelt satisfaction, but his countenance seemed to betray much anxiety; his pleasure was damped by dark anticipations of the future; he feared that it was the intention of Madame de Boulainvilliers to have married me to some other husband, and trembled for the success of my embassy; he read in my countenance that all was not as it should be, while the words which dropped from Madame de Boulainvilliers made me doubtful whether I should be able to obtain her consent. The uneasiness which on this account overspread my countenance was intelligible only to M.

de la Motte, by whose advice, and to obviate every objection, I was prevailed upon to take the only step prudence dictated in so delicate and embarrassing a circumstance.

My pen was the instrument by which I disclosed a secret my timidity could never suffer my tongue to utter. I immediately wrote to Madame de Boulainvilliers three successive letters, entreating her to compassionate my distress, and to let her consent grace our union. I also wrote to the Bishop of Langres, entreating that worthy prelate, who had before done me signal service, to intercede with the Marchioness in my behalf.

The intercession of the bishop I was confident would have its due weight, which, added to the sensibility of my worthy mother, who I hoped would agree to what could not be altered, at length elicited the consent so essential to my future happiness.

My applications took up some time, and the interval between them and their success was to me a condition of so much anguish of mind, that I find language as inadequate to convey any idea of it as it is to describe the joy I felt on being relieved from such anxiety. I had no confidante; my uncasiness was unknown to my sister; nay, I concealed it from M. de la Motte.

The approbation of Madame de Boulainvilliers having now given a sanction to our proceedings, by the advice of the friends of M. de la Motte an early day was appointed for the celebration of the nuptials.

M. de Boulainvilliers having refused to be my guardian, we appointed M. Armintot, Lord of Bouchemin, my cousin, to stand in his place, and I

was married, according to the custom of that province, at midnight. The church was much crowded; my sister was far from congratulating me on the occasion, as she had imbibed a strange presentiment that my marriage would not prove a happy one.

The day after our marriage, a grand dinner was given by Madame de Suremont. The entertainment was profusely elegant. There were two tables, one in the ante-chamber and the other in the dining-room. Every apartment was open, and very soon crowded; the health of the bride was an apology for drinking wine as though it had been water. When the company quitted the table, all were desirous to salute and wish me joy. The remainder of the day was spent in dancing.

The banns of marriage had been published at Fontette, which made the peasants of that place curious to learn the wedding-day. They came in great numbers to Bar-sur-Aube with an intention of seeing the ceremony, and remained there some days. Among them came two men and a woman, who begged permission of Madame de Suremont to see M. and Madame de la Motte. On her interrogating them as to who they were, they replied that they came from Fontette, "and we are people whom Madame de Valois, who is lately married, if she knew we were here, would receive well." Being informed of this circumstance, I went to receive them, and found they were two brothers and a sister of my mother's, by second marriage. I received them cordially; they greatly deprecated the conduct of their sister, who, they said, had behaved unworthily. "But, Madame, you will, notwithstanding, grant us the honour of speaking to you? How does Mademoiselle de St. Remy, your sister? We

have no other object in coming to see you than to be honoured with the name of relation, though we confess ourselves unworthy of that honour. We know that our sister made you suffer when in this country some years ago, but she was ashamed to come again to Fontette; she knew she would meet the reproach she merited for cruelty to her children. Suffer us, Madame, notwithstanding, to salute you and wish you joy on the present occasion." They did so, and departed pleased with their reception.

Soon after, another peasant, a very comely young man, came to Madame de Suremont, and inquired bluntly for Mademoiselle Filliette, a name by which my sister had formerly been known in the country.

"I know no such person!" she replied. "What do you mean by Mademoiselle Filliette?"

"Why, Madame," replied the clown, "the sister of Mademoiselle de St. Remy, who is just married. Please to tell her that I am Colas, of Fontette; she will recollect me."

Madame de Suremont communicated this to my sister, who, out of compassion for the unfortunate rustic, refused to see him, lest such an interview should make him more unhappy. Durand, to detain my sister in the country, had promised her in marriage to this peasant, whose appearance was greatly in his favour; but she had never consented to the project, nor given him any encouragement.

The relation of the story of her birth by the people in the neighbourhood, as I have before mentioned, had kindled in the bosom of Marianne hopes of an alliance more consonant to her ideas, more consistent with her birth. Far from despising this poor creature,

she wished to avoid giving him pain. She begged me to speak to him. I did so.

“Good day, my friend! What are your commands with my sister?”

“I wish, Madame,” replied he, “to have the honour of paying my respects to her. She is of the same age as myself; we each have the same sponsors; and M. Durand, her godfather, has promised me that I shall marry her. But her fortune is changed—she is now Mademoiselle de Valois; and I am not quite such a fool as to think that she will have me for her husband, as she is descended from the blood-royal; but I wish to have the pleasure of seeing her in her fine clothes; for I am sure (continued he, bursting into tears), she is very handsome!”

I could not help shedding a tear of pity for this honest rustic, and admiring the genuine simplicity of his nature. His grief, however, was not to be alleviated; the presence of my sister would but have increased his misery; at least she thought so, and could not be prevailed upon to see him. Finding himself without hope, he went home again, murmuring at what he termed the false-heartedness of his mistress.

Soon after, I accompanied my sister to Fontette, where, it being Sunday, we went to mass. Upon our entrance all the peasants rose from their seats, and desired that the curate should do us honour, as the children of the Baron de St. Remy, their lord. We received the holy water at the communion-table, the consecrated bread, and afterwards the mass; the bells were rung, and every one testified their joy at our arrival. They crowded about the house where we were; we ordered them six livres a-piece, for which

they testified their gratitude by drinking our healths, and the health of the Baron St. Remy de Valois, and to his safe return.

They then conducted me to the mansion of my ancestors, and round the grounds of the patrimonial estate. "This mansion, this noble estate," thought I to myself, "might have been possessed by the descendants of those who acquired it by valour, and enjoyed it with hospitality."

I lamented the ravages of luxury: I thought of the credulity and easy temper of my father, who sacrificed everything to the extravagances of his wife. But for this, he might have maintained the dignity of his ancestors, and his miserable offspring might have uniformly sustained that appearance to which they were by birth entitled.

Some time subsequent to my marriage, I miscarried of twins, both of which died. For six days my recovery was doubtful; but the strength of my constitution, however, at length prevailed, and as soon as I was able, I returned visits of thanks to all those families in town who had treated me with the greatest politeness and regard.

M. de la Motte, whose leave of absence expired on the first of July, was obliged to set out for Luneville.

After this severe illness I enjoyed much better health than I had ever experienced before. I became more *embonpoint*, and my complexion resumed its usual colour; my mind was much easier, and I entered into the diversions of the place with all the pleasure of a mind restored to tranquillity.

About this time I was agreeably surprised by the

return of my husband, who had procured fresh leave of absence. Three months insensibly glided away, when again the day of his departure arrived. Nothing particular occurred during this interval, except my quitting the house of Madame de Suremont, and residing for some time with Madame de la Motte.

When my husband departed for Luneville, he left me, on his journey, at St. Nicolas, at the house of Madame Mailfort, wife of an old officer in the gendarmes, with whom M. de la Motte's father had formerly been intimate, to whom he had previously written, begging her to look out for some eligible apartment in a convent, for my reception.

Madame Mailfort, who had lately lost her husband, had not yet been able to find a convent to her mind, though she had made two or three applications; in consequence of which we set out, directed by chance, to a convent of the Benedictines, where I inquired if there would soon be a vacancy, and was informed there would be one in a fortnight. The vacancy accordingly took place, and I joined this society of Benedictine ladies, paying three hundred livres per annum.

My residence in this convent was very agreeable; I had many friends, but I had also some enemies. Envy and malice are, perhaps, in some convents, as prevalent as in the circles of the drawing-room. Scandal was busy with my reputation, and there were not wanting those who even doubted whether I was really the wife of M. de la Motte. A female friend informed me of these suspicions, and advised me to deposit the certificate of my marriage with the Bishop of Nancy, that it might be referred to without my

seeming to suppose that they doubted it, and that it might not be imagined my friend had betrayed their secrets. I availed myself of this advice, and instantly sent to Madame de la Motte, begging her to send me my marriage certificate per return of post. On receiving it, I put it into the hands of the Superior, who advised me, lest her conduct should create any disturbance, to send it myself to the Bishop, who, on its receipt, wrote a letter to the Superior, informing her, that if any of the ladies had any doubt concerning Madame de la Motte, they were at liberty to peruse her marriage certificate, at that time in his possession. The moment the Superior communicated this intelligence, all disturbance ceased, and everything became quiet.

These *religieuses*, heartily sorry for their ill-grounded suspicions, now acted a very different part. They endeavoured to make me amends by every attention, every civility in their power, and we became more intimate than if these disturbances had never happened. They strove by their good offices to obliterate from my mind the recollection of their former conduct, which I most heartily forgave, and was cautious never to mention a single circumstance that might affect their sensibility by inducing them to suppose that I still remembered it.

We passed our time in a most agreeable manner, and when the period of my departure arrived, they expressed the greatest regret. They gave the keys to the porter to open the doors; but when I went out, none of them could be seen to bid me adieu.

The sorrow I felt at leaving my friends in this convent was in some degree soothed by the hope of

seeing my husband, who wished me to be nearer him during the time he was in garrison at Luneville.

I had scarcely arrived at this place, when I received many letters from the nuns in the convent, expressive of their regret for the loss of my company, and apologizing for their not bidding me farewell. These letters, with many others, were devoured in that dreadful dungeon, the Bastille.

The attention and respect with which I was received at Luneville, whether it proceeded only from compliment and politeness, or was really the effusion of genuine friendship, was more than sufficient to have raised my vanity, had that been a predominant foible; but fully persuaded of my own deficiency in point of personal charms, I could only attribute it to respect for my husband, to a knowledge of my birth and reception at Court, and to a lively manner, animated with the greatest vivacity, for which I was remarked even to a proverb.

The Marshal de Castries commanded the gendarmes then quartered at Luneville. M. de la Motte hoped, from the circumstance of his marriage, to obtain some military promotion. The Marshal warmly befriended him, but the superintendance of the navy department not permitting him to continue with the corps, the Marquis d'Autichamp succeeded to the command.

So delighted was I with the attention of my associates and the undisturbed tranquillity of such a life, that when I left my former convent, at the desire of M. de la Motte, I did it on this express condition, that I should pass in another the whole time required by his residence in the garrison; and soon after I

entered a convent about three leagues from Luneville. But I was not suffered long to enjoy that repose which such a situation would have afforded me.

The necessary absence of the Marshal de Castries, who was sincerely our friend, was an unfortunate circumstance. The Marquis d'Autichamp made greater and more plausible professions of service, but he had not one grain of the sincerity of the Marshal de Castries. Acquainted with our story, he advised us to go to Paris; told us that nothing could be done at Luneville, but that at Paris we should have the good offices of the Marshal de Castries, with the assistance of Madame de Boulainvilliers; and that he would interest himself with his particular friends to procure some advantageous post for my husband.

This advice appeared too rational to be neglected; but when the time of our departure approached, it appeared that I alone was to solicit the assistance of our friends at Paris, and the Marquis himself was to accompany me.

This plan appeared rather singular, and I made some objections to proceeding without my husband; he answered, that having twice had leave of absence, he could not reasonably expect a third. M. de la Motte, however, applied, and was peremptorily refused, in consequence of which he quitted the corps.

This instance alone might have sufficiently informed me what I had to expect from favour with the great; still, I felt ambition urging me forward, and my hopes were considerably strengthened by the flattering reception I universally met with. I determined in future to suspect the pressing civilities, the extravagant compliments, and profuse proffers of service of

the other sex, instructed by the conduct of the Marquis d'Autichamp.

I left Luneville, accompanied by the Count, my husband, and took the road to Strasburg, where the Marquis and Marchioness de Boulainvilliers then were. We were disappointed on our arrival to find them gone to Saverne: and remaining that night at Strasburg, next day went on to Saverne, and waited upon the family of Boulainvilliers.

The Marchioness, ever tender and affectionate, received us kindly. It was here that I first saw the Cardinal de Rohan, of whom I shall hereafter have much to say. Little did my kind mother think, at the moment she presented me, what would be the calamitous consequences; but it is not for human nature to penetrate the darkness of futurity, otherwise we should often find that the objects of our most ardent wishes, however gilded by the rays of present opinion, are eventually but misfortunes in disguise. Madame de Boulainvilliers, influenced by the most generous motives, introduced me to this prince: his reception was at once flattering to youthful vanity and maternal anxiety.

In a few days the Marchioness returned to Paris, inviting me and the Count, my husband, to accept an apartment in her magnificent hotel in that city. M. de la Motte was obliged to go to Bar-sur-Aube to arrange some family concerns, and shortly after I accepted the kind and pressing invitation of my worthy mother, and arrived at the Hotel de Boulainvilliers at Paris.

I am now about to enter upon a more interesting part of my history, and to rescue it from an imputation of

sameness, which, perhaps, may be thrown upon so minute a recital of transactions in the early period of my life; but as it was essentially necessary to invalidate my assertion that I was born to be unfortunate, and to prove that my life has been one continued series of misfortunes, I trust the candid reader will see the propriety of this minute attention to particulars, and pity rather than condemn.

Though apparently flattered and caressed, I nevertheless was envied; in proportion as my aspiring notions advanced towards the summit of their object, my enemies were in secret plotting my destruction, and rejoicing maliciously in the anticipation of my fall.

Soon after my arrival at the Hotel de Boulainvilliers, I wrote to a friend with whom I was once particularly intimate at the convent of St. Nicolas, intimating my intention to dine with her on the Monday following, and begging her to return me no answer unless she was so particularly engaged that it would be inconvenient for her to receive me on that day. I received no answer, and accordingly prepared to pay my visit, anticipating in idea the pleasure I should receive in meeting her, and in renewing that friendship which had formerly subsisted between us. On my arrival at the gate, my servant returned from the porter with the startling intelligence that the lady had been dead nearly a fortnight. Conceiving that he must have made some mistake, I instantly sent him back; the porter returned with him and, to my astonishment, confirmed what my servant had told me.

“I assure you, Madame,” said the porter (observ-

ing my surprise), that she is dead, and died of the small-pox."

I had received a letter from her but seventeen days before; not long before I had seen her at the convent of St. Nicolas, in blooming health and high spirits, and scarcely believed it possible that there could be so sudden a change: a young girl, only nineteen years of age, and but a twelvemonth married!

Stupefied with astonishment, and incapable of uttering a word, I could not reconcile myself to part with my friend so suddenly. At length her husband sent one of his domestics, and a gentleman with whom I had been acquainted, to hand me out of my carriage and invite me to walk in. I debated for a moment in my own mind whether I should accept this invitation, lest my presence might add to the husband's distress. Nevertheless, not being able to persuade myself that she was actually dead, I alighted from the carriage to visit her husband.

Never did I behold such a scene of severe affliction as presented itself upon my entrance. The distress and grief of her husband struck me beyond the power of description. The apartment was hung with black, and the mantel-piece decorated with some little articles of dress and jewels worn by the deceased. The chamber in which I was received contained a bed of state, on one side of which hung a picture of the deceased lady, holding a crucifix in her hand; on the other side was a figure of Death in the attitude of warning, while her countenance represented a smile of patient resignation; before her stood the communion-cup, with every other accessory which could render the scene awful and affecting.

In another chamber stood the bed whereon she died, without furniture, representing a tomb; in this was placed all her wardrobe, and here the unfortunate husband devoted every morning and evening to pray and indulge his melancholy.

The mourner, whose legs were scarcely able to support him, had dwindled away to a mere shadow; in short, everything denoted the extreme aspect of sorrow, beyond the power of language to express. A scene like this, to a person even of moderate sensibility, must have made a very strong impression. A dinner was ordered to be prepared; but after such a sight, who could have an appetite? I found my presence distressed the wretched husband, and unable to suppress my tears, I determined to depart. Such a picture of conjugal affection is so very rare that I think it my duty to record it.

With a mind absorbed in what I had just seen, I returned to the Hotel de Boulainvilliers, where my melancholy was greatly heightened by finding my worthy mother confined to her bed. This amiable lady, interested in all my friends, had desired me to bring the deceased lady the next day to dine with me. I had once before presented her at the Abbey of Longchamps. The scene I had just left, added to the indisposition of the Marchioness, produced an effect upon me I found impossible to conceal. The Marchioness perceived it, and said—

“You seem very low-spirited, my dear child, notwithstanding you have had the pleasure of dining with your friend.”

I knew not what to answer, conscious that the Marchioness disliked to hear of any one's illness, and

was averse to conversation on death, especially by such a malady as the small-pox, of which she had always a great horror.

“Well, my dear,” said she, finding I made no answer, “shall we have the pleasure of seeing your friend to-morrow?”

“No, Madame,” replied I, “she is engaged for a fortnight in the country, and sets out to-morrow.”

My dear mother was grieved that I should have been disappointed of my friend’s company.

On visiting the Marchioness a short time after this, I observed some eruptions on her face, attended with a violent fever, which I was fearful appeared like that destructive malady she had so long dreaded; and notwithstanding the efforts of the Marquis to make her appear convalescent, and his influence in biassing the opinions of the doctors, I had the inexpressible anguish to observe that she was dangerously ill, and terrified at the idea that she would not recover.

During the illness of this most amiable of women, nay, even while she was confined to her chamber, the Marquis de Boulainvilliers, notwithstanding every repulse, never ceased to persecute me with his odious addresses. His conduct at this period rendered him doubly disgusting; my answers were more pointed and peremptory, which irritated him to such a degree that he could not bear me in his sight.

The medical gentlemen, MM. Gard and De la Motte, to whom I gave an account of the Marchioness’s health night and morning, satisfied that she could not recover, imparted their convictions to the Marquis, who replied—

“How, gentlemen? ’Tis impossible! You must certainly be mistaken!” Such was continually his reply. “She has had three or four hours’ sleep.”

“We know not,” they replied, “but Madame the Countess has reported otherwise.”

“How!” he answered, “what has she to do with it?”

He even wished to brow-beat Victoire, one of the women who constantly attended the Marchioness, to force her to coincide in his opinion; but she neither watched with that tender anxiety, nor do I believe she was equally competent to make observations, as myself, who, during the time of my residence in the convent, had been in the habit of visiting the sick, paying attention to every symptom of their complaints, and doing all those little offices which I considered to be my duty. For these reasons, Victoire was not so competent to judge; and the opportunities I formerly had of making my observations enabled me to form an opinion on the state of the Marchioness’s health. I therefore, without any fear of the Marquis, stated truly everything I had observed, and one day when he said to the physicians, “She has slept well; she is really now very tranquil, and must not be disturbed!” I summoned up sufficient resolution to remonstrate (and I trust the interest I had in the preservation of a life so dear sufficiently warranted the remonstrance), “Sir, as we consult these gentlemen, who are the proper judges, we ought to follow their advice.”

The Marquis de Boulainvilliers showed by his conduct that he never loved this worthy lady, whom he had probably married for her fortune. He was,

indeed, too great a libertine to taste the enjoyments of conjugal felicity, and he wished to have it supposed that he believed the Marchioness was not really dangerously ill, otherwise he would not have been able to apologise for his neglect in not seeing her; and if he had really believed the report of the physicians, he must, to save appearances with the world, have attended more assiduously upon a wife whom, if any judgment can be formed from his character, his conduct, or public report, he was not very sorry to lose.

At length, with some difficulty, I obtained a private conference with the physicians, and addressed them to this purport—

“Are you sure, gentlemen, that Madame de Boulainvilliers is convalescent? The Marquis possibly desires you to say so, because he does not wish to make her uneasy. I caution you lest she should die, which I fear will be the case in three or four days. Believe me, gentlemen! Speak the truth, and do not give him his way; for his design is to lay all the blame upon you if anything should happen. He will say that you were unacquainted with the nature of her disorder, and consequently incapable of administering the proper remedies. Consider, gentlemen, your reputation is absolutely at stake. Do not quit him this night before you have truly stated the situation of Madame de Boulainvilliers, and given orders that she may receive the sacrament to-morrow morning, before it be too late.”

The physicians quitted the room, perfectly satisfied with my remarks, and assuring me that my wish to have the sacrament administered should be complied with next day.

The certificates of health till then had been written precisely as the Marquis de Boulainvilliers had dictated. The public could scarcely suppose the Marchioness was indisposed, much less that she was so dangerously ill; and from all these reports of her good health, and the hours she slept, would be extremely surprised to hear next day that she was dead. These gentlemen were considered as two very able doctors, and the Marquis de Boulainvilliers would immediately have exclaimed that they had deceived him. It was not, however, in his power to deceive me; for if any judgment may be formed of his designs, from his words or actions, I think I am not mistaken in anything I have before advanced.

A few days before the death of his wife, the Marquis de Boulainvilliers called me into his chamber, and after some very foolish conversation, said—

“Well, well, my dear, if she should die; she is so very particular, so capricious, so vapourish! You have seen what I suffered in our journey to Strasburg. Besides, my dear, you will be more comfortable; she is so very jealous! If you did but know what I have borne with on your account, I am sure I should be dear to you. I dare say she has told you many stories about me, while at the same time she was tormenting me concerning you. Certainly she cannot live a long time, and we shall send for your husband here; I shall find means to procure him a post in some regiment, which will prevent him from troubling us often.”

He insinuated that this might be a connection of mutual convenience, if I would but comply with his desires; and that, as I was now a wife, my reputa-

tion would be beyond the reach of slander. He even made an offer to share his fortune, and to disinherit his children, if they should murmur at this measure. Thus did he attempt to obviate any difficulty which might arise, and painted the advantages which would result from my consenting to be his mistress, in colours best adapted, as he thought, to allure my vanity, and engage my interest to accept his odious proposals.

The reader will readily suppose that I did not receive these offers so gratefully as the Marquis expected, from the depravity of his own heart, they deserved. I heard him with stifled indignation: my answers were very short. I could not flatter myself with the idea that a man of his age would listen to any remonstrances from me, concerning the duty he owed to himself and his worthy consort. I considered the disparity of our ages would make him look upon any advice I might offer of little or no consequence, especially when clashing with the licentious indulgence of a passion to which he had long given himself up. I contented myself with holding him in the most ineffable contempt, although I well knew, from the influence which generally accompanies wealth, and from the low cunning and dissimulation for which he was peculiarly distinguished, that when he had it in his power, the inclination to do an injury, either to me or to my friends, would never be wanting. I submitted to his infamous proposals in silence, but I despised the creature who made them, whom I considered not as a man, but a monster.

After this conference, I avoided him as much as possible. When I returned, the Count de Bourbon,

and the Viscount de Clairmont, his cousins, rallied me on my long conference with the Marquis, to which I made no other answer than a faint smile.

That very evening MM. Gard and De la Motte, the Marchioness's physicians, arrived, and reported that she was in a critical state. It is impossible to express the rage of the Marquis at this intelligence. "It is Madame de la Motte," said he, petulantly, "who has biassed you; and will you listen to her? She is a mere child!"

"No, sir," they replied, "it is our own serious conviction. From this moment we must apply blisters to your lady; and to-morrow, at eleven or twelve, it is our wish that she may receive the sacrament."

They then ordered Victoire, a girl who had received a very good education, to make preparation for that purpose, and to take care to proceed so as to disturb the Marchioness as little as possible. Madame de Boulainvilliers had no idea that she had the small-pox; she attributed her disorder to erysipelas, and had always so much dreaded the former malady, that it was judged prudent not to inform her of her true condition.

About nine the next morning, the Marquis entered the apartment of his lady, and in a whining tone made inquiries concerning HIS POOR WIFE, and to know how she had passed the night. At the same time, observing me, he shot such a glance, that his eyes appeared, like "Basilisk's, ready to strike me dead." I was bold enough, notwithstanding, to speak to him, to tell him what I had suffered.

"I have attended you," replied he, "two hours. You have indeed deceived me, but you shall repent it!"

Every necessary preparation for receiving the sacrament being now made, that sacred ordinance commenced, and the ceremony was extremely affecting. Her nearest relations assisted. It seemed like the hour of the Marchioness's death, and as if her dearest friends, as the grief of their countenances strongly indicated, would follow immediately after. The ceremony performed, the parties present retired to their apartments. That night I passed in tears, and from the affliction of mind and want of necessary nourishment, I found myself extremely feeble the next morning.

Whenever I moved a little from the Marchioness's bed, and she could only hear my voice, "My daughter Valois," said she, "are you near me?" "Yes, my dear mother, I am." She was unable to perceive me, as the small-pox had closed up her eyes. I pressed both her hands, then very much marked by scars left by the disorder, and wept incessantly, as I but too plainly foresaw that I should soon lose the dearest object of my affection—a mother who had ever felt for me such tenderness and affection.

"You weep, my dear daughter," said she, hearing me sob.

"No, my dear mother," I replied, not wishing to make her uneasy; "I have only a cold in my head, but I feel myself much better."

The Marchioness had not the least idea of dying: she could not even bear any person to speak of it. She was fond of company; and, caressed and respected, she was the delight of every eye, and the admiration of every heart who had the felicity of her acquaintance. Affable, polite, sensible, humane,

and generous, she left behind her a name never to be forgotten while these qualifications shall be admired as ornaments of human nature. This was her character universally, which, I was going to say, was not the partial panegyric of friendship, for even her enemies allowed her this merit. Enemies, did I say? I retract what I have written. She had no enemies, but those whose enmity, far from being disgraceful, is even meritorious—the enemies of virtue.

In a few days this paragon of female excellence breathed her last; and notwithstanding the efforts of every one to prevent it, she expired in my arms. They all wished me to avoid this scene; but they strove in vain to tear me from her. I could not, I dared not, think that she was dead. At length, with great difficulty, they forced me from the body. I was in a state of delirium. “Live, live, my dear mother,” said I, addressing myself to the breathless corpse, “or I am lost for ever! You are my soul, my support, my life!”

Protectress of my infant weakness! guide of my youth! whose precepts I will ever follow, but whose example I despair to imitate, thou art at this moment an inhabitant of the mansions of bliss! It is thine to wear the crown to which thy virtue entitled thee, while it is ours to mourn thy loss, which all who knew thee most deeply felt; but mine, mine, are the genuine tears of gratitude and affection.

On the death of my worthy mother, my existence was dark and comfortless; the earth was to me a barren wilderness, the heavens dark, gloomy, and lowering; every amusement was insipid and wearisome. I had now no friend whose affection and

prudence was so sufficient to advise, nor whose power so able to assist. The Marquis de Boulainvilliers indeed remained; but what was the Marquis de Boulainvilliers to me? He was not my friend; on the contrary, he was the very reverse. He was, as I shall hereafter prove, my bitterest enemy; but he presumed upon his immense riches to set the opinion of the world at defiance. Buoyed up by wealth, and that degree of influence which wealth alone creates among those sordid beings who bow the knee to Mammon, he consulted not the dictates of reason or philanthropy, but gave way to his unbridled appetite, sometimes even throwing aside the mask of dissimulation, except when he wished to palm himself upon the public opinion for virtues which the malevolence of his soul, and the avarice of his disposition, would never permit him to practise.

Four days after this event of inexpressible anguish, which had for a time disordered my reason, I found myself in bed, although I knew not by what means I came there; and when the frightful idea of the loss I had sustained occurred to my memory, I fell into convulsions. The Baronesses de Fodoas and De Crussol, a little recovered from their sorrow for the death of their beloved parent, notwithstanding their grief was yet recent, visited and endeavoured to console me. They observed that the loss I had sustained was much more terrible to me than to them, though they had lost their own mother. My attachment was much more inviolable, more strong than the brittle tie of nature, and my affection was even strengthened by the sense of my unprotected situation. She was the foundation and support of all my hopes; relentless

death had plucked it away, and I fell defenceless and forsaken. M. Gard, who attended my deceased mother, came often during my illness to visit me, and behaved with great attention and kindness; but he had no medicine for the cure of my disorder; he could not "rase the written troubles of the brain"; he had no oblivious antidote to the reflections continually occurring to my imagination, of the worth of her I lamented; nor was it within the compass of his art to minister to a mind so diseased, so distracted as mine.

The Baron de Crussol did me the honour to visit me, and as soon as I was sufficiently recovered to be removed without danger, sent his carriage for me to take an airing. The Viscountess de Fodoas also paid me the same attention.

About a fortnight after my recovery, notwithstanding the Marquis's conduct, as he was the husband of my much lamented parent, I thought it would be proper to pay him a visit of condolence. He presented a complete picture of dissimulation and hypocrisy. His mourning was all external, glaring to the eyes of the world, while he rejoiced in his heart at being delivered from what he termed an incumbrance. He was now more at liberty to gratify his passions; he might now marry another fortune; and such was his avarice, if he could once touch the fortune, he was perfectly indifferent to the wife.

The portrait I am now about to exhibit of this *disconsolate* husband is so very singular, that I almost fear my veracity will be questioned. From some preceding reflections upon the character of this bad man, my credibility may perhaps be doubted. Let it not be said that my narrative is tinged with too much

acrimony; let the character of this man be read in the public estimation; let it be read in the presence of individuals whom he has injured; and then let an impartial judgment be formed, if the facts I state are at all improbable; let my injuries be weighed, and then let it be judged if my remarks are too virulent.

From motives of fear, and from respect to the other branches of the family, I went to pay a visit of condolence to the Marquis de Boulainvilliers. I found things greatly changed; the apartments were hung with black; he affected to be shocked, and assumed the most violent emotions of grief; but his countenance apparently struggled with his heart, which seemed to feel the opposite emotions of pleasure. He affected an air of sorrow. "I am very poorly, my dear girl!" said he, in a faint and melancholy tone; "how are you?"

I sat down at some distance from him, that I might observe him well till the return of Victoire, whom he had sent into his closet to open the door, which, when any one came to make visits of condolence, she was generally dispatched to shut. On these occasions he assumed a very serious air and mournful grimace; but the moment the visitors departed, he extinguished all the lights, except one small piece in a wax candlestick, which he kept burning so as to light the others quickly. Thus did his avarice struggle with his pride, whilst dissimulation was useful to both. I am now relating a scene of which I was actually an eyewitness.

The Prince de Conti's equerry came, on behalf of the Prince, to pay compliments of condolence. The *valet de chambre* announced some gentleman, whose

name I have now forgotten, but who was sent by the Prince de Conti. The name of the Prince's equerry put the Marquis in a bustle, who, forgetting that this gentleman was in the first saloon (and from that to where we then were was a grand suite of rooms), in a moment, he, this *disconsolate mourner*, was running about from one room to another, lighting all the candles with the greatest expedition. Nothing could be more ludicrous: the equerry was standing without at the door, observing the Marquis in his progress of illumination, and wondering at what he saw, at the same time not daring to enter. Observing the situation, I endeavoured to persuade him to walk in; but he chose to remain where he was.

Ashamed to witness such economical hypocrisy, I spoke to the Marquis, but in vain; he was so busy with his illuminations, that he paid no attention to me, but made signs not to be interrupted. It was impossible for me to refrain from laughing: the gentleman smiled, and begged me not to interrupt him.

At length, the candles being lighted and the theatre prepared, the actor soon made his muscles and gestures conformable. The Marquis went towards the gentleman, to whom he affected to be scarce able to speak. Observing his situation, I paid my compliments to the gentleman, and made some apology for the silence of the Marquis. As soon as he had sat down for a few minutes, he clasped his hands together, and turning up his eyes, said, "Ah, sir, no man can tell the loss I have sustained! A wife, whose merit—but I shall not live; I shall not be able to support her loss!"

The equerry and I endeavoured to stifle our indig-

nation at the conduct of which he knew not we had both been witnesses.

“See, sir,” pointing to his big belly, “how I am fallen away!”

This was a farce past endurance; it was absolutely impossible to bear it any longer, and I arose to depart.

“There is my child, sir!” continued he, in the same mournful tone, at which I could scarce refrain from laughing; and I dare say the equerry would not fail to divert the Prince at the expense of the Marquis, who, in every visit of condolence, had so often played the hypocrite that he was an adept in the character.

Soon after, when my health was a little recovered, I received the visits of my friends, and returned them. The old Marquis was jealous of these visits: he suspected all those whom I termed friends were in fact lovers; he was suspicious of every one. The character of M. de la Luzerne, Bishop of Langres, could not put him beyond the reach of the Marquis’s suspicions: even he who respected all my family, and behaved to me like a father; for it was constantly the business of that family to oblige the whole human race by every kindness in their power. In short, every one who obliged me, every one whom it was my interest as well as my duty to speak well of, all were considered as my lovers; at the same time he himself was continually making his detested offers, which became by repetition more intolerable than ever. He never failed to suggest how much it was my interest that I should submit: he told me his wealth, his influence, all would be at my disposal, and that every obstacle in the road to my wishes would insensibly vanish.

Finding this note unsuccessful, he touched an opposite string—he addressed himself to my fears; he insinuated how much it was in his power to defeat all my wishes, how easily he could blemish my reputation with those who would otherwise serve me.

“What will you have me say,” he one day asked me, “to those persons whom I am going to visit, if they should happen to make any inquiries about you? To-morrow I expect to see the Mareschal de Luxembourg, who has promised you his services, as well as the Princess de Beaufremen: what do you wish that I should say to them?”

Passion overcame me, and made me for a moment forget the respect I owed both to the name and memory of my worthy mother. “Ah, wicked man! you are capable of everything, and can plot the destruction of a child, whom your worthy departed spouse has brought up and educated with so much care! It is your aim to ruin me in the estimation of those who wish to make me comfortable, and to poison their good intentions, by giving them a bad opinion of my conduct; however, if I cannot be permitted personally to explain myself, I can write; I can explain your menaces, and I will make you known.”

This villanous hypocrite intercepted my letters, though they contained nothing worth discovery, and was eternally reproaching me, and telling me that I loved other men better than him.

I was not a little pleased at the return of my husband, a circumstance which gave me much satisfaction. The Marquis received him well, but endeavoured to destroy his good opinion of me. He sent one day to speak to him on business, but the conver-

sation was chiefly about me. He laboured to insinuate that I was fond of intrigue. "Oh!" says he, "her cousin is particularly attentive to her. Be cautious! Madame is very fond of company: she is intimate with my sons-in-law. I would have you watch her narrowly: I have known her from her infancy."

Count de la Motte had too much good sense to give any credit to the insinuations of the Marquis; he heard, nevertheless, everything he had to say, and seemed to listen very attentively, but he did not believe a single iota.

I went, some days after, to pay my respects to the Marchioness de Luxembourg. I was indulged that morning to stay as long as I pleased, and converse on my affairs. I was very graciously treated, though, from what my good friend the Marquis had told me, I was not without strong fears that the door would be shut upon me. I reflected that the Marquis was rich and powerful, and had often seen that some men are so depraved, that the moment they have the power to do an injury, they seldom leave it undone for want of inclination. I considered that I was poor and unprotected; and upon weighing my responsibility with that of the Marquis, in the estimation of the great world I knew that the word of the Marquis would turn the scale against me.

At my first interview with Madame de Luxembourg, she seemed rather reserved, which greatly intimidated me; however, I took courage, and informed her of my husband's arrival; to which she replied, "I am very glad to hear it, as that will prevent you from experiencing those temptations to

which many young women without such protection are too frequently exposed."

This declaration alarmed me, and I determined to say a word or two concerning the Marquis de Boulainvilliers, which was sufficient to open her eyes; but she was already prepossessed. "Oh no, my dear child!" said she, "be very cautious that you make no mistake in your assertions! The Marquis de Boulainvilliers speaks of you as an affectionate parent; and if he reproves you, it is because he has your happiness at heart: he does not mean to injure you. The obligations you owe to him should direct your conduct, and you should give him your confidence. For my part, I am sensible of the manner in which he speaks of you; and those persons who have spoken of you lately, spoke very favourably. So far from being your enemy, the Marquis is a father to you! Be very cautious how you take things amiss!"

I did not know whether I ought to continue the conversation, but Madame de Luxembourg herself engaged me to do it, and to disclose everything as to my proper mother. With this encouragement I unbosomed myself, and told her everything.

Although apparently affected by my story, she did not try to irritate me against him; on the contrary, she endeavoured to impress me with ideas less unfavourable, and rested the strength of her arguments on the obligations I was under, which she placed in every point of view. However, notwithstanding what she said, I observed her attentively, and fancied I discovered that her thoughts were favourable towards me. I even fancied I could trace the blush of indignation on her cheek against a man who had appeared

externally as a father, but whose real disposition was so much the reverse. She encouraged me to behave well to him, assuring me of her friendship, and that she would do all in her power to supply the loss of that worthy mother.

It is necessary to point out the arts of this cunning hypocrite, whose plausibility might be too apt to deceive. Fearful that I should some time or other disclose his villany, and his criminal passion towards me, he affected in public a fatherly affection and regard, at the same time expressing his fear that I was dissipated, and had a turn for intrigue. But why need I attempt to prove what must be sufficiently obvious to the understanding of every reader, that the Marquis de Boulainvilliers was a most consummate adept in hypocrisy?

The conversation I had with Madame de Luxembourg irritated me yet more strongly against the Marquis de Boulainvilliers. I had, indeed, resolved to see him no more; but the advice of Madame de Luxembourg determined me to return. He took care, however, to make the house as disagreeable to me as possible, by means at once ungenerous and unmanly: he frequently took occasion to make use of very indelicate double-entendres, with the express design of giving me offence: sometimes he engaged me to dinner, saying that his children, whom I preferred to him, would be present. "Your confidantes," added he, "to whom I am sure you have repeated all I say to you; those who give you advice on these occasions."

His sneers entirely exhausted my patience, and I was not long able to endure them. I sometimes retorted upon him some of those reproaches which

his conduct to me so justly merited. He saw that Madame de Luxembourg and others had told me much. I represented to him that they had thoroughly mistaken his conduct, and were not his dupes quite so much as, perhaps, he might be inclined to suppose. His answer was, that he should have sufficient influence to gain more credit than I could.

His children sometimes dined with him ; but though he was their father, the little attention they paid him was much more through fear than affection.

The embarrassments under which he suffered his daughter, the Viscountess de Fodoas, to labour will ever remain a monument of his avarice and inhumanity. It is a circumstance well known, and universally reprobated, throughout Paris, that he refused to give security for the payment of some small debts due at her death. So much did he expose his children, that house, furniture, and estates, everything was sold and turned into money. It is well known that the fortune of Monsieur de Boulainvilliers is indeed immense, and probably equalled by nothing but his avarice ; while his charity, his sensibility, are as poor as his virtue. Who but such a father could not only neglect but abuse his own children ? He it was who, delighting in mischief, estranged from my interest all those friends who wished me well during the life-time of my worthy mother, excepting some who were unalterably attached, and his children, who followed not his advice. Having been attached more strongly to their mother, they would have been always glad to see me, but dared not indulge this propensity for fear of their father. He knew too well the cunning arts of dissimulation ; and I am

sorry that the history of my life, and my connections, oblige me to adduce additional proofs of his malevolence.

AN aunt of M. de la Motte's, who lived close by, desired me to come and see her every day; and as I was there always well received, and saw a great deal of good company, I frequently accepted her friendly invitation. She was often so obliging as even to send her coach, notwithstanding the distance was so short, and either she herself or one of her sons came in the carriage to conduct me. The appearance of a young man in the carriage, according to custom, awakened the jealousy of the Marquis de Boulainvilliers. He made complaint to his children, that he saw me but little, and that I converted his house into an inn, merely to suit my own convenience.

I communicated my complaints to my aunt. "I am astonished!" said she. "I am your aunt. Inform M. de Boulainvilliers, if he says anything to you, that I wish to see you often, and if he reproaches you with the obligations you are under, and the bed you have at his house, come to me." Encouraged by this I became more resolute; I told him more plainly and more openly what I thought, and spoke to him of the kindness of my aunt.

One day in particular, being invited to dine with my aunt, she as usual sent her carriage for me. Whilst we were at dinner, one of the servants came and whispered something very softly to my aunt; she rose, and went along a large saloon, which was so situated that I could see, while sitting in my place, every person who was under the window. I was not a little surprised at observing M. Denis, the secre-

tary of M. de Boulainvilliers, but did not take the least notice of it to any of the company. My aunt upon her return appeared rather reserved, and although she said nothing, was rather disconcerted. After dinner, taking me apart, she informed me that M. Denis had waited upon her from the Marquis de Boulainvilliers, to request an interview that evening about seven, or half-past seven o'clock, at the same time charging her to keep this a profound secret from me, and if possible, find some pretext to send me home.

Disquieted greatly, and not being able to conceive what he had to communicate, nor his particular charge that I should be sent home, we took our measures together, and consulted on what should be done; she at the same time, knowing the dissimulation of the Marquis, and thinking he had some scheme in view, determined to be particularly cautious in her answers. The time arrived: the Marquis approached, and I contrived to conceal myself in a little closet which opened into the small saloon where she received him. A screen, extending round to the entrance, concealed my retreat, and I kept the door of the closet half open, that I might hear more distinctly. I was all suspense, and eager to hear the result of this extraordinary visit, at which I in particular was not to be present.

Madame Clause received him with a degree of reserve, which probably prevented his more immediate communication; or possibly thinking it improper to enter abruptly upon the business of his visit, he was sufficiently artful to bring in the main subject accidentally. His conversation first turned upon the

news; at length he ran through a deal of nonsense about the carnival, and the common chit-chat of the day. "Pray, Madame, have you been at the masquerade?" She answered in the affirmative.

"Then I presume that Madame de la Motte accompanied you; my porter and M. Denis, my secretary, have both seen her return from the assembly at eight o'clock in the morning, with a young man whom they describe as your youngest son."

"Oh no, sir," replied she; "my son has never been with her; and besides, if he has, his being with her could never constitute a crime."

"Very true, Madame; but a circumstance with which I believe you are not yet acquainted is, that the young gentleman has been at Versailles, where she has passed a fortnight on a visit, and that he hired a cabriole to go thither to see her, and he continued three days. In short, Madame, such gallantry must necessarily lead a young man into expenses."

"Ah, sir," replied Madame Clause, "you must undoubtedly be mistaken."

"I beg your pardon, Madame! I assure you that your son is very much in love with his cousin, and I would have you be particularly on your guard. I know a great deal more, much more than I choose to disclose. Examine if he has his watch; for as I have heard, he lent it as earnest for the payment of the hire of the cabriole. As for Madame de la Motte, I tell you as a friend, I will no longer have the charge of her. I am obliged to make a sale at my house, and have occasion for the furniture of the apartment which she occupies. Be careful, Madame, and take measures for the best. This affair may be attended

with bad consequences : your son is a very young man, and love will carry young men great lengths !”

What can the reader think of a man who could relate such a story without the least foundation in truth ? What can the most candid, the most meek, allege in vindication of the conduct of this blasphemer of reputation, who could attempt, in a mode so deliberately artful, to blast an innocent character with a relative by forging lies which originated only in his own depraved imagination, and calling forth the feelings of a mother to her son, who was thus represented to be in danger of being ruined by her niece ?

My blood was at this moment boiling in my veins, and I had scarce patience to contain myself, when he rose to depart. I now placed myself in his way, and exclaimed, “ Stay, monster ! Return to Madame ! Explain yourself in everything you have said ! You wish to prevent my aunt from showing her goodness : you endeavour to frustrate all my hopes, to reduce me to the necessity of throwing myself into your arms, and then depending entirely upon you !”

The expressions I used on this occasion, and the tone in which I uttered them, will sufficiently show the conception of my mind with regard to the conduct of the Marquis. In such a matter as reputation, to be cold is, in my opinion, to be criminal.

Struck with confusion, the wretch was incapable of speaking : his lips quivered, and he turned pale as death. I repeated what he had said to Madame Clause *verbatim*. His confusion at being detected, at being laid open before that lady, prevented his faltering tongue from executing its office : he was incapable of uttering a syllable. At length, as I still

urged him, addressing himself to Madame Clause de Suremont, he said,

“She is too impatient, Madame, to suffer me to enter into any explanation.”

“Villain that you are!” exclaimed I, provoked beyond all patience; “all that you have repeated is false, merely lies of your own coinage, invented to traduce my character, and similar to those you have told elsewhere!”

Madame Clause was so struck with the manner in which I behaved to him, that she did not remain the whole time, fearing that, being so humbled, the wretch might conceive some enmity against her. He retired, overwhelmed with confusion: not the blush of shame attendant on remorse, but that of guilt absolutely detected. To me his conduct was uniformly inimical; but neither his wealth, nor that title which he has so often disgraced, nor even a name greater than either, the name of my sainted mother, shall prevent me from exposing his machinations, however speciously they may be glossed over by dissimulation or plausibility, and painting in their proper colours his real character, and the very secrets of his inmost soul!

Madame Clause very well knew, as did many others who will peruse my life, that I had frequently denied her son admission; his mother has given me credit for this. It was true that he came to Versailles, but I knew not that it was expressly to see me. I particularly interrogated him if he had his mother's permission: he answered positively that he had. I knew not that he had deceived me; fearful, however, that this might be the case, I requested Monsieur de la Motte to send him away. This young gentleman was very

much given to gaming, and would sometimes even pledge his watch, which, when successful, he redeemed. This is a piece of information I have since received.

These circumstances did the fruitful brain of the Marquis (ever ready at the connection of such incidents) put together, and endeavour to wrest to his malignant purpose. This was the wonderful discovery he had made, and with these materials did he fabricate this tale, mentioning the circumstance of the watch, which he knew the young gentleman, who had lately been unsuccessful in gaming, had not about him, to impose upon maternal affection, and alarm her fears for her son. It is not impossible but the Marquis, who was equal to any meanness, might have contrived to reduce the young man to the necessity for parting with his watch by agents employed for the purpose, that he might have a better opportunity of succeeding in his designs.

The daughters of the Marquis de Boulainvilliers, who followed that pattern of female excellence, their mother, notwithstanding the injunctions of their father, treated me with particular kindness, and invited me to dine with them. This invitation was soon after the quarrel I had had with their father, of which they were as yet ignorant. I accepted their kind invitation, and as soon as I entered, I beheld my grand enemy, the Marquis. My eyes met his, and I was surprised at his composure: he appeared a little cast down, and fearful lest I should relate our quarrel, but more particularly lest I should expose his designs. He watched me the whole time of dinner, and when he thought himself unobserved, he gave me a look ex-

pressive of scorn and spite, which, however he might think unregarded, did not escape the notice of the Viscountess de Tonneres.

After dinner, the ladies and I retired into a corner of the saloon, to commune more freely; M. de Boulainvilliers perceiving us together, appeared very much agitated, and came up to us: he was even suspicious of his own children. "What do they say to you?" demanded he: "take care what you say to them; they are too cunning for you; they wheedle you out of anything."

During the whole course of the day he seemed to be uneasy, ashamed, and almost terrified; in the evening he embraced me: "Good-night, my child! good night!"

The Baron de Crussol had interested himself on behalf of my husband, and procured him a post in the regiment of Artois, till he could be otherwise provided for. That gentleman, in compliance with the wishes of the Marchioness de Boulainvilliers, and in conformity to the desire of his wife, with whom I had the honour of being upon a footing of intimacy, had exerted himself to procure this post, but did not mean that his services should stop here.

The Marquis de Boulainvilliers, disappointed of his aim in his first scandalous report, soon after fabricated another, and rumoured it abroad that the young gentleman, the son of Madame Clausse, had absolutely eloped with me. Were I to mention half the injuries I have received from this man, it would tire the patience of my readers. However, as I have been tolerably intimate with him, in the course of a life replete with misfortunes, so far as his conduct had

an effect in producing them, so far I am bound to relate. If these facts should reflect upon the character of the Marquis, it is not my fault, but his: let him, if he can, refute my accusation. Not only he, but all my enemies will have that justice here which I, by the laws of my own country, if I may call them laws, was denied. Happy am I that from this moment I can leave this ungracious person, at least for a time, and proceed to circumstances much more interesting, and which I hope will tend to the gratification of curiosity.

It is necessary, for the better understanding of this narrative, to recapitulate some of those circumstances which, owing to the agitation of a mind almost overwhelmed with distress, may probably have been too much dislocated for critical perusal.

Let the circumstances and situation of the authoress of this *Life* ever be present in the memory of the candid reader, the very recollection of whose miseries is sufficient to obliterate the powers of memory, and almost all the faculties of the mind. How, then, can strength of conception, judicious arrangement of circumstances, or elegance of expression, be expected from one whose situation is so completely wretched as to render her unfit to use any other language but that which is dictated by the energy of grief? Nothing could have induced me to undertake a task like this—to retrace a life which has already been too long, and which, if my ideas of it are as just as I could wish, is drawing fast to a close—nothing could have roused me from this lethargy of grief—but to rescue my memory (when this fluttering pulse shall cease to beat, and the hand that now guides my pen be mouldered into dust) from the detractions of malice. Abused, insulted, and dis-

graced, the wounds of bleeding honour are too deep here to be closed. Do they call for vengeance? No: there is a just, a righteous Judge, before whose tribunal I shall again meet my enemies, where neither the strong arm of oppression, nor the "gilded" hand of offence, will be sufficiently powerful to vanquish innocence. To that tribunal I cite my enemies for a rehearing of my cause; in the meantime I consider it a duty I owe my friends to relate those circumstances which may tend to prove that I have been the victim of powerful oppression and intriguing policy, against which nothing but the consciousness of innocence could have sustained me.

I have mentioned the manner in which the estate of my ancestors had been divided; and from the easy and unsuspecting temper of my father, added to his necessitous situation,—it having been obtained by its present possessors for a very inconsiderable sum compared with its intrinsic value,—it was re-echoed from every quarter that these possessions might be regained through legal process. To examine into this, and to gain from the people in the place every necessary information, the Marchioness de Boulainvilliers had advised us to undertake the journey to Bar-sur-Aube. The restoration of the inheritance of my ancestors was what I was now aiming at, and I endeavoured to gain all the friends I could to support me in my claim.

When the Marchioness de Boulainvilliers was alive, she gave me the strongest encouragement to hope that, through her powerful influence and intercession, I should again be put in possession of the inheritance of my ancestors. With this view she had introduced

me to all her friends, particularly those at Court, from whose position and intercession any probable benefit might be derived. The worthy Marchioness, alas! was now dead, but the ideas she had taught me to entertain, and the hopes these ideas naturally produced, were still alive and in full vigour.

Activity and exertion were now more than ever necessary; and I foresaw that any prospect of future fortune would principally depend upon a proper cultivation of the friendship my worthy mother had implanted in the breasts of her friends, and a conjunction of fortunate circumstances, so necessary to the attainment of a desired object. I determined, therefore, to improve the acquaintance with those to whom the Marchioness had recommended me, and who, respecting the memory of that amiable lady, would be induced to render me service.

Soon after the death of his worthy lady the Marquis fancied that I might be useful in his house, and had the audacity to offer me a direct proposal, in terms, as he expressed it, of mutual and reciprocal convenience; insinuating that, as I was now married, my reputation would be safe from the aspersions of scandal, and that the name of a wife would be at once a sanction for intrigue and a shield for reputation. Disappointed by the forcible expression of that indignation which must ever accompany the total rejection of such guilty propositions, and without hope of being able to overcome a settled contempt which his behaviour could not fail to excite, he attempted revenge, and revenge of the blackest nature, craftily directed, and enveloped with a dissimulation against which it was almost impossible to guard.

I have before shown how he attempted to alienate the affections of my relatives, and elsewhere related the means by which he endeavoured to ruin my reputation with my friends, thereby wishing to render me as much as possible, like himself, the object of private scorn and public detestation; but those good angels whose office it is to defeat the dark designs of hypocrisy (a vice which cannot always be discovered by human penetration), disappointed his malice.

Among the chief of those in power, to whom the worthy Marchioness had introduced me, was the Cardinal de Rohan. That Prince gave me the most gracious reception, and encouraged me to confide to him my future projects, which he would direct by his advice, and assist by his influence. I have already noticed that my first introduction to this Prince was at Saverne, where, having been made acquainted with my story, much to the gratification of my worthy mother, he was pleased to pay me particular attention. He now encouraged me to relate to him in the most explicit manner my position, circumstances, and expectations, promising he would interest himself warmly in my behalf. Elated with the idea of having acquired so powerful a friend, and pleased that my plans would have so able a director, I did not hesitate to disclose them.

His Royal Highness the Duke d'Artois, having seen me at church, noticed me in a particular manner, with his wonted affability. The attention he had been pleased to pay me was soon wafted to the ears of his consort, whom also I had the good fortune to please, and she determined to take me under her protection.

The delicate and disinterested manner in which

this princess exerted herself in my favour can never be erased from my memory. Convinced that she had lately been in a very singular predicament, and fearful that if she placed me immediately under her patronage it might operate to my disadvantage, she, in the most private manner possible, placed me under the patronage of her royal sister, Madame.

The Cardinal, from whom I concealed nothing, advised me at this juncture not to press either the Countess d'Artois or her royal sister, Madame, to make any request, which might probably have been premature: it was sufficient that those ladies expressed an inclination to serve me. He approved of my intentions, which were, that they, with Madame Elizabeth, who had formerly honoured me with her attention, would interest themselves privately, and strengthen my application to his Majesty.

The Cardinal de Rohan having sanctioned it with his approbation, I immediately set about putting it in execution, and for this purpose waited on Madame Elizabeth, who received me with the greatest complacency. I presented my memorial, which she accepted with her usual affability, and condescended at parting to salute me.

Emboldened by the success of my first application, I soon after went to the apartments of the Countess d'Artois, when her first woman, Madame Coulong, received me, and desired me to follow to her apartment, in which she left me without saying a word. In a few minutes she and the Countess d'Artois came out together, reading a paper, the contents of which seemed to affect them. Madame Coulong returned, and informed me that the Countess d'Artois and Ma-

dame Elizabeth were that moment perusing my memorial, and that the latter begged me to call at her house, where she would be with me in a moment. In a quarter of an hour she arrived: I was ushered to her presence by Madame Patres, her first woman. After receiving me very courteously, and asking me many polite and obliging questions on my situation, she informed me that she would do what I desired with the greatest pleasure.

The petition which I delivered to the Princesses was in fact drawn up and addressed to his Majesty. I had only, as I before intimated, put it into the hands of those ladies, that, being acquainted with the nature of my request, they might enforce it as they should see occasion.

The kindness with which the Princess received me, the interest she took in my affairs, and the expression of her good wishes to serve me, so affected my sensibility that I could not refrain from tears. I was extremely surprised to hear her explain herself so well, and speak with facility on minute affairs, about which ladies of her rank are seldom supposed to be conversant. When I quitted her, I attempted to take one of her hands and press it to my lips; but she, anticipating my intention, gently withdrew it, and exclaimed, embracing me with all the warmth of friendship, "Ah! my dear Countess, you are very dear to us, as well as Monsieur." Tears of gratitude, which I could not restrain, trickled fast down my cheeks. She observed it, and expressed anxiety at parting with me.

"Come often and see me! Come every day," said she; "you will always find me disengaged at eleven.

Is it possible," added she, "that the Queen will not prefer you to the Polignacs?"

If I could have believed that my misfortunes would ever be ended, it would certainly have been at this period. The whole Court spoke of me; I was the general subject of their conversation; all pointed me out as patronized by *Madame*, who carried her attention to me to such an extent that, fearing I might wait sometimes longer than she wished, she desired me often to write, and commissioned the Abbé Malet to take charge of my letters. This was a very singular condescension, and a very great honour; for it is not the custom in France to write letters to the royal family, which only pass between those who are equal in point of rank: when the Princesses are addressed, they are called petitions, by way of marking their distinguished eminence and superiority. I think it necessary to make this remark, not merely from ostentation, but to show in what a respectable light they held my family, and how much they were attached to my interest.

As often as I wrote to her, she carried her complacency and condescension so far as to write to M. d'Ormesson, then Intendant of the Finances, and to M. de Forge, of Bonnaire, three or four letters, stating very fully my case, and pressing them to consider and interest themselves in my favour. These were not mere billets, usually ordered to be sent by persons of rank upon ordinary applications; but letters in detail, actually written by *Madame*, under her own proper signature, purporting that she should be much pleased with them if they would pay proper attention to her request; that these solicita-

tions were in favour of a person who merited their support, and that her name was Mademoiselle de Valois.

When I presented these letters to D'Ormesson, he said, "Well, Madame, I will reply to these letters of *Madame* very soon; but *Madame* has now no great influence. You should rather solicit the influence of the Queen; she can serve you much more effectually. Will you have the goodness to acquaint *Madame* that I shall be very glad to have an audience with her, to explain this business?" I confess I felt myself much hurt at the interview with M. d'Ormesson, to hear him express himself with so little respect to my benefactress; and as I possessed a faculty from nature of speaking the truth (a language not often spoken in courts, nor often agreeable to the ears of ministers), he felt himself so much offended, that he determined, with M. de Forge de Bonnaire, not to give themselves any trouble about me. .

M. de Forge de Bonnaire was Intendant of the demesnes of the King's Fisheries and Forests; my father's estate was a part of these demesnes: it was on this account that I found it necessary to make application to him, to whom I was first recommended by his worthy uncle, M. de Beauman, who had given him that place during his life. This gentleman was of an opinion very different from his nephew: the former wished me to recover, and enjoy my father's possessions; the latter asked me many impertinent questions: "Whether I had a certain right to make such a demand?" and "If I was really descended from the Valois?" Astonished at the impropriety of such interrogatories, my descent being well known

to all Paris, and acknowledged by the King himself, "Good gracious!" exclaimed I, in accents of surprise, "Can you really be serious in these inquiries? It is surely impossible that you can be so ignorant; nevertheless, for your satisfaction, I will send to you this evening, when I return, my genealogical extract, which will convince you of my birth, and a letter shall accompany it, which will explain my sentiments on this occasion."

"Madame," returned he, in a tone of trifling gallantry, "I ask your pardon! I only put the question that I might indulge my eyes with gazing upon a fine woman. I admire your vivacity; but with you, Madame, I have a double pleasure, as you are at once beautiful and witty."

"You have doubts, M. de Forge," retorted I; "you shall feel that I am a Valois!"

I spoke this hastily, without the least degree of premeditation; but M. de Forge thought otherwise, and took occasion, after having seen me frequently, to make a very fine and long declaration of love. He said many things against M. d'Ormesson, and wished to sift me as much as possible concerning what had been said by Madame; observing, at the same time, that it was not in M. d'Ormesson's power to serve me much, although he was certainly his superior.

M. d'Ormesson had at first promised Madame Elizabeth that he would arrange everything in such a manner that the King would not fail to grant what she desired; and so sure was he of success, that he advanced me five hundred livres upon the rents of the succeeding year. As soon as Madame was informed of this circumstance she sent for me, received me

with a kiss of congratulation, complimented me on the occasion, and told me she had sanguine hopes that she should now succeed in her applications, and that this was an earnest of great success.

This beneficent Princess was so overjoyed that she related the circumstance to every one she met that evening. All anxiously awaited my arrival, that they might have an opportunity of congratulating me on my good fortune, upon which they were pleased to say a great many handsome ; things and the generosity of Madame was not more the theme of conversation than, as they flatteringly insinuated, the accomplishments of her who had occasioned it : so natural is it for people to flatter those who are just beginning to experience the sunshine of prosperity, and are distinguished by the favours of the great. The commendations of these sycophants are as profuse in the time of favour, as is their malice and contempt of the very same person when labouring under the gripe of poverty occasioned by the frowns of neglect. The history of human nature in every page—nay, in almost every line—so strongly evinces the truth of this remark, that it needs neither apology for its insertion nor proof for its support : it is one of those self-evident propositions which we are every day in the habit of seeing illustrated.

That same evening, Madame sent me to the house of M. d'Ormesson, to thank him for his kind exertions in my favour. Before I waited upon this minister at his own house, I thought proper to write to him, as if from Madame ; a permission which that lady had given me. The purport of my note was to enquire if he could be seen at ten o'clock that evening. He

begged the favour of me, by a billet, to have the goodness to defer the appointment till seven o'clock the next evening. I accordingly attended at the hour appointed, and found there M. Roullier d'Orveuille, Intendant of Champagne, who was waiting to speak to M. d'Ormesson. I waited nearly half an hour; but what was my surprise when I observed M. de Forge, who had just left the room of M. d'Ormesson. "Ah! are you there, beautiful Countess?" exclaimed he.

"You seem to speak as if you were ignorant of my presence," replied I; and like a bird of ill-omen, began to forbode in my own mind that no good was brooding between those two; and my foreboding was eventually true.

Madame has sent me hither, thought I, to return my acknowledgments; but instead of acknowledgments, I fear we shall have quarrels. If M. d'Ormesson had succeeded according to his promise; as he had taught me deceitfully to hope; if he had any good news for me, he would certainly have informed M. Forge, as those possessions of my ancestors which I wished to regain were all within the department of the latter.

"You know nothing," replied I, addressing myself to M. de Forge, who had put his questions concerning my descent, "absolutely nothing! You know, at least, that you are one of those who promise largely and perform sparingly; and you know that you have told me falsehoods!" He insisted upon an explanation, and what I meant by such an assertion.

Convinced as I was that he was yet more culpable than M. d'Ormesson, I told him my thoughts, and in a tone which people in office are least acquainted with, and least pleased to hear.

“As I do not know what you mean to say,” replied he, “I will not wait for you: I will either attend you at your own house, or conduct you to mine.”

I then went to M. d’Ormesson, leaving M. de Forge with M. Roullier d’Orveuille. I understood from M. d’Ormesson, what, indeed, I had already foreseen, that he had not said a word to Madame concerning the restoration of my possessions, and discovered that nothing more was in his power than to give me a *regrat de sel* in a province about forty leagues from Paris. It is necessary to explain to those unacquainted with France, that the *regrat de sel* is an officer common in every town, and that the person holding this office delivers out, from a warehouse, all the salt consumed in the place. The salary is proportioned to the size of the town; and from this office the *gabelle*, or tax upon salt, is collected, which is farmed by the *regrat de sel*.

Thus was the grand-daughter of a king treated by these mushrooms of the day, who, springing from the transitory smiles of royal favour, are destroyed by the breath that raised them, and sink into their primitive insignificance; thus was an undoubted descendant of the Valois degraded by an offer to keep a warehouse and be a retailer of salt!

Vexed at such an insult, which alarmed my pride and affected my sensibility in a manner I had not art enough to conceal,—an insult which was more intolerable than an absolute disappointment,—I prepared to depart. M. d’Ormesson, knowing my intimacy with Madame, and observing the indignation with which I treated so degrading an offer, was not

without apprehensions that I might prejudice him at Court. After my audience, I went to the house of M. de Forge. I confess that I have a natural warmth of disposition, a certain vivacity and impetuosity of temper, which the proposition of M. d'Ormesson had by no means tended to diminish. I could not forget so preposterous an offer, nor could I help remonstrating with M. de Forge, notwithstanding the presence of M. de Roullier d'Orveuille and some of the domestics.

"It is you," said I, "who are the adviser of M. d'Ormesson; he is not wicked enough to deny it, nor has he any reason to do so; and had you not made some observation consonant to your own views, he would not have offered me such an insult."

M. de Forge solemnly denied having any knowledge at all of the matter; he even appeared to blame the conduct of D'Ormesson. M. de Forge and M. Roullier d'Orveuille expressed their good wishes to serve me, gave me friendly advice for my future proceedings, and concluded by pressing me to declare whose conduct was most reprehensible.

"I cannot exactly ascertain," replied I, "who is most to be censured; but Madame feels much piqued at having been thus trifled with, and by no means understands such finesse."

"But the Queen," replied they, "is the only person that triumphs; it is she who rules everything; all favours are reserved for her disposal."

M. d'Ormesson had, indeed, engaged me strongly to pay my court to the Queen, because he said he was obliged to render an account of every application for favours, that the Queen might see whether

they were requested either by her own friends or those of Madame de Polignac, otherwise they could not be obtained.

Furnished with this intelligence, which then appeared to me so remarkably singular, I returned to Madame and related this conversation word for word. She listened to me with attentive concern, and advised me to be patient, assuring me that there would soon be a change, as D'Ormesson would not long be in power; notwithstanding she persuaded me to go to him again at Paris, and demand, on her part, that he would acknowledge his former promise, and give me fifteen thousand livres. I accordingly set out, accompanied by a friend, and waited upon M. d'Ormesson about seven o'clock in the evening. He seemed to express concern that he could do nothing for me. The sanction of Madame, and the presence of the friend who accompanied me, inspired me with courage to speak my thoughts.

"Very well!" replied I, "Madame has charged me to tell you that your power to deceive her will cease at the expiration of three weeks, when I shall have sufficient satisfaction for your breach of faith!"

Having uttered this threat, I departed.

I had, indeed, predicted the truth; for about three weeks after my journey from Fontainebleau, M. d'Ormesson was dismissed from office, and superseded by M. de Calonne.

I had continued at Versailles, dancing attendance on M. d'Ormesson (amused with hopes, and deceived by promises never meant to be performed) at a very considerable expense, from the month of June to the month of September, by the desire of Madame,

that I might be upon the spot to solicit the minister. I lodged at the Hotel de Jouy, in the Rue de Recollet, having long before (which I believe I have not yet mentioned) left the Hotel de Boulainvilliers, in consequence of the behaviour of the Marquis, who, as I have mentioned in my memoirs, not choosing plainly to bid me depart, took care to make my residence as uncomfortable as possible by several mean retrenchments, which none but a man of his disposition could have been guilty of.

My residence at Versailles, and my domestics, together with the appearance I was obliged to make, and the company with whom I associated, was necessarily very expensive; at the same time I had a house at Paris, where my husband resided, in the Rue de Saint Giles.

M. d'Ormesson sent to me one day, and desired an interview, informing me he had many things to tell me, which, from his short continuance at Versailles, he had not had time to communicate. On my arrival at Paris, in the course of conversation, he said, "Oh, Madame Countess, I am confused! I dare not, indeed, appear before you; I am really ashamed. Can you pardon me? But I fear I shall not find favour: I have so often promised, and not kept my word." These were, indeed, humiliating concessions for a man once so high in office; but the storm which had tumbled him from the giddy height of intoxicating power, had at least been favourable in strengthening his judgment. During his administration he had been a man of promises, and had put many to great expense in attendances for appointments, which all evaporated in disappointment.

From too great an irritability of the nervous system, I miscarried a second time, and was indeed dangerously ill; but I had the consolation to find myself honoured by the particular attention of those whose interference seldom fails to create envy. The Queen herself condescended to send for Madame Patres, to inquire after my health. Madame frequently sent to my house. M. Champion, page of the back-stairs, a particular favourite of Monsieur and Madame, was often despatched to me with kind inquiries. Sometimes he accompanied the physicians whom Madame sent to give me their advice and assistance; it was he who first gave me intimation how highly I was honoured, by the relation of a circumstance which could not but be pleasing. He informed me that he was present when the Queen said to his Majesty, on his returning from hunting, that she found herself somewhat indisposed: the King inquired from whence her indisposition proceeded. "It is," replied she, "at sight of a spectacle which I beheld from my window: a lady whose name is Valois, married to the Count de la Motte, had fallen into strong convulsions, and was carried along by two men; it was some time before I could discover what was the matter, and I am given to understand they are both young people."

Such an honour as her Majesty's notice; such a condescension, the very terms in which she spoke, intimating a degree of compassion, and even an interest in my concerns: such compassion, such interest, could not be pleasing to those who had long monopolized her Majesty's favour, and they determined, if possible, to crush this growing attention in its in-

fancy, by adopting those means which they thought best calculated to effect their malicious purposes. To this end, and to prevent the visits and kindness of the Princesses, they insinuated that my disorder was of such a nature as to render it dangerous to approach me.

The kindness of these ladies, probably penetrating the intentions of those who wished to set me aside that they might themselves enjoy my place in their esteem, would not suffer them to put an implicit confidence in their reports, notwithstanding they were not altogether without fear. To ascertain, however, whether these reports were well founded, Madame questioned the physicians, at the same time informing them that many persons had endeavoured to prejudice her against me, by insinuating that my distemper was contagious. These gentlemen gave it as their opinion that the disorder under which I laboured, and the consequent convulsions, had been occasioned by a derangement of the nervous system; "and we can aver this, for the satisfaction of Madame," continued they, "upon our honour."

"You believe there is not the least danger in coming near her? This report, then, is nothing but the effect of jealousy." She then dismissed them, charging them to pay me particular attention, and to give her an account of the progress of my recovery. They obeyed her orders punctiliously, assisting me with the best advice and medical preparations; and, when I found myself sufficiently convalescent, they advised me to go and pay my respects to Madame, and to be seen by all the Court. My first visit was accordingly made to that Princess, who received me

with the greatest complacency, and testified her joy at my recovery.

At courts, where jealousy is ever watchful, where envy is always prevalent, and malice continually active: where those who are particularized as favourites cannot escape the minute investigations of court flatterers, it is not strange that at Versailles I fell under their censure. There were many who observed the growing kindness of Madame, and endeavoured by every means to detach her from my interest; they were jealous also of the friendship and esteem with which the Countess D'Artois condescended to honour me. Madame had the delicacy not to tell me of this, but she suggested to me her ideas through the medium of the Abbé Mallet, one of her chaplains, who prefaced his commission with compliments it would but ill become me to repeat, lest I should incur the imputation of vanity. She advised me to stop the suggestions of malice, and prevent any one from speaking disrespectfully of my future conduct, by sending for my husband, and charged the Abbé to write himself that same day, desiring him to come as soon as he received the letter.

“This will at least quiet those who are jealous; this will tend to hush the suspicions. And desire her,” added she, addressing herself to the Abbé, “to take no steps at Court without her husband.”

Soon after my recovery, my friends advised me to place myself in the *Salle des Trophes*, near the chapel, with my husband, to the intent that we might be observed by all the Court. We placed ourselves at the side of the chapel, where no person has any right to be seated; but as I was very well known, this

was conceded in my favour. Madame had the goodness to point me out to the Queen, who did me the honour to notice me. Upon this attention being paid me by her Majesty, many eyes which were before directed towards this royal personage were now turned upon me, and a whisper was heard of "There, there she is! There is the Countess de Valois, now perfectly recovered." And as every person is ready to follow the example of royalty, all seemed to express their kindness, and paid their compliments on this occasion.

It was more than once mentioned to me that the King and Queen, but more particularly the Queen, felt great concern on my account; that her Majesty had expressed herself in a very earnest and particular manner to Madame. From this intelligence, so favourable to my wishes, and the advice of my friends, I confess I took every opportunity to sit in the same place in the chapel, and in every other place where I might be more conspicuously observed by the royal family and the nobility; and it will not probably be thought unnatural that, having favours to ask at Court, I should be so anxious to gain the royal favour, and seize the golden moment for my establishment in life. Whenever I appeared in public, whenever my eyes met those of her Majesty, she honoured me with a smile—a fatal smile, that allured me to my ruin!

When her Majesty condescended to salute me in this affable manner, as I was on the other side of the church, I observed her with a look expressive of the greatest respect. Not daring to smile again, I attempted, by my deportment, to convey an idea how much I felt myself honoured, and how extremely

grateful I was for her attentions. This favourable disposition of her Majesty did not escape the notice of my friends, who advised me to improve it to the utmost.

The Cardinal had persuaded me to see Madame d'Ossenn, the Queen's attire-woman, and sister to the Duc de Guiche, who married Madame de Polignac, to entreat that she would have the goodness to take charge of the genealogical memoirs of our family, and present them to the Queen. I accordingly laid them before that lady, and begged her to use her influence in strengthening my request to her Majesty. She listened to me with great kindness, and replied,—

“You are certainly not well advised in having made your first application to Madame, whom the Queen is informed is your protectress, particularly as you know they are not upon good terms. I scarcely know how to direct you in such a predicament; however, I will see if I can find a favourable opportunity of speaking to the Queen, but I have great doubts whether she will take upon herself to oblige you, on account of your first application having been made to Madame. As to the memoirs which you wish to have presented to his Majesty, I would advise you to see my brother, the Duke de Guiche, captain of the Guards, successor to the Duke de Villeroy. I assure you, Madame, that I will recommend you to him this day. You may see him to-morrow about twelve, or between twelve and one. Write to him, however, at nine, by way of refreshing his memory.”

I took this lady's advice, and waited upon him next day at the hour appointed. The Duke, who was young and light-minded, did not apparently pay great regard

to my request; in fact, he did not choose to trouble himself much with business, and as all are triflers about the court of Versailles, and more busy in pursuit of their pleasures than any serious concerns, the Duke began to amuse himself by paying me some compliments, and making love, instead of listening to my request. As my business was of a more serious nature than to attend to these trifling gallantries, to which my situation did indeed but too much expose me, I attempted to recall to his mind the subject of my errand, and still reiterated the word "business."

"Well, then," replied he, "I will take charge of your memorial: I will deliver it myself to his Majesty. I will serve you with all my influence, and support your request with all my power."

I considered this promise, in the language of the Court, rather too profuse to be sincere, particularly as the Duke had prefaced it with some trifling compliments, which made me suppose that my concerns would escape his memory. I determined next day to have my memorial presented to the King. As there was mass that day, it was agreed between us that the Duke should himself receive it at the chapel, and present it to his Majesty: he also politely promised to inform me by letter what his Majesty should observe.

Matters being thus adjusted, I myself took care to be present at the mass, and chose a situation where I could see without being observed. I had the satisfaction to perceive the King reading a paper very attentively, and the Duke appeared to be in earnest conversation with him. After dinner, I received a very circumstantial epistle from the Duke, to whom

the King had put a great number of questions, very favourable to my interest.

In this epistle the Duke advised me to throw myself at his Majesty's feet the next day, to induce him to remember me, at the same time charging me not to say a syllable to his sister of the part he had taken in my affairs. It appeared very singular that the Duke should desire me not to inform his sister that he had presented my memorial to his Majesty, together with some other circumstances which were to me extremely enigmatical. In vain did I reflect, ineffectually did I then puzzle myself, to find the clue that might unravel this mysterious business. It was also singular that a brother, who appeared interested to serve me, should give me advice not to trust his sister with my memorial, to deliver to the Queen.

"You are unfortunately pretty, Madame," said he; "and the Queen—you have too much power to please, and the Queen—"

I could not for my life divine the purport of these hints, couched in terms at that moment so unintelligible. My readers will, perhaps, be as much puzzled as I was, and will scarcely be able to guess this enigma. Had they known the character of the Polignacs, whose influence was then so prevalent at Court—had they known their jealousy of all those who were not immediately recommended by them—had they known the fury of their tempers, the irritability of their dispositions—neither my reader nor myself would have wondered at this caution. The Duke was, in fact, fearful of his wife, and afraid to be the means of acquiring any Court favours, the disposal of which those haughty ladies were so eager to mo-

nopolize. This also explains the reason of the advice of Madame d'Ossenn, when the manner in which she received me, and the counsel she gave me, is recollected, though perhaps she was not then aware of what she said. I have, however, sometimes seen her as she was taking an airing with the Queen in her phaeton, to whom she has frequently pointed me out, and her Majesty, as usual, has condescended to regard me with a smile of inexpressible affability.

M. de Forge, whom I met at Fontainebleau, begged permission of M. de la Motte to pay us a visit, that he might give us his advice respecting the present minister. Imagining that he wished to promote our interest, we were always happy to see him, which was indeed very often. He drew up the plan of proceeding he wished us to adopt, in writing, which he desired the Count to copy, and transmit the original to M. de Calonne, that he might be apprised of the nature of our claim. "Send it," continued he, "tomorrow morning at half-past eleven, and when I mention your name, he will not fail to make some remarks upon the circumstance. It shall be my care to avail myself of this opportunity to explain everything, as soon as I get possession of your memorial." I indeed promised it should be prepared for him; but having strong reasons for supposing his professions were not altogether sincere, neglected to send it.

The following day he waited upon me, to ask the reason why I had not sent the memorial to M. de Calonne, who was going to set off on the Wednesday following, consequently he could not have any opportunity of seeing him but at Paris. "That is just as I wish," replied I. "I have written to M. de Calonne,

begging him to appoint some hour for an interview to-morrow, and he has written a very polite note in answer, telling me that he was sorry he could not see me till Wednesday, at one, just previous to his departure.

I must do M. de Calonne the justice to say, that his behaviour at that period was perfectly satisfactory; and I began to feel my hopes revive, and to think that my misfortunes were drawing to a conclusion. I was, however, deceived. These hopes were rekindled, but alas! only to be lost in greater disappointments. Thus was I accustomed to reason fallaciously on the first dawn of good fortune, which I flattered myself would be progressive to the meridian of my wishes; but I had cherished only an illusive gleam of fancy, which beamed in the bosom of inexperienced youth to allure it towards the precipice of ruin.

The Wednesday following, on my arrival in Paris, I understood that M. de Forge had been that morning to pay me a visit. He wrote a few lines expressive of his wish that I should devote an hour or two to him the same day, as he had some very particular business to communicate. I accordingly saw him at the appointed time, and related the good reception I had met with from M. de Calonne.

"'Tis very well," replied he; "I am quite delighted; there is not the least doubt but we shall succeed. I will go to-morrow, about ten; I have some business to do with him, and I will be sure to speak of you."

"That's very well," replied I, "and have the goodness to drop me a line, to inform me if he consents to my appointment this evening."

After waiting a considerable time, in expectation of

an answer from M. de Forge, I began to suspect him of duplicity, and wrote a note, wherein I informed him that I should follow him immediately unless I could be satisfied as to the success of his application. He pretended that M. de Calonne was too much engaged, "which," added he, "is not very strange, as he is scarcely seated in his office;" declaring that it was with the utmost difficulty they could find a moment to speak of me; "but he will be very glad to converse with you upon your concerns to-morrow, at half-past seven in the evening." There was nothing more natural, than that M. de Calonne, from what he had said to him concerning me, appeared very much disposed to oblige me.

Previous to my visiting M. de Calonne, I saw his first secretary, named Henry. This gentleman, who was remarkably intelligent, and in whom I placed great confidence, wished both me and my husband all possible success. He used every exertion in his power with the three successive ministers in my behalf, and once said, with great joy in his countenance, "Oh! Madame Countess, your misfortunes will soon be over! Only have a little patience."

I could not comprehend his meaning. He told me that he had often spoke of me to M. de Calonne, who appeared desirous to oblige me. He encouraged me much, and advanced every argument that might induce me to hope, but without effect; he could not dispel those fears, which, indeed, I could not help expressing. "If he should change, Madame," replied he, "I assure you I shall be very much surprised." He then conducted me to the house of M. de Calonne, to whom I was immediately introduced,

although there were many persons at that time waiting.

This being an evening in which there was a particular audience, I did not intend to occupy the time of the minister, engaged in such a multiplicity of business: he nevertheless desired me to be seated. His conversation surprised me to the last degree, and I began to perceive that there had been a great deal of finesse between him and M. de Forge, though I wanted courage to tell him my thoughts. "Confess," said he to me, "that you are only shamming poverty! You are certainly not poor in reality; for it is very visible that the appearance you make speaks quite a different language. You have a hotel at Paris, your cabriole, carriage, a travelling carriage, with servants in livery; and you travel with the Court. All this splendour, Madame Countess, is beyond your income. Is it possible we can believe that your pension of eight hundred livres can support all this? But come now, tell me, and tell me truly; for the calculation of your expense is at the rate of two thousand five hundred livres per annum. Confess that you have other resources than we are acquainted with; for it surprises us greatly that you should pretend to be so poor."

"I assure you, sir," replied I, "those who gave you this information are not acquainted with the sums I have been obliged to borrow, nor how much I am in debt. Perhaps you are ignorant that Madame has desired me to accept an *arret de surséance* (a species of writ issued under the King's sign-manual, the party obtaining which is obliged to make a declaration of the extent of his debts, and is protected

from arrests or suits-at-law), and that my declaration amounted to sixty thousand livres."

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed he, "that is quite a different thing."

"Having earnestly entreated Madame," replied I, "to put an end to my affairs, several of my friends advised me to mention the debts I had incurred in consequence of my attendance. Those who were jealous of me insinuated to Madame that this was a piece of finesse on my part; they also advised her to treat me in the same manner, and instead of giving me money, to grant a safe conduct for my husband, and the *arret de surséance* as a privilege for myself. By this precaution I was given to understand that I might wait with patience, as I should not be harassed by the demands of creditors." Surprised at this singular mode of address while I was making my applications, well recommended, and soliciting favours, I knew not what to reply. I was tempted several times to rise, and make urgency of business an excuse for my departure.

"You have many persons waiting for you, sir," said I. "Suffer me to visit you another day, when you will be more at leisure!"

But I was still detained. Neglect was not sufficient. I was detained to be insulted.

"An *arret de surséance*!" repeated M. de Calonne, in a sarcastic manner; "but that may, perhaps, be asked without reason! It is really unfortunate for you, that Madame has people about her so very jealous of you, to give her such advice!"

"I really do not understand your expressions," replied I; "neither can I comprehend your meaning."

“Tell me, then,” replied he, “who are really your friends? If I desire to be informed, it is because I would anticipate them.”

“I ask, sir,” returned I, “nothing but the estate of my ancestors—in that centres all my demands; and I wish to hear no more.”

The reader who is at all conversant with the history of mankind, will naturally deem it unnecessary for me to point out the difficulties which are opposed to, and the trouble and vexation ever attendant on, an application for Court favours. I cannot help observing, however, that those in power, forgetting the attention with which it is their duty to hear and redress the grievances of the unfortunate, wanting even in the common politeness for which the French nation has ever been distinguished (and which was requisite in proportion as female timidity discouraged me from proceeding), will apparently listen to a distressing relation of complaints, and even pretend to pity them; but, with a significant shake of the head, the minister will coldly reply, “Really, Madame, I am extremely sorry! I have so much business to-day! Can you call again on such a day?” When that day arrives, the very same scene is again acted; and there is no end to your application, but mortification on one side and deceit on the other.

Instead of receiving any consolation, I was treated with mere cajolery and bagatelle. Deeply did I feel that sickness of the heart which arises from anxious suspense, ending in still greater disappointment.

Soon after my interview with M. de Calonne, M. de Forge paid me a visit. I received him,—and

as I have already intimated, not being possessed of the talent of concealing my thoughts, nor wearing a smile upon my countenance with a bosom labouring under discontent,—I spoke to him very freely, and in plain terms accused him of duplicity. He defended himself to the best of his ability.

“Cease, sir,” continued I, “to persuade me any farther! I assure you it is in vain! I am convinced of your dissimulation, and request you instantly to drop so disagreeable a subject.”

M. de Forge, with the most barefaced effrontery, passed over everything I had said in a few gallant expressions. “I do not wish,” said he, “to be deprived of the good graces of the ladies! I submit to everything! Fine women have a charter to say what they please!”

After numerous attendances on M. de Calonne, as well at Versailles as at Paris, he at last told me that he “had laid my memorial before his Majesty, but that the Duke de Vrilliere had exchanged one estate to which I laid claim at Fontette, and this was what had hitherto created a difficulty; but that the King, out of his royal munificence, had granted me an augmentation of seven hundred livres.”

I replied, in the hearing of a number of persons, that “the King had ordered no such thing; that he gave more than this to his valets and footmen; and that, if he were properly acquainted with the true state of my claim, I should find relief from a prince who was naturally just.” I refused this pitiful addition; “but I will oblige you,” said I, in a spirited tone, “to speak of my demands! I will stay in this house! Make your complaints, sir, to the King,

and tell him that I will stay in this house till he thinks proper to give me another!"

M. de Calonne was astonished at being addressed by a female in a strain so unusual; and he being called out at the moment to the Duchess de Polignac, I went into another drawing-room, where I remained three hours without seeing him. Observing his secretary, M. Henry, of whom I have before spoken, I thought it very probable, from several servants having before entered the room, that M. de Calonne had sent to see if I had put my threats in execution. M. Henry expressed surprise at seeing me, spoke to me very politely, desiring me to come up into his apartment, and stay with him; but as I insisted on remaining where I was, he told me, from M. de Calonne, that I should certainly be satisfied. "I shall come to-morrow morning to your house," added he, "to bring you good news."

I went away, not so much through faith in fair promises, but because I reflected that my stay there would answer no purpose.

The next morning M. Henry called upon me, and brought me a bag of fifty louis, and some time after another containing the same sum; and at another time he brought me less. I was tired of receiving such pecuniary gratuities, and determined to reject this last, telling him that I did not ask for money; it was my estate that I claimed.

Soon after, Madame sent the *Sieur* Champion, desiring me to wait upon her at her own house, at seven o'clock in the evening. On my arrival she put into my hands a note from M. de Calonne, purporting that "having submitted to his Majesty the demand of

the Countess de Valois de la Motte, the King cannot at this time grant any more than the augmentation of seven hundred to her former pension of eight hundred livres, making together the sum of fifteen hundred livres per annum, the brevet of which I herewith send to Madame."

Madame expressed the greatest anxiety that she had it not in her power to do any more, and appeared very much affected, as this was her last resource. At that time she advised me to exert myself to the utmost to see the Queen, and to bring her good news, which she should listen to with the greatest pleasure.

It will appear from what I have already related of her Majesty's condescension, and the attention with which she honoured me, that she had conceived some partiality for my interest, and that her good wishes were not wanting to render me service. But the Queen was not her own mistress; she was entirely governed by the Polignacs, who had acquired an absolute ascendancy at court. There was no access to the royal ear but through their influence; no favours were distributed but through their means, and to their creatures—to those who were decisively of their party, and whose interest it was that they should preserve the authority they had acquired.

The Countess de Polignac, grand adviser of this junto, had no pretensions, either from beauty or address, to such an influence as she possessed—an influence which she held more from fear than any other motive. The Queen, whose disposition was warm and lofty, was filled with the most exalted ideas of her family and descent; but as I have before

stated, she was not her own mistress, and consequently wished not to receive me publicly. From the hints I have already given, many doubts which may have arisen in the minds of my readers will be dispelled, and many more which might probably arise without such an explanation, be sufficiently obviated.

Many persons of my acquaintance, perfectly conversant with the intrigues of the Court, reproved me strongly for my attachment to Madame, my credulity in trusting to her promises, and for supposing her protection could do anything at Court. Every one echoed in my ears, "It is the Queen to whom you should apply; it is the Queen who has the disposal of everything: you should have cultivated an acquaintance with the Polignacs." Those who advised me thus were, I well knew, my friends, better versed in the mystery of Court influence, in which they had been educated all their lives. I submitted my own ideas to their counsel and direction, and attempted to gain an admission to the Duchess de Polignac. I wrote to that lady, begging her to do me the honour of appointing an interview when it would be convenient. She returned for answer, that if Madame the Countess de Valois would wait upon her the next day, between eleven and twelve, she would be at leisure to receive her.

I accordingly waited upon her the following day, at the hour appointed; when, instead of seeing her, I received a message that the Duchess was extremely sorry, but M. the Count d'Artois was then with her, and that she could not tell how long he might stay; observing that it would probably be some time, as he generally attended the Queen to her apartment,

But Madame the Countess might come at the same hour to-morrow. I desired the *valet-de-chambre* to acquaint the Duchess, that I would then do myself the honour of waiting upon her.

The next day, at the hour appointed, I again waited on the Duchess, who, after keeping me a long time in the ante-chamber, despatched the same *valet-de-chambre*, with a small scrap of paper in his hand, containing these words, "Madame the Duchess is extremely sorry that she has it not in her power to receive Madame the Countess, being too much engaged for others to oblige her in any claim which she may have to make to the King, or the Queen, who is already wearied with numberless applications."

Surprised at the rudeness of such a message, I addressed myself to the valet, "Is it possible that Madame de Polignac should have sent such an answer as this?"

"It is not my fault, Madame," replied he, in conducting me out; "it is Madame the Duchess, who made me write it, because I scrupled to deliver it *viva voce*."

I will confess that my vanity was very much hurt at the treatment I received from this imperious woman. "Certainly," said I to myself, on returning home, "I am born to be a beggar, and, like a wanderer on the earth, have no place to lay my head! Unfortunate woman! Unfortunate name! to be the scorn of those whose birth was nothing to mine! Children but of yesterday, raised to affluence from indigent obscurity, was it for them to treat me with such insolence? Were these the women whom,

in my humble station of a mantua-maker's apprentice, I had so frequently waited upon from Madame de Boussol to obtain payment, and who then, instead of money, could pay me with courtesy and fair promises?—are these they who, before the smile of royal favour, no tradesman chose to trust, and even their mantua-maker refused to work for; who had not even a habit in which to be presented at Court?" I do not reproach them for their misfortunes or their poverty; but I reproach them for their haughty behaviour.

I am not ashamed to confess my misfortunes. Though the descendant of a King, I have been a beggar, a servant, a mantua-maker's apprentice, and the favourite of a Queen! I am now preparing to leave a theatre where I have acted such a variety of characters for some other state of existence; since, with equal sensibility, with similar consciousness, I cannot be more miserable.

Why should I be thus treated by the Duchess de Polignac? Was it because she knew I was intimately acquainted with all the circumstances I have just recited, that she was afraid I should avail myself of them to wound her pride? Was it that, knowing my birth and the noble spirit of the Queen, she was fearful lest her borrowed splendour should be eclipsed? But I will not waste my time, or the patience of the reader, by mentioning those anecdotes which could not fail to mortify the pride of those imperious women, whose haughty demeanour sufficiently characterizes their grovelling extraction.

Madame, who asked me if I ever had an opportunity of seeing the Polignacs, told me, as well as

the Countess d'Artois, that upon reflection they thought, if I could but once be presented to the Queen by those women, there was not the least doubt but I should succeed in my petition; "for, my dear Countess," continued she, "I know not whether you are well acquainted with the circumstance, but I am not upon good terms with the Queen; and possibly the reason that you have not succeeded is because I have interested myself in your behalf, as M. de Calonne has himself informed me that the Queen had taken the disposal of all favours. I would, therefore, advise you to write to Madame de Polignac, and report to me how you are received." I accordingly wrote, and reported to Madame the reception I met with, at which she was highly enraged.

It was very recently that the Queen and Madame had quarrelled; which was not uncommon, as there were mutual piques between them. The present difference, which appeared to have been looked upon by both parties in a more serious point of view than usual, arose from a scandalous report which had been circulated relative to Madame, and which had no other foundation than the mere appointment of one of her domestics to the superintendence of a garden in which she took a particular pleasure to walk.

In the heat of their dispute, the Queen upbraided her royal sister with the above appointment. This drew from Madame an equally severe retort upon her Majesty. Their dispute rising to a very disagreeable height, the two ladies separated in the most violent agitation, seemingly entertaining the greatest rancour towards each other.

Malicious reports are present everywhere; perhaps

at Court they are more particularly prevalent. All the eyes of the Queen's friends were upon Madame; they were as sharp-sighted as lynxes to discover any blemish in her reputation, and were really afraid of her virtue; for his Majesty had frequently said, in the hearing of the Queen, "But no one speaks slightly of the conduct of Madame d'Artois!" This was sufficient to excite jealousy; this was enough to make her odious. She was pointed out as a pattern of virtue; and it was necessary, if possible, to taint her reputation.

When people are determined to be malicious, they have generally cunning sufficient to invent or make false comments upon actions in themselves absolutely innocent. Madame often went to a very pretty house at Montreuil, thrice a day frequently, both winter and summer: she walked in the garden, and gave orders herself that everything should be arranged to her taste. She took infinitely more pleasure in this innocent amusement than she did in a Court where, being out of favour with the Queen, she was not only disrespected but even frequently insulted. This innocent occupation was, by the breath of calumny, converted into a crime: they insinuated that this Princess so frequently visited this house for the purpose of seeing a domestic whom, from the solicitations of those about her, she had been charitably induced to appoint to the superintendance of this garden, he having been gardener before he was her chairman.

From such slender materials did these spiders artfully weave a web to entangle the reputation of the Princess. But they were not content with this: the gardener was one day found dead, and it was pre-

tended that he was poisoned by Madame, to prevent a disclosure of her secrets. I am relating only what I have heard, but what is well known to have been circulated very extensively. For these circumstances, and the truth on which they are grounded, I must refer my reader to the Polignacs. Though they may here arrest the hand of justice, when they arrive at that tribunal where the secrets of every heart shall be revealed, where they themselves will be obliged to give in evidence, there they will appear in their proper colours, and be made answerable for their unjust aspersions.

It would be a tedious task indeed to recapitulate the numerous and scandalous fabrications which were industriously propagated to the prejudice of these amiable ladies, whose exemplary conduct having elevated them to the very summit of public estimation, and who were no less respected for their private worth, were rendered at once objects of hatred and envy to those who despaired of emulating their virtues.

I must confess I felt myself extremely mortified at the reception I met with from the Polignacs, my only hope, and indeed the only medium through which I could expect access to the Queen, being from their interest. Reduced to a degree of desperation, I resigned all thoughts of succeeding in my wishes, and gave way to an impetuosity of temper which repeated disappointments had almost rendered fatal. From a warmth of disposition, I cannot remain neutral; if it is a fault, it is a defect in my nature, for which I hope I am not accountable.

Unwilling to acquaint the Cardinal with the re-

pulse I had met with, I formed the dreadful project of putting an end to my existence, and instantly set out for my own house at Paris, hoping that I should not see my husband to impede my design. That melancholy hope, at least, was successful: he was absent from home. I opened my secretaire, and taking from thence two loaded pistols, I returned to Versailles. On my arrival there I sat down to write my life, to leave behind me, with several letters to my friends, expressive of the distracted state of my mind, and a caution to my enemies who had reduced me to that deed of desperation; but finding myself more disturbed as I advanced, I threw down my pen and began to expostulate.

“And when I have written this miserable life,” considered I, “which I am now on the point of quitting, what will it avail me after my death to inform the world that I have put a period to my own existence? They will only say, perhaps, that I preferred a present and sudden, to a more distant and lingering, exit.”

My brain was now raging, even to madness. Reason was tumbled from her seat, and every calmer thought was whirled in the vortex of despair. Nothing remained unshaken but my dreadful purpose. Filled with that purpose, I went out at six o'clock in the morning. A large calash sufficiently concealed my face. I proceeded unobserved; not even my own people were acquainted with my early departure. Nothing now was requisite but a proper place for the execution of my horrid design.

I directed my way towards a wood, about a league from Versailles. Passing through the park, I at

length came to a very large and deep pit, which had formerly been a stone quarry. Upon the brink of this pit, whose deep recess I designed to be my sepulchre, I stood for a moment, and looked round attentively that no curious eye might mark my agitation, no human hand interrupt me in my course. Unobserved by every eye but His, which penetrates the deepest abyss, and reads the secret thoughts, I descended, and walked a few paces under ground. My brain was in the most violent agitation, and I seemed as it were sealed for destruction. I made the signs of the Cross, wishing before my departure to put up a short prayer to heaven.

But here reflections on the crime I was about to commit arresting the prayer ere it could take its flight, I cried, "Wretch! darrest thou think of presenting a prayer to that Deity who has prohibited self-murder?" I shuddered at the very idea; I stiffened with horror at my own presumption; a thousand thoughts crowded upon my mind; Reason and despair were in a continual struggle. "Yet, wretch," said I to myself, "listen not to the voice of pride! Let reason for a moment calm thy fears! Attend to the whispers of hope! Has not the Cardinal obliged you? Is he not at this very moment your friend? If the Court, if the public, should know this, will they not put false constructions upon his services, and traduce my character as they did that of Madame? But alas! what is in the power of the Cardinal? That which has been already done, though great, is as it were but a transitory act of charity, and not a permanent independence!"

Wearied with this perturbation of mind, fatigued

by the contest between reason and despair, and finding no avenue for the admission of hope, I took one of the pistols and placed it to my right ear. Something seemed yet to restrain my hand. "But what," thought I, "will become of my unfortunate husband? When he shall hear of this, probably he may take the same desperate remedy!" This reflection deprived me of all my resolution. I sat down, and remained for a considerable time in a state of stupor; but at length awaking, as from a dream, a flood of tears relieved my bursting heart, and being now capable of a little reflection, the horrid deed which I had well nigh perpetrated appeared before me in its proper colours.

A ray of hope at that moment was revived in my breast, and that love of life which is inseparable from human nature prevented me from the commission of this dreadful act, and induced me to reason by comparisons drawn from former troubles. I reflected that, bad as my situation then was, it had been infinitely worse. I remembered myself in my unprotected infancy, when I was begging my bread from door to door. True, I had not the same degree of sensibility; but I conceived that I was not preserved from all the dangers which threatened my infancy to become my own executioner. I considered that that Being whom I had so recently offended had mercy greater than the flagrancy of my crime, had bounty beyond even my utmost wishes. Towards Him I bent my knee; to His ear I lifted up my voice in fervent prayer, to entreat at once His mercy and future protection.

I at last resolved to return home; but it being

now near one o'clock in the day, I was almost ashamed to enter, none of my domestics having ever seen me go out before, particularly alone. At length, however, I reached my apartment, and threw myself upon the sofa, in hopes of being able to compose myself; but such was the agitation of my spirit that I attempted it in vain.

Before I proceed in the relation of my narrative, it will be necessary for me to explain the situation and circumstances of some of the most distinguished personages at the Court of France, whom I am about to bring upon the *tapis*. Without such an acquaintance my narrative might appear obscure and perplexed; with this every difficulty will vanish.

The Cardinal de Rohan, of a noble and powerful family, had been in favour with the Queen when she was Archduchess, previous to her marriage with the Dauphin; but her Majesty had now the greatest antipathy against him, which was fomented by the Cardinal's enemies, who were continually whispering falsehoods concerning his indiscretion in speaking of her Majesty. To make his peace with the Queen, he employed the Princess de Guimenée, his niece, whom he had obliged and generously assisted. But she treacherously and ungratefully promoted that pique which the Cardinal thought, from the relation in which she stood to him, from the assistance she promised, and from the obligation she was under, she would not only endeavour to extinguish, but even exert herself to the utmost to restore her uncle to that degree of favour which he had unfortunately lost; but in this hope the Cardinal was deceived.

Implicitly believing these reports, such a spark of

resentment was kindled in her Majesty's bosom, that all his assiduity, all his exertions, could never extinguish. The Queen would have sacrificed him without scruple; but there was a circumstance which prevented this, and obliged her to dissemble till some fair opportunity offered, or his enemies might draw him into some imprudence by which the King himself would put it out of his power to do any further injury, and at the same time gratify her revenge.

The circumstance which preserved the Cardinal from the resentment of the Queen was, that he was connected with her brother the Emperor, deeply immersed in state intrigues, and in the highest confidence at the Court of Vienna. This circumstance necessarily rendered the Queen and the Cardinal now in unison in point of interest, but divided upon former piques. Their private quarrels and animosities were for a time forgotten: the aim of the Queen was to be absolute, the Cardinal's wish was to be prime minister. He was for this purpose advancing the interest of the Emperor, who wished to cultivate the greatest influence in the French Court, for reasons best known to himself, but which may easily be conjectured by those who are versed in political intrigues, and who are acquainted with the relative interests of the two countries.

The Queen, amidst the dissipation of the Court, had almost forgotten her former attachment to the Cardinal, who thought she had overlooked him: this the Cardinal observed and lamented. He informed me one day that, as the Archduchess passed through Saverne, on her way to Versailles, he determined to repair thither and congratulate her on her arrival.

He hastened to receive her in the palace of the old Cardinal, where he threw himself at her feet, and saluted the hem of her robe. She raised him up kindly, blushed and held out her hand, which he kissed with ecstasy. "But this," continued he, "was the last kind look I ever experienced from the Queen—amidst the intrigues of a Court, amidst the malicious insinuations of my enemies, my former services were all forgotten."

Whether the Cardinal had really been guilty of writing these letters to the Empress, or whether he had absolutely made use of some indiscreet expressions respecting the conduct of her Majesty, is not here very material: it is sufficient to observe that she strongly suspected him of both. Her present neglect and indifference, contrasted with her former kindness, might possibly have induced him to make some remarks which he did not think would rise up in judgment against him, particularly with such exaggerations; but he was deceived. From the most slender materials his enemies found means to fabricate reports to his prejudice; and as they well knew that her Majesty had conceived an antipathy against him, they were ever assiduous to blow this spark into the flame of revenge, which they continually kept alive by repetitions of the Cardinal's indiscretion and the disrespectful terms in which he had spoken of her Majesty—who, as I have before mentioned, implicitly believed everything they told her—that she was at length so exasperated that she determined to get rid of him at all hazards.

But it was not to the Polignacs alone that the Cardinal owed his disgrace: he had another enemy whose

perfidy he complained of, because she was his relation, and he thought her his friend. The person I allude to was the Princess de Guimenée, who, while he supposed her engaged in his favour, was actually his bitterest enemy, and instead of bringing him nearer to the object of his wishes, removed him infinitely further off.

The Princess de Guimenée had formerly been governess to the royal children, but she was now in disgrace: the Prince, her husband, who was involved in debt and had been guilty of fraud to his creditors, thought it necessary to abscond. This circumstance, with the disturbances consequent, is so well known at Paris that a detail of particulars would be unnecessary.

The Cardinal de Rohan wished to counteract this misfortune, and attempted to establish the reputation of his niece. He made several applications to the King for that purpose, who always referred him to her Majesty, with whom, as I have before stated, he was unfortunately in disgrace.

While exerting himself for her re-establishment, this ungrateful woman was plotting his ruin: it was she, in conjunction with the Polignacs, that by false insinuations influenced her Majesty, who listened with but too much attention and placed but too implicit confidence in their reports. The Princess de Guimenée had asserted that the Cardinal, when at Vienna, had spoken very indiscreetly, not to say disrespectfully, of her Majesty when Archduchess; that he had even written letters to the Empress complaining of her levities, and had laboured to prevent her marriage with the Dauphin.

The Cardinal, however, suffered patiently; he was not totally discouraged by the magnitude of those obstacles which appeared to bar his way to royal favour. Of a proud, haughty spirit, he relied upon his family: he trusted to the influence of the Emperor, with whom he maintained a private correspondence, and yet thought, notwithstanding all that had hitherto passed, to surmount every difficulty in which his enemies industriously involved him, and rise again to the smiles of fortune and reconciliation with the Queen.

To this end he constantly kept his eyes upon her Majesty, ever vigilant to seize an opportunity which he was sanguine enough to hope would soon offer. He even expected to detach her Majesty from the interest of the Polignacs, and his ambition and self-confidence led him to imagine he could effect (I may say) this Herculean task; but the connection between this family and the Queen was a Gordian knot, to cut which was beyond his power.

The Polignacs were supposed to have in their possession some papers of consequence respecting her Majesty's affairs; they were acquainted with circumstances which would be attended with fatal consequences if they were discovered. It was the fear of this that preserved the influence of these imperious women, and rivetted them so strongly to the Queen that she found it impossible to shake them off. She had frequently complained of her situation, which obliged her to be particularly circumspect, as these persons were spies upon her conduct, and had the penetration of a lynx's eye in prying into her minutest actions.

The Cardinal had observed her Majesty's condescension in smiling upon me, notwithstanding I was under the patronage of Madame, who, as I have before observed, was not kindly looked upon by her Majesty, and whose protection on that account was rather inimical than favourable to my interest. He thought he discovered in her Majesty's smiles and apparent affability something that, by proper management, might be turned to his advantage; he was determined, therefore, not to let slip a single opportunity. He knew me to be attached to his interests from motives of gratitude, and conceived that I might be instrumental in restoring him to her Majesty's favour, by which means we might be mutually serviceable to each other in the furtherance of our respective wishes.

He communicated to me the observations he had made, giving me the strongest hopes, and assuring me that I could not fail of success. I had so long listened to his counsels, and been repeatedly baffled by my unsuccessful applications, that I determined to give up the pursuit. The Cardinal remonstrated against my pusillanimity, and advised me to what he termed a *coup-d'eclat*—not to wait the slow and uncertain proceedings of the Minister, nor the ineffectual influence of Madame, but to apply to the fountain-head, and throw myself immediately at her Majesty's feet.

Such was the situation of affairs at the time I followed the Cardinal's advice, and I have put this as a *passe-par-tout* in the hands of my readers, to unlock those difficulties which would otherwise tend to perplex this narrative.

The Cardinal de Rohan, as I have before mentioned, was constantly my adviser—that Prince's generosity and apparent concern for my welfare had attached me to him as a second father. Ambition, if ambition be a foible, was the failing of us both. Under similar circumstances it was not at all strange that we should unite our counsels: the Cardinal advised me as a parent, and I paid obedience to his advice as a daughter.

The many repulses I had suffered, the *hauteur* of Madame de Polignac, who barred every avenue to the royal favour except to those who were her own creatures, the neglect of ministers, and all the insolence of office, had so damped the ardour of my pursuit, that I despaired of ever being able to obtain my end; and I told the Cardinal that it was in vain to deceive myself with illusive hopes, that I found it impossible to succeed, and that I would hear no more on the subject of seeing the Queen.

The Cardinal remonstrated strongly against my want of resolution, and reprobated my timidity somewhat harshly. "What a fool you are," said he, "to be discouraged at the first obstacle!" and informed me, as I have before mentioned in my memoirs, that the present measure was a *coup-d'eclat*, which he most earnestly conjured me to adopt, as it would be the only means of ensuring success; and that this should be done as publicly as possible, the better to intimidate those who were our common enemies. He advised me to embrace the opportunity of the Procession of the Blue Ribbon, which was to take place on the 2nd of February.

The favour with which her Majesty had conde-

scended to regard me, the high opinion I entertained of the wisdom of my adviser, and every other avenue of access to the royal person being impracticable, I determined to follow his advice, and took this awful step. I call it awful: it was so to me—the most important moment of my life.

The eventful day approached. Prepared with the petition I was to present, and the most ample instructions to sustain myself against every possible emergency, with a heart palpitating for the success of the event, I repaired, full-dressed, to the castle, where I waited in one of the saloons till the procession returned. At length the long-expected moment arrived, and as her Majesty was passing I fell at her feet, presented my petition, and told her in a few words that I was lineally descended from the Valois, and acknowledged as such by Louis XVI.; that the possessions of my ancestors not having been transmitted with their name, his Majesty's munificence was my only resource; that the major part of the estates they had enjoyed were now in the King's possession; and that, finding every other means of access closed, despair had induced me to this mode of application to her Majesty.

The Queen observing the agitation of my spirit, from my trembling, and the faltering voice in which I spoke, condescended to raise me up kindly, received my petition, and desired me to make myself easy, for she would attentively consider my request.

Fortunate as I then thought myself, my joy at this gracious reception was only equalled by the suspense which preceded it. Little did I think at that moment that the smiling aspect of royal favour would have

been converted to the frowns of destruction; little was I aware that so splendid an avenue of distinction could lead to so dark a cavern of disgrace!

I returned to my own house, where I found a note from the Cardinal, in consequence of which I went to his hotel, and communicated everything that had passed. His Eminence seemed highly pleased with my success, charged me to take advantage of the golden moment, and improve it till it terminated in success; advised me to write a letter to Madame de Misery, First Lady of the Bedchamber and Waiting-woman to the Queen, desiring her to take the trouble of delivering another, enclosed for her Majesty. I accordingly wrote the letter, and the very same evening received an answer from that lady, desiring to see me at her apartment at half-past seven.

I repaired thither at the hour appointed. Madame de Misery received me respectfully, informed me that she had laid my letter on the Queen's mantel-piece, and congratulated me on the honour I was going to have conferred on me, which she hinted *must be kept a profound secret from all the world, not excepting Madame*. I earnestly wish to have this injunction to secrecy strongly impressed upon the minds of my readers during the perusal of this publication. It is a key to the History; and when I point out the connection between that and the intermediate occurrences, it will serve to elucidate this mysterious transaction; and it shall be my chief study, by offering such arguments as cannot fail to produce conviction in the unprejudiced mind, to remove the veil of obscurity which has so long concealed the truth, and consequently fixed on me the imputation of a

crime for which, through the influence of *powerful guilt*, I have been made a public sacrifice.

I continued in conversation with Madame de Misery till about eleven o'clock, when her Majesty appeared. All amiable and condescending at that moment, she endeavoured to throw aside that pomp of majesty, to me so awful. Seeing me tremble, and under a palpitation which I could not suppress, she condescended kindly to encourage me, was pleased to request my confidence, and desired me to speak to her freely respecting everything that concerned my interest.

After some time, when my fears were sufficiently dissipated by her Majesty's affability and condescension, I summoned up resolution enough to state the nature of my claims; my repeated attendances on the ministers, under the patronage of the Princesses, her sisters-in-law; and complained with some asperity of the rude treatment I had received from the Polignacs, at which her Majesty smiled.

The Queen, after a short pause, replied that she had perused my memorial with attention and concern; that she perceived the purport was to urge the minister to a restitution of the possessions which formerly belonged to my ancestors; but she had particular reasons for not complying with my request; yet, though she could not serve me publicly, she might privately and indirectly do me a service. She advised me to send for my brother, who, being now the head of our house, was the most proper person to solicit; at the same time promising powerfully to back his pretensions. Her Majesty concluded by presenting me with a purse, honouring me with a salute, enjoining me to remain at Versailles, *and to*

speak to no person whatever of this interview, or of the success of my petition.

Her Majesty said that "we should meet again." A few days after I received a note from Mademoiselle Dorvat, desiring me to repair, between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, to the Little Trianon. I was there at the hour appointed, and entertained a higher opinion of her Majesty's affability, was charmed with her condescension, and received fresh proofs of her generosity. She presented me at parting with a pocket-book, containing bills to the amount of 10,000 livres on the Caisse d'Escompte, and concluded with saying we should meet again.

It would be needless to tire the reader with a repetition of the frequent interviews I had with her Majesty. Suffice it to say that I received frequent proofs of her munificence, nor is it in my power to do justice to the numerous instances of her bounty which I experienced. But it was my fate to fall a victim: it is my duty to declare my innocence; and if my narrative should criminate those who have disgraced me, it is the fault of those who have forced me to that vindication, which, if it does not stamp them with guilt, will at least subject them to suspicion. Nevertheless, I wish not to avail myself of any circumstances but those which I conceive essential to my defence.

The Cardinal de Rohan, to whom I communicated everything, beheld his speculation with an eye of satisfaction, and read by anticipation, in my connection with her Majesty, his future reconciliation and the completion of his wishes. It was his ambition that had forced me into her Majesty's closet; it was mine,

blended with gratitude to my benefactor, and respect for my adviser, which had induced me to follow his advice. He marked my growing favour with the Queen, which, when he conceived to be sufficiently matured, he prepared to reap the harvest of success, and peremptorily insisted as before that his fortune was in my hands. He conjured me to let no opportunity slip of mentioning his name to the Queen, and if none offered, he begged if possible to contrive one.

I was not at this moment aware of that inveterate antipathy which her Majesty entertained against the Cardinal, nor was I thoroughly acquainted with the motives which occasioned it. Gratitude therefore obliged me to undertake his request, and in one of my interviews with her Majesty, as favourable an opportunity as I could wish spontaneously offered itself. The Queen inquired how I had supported myself before I was introduced to her? This was the moment for naming my benefactor; but it required some caution lest the Queen should discover that I was deeper in his confidence and counsels than it was proper for me to appear. I attempted, if possible, to avoid giving the least cause for suspicion, and expatiated largely, in general terms, on the Cardinal's beneficence, charity, and benevolence; enumerated the services he had rendered to almost every one that applied to him; that, from his generosity, he had acquired the esteem he merited, and spoke with a grateful warmth of the favours he had heaped upon me.

Her Majesty regarded me with a curious and penetrating eye: she paused for some minutes, and appeared buried in thought. This was the first moment of my mentioning the Cardinal's name, and I had an

opportunity of reading in her Majesty's face such a degree of aversion that gave me a very unfavourable omen of success—I was then first acquainted with the strength of her antipathy. At length, awakening from her reverie, she expressed her surprise at the information I had given her, did not think the Cardinal capable of such actions, and that report spoke a different language.

I communicated to the Cardinal all that passed—the remarks I had made upon her Majesty's conduct, which appeared to me very unfavourable to his hopes. Nevertheless, having once broken the ice and mentioned his name to her Majesty, my future difficulties upon that subject would be considerably diminished. The Cardinal conjured me earnestly to lose no opportunity of speaking of him, suggested various modes of bringing him on the *tapis*, gave me many instructions, and sedulously applied himself to make me perfect.

The instructions he gave me were all ineffectual, the Queen not mentioning any circumstance that had the most distant reference either to him or his affairs. It was a matter of delicacy to render him, if possible, an essential service, yet to avoid giving her Majesty any suspicion that I was in his interest: to introduce his name abruptly would have prevented the former, and fully confirmed the latter.

The Cardinal, who had received 200,000 livres as a *pot-de-vin* for foraging the cavalry in Alsace, presented me with 20,000 livres. I thought this a favourable opportunity to testify my gratitude to my benefactor, and speak of his generosity to the Queen. My zeal now carried me greater lengths in his favour;

I spoke of him with a degree of warmth almost enthusiastic; I even represented that he had imparted to me his troubles, and described him as struggling with discontent, overwhelmed with misery, the sport of envy, and the victim of detraction.

My gratitude and the effusions of the moment hurried me away, and her Majesty suffered me to proceed uninterrupted; but her eyes informed me that my eulogium on the Cardinal was far from being pleasing. I feared I had been too copious in panegyric, for at some moments she even appeared angry: I perceived that her prejudices were too strong to be eradicated. Nevertheless, she soon assumed an appearance of tranquillity, which, like a deceitful calm, ended in a storm, in which my peace, my fame, were dashed upon the rocks.

The Cardinal, undaunted by repulse and unmoved by my remonstrances, still emphatically preached up perseverance. I even thought, from her Majesty's silence, that if I could not succeed so effectually as I could wish, I should at least weaken her prejudice. I succeeded so far, in my own opinion, that I advised the Cardinal to hazard a letter, which I undertook to deliver the first favourable opportunity. I indeed induced him to write; but I could by no means have imagined, under his circumstances, that he would have made use of indiscreet expressions, or would have been so precipitate in declaring his partiality, before he had justified himself to her Majesty, and erased from her memory the insinuations of his enemies.

The Cardinal unhappily considered that he was essential to her Majesty's interest, and, to use his own

expression, that she could not do without him. Ill-fated Prince! the blind impetuosity of thy disposition injured thee, and accelerated my destruction!

I am at this moment writing the incidents of my life, and I should have an indifferent claim to that candour I request, were I to conceal any circumstances which might elucidate the facts I relate. The Queen was determined to sacrifice the Cardinal; and observing his care and attention to me, she conceived I might be instrumental to his destruction; while he, on the contrary, hoped through my means to be exalted to the highest pinnacle of his ambition.

To give an idea of the Queen's animosity towards the Cardinal, I have only to relate the following fact, which will sufficiently enforce my assertion.

The Queen having recently heard of some indiscretions of which the Cardinal had either been guilty, or his enemies had laid to his charge, urged me to engage him to attend an appointment with her between eleven and twelve at night; "because," said she, "I will persuade the King to be present." Seeing me startled at such a proposition, her Majesty continued, "Be composed, Countess! Serve me, and I will serve you; but that I may be perfectly easy about the business, do you continue at home, that I may be sure you have not prevented my project this evening. I will often send to your house to be convinced that you are there; for if the Cardinal does not come, I shall suspect you as the cause."

The Queen having engaged me to write to the Cardinal what she had dictated, and she having written to him the same day, "our plan," continued she, "cannot fail to be successful. The King shall be

concealed in the chamber, behind the window-curtains, that he may hear those expressions which the Cardinal will make (and no one knew better than she what he would say on such occasions). He will be sure to fall on his knees, seize my hands, and kiss them. Some expressions of his happiness on such an occasion cannot fail to escape him, when I would exclaim, and demand vengeance for such an insult: his indiscretion would not fail to exasperate the King, and all his family would be ruined in the public estimation."

Such were the particulars of this shameful plot; such were the black ideas of revenge conjured up in the mind of the Queen by the diabolical machinations of the Polignacs. What was the situation of the Cardinal upon the brink of this precipice? What must have been the consequence had he blindly entered into a snare so artfully prepared? Possibly he might have been sacrificed on the spot; or, with such strong presumptions of guilt, upon his knees before her Majesty, expressing happiness at being again favourably received, the King himself a witness, he would have been put to the torture and beheaded, or hurried away for the remainder of his life to the gloomy caverns of the Bastille. His friends, his family would have availed him nothing; both would have lost their influence, and both participated in his disgrace.

How delicate was the predicament in which I now stood! To what a dreadful dilemma was I now reduced! Either to lose the favour of the Queen, and thereby sacrifice every future hope by betraying her counsels, or be accessory to the ruin of a friend whom, by the laws of gratitude, I was bound to honour and

respect. Should I lay the snare for my friend, for the man who had directed me by his counsels and assisted me with his purse? Forbid it, every generous feeling! forbid it, gratitude! forbid it, virtue!

My ideas were distracted. I could not think of abandoning the Cardinal; I did not wish to lose the favour of the Queen. Suspended between these two extremes, reason, prudence, and my own interest, seemed to dictate a middle course. I resolved to amuse the Queen, and at all events to acquaint the Cardinal.

I quitted her Majesty, and returned home, where I had no sooner arrived than I ordered Rosalie, my first chambermaid, to tell any person who might inquire for me that, being indisposed, I was gone to lie down, apprehensive lest the Queen should send as she had threatened.

I ordered a horse to be harnessed to my cabriole, set out for Paris, and, unattended by a single domestic, drove to the Cardinal's, where I arrived about half-past ten. He was surprised to see me at the very moment when he thought to have found me at Versailles with the Queen, or the next morning at my own house. I hastened to convey the momentous intelligence, which I communicated almost out of breath. I warned and entreated him to take every precaution not to expose me, when it was agreed that he should set off and wait upon the Queen, to whom he was to be particularly careful to observe the most profound respect, to throw himself on his knees at his entrance, and to say these words, taking care to speak very loud, that the King might understand him—"I come, Madame, obedient to your orders: deign yet to

extend your favours to a family which has been so unfortunate as to incur your royal displeasure (speaking of Guimenée): condescend to recommend them to the King. They will ever retain the most grateful sense of your Majesty's goodness for their newly acquired favour."

It is necessary to explain this circumstance. The Princess de Guimenée being in disgrace, the Cardinal had frequently solicited his Majesty in her behalf, who had as constantly referred him to the Queen; it was, therefore, by way of counteracting the machinations against him, that he meant to throw himself upon his knees, as if to solicit for this family, now so much out of favour.

Our plan being hastily settled, I was anxious to return, lest in the interim the Queen should have sent, though probably she did not conceive I should have so far run the hazard of serving my friend at the expense of her displeasure. I was, nevertheless, not a little apprehensive, as she knew my attachment to the Cardinal; at the same time I resolved, if I should be unfortunately discovered, to speak the whole truth, and express to her in the most respectful terms the regret I should experience in being accessory to the destruction of a person who had rendered me so much service; assuring her Majesty that it was impossible to do such violence to my feelings as to be guilty of a species of ingratitude of so deep and malignant a dye; begging, however, her Majesty to command my utmost exertions in all things that were not in themselves impossible.

When I arrived I found all as I wished—everything was safe. About midnight the Queen sent me

a billet to the following purport: "I cannot, my dear, put my project in execution this evening. I shall see you to-morrow at the same hour—he is arrived—I have written to him to put off our interview till another day—perhaps to-morrow—but I will certainly see you."

The Queen, convinced of her power and the facility with which she could sacrifice any of her enemies in France, had at first adopted this plan, supposing it would effectually destroy the Cardinal, assured as she was of her ability to make his cause wear the most unfavourable complexion.

At eleven the next evening I again saw her Majesty, and found her but little disposed to execute her project. The Cardinal, whose only hope was to regain the confidence of the Queen, had, with the most insinuating address, written a letter to her Majesty, wherein he refuted the malicious accusations which had been brought against him by his enemies, and expressed the anxious desire he had to see her. He took particular care in his letter that he might not expose the Queen, and very prudently did not give her the most distant idea of the confidence I had reposed in him: by these means she never had the least ground for suspicion of my interference.

Some days after the Cardinal and I were admitted: I remained some time in the closet, and the Cardinal was introduced into her chamber, where he continued two hours. I had only a glimpse of him as he passed. As soon as he came out he told me everything had succeeded to a miracle; "not without some reproaches," continued he; "but sufficient to confirm all you have told me."

The day after, when I again saw her Majesty, she appeared considerably softened; and, if my conjectures are not erroneous, repented of her project on the day preceding.

This circumstance, fully demonstrative of my zeal in his cause, and the hazards I ran to render him service, certainly merited a better return than false accusations, oppression, and disgrace. The Cardinal ought to have recollected some of those circumstances whereby I had prevented him from running headlong into the snares of his enemies; he ought, I say, himself to have avowed the advice I had given him, to be cautious, and if possible to avoid the danger which threatened him. Frequently did I address him in terms emphatically remonstrative. "Why, Cardinal, will you blindly hazard your life, which will probably be the price of your ambition, and I shall be disgraced? For me, were I in your situation, the whole world should not constrain me to expose myself to be the scorn, and probably the victim, of my enemies!"

"Fear not, my dear Countess!" replied he. "My name, my family, will all defend me; and the Queen will not have revenge in her power." So very inconsiderately did the Cardinal speak, so fallaciously did he reason, so completely did he deceive both himself and me. He even insinuated that the Queen could not do without him. His reliance upon his family and connections was one of the leading traits of his character. Upon this he built much; but his private connections with the Emperor (which I believe I have formerly hinted, and may perhaps hereafter have greater occasion to mention) now buoyed

him up so strongly, that all his actions seemed to take a tint from the reflection of his circumstances. But these high-blown hopes, which for a moment bore him up, at length burst under him, and exposed him to punishment, slight in comparison with mine, doomed as I was to bear the guilt of both, and at length to be the dupe of deception and the victim of disgrace.

It is almost impossible for me to describe the situation into which I was now inadvertently drawn, between two over-hanging rocks, both of which constantly threatened, and both of which eventually falling, buried my reputation in their ruins. Upon my first introduction to her Majesty, I had a most emphatical injunction to secrecy, to conceal everything even from my nearest friends. A combination of peculiar circumstances had, as it were, drawn me into a situation where I could not remain with honour, and from whence I could not retreat without danger. It is true I received presents of money and bills upon the Caisse d'Escompte; but then I was reduced to the station of a servant, although of a superior rank—the confidante of her Majesty, the confidante of the Cardinal, between whom the Emperor wished a reconciliation, and I was thought a proper medium for this. I knew that all favour centred in the Queen: she only could be the means of restoring the possessions of my ancestors. I was attached by gratitude to the Cardinal; but had I known truly the nature of their intrigue, neither my wish to regain possession of Fontette could have so strongly attached me to the Queen, nor motives of gratitude to the Cardinal, as to have induced me to sacrifice my

peace, my reputation, and my honour, for the accommodation of either; and I remained only in the situation I then was, merely because I had not sufficient experience to extricate myself from the dangerous path which led to my destruction. I blush when I am about to declare the situation in which I stood between the Cardinal and the Queen: nothing but a sacred regard to truth, which I have pledged myself to declare, could have induced me to brand my own reputation by such a declaration of my errors; but I have at least the consolation of having confessed them, and confession is the passport to remission. Could my sighs, my tears, my anxious days, my sleepless nights, have erased them from the record, they would long ere this have been buried in oblivion. Bleeding from the cross I have sustained, yet smarting from the wounds which oppression has inflicted, I have no advocate whose persuasive eloquence can plead my cause, whose breath can re-animate my fame. Withered by the blight of malice, defenceless as I am, I submit my cause to ~~that~~ candour which I think it frequently necessary to bespeak to protect me from the frowns of censure and the scoffs of insult. To be entitled to that candour I confess my errors, as a previous and necessary step towards interesting the humane, who will probably consider these errors which I myself confess to be sufficiently atoned for by my misfortunes.

The moment I began to perceive the nature of the service with which I was entrusted, I felt myself uneasy, my delicacy instantly took the alarm, and I remonstrated strongly against such odious employment. "It is true," said I, "that I am indeed the confidante

of a Queen, and because she is a person of such exalted rank, they will not, perhaps, give me that odious appellation which other women on these occasions would so justly merit and so surely receive; but notwithstanding it is the Queen's service in which I am engaged, it will not be in the power of her Majesty to prevent those secret whispers that would certainly injure my reputation." Similar remonstrances I often made to the Cardinal, begging him in the most earnest manner to press the Queen urgently to give him a public reception, and, if she refused, I advised him to cease from the pursuit.

My remonstrances, alas! were all ineffectual; the Cardinal still persisted. He was too confident in himself to pay much attention to my advice, affecting frequently to treat me like a child. Nevertheless, I succeeded so well as to prevail upon him to depart for Saverne. I had then that opinion, though probably he had other motives, strongly urging that he would be less obnoxious to the malice of his enemies, and that I should be much more comfortable. I communicated to him my intention of placing half the sum I had received from her Majesty's bounty out at interest, having disposed of the other in purchasing an annuity for my life, and to retire to the estate of my ancestors, where a moderate competence would be infinitely preferable to the anxieties attending my present situation. I expatiated largely to the Cardinal, not only on the trouble and fatigue, but even of the imminent danger attending my present occupation; how the Queen frequently commanded me as one of her meanest servants, and engaged me to act a part so odious, that if I was discovered I should be

irretrievably ruined. It would be in vain that I should plead I was acting in conformity to the orders of my Sovereign, whom I dared not disobey; that she had pledged her honour she would protect me. "In vain could I plead," continued I, "that you had said the same. Upon a discovery you would both defend yourselves, and leave me exposed to all the danger."

"I have great reason for presuming that this will be the case, since both you and the Queen have thought proper to entrust me with the knowledge of your intimacy; but I must beg you to answer me this question—supposing what I fear should be the consequence, how will either the Queen or you extricate me from the embarrassment? You may, perhaps, fear nothing. Supported by the influence of your family and the dignity of your situation, you perhaps may not have much reason to fear; but, single and unprotected, who shall deliver me?"

With such repeated and earnest expostulations did I endeavour to dissuade the Cardinal from rushing too precipitately to his fate; but, independent of the danger, independent of the disgrace, the fatigue, the agitation of spirits attendant upon such an occupation, rendered it extremely irksome, and almost intolerable. Frequently have I been obliged to watch the greater part of the night, attending her Majesty's pleasure, who, often uncertain and inattentive to the punctuality of her appointment, has kept me waiting with all the anxiety of suspense. Many a heavy hour, many a sleepless night, has been devoted to her Majesty's service, to the Cardinal's accommodation; and how have I been requited by both? The one, to extricate

himself from the revenge of the other, has accused me of a crime which I tremble even to mention.

Difficult indeed was it for me at all times to conceal my sensations while engaged in such a situation; in vain did I struggle to hide those emotions which I could not suppress; the tears involuntarily trickled down my cheeks. Thus frequently did I count by my sighs those painful periods, while I was waiting the favourable moment when her Majesty should be disengaged, to introduce the Cardinal, who, when the Queen approached, I introduced into the saloon, which, if I am not greatly mistaken, was called the Saloon of Venus. But perhaps a description of the place may at once be an apology for my want of recollection, and in some measure gratify the reader's curiosity.

This charming structure is situated in a garden of the Little Trianon: it is a circular building, erected upon an easy eminence, and surrounded by a ditch, which the Cardinal and myself were in the habit of passing by means of a plank. The roof of this edifice is arched in form of a dome, in the midst of which is a statue either of Venus or Apollo (I cannot now perfectly remember which), upon a pedestal of white marble: the furniture covered with most beautiful chintz. The room is splendidly decorated with carved wood, of a lilac colour: in the corners are beautiful statues emblematic of love, and tending to inspire that passion: over the chimney-piece of fine statuary marble, exquisitely sculptured and superbly ornamented, are small figures conformable to the rest, and equally tending to inspire passion: the doors are panelled with glass, from whence there is a descent

into the garden by four marble steps. There are windows all round the room, with curtains of fine muslin, richly embroidered with flowers. No person is permitted to enter this delightful spot except once a week, on Saturdays, and not then without an order signed by the Queen, in which permission the name of the person must be inserted; but in general such a favour is rarely granted. The garden is laid out in the most exquisite taste; but I will not attempt to enumerate all those beauties which tended to render this little spot an epitome of elegance.

It was in this saloon, with whose beauties the suspense of my mind prevented me from being pleased, that I was generally stationed till the Queen's approach; and notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, the nights being severely cold, I was frequently obliged to retire into the garden. Will it appear the least singular to any one endowed with sensibility that I should be disgusted with this odious occupation, and deplore a condition which, however enviable it might be to others, to whose vanity perhaps it might have been highly gratifying to be confidante to a Queen, that such a situation should expose me to the most bitter reproaches, and the keenest pangs of insulted delicacy?

Upon her Majesty's appearance I went in quest of the Cardinal, whom I generally found waiting the moment of my arrival with impatience, the place of rendezvous being previously agreed on in the daytime, and varied occasionally, sometimes in the walk of the Trianon, at others in the avenue leading to the Little Trianon. It by no means unfrequently happened that the Cardinal, impatient of her Majesty's

de la Motte, had left his station, and rambled to some distant part of the garden, where, not being able immediately to find him, I have run almost breathlessly, wandering from walk to walk, and from one tree to another, which I have sometimes mistaken for men, imagining they were valets going home to their wives, and dressed in the same manner as the Cardinal, who, it must be observed, always disguised himself as a valet, and frequently carried a bundle in his hand, the better to favour the deception. This was contrived at once to avoid suspicion and prevent discovery. When, after a weary search, I at length found the Cardinal, I conducted him to the place of rendezvous, the saloon before described, where the Queen was waiting. I mention these circumstances merely to prove, that from the danger, suspense, uneasiness and fatigue of such a situation, the being confidante even to a Queen is by no means an enviable occupation. Fool that I was, to do those things which now give evidence against me, to accommodate those who have indeed overwhelmed the errors of which I was guilty in their service, in the magnitude of their oppression, in the plenitude of my misery!

There is one circumstance which, if I could forget, I would wish not to mention; but it made such an impression on my memory as time has not yet been able to efface. I had been waiting for the Queen in that saloon from eleven o'clock—nearly an hour—without seeing her according to appointment, which was between eleven and twelve, and the Cardinal at midnight. I went to her Majesty. There was some obstacle which had prevented her keeping her appointment. "However," added she, "go and find

the Cardinal, and in a very short time I will send to inform you whether I shall be able to receive you." I accordingly, after going to tell him of this, to prevent his disappointment, went to the place appointed, to wait the arrival of a trusty messenger, whom I shall hereafter have occasion more particularly to mention.

About three hours afterwards I received two notes, after which I was again sent to the Cardinal. We went to peruse the contents of our notes by the light of the lamps near the castle, in the walk leading from the Trianon. I here took occasion to explain to the Cardinal what I suffered. "Consider," said I, repeatedly, "what a part the Queen has reduced me to act. I should be much better pleased to be less distinguished by her Majesty's favour; for then I should have much less cause for humiliation." The sense of my situation made me for a moment forget all the favours he had bestowed on me, and I could not help telling him that such proofs of her Majesty's regard were rather more painful than pleasing. Borne away at this moment by his own immediate interest, he lost sight of that delicacy which would have been more consistent with his wonted generosity. He replied that he considered me as exceedingly fortunate in having such an employment, for which, he said, I had been so handsomely paid. But surely at this moment he did not consider the odious light in which I beheld this occupation, for which he thought proper to say I had been at once so highly honoured and so amply rewarded.

When I informed the Cardinal that I was ashamed and heartily weary of the part I acted, which I would not much longer sustain, he replied, "That will be so

much the worse for you, if you take this course; because the Queen will easily find another confidante, for whom you will be exchanged. Besides, Madame, what reason have you to complain? You have been well rewarded. Ah! without the Queen what would become of you? This is not the last thing she will do for you. If your brother was present, she would give you yet greater proofs of her beneficence."

Such an insinuation, that I had no reason to murmur, having been so well rewarded, yet vibrates in my ear. I felt at that moment the keenness of the reproach, which roused me to a reply, "The presents of the Queen! The favours of the Cardinal!"

His former generosity, his accustomed delicacy, vanished from my sight, and I saw nothing but a reproach of ingratitude, because my sensibility had induced me to remonstrate against an occupation, or mercenary employment, to me infinitely more intolerable than my infant wretchedness; worse than my former menial occupation, even when I was reduced to the abject situation of being servant to a servant. Then, I reflected that I was not only poor, and that poverty was no cause of disgrace. Now indeed I was rich, and the confidante of a Queen; but neither my wealth nor the rank of the parties whom I served could reconcile me to a situation so infinitely beneath the most abject to which I had ever been reduced. "But this employment," replied I, "is not the favour I am soliciting at Court, where I am asking only what was absolutely the possession of my ancestors." I was induced to petition as a favour for what, indeed, I might demand as a right.

There were, indeed, some persons whom I either

knew, or had heard of, who were eager to receive, and would in no small degree plume themselves upon receiving, marks of royal favour; whose vanity would be highly gratified by any trifling proof of their Majesties' attention, which, publicly conferred, could not fail to give them a degree of consequence above others, who would distinguish them as objects worthy of regard, and court their acquaintance, as being necessary to their interest: but with me the case was very different. From the secrecy expressly enjoined, from the very nature of the service in which I was engaged, it was impossible for me to enjoy any of these advantages: few people would pay much attention to me. That I was in favour with the Queen would appear a complete paradox. "If," they would say, "she is really in her Majesty's good graces, why has she not sufficient influence to obtain the restoration of her possessions?" If I could effect that, indeed, it might perhaps be supposed that I had friends at Court, and was the object of her Majesty's protection.

I observed that the money I received was no compensation for the danger, fatigue, and opprobrium of the services I was to perform. Often have I wept when I reflected upon the inextricable maze in which my destiny had involved me, whose perplexities were rendered doubly distressing by the reproaches which I had so recently received from the Cardinal for the favours I had received from the Queen.

My reflections upon these circumstances urged me to be earnest with the Cardinal, if he was really my friend, to solicit her Majesty for the restitution of

my property; but I did not foresee what objections would be raised. The Queen was so circumstanced that she could not serve me publicly without incurring suspicion; indeed it will be recollected that she said this at our first interview.

It will doubtless appear very singular to the reader, that the Cardinal and the Queen, so long at variance, and with such an inveterate animosity on the part of her Majesty, should be so suddenly, so strangely reconciled, and apparently so cordially united. I must confess that I was myself astonished at the miracle which I at that time fancied I had wrought; but I was as erroneous in this conjecture as the fly in the fable, who, fixed upon the wheel of the chariot, thought all the dust of his own raising.

I will endeavour to explain, as clearly as possible, and point out to the reader the secret spring which moved every wheel of the machine. It was not love that effected this: it was the demon of politics; it was the secret negotiation at Vienna, the private correspondence between the Cardinal and the Emperor.

I have elsewhere said I was the confidante of the Cardinal; but there were circumstances which he concealed from me, circumstances which wore a very mysterious aspect. They indeed required caution, and related to those private intrigues which prevail more or less in almost every Court in Europe. These negotiations must necessarily have been kept very close, from the immediate danger which would have attended a discovery; it is not therefore strange that into these he did not wish me to scrutinize.

The frequency of couriers arriving from Germany,

many of whom were German officers; their long and mysterious conferences; the hints which the Cardinal dropped in conversation; the number of packets which my husband was charged to deliver at different parts of the city, particularly at the Porte St. Antoine, to couriers who appeared to be Germans; the circumstances mentioned in the correspondence given in my memoirs—all tend to substantiate the supposition of a correspondence between the Emperor, the Cardinal, and the Queen.

It is not my purpose to interweave political disquisitions in the narrative of my life. Perhaps I shall be censured for hinting that the Emperor was at that period distressed for a loan, which, through the instrumentality of the Queen and the Cardinal, he hoped he should be able to acquire. Perhaps the latter was unable to procure the sum demanded, which the Queen herself was obliged to procure. This might have been the reason for his yielding to my advice in departing for Saverne: possibly I might hint some circumstances respecting *Lorraine*; but I dilate not upon these subjects, probably too complicated for female discussion, and substitute some apology which may probably obviate those objections which might be made to the slight sketches I have already introduced.

As far as I apprehend the circumstances material for my defence, by all the laws of self-preservation I have a right to avail myself of those, and by the laws of nature I am justified in using any weapons with which the guilt of my enemies has furnished me, and which I may consider necessary to protect me against the aspersions of their malice, and the

weight of their oppression. If my suggestions are merely suppositions, the evanescent phantoms of imagination, they will of themselves die away; but if they are solemn substantial allegations, reared upon the broad basis of truth, they will stand unshaken monuments in my favour when the Babel structure of my enemies shall be tumbled into ruins.

The mysterious terms in which the correspondence was couched, the political magnet which attracted the parties, will at least substantiate their dissimulation; will at least prove that ambition was the regulating principle, that the Emperor attracted the Cardinal and the Queen, who, upon principles of mutual interest, strongly adhered to each other, in order that they might by such union endeavour to advance themselves respectively to the highest pinnacle of their ambition. I have before mentioned that I was astonished at the sudden cordiality between the Queen and Cardinal: 'all surprise will, however, cease, when I suggest that the Queen was acquainted with, and included in, this clandestine correspondence which had so long subsisted between the Cardinal and the Emperor.

At length, however, this political attraction diminished: either the Cardinal's real or imaginary indiscretions tended not only to weaken its influence, but to substitute a desire for revenge; which in course of time overbalancing every other consideration, exposed him to all its fury: in a word, he was destined to become its devoted victim.

The Queen gradually appeared to grow tired of his importunities, seemed disgusted by his attentions, and was exasperated by his indiscretions. His in-

fluence with the Emperor was, as I have before mentioned, the only thread that yet suspended the sword over his head; and her desire for revenge now became more ardent—she was determined by any means to destroy him. The negotiation of the necklace afforded her an opportunity for reprehension, and the gratification of her revenge; this circumstance was accordingly favourable to her purpose, and was intended as his *coup-de-grace*.

Having given in my memoirs a minute detail of that transaction, it would by no means have been my wish to retrace the many particulars relative to that circumstance; but as many of my readers may not have perused those memoirs, and as that occurrence appears to me so very interesting, so essentially material, I shall take the liberty of slightly glancing at the most prominent traits of that mysterious and fatal transaction, reserving my more particular remarks to throw in occasionally during the time of my being confronted with the Cardinal, and examination upon interrogatories.

The Queen had, it seems, long taken a fancy to this superb ornament, which remained a long time burdensome to the jewellers, and which they anxiously wished to dispose of. They secretly applied to me to mention it to her Majesty, artfully insinuating that they were not unacquainted with my influence, and attempting by many flattering compliments to induce me to use that influence to serve them by persuading her Majesty to make the purchase.

Fearful lest the Queen should suspect that I had some interest in disposing of this bauble, (a suspicion so injurious to my delicacy,) I told the jewellers that

it would be the highest impropriety in me to interfere, and absolutely refused to have anything to do with the business.

Upon my next interview with the Cardinal, he wore a very elegant ring, which he affected to display by putting his hand in every possible direction to attract my notice. Observing that I said nothing about it, he directly asked me what I thought of his new ring. I replied that it was indeed very brilliant, but I had lately seen something that was much more so. I then related the circumstance of the necklace, at which the Cardinal expressed great surprise, but said nothing more at that time relative to the subject.

Some time after I received a note from the Cardinal, requesting to know the jewellers' address, which I procured, and sent him.

This conduct raised various conjectures in my mind concerning the reason of the Cardinal's sending so suddenly for this address, which, not being able to account for, I poised in my own mind several circumstances, which led me to apprehend that the Cardinal meant to treat for the purchase of this jewel, with a view of appropriating it to satisfy the demands of some of the most clamorous of his creditors.

About this period his affairs were not a little deranged; his mode of living was, notwithstanding, profuse, and his finances were very far from keeping pace with his extravagance. He had indeed been censured by the King, who was characterized by his economy, and who, as the Cardinal himself seemed to insinuate, would be more reluctant to trust the affairs of the state to a person who had betrayed such mismanagement in the regulation of his own.

The motives which biassed my conduct in this business seemed to centre in what I considered to be my duty. As a friend to the Cardinal, I could not think, entangled as he then was, of suffering him to plunge precipitately into still greater embarrassments, while the means of prevention remained in my power. I had also additional apprehensions lest, having seen the necklace, and sent to the jewellers for their address, my name should be brought into question: it was also a consideration with me that the jewellers should not part with their property upon such uncertain security.

These motives conjointly influenced my proceedings, and determined me to repair to the jewellers to hint my suspicions, desiring them to remember that I should not think myself accountable for any agreement on the part of the Cardinal; at the same time forewarning them to be particularly cautious, and not to part with the necklace till they were satisfied with the security.

This to me was a disagreeable office, but it was a circumstance which I hope will be remembered with very particular attention, because it is a leading argument in my defence, and a bulwark against the attack of my enemies. Had I wished to possess myself of this ornament, as it has been most strongly asserted, it will not wear the faintest hue of probability that I should raise obstacles against the Cardinal's purchasing it—that I should obstruct the only channel through which I could hope to obtain it.

It was several days after this transaction before I again saw the Cardinal, though I frequently saw the Queen during that interval. Her Majesty said not a

syllable to me respecting the necklace, but informed me that she had seen the Cardinal two days before, and expressed her surprise that I brought no account of a commission with which she had entrusted him. I was not then aware of the nature of the commission of which she spoke, but when I again saw the Cardinal I had no doubt that it related to the necklace.

About two days after this interview with her Majesty, I again saw the Cardinal, who then made me acquainted that he meant to purchase the necklace for the Queen, but that she would not have her name appear in the negociation. It must be observed that her Majesty had entered into a private, but express, contract with the King not to make any purchase, or sign her name to any agreement, without his concurrence.

The Cardinal had been with the jewellers immediately after he had received their address, and found them perfectly agreeable to his wishes. He set out for Versailles to apprise her Majesty that the necklace was in his power, and only waited her Majesty's commands. It was during this interval, between the Cardinal's first application to the jewellers and his departure for Versailles, that I had hinted my suspicions, and raised obstacles which he found so difficult to overcome; but these proceedings will, I hope, be excused on account of the rectitude of my intentions in this matter.

Upon his return from Versailles, the Cardinal, finding the jewellers strangely altered, and seeming to raise difficulties, was at length induced to declare that he purchased for the Queen, who did not wish to appear in the transaction, and drew up articles for

the contract, to which he meant to have her Majesty's approbation, upon the production of which the jewelers declared they would trust to his private security.

The Cardinal informed me that there would be *private arrangements* between himself and her Majesty, so that the Queen might possess this jewel she so earnestly desired, and her Majesty's name not be brought in question.

When I received the information that it was for her Majesty this jewel was designed, that it was for the Queen the Cardinal meant to purchase, I thought it no bad speculation, and began to repent that my fears had made me too precipitate in raising those impediments, which originated in the union of friendship, prudence, and justice. It was, however, now too late to retreat; the Cardinal drew from his pocket a packet, which he desired me to convey with all possible expedition to the Queen.

I lost no time, but posted in my phaeton to Versailles, where I arrived about nine o'clock, but could not that night obtain an interview with her Majesty.

I have not, I believe, previously mentioned that, finding myself subservient to both parties only so far as served their own purposes,—reproached by the Cardinal,—the secrecy of the transaction,—and the danger in which I was involved,—conspired, much more than curiosity, to induce me to take copies of some of the most material letters which passed between the Cardinal and the Queen. Was it an error? It has happened, fortunately, to enable me to speak precisely upon the most material facts of my defence. Was it a crime? When I reflect on my misfortunes, it has been, I hope, fully expiated.

Before I went to bed I took a copy of the Cardinal's letter, and perused the whole of the conditions of the purchase from the jewellers, with which I was despatched for her Majesty's approbation, written in the *Cardinal's own hand*.

Disappointed in not seeing her Majesty, and receiving intelligence from Mademoiselle Dorvat that it was uncertain when I could have the honour of seeing her, and knowing the Cardinal's impatience for my return with the ratification of these articles, I sent the packet to Mademoiselle Dorvat, begging her to forward it with all possible expedition, as I only waited for the answer to return immediately to Paris.

Two hours after I received a parcel, sealed up, with a short note from her Majesty, desiring me to use dispatch. This parcel contained the articles I brought, not only unapproved and unsigned, but accompanied by a note to the Cardinal containing the most stinging reproaches.

When the Cardinal opened the packet, and found it exactly as he sent it, he turned pale; when he perused the letter, he was almost frantic. He communicated to me its contents, appealing to me to arbitrate between him and the Queen, if he had not strictly adhered to the spirit of the articles.

He then, after regretting that he had kept it a secret from me, informed me that a few days ago the Queen had mentioned the necklace, which was, she said, destined for Portugal, and appeared desirous to have it.

"I then told her," continued he, "what I thought as to the practicability of so disguising the necklace, by altering the fashion of some of the most

remarkable stones, that it might not be easily discovered by his Majesty. The Queen's desire to possess the ornament increased in proportion as the difficulty of its concealment appeared to vanish; no obstacle remained but the payment, which, well knowing it to be beyond her Majesty's immediate compass, I offered her my best exertions and my credit, which she accepted on condition of permitting her to enter into private arrangements corresponding with those personal securities I should offer to the jewellers.

"Perfectly, as I then thought, comprehending her Majesty's meaning, I hastened to Paris, sent for the jewellers' address, and went to them immediately, under pretence of having some jewels set, which I took with me for that purpose. After some conversation I mentioned the necklace; said I was commissioned to inquire the price, and that, in case the person meaning to purchase should decline to appear in the transaction, I would enter into a private agreement with Bhomer.

"No difficulties appearing, I set out for Versailles, informed the Queen that the necklace was in my power, and only waited her Majesty's command. She answered expressly in these words:—'I shall approve of any arrangement whatever that you may make, provided my name does not appear in it.'

"Thus empowered I returned to the jewellers, spoke of concluding the purchase and ultimately settling the value, but was surprised at the difference of my reception. Instead of the same eagerness, they expressed their fears, raised difficulties, and appeared to hesitate. To remove every obstacle I told them

at once that I was purchasing for the Queen; that her Majesty had very particular reasons for keeping the transaction secret; but I, fully satisfied with the arrangement her Majesty had vouchsafed to make with me, was empowered to accede to any terms that could be mutually agreed on between us. I then personally drew up the articles, such as I thought conformable to her Majesty's inclination, and which would meet her approbation, which I communicated to them; but one of them, Bassanges, started another difficulty, that being considerably indebted to M. de St. James, they could not conclude the business without previously acquainting him. Annoyed at these obstacles, I then told them, by way of dispersing them, that I would bring the articles approved and signed by the Queen; that after they were produced, and seen by none but themselves and M. de St. James, they could afterwards remain in trust with me till the total liquidation of the payment, for which I would give my own personal security.

“With this they were perfectly satisfied, and I instantly wrote to the Queen that packet which you have just conveyed, requesting her Majesty's approbation in the margin to the articles I sent; observing, that as that instrument would remain in my hands, her intentions would be fully complied with, and that her name would not appear publicly. And see,” continued he, “what an answer I receive!”

The Cardinal was in a most violent rage, as his expressions sufficiently demonstrated. Finding it impossible to gain his attention during these bursts of passion, I suffered him for a few minutes to give vent to them, knowing, at the same time, from

their violence, that they could not be of long continuance.

I was not wrong in my idea—his exclamations against the treachery of women at length subsided, and I observed that there was nothing so very offensive in the Queen's letter as he might, at first sight, erroneously imagine. Respecting the expression, that her name should not be seen in it, it had a very vague and indefinite meaning, which he might probably widely misinterpret; that it by no means implied that her Majesty would not accede to the purchase; that her sending back the agreement was not to be understood that she did not mean to have it concluded, but merely that she was dissatisfied with the drawing up of the articles, which, not coinciding with her ideas, she wished to have modified; that the first thing to be done was to consult her Majesty, who had, on sending me back with the agreement, enjoined my return the same evening; but it being then too late, I would set off early the next morning, so that I might watch the first opportunity when her Majesty should be visible, when I hoped, by explaining everything to the Queen, I should bring him better news.

The Cardinal was more cool, appeared pleased with my proposition, and allowed that it was absolutely necessary, since it was so expressly commanded, that I should again appear at Versailles; he then gave me the agreement and departed.

When I arrived at Versailles I was given to understand by Mademoiselle Dorvat that the Queen had expected me up to twelve o'clock the preceding evening, and that she was much out of temper.

Two hours after I received a note from her Majesty, informing me that she should not be visible that day; but commanding me to stay at Versailles, and that I should be apprised when she could be seen."

The next day, upon my return from a short visit, I found a note from the Queen in these terms: "*To-night, at half-past nine.*"

I attended, with great timidity, at the hour appointed. Her Majesty's courteous and affable reception soon dispelled my fears. After many obliging speeches, she inquired if I had brought nothing from the Cardinal? I answered in the affirmative, and drawing the agreement out of my pocket, said I was charged to receive her Majesty's commands on its contents. I then humbly represented the situation of the Cardinal, the difficulties he had to encounter, and the address with which he had vanquished them, in having at once satisfied the jewellers and coincided in her Majesty's wishes; adding that the writing retained in his possession was a sufficient security that her name would never appear.

The Queen replied that she had positively told him she would enter into no arrangements but with himself; "and here," continued she, "he proposes a direct one with the jewellers! Now, as I wrote him word, if I had chosen to treat with them, I could have done it without his assistance; but now my name is actually mentioned. It is a most unpardonable indiscretion! He would have acted better by giving me notice, than by taking upon himself a business he was unable to execute."

I suggested a reply, in hopes of exculpating the Cardinal, that "he had not foreseen the obstacles he

had to encounter; that zeal and a desire to serve her Majesty made him proceed in the negotiations; that upon so many difficulties being started, he was necessitated to make use of her name, in order to clear himself of the suspicion, which he but too strongly discovered they entertained, of his having a design to purchase the diamonds in order to convert them into money; that finding no other means of procuring the jewels, and thinking equally to fulfil her Majesty's wishes, he mentioned her Majesty's name to inspire their confidence, and meant to keep possession of the writing to be strictly conformable to her Majesty's desire."

The Queen replied, "From what you tell me, I am sorry that I wrote to him as I did. I will give you a letter to him. But does he not betray a want of tact in his conduct? If inspiring confidence was all that was requisite, could he have devised no other mode? *He is perhaps ignorant of it, but I tell it to you, that I have contracted with the King a formal engagement, not to set my name to anything without first communicating it to him.* It is, therefore, impracticable! See, between you, what can be done; or let the idea of a purchase be given up! *It appears that the writing being only a matter of form—that those people being unacquainted with my handwriting—you will consider of it.* But, once more, *I cannot set my name to it!* However, let the matter terminate which way it will, tell the Cardinal that I will, the first time I see him, communicate the nature of those arrangements I mean to make with him."

Thoughtless of the consequence, eager to obviate every difficulty, and anxious to accommodate all

parties, I revolved everything that passed in my own mind, particularly her Majesty's expressions,—that she considered it merely *formal*; that she was bound, by her contract with his Majesty, never to set her hand to any agreement without his consent; that she wished to be possessed of the necklace; that the Cardinal was eager to obtain her Majesty's approbation, who seemed satisfied with any arrangement, provided her name did not absolutely appear, in violation of the contract she had made with his Majesty. Without giving myself time to think, I consulted a friend, who perfectly coincided with me in the propriety of the measure, signed the name, *Marie Antoinette of France*, in the margin of the agreement.

I mention not these circumstances to justify, but in some small degree to palliate, this imprudence, the greatest, and attended with the most fatal consequences, of any in my life, to the commission of which my natural vivacity of temper, and the impulse of the moment, backed by what I then termed plausible arguments, hurried me irresistibly away.

I thought that the signature could not strictly wear the complexion of a forgery; for the person whose name I procured to be signed would be accommodated by this fictitious signature. It was not a fraud, for the jewellers would be possessed of the Cardinal's security, which they would not, as appears from his first application, have hesitated to admit, had it not been for my apprehensions; and the Cardinal would, from the nature of his private arrangements with the Queen, be enabled to fulfil the stated times of payment regularly as they became due. Biassed by these ideas,

I was guilty of this error, for which I confess I deserved censure; though possibly every rebuke may be covered by that enormous weight of misfortune which has assailed me in consequence of this deviation from the path of rectitude.

I had determined, then, upon this deception of which I at that period knew not the consequence. The mode of proceeding now busied my thoughts, which must be in a manner the least liable to exception, and the best adapted to prevent discovery. When I first arrived at my own house, I was about to put down in the margin, "*Approved by me, the Queen*"; but I was doubtful whether, considering her contract with the King, the Queen would have adopted that signature. I was in a state of perplexity, and had some inclination to consult my husband; but I was fearful, upon recollection of the former difficulties he had started, that he would not fall into the scheme. Doubtful and perplexed in the extreme, while I was weighing one thing against another, and uncertain how to determine, the name of M. Retaux de Vilette was announced.

M. Retaux de Vilette was a person with whom I had long been acquainted; he was on the point of obtaining, through my influence, a military appointment, and could, I thought, hardly refuse doing me what I termed a service of such trivial consequence. I accordingly kept him to dinner. He was acquainted with my relations with the Queen and the Cardinal. I had previously hinted what was contemplated relative to the purchase of the necklace; I now related every circumstance, and the precise state of every incident concerning it.

I had the satisfaction to find that M. Vilette perfectly coincided with me in opinion. He told me that, not doubting but the Queen had made use of those expressions, it appeared to him precisely in the same point of view; that it was a matter of indifference in what hand the approbation was written, since the jewellers were unacquainted with her Majesty's writing. "But," said he, "neither you nor the Queen are perhaps acquainted with the danger of counterfeiting the handwriting of any individual: it is, in the eye of the law, a criminal offence, under the appellation of *forgery*. Doubtless you would not advise me to commit such a crime; but this we may do: proceeding on the supposition that the jewellers are not acquainted with the Queen's handwriting, it is equally improbable that they should be acquainted with her signature. Your idea of signing *Antoinette* only, is a palpable forgery; but *Antoinette of France* has certainly no meaning at all. Were the business to obtain the necklace improperly, then, whenever collusion was discovered, such a signature would indeed stand as a proof of it; but there being no doubt of the jewellers receiving their payments, since they are possessed of the Cardinal's security, secretly backed by the Queen's, I think one may, without great fear of detection, comply with these circumstances, which shall be done in the following manner: First, I shall not disguise my hand; secondly, I shall give the Queen the inaccurate title of *Antoinette of France*. This writing being presented by the Cardinal, will not be scrutinized; and you shall promise me to burn it, in my presence, when the jewellers are paid, and the business is ended." I gave him my

word of honour that it should be done; upon which he signed the approbation.

During the time of my being engaged with M. Retaux de Vilette, I received a note from the Cardinal, who was all impatience for my return. I sent back the messenger with an answer that I would see him soon; but in the meantime everything went on well.

The moment I was possessed of this approbation, I hurried away to the Cardinal's, from whom indeed I intended to have concealed the transaction; but reflecting a little as I went along that neither M. Vilette nor myself were perhaps fully aware of the consequences which might happen, I determined to explain every circumstance, after having amused the Cardinal with a temporary deception. Wishing to make an experiment if the signature would pass current with him, "Here," said I, upon entering; "here it is at last!" The Cardinal perused the articles, examined the approbation, and exclaimed, "Yes, here it is at last!" I laughed heartily, and explained the whole transaction. He examined the paper more attentively, was pleased with what I had done, and observed that if the signature had deceived him, it would be much more effectual with the jewellers.

The Cardinal departed, and on that very day (the 30th of January) concluded the bargain. The day following he sent me two letters, one for myself, desiring my immediate departure for Versailles to deliver the other, which was enclosed and addressed to her Majesty.

In compliance with the Cardinal's request, I used all possible expedition in travelling to Versailles. As

soon as I arrived I received a note from the Queen, who was a little indisposed, commanding the Cardinal to be in my apartment at nine at night, in his usual dress, *with the box in question*, and not to depart till he heard from her.

The next day I accordingly transmitted this note to the Cardinal, as directed. About half-past eight he came to me in his usual disguise, with the box containing the necklace, which he deposited on a bureau. We remained some time conversing upon a variety of topics, till our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Lesclaux her Majesty's Groom of the Chamber (a man perfectly known to the Cardinal, and frequently employed as a trusty messenger), who well knew the nature of their intrigues. This person delivered to the Cardinal a note from the Queen, couched in the following terms: "The *minister* (the King) is actually in my apartment. I know not how long his stay will be. *You know the person* whom I send: deliver the box to him, and stay where you are. I do not despair of seeing you to-day."

The Cardinal, after perusing the note, written, as well as the preceding one, in her Majesty's own handwriting, delivered with his own hands the box containing the necklace to the very person whom the Queen herself had expressed to be deserving of her confidence. Lesclaux observed on departing that he had orders to wait at Madame de Misery's apartment till twelve.

About half-past eleven the same Lesclaux returned with another note to the Cardinal, purporting that her Majesty was very much crossed, but expressly

acknowledging the receipt of the necklace, and concluding that she would see him the following day.

Such is a very brief statement of the circumstances connected with the necklace: by the time it was received by the Cardinal from the jewellers till delivered to Lesclaux it was not a moment out of his possession. Why, then, it may be asked, did he not call Lesclaux to account? The answer is obvious—because he was fearful of involving the Queen; but he delivered it to Lesclaux with his own hands, and the Queen expressly acknowledged that she had received it.

The necklace was delivered on the 1st of February, 1785; from the intervening months till the fatal catastrophe a variety of circumstances took place similar to those I have already related, and which I shall hastily pass over.

On the 2nd the Cardinal received a letter from the Queen, which did indeed but slightly mention the necklace; it stated, however, that the Queen admired it, which made the Cardinal himself remark, at the time of reading the letter, that "*the vessel had sailed safe into harbour.*" This letter indeed I did not copy; it was written in terms the most indecent, the most licentious that could possibly be imagined. For these reasons it is that I wish not to enter into any further particulars than is material to prove, from her Majesty's writing and from the Cardinal's own expressions, that the necklace had reached the port of destination.

Nothing very remarkable occurred for some time, but letters in profusion, continual journeys for me to and from Paris, Versailles, Trianon, &c., &c.

About a month after the Queen was in possession of this necklace, she wrote a letter to the Cardinal, informing him that some person had assured her that it was too dear by at least 200,000 livres, and stating that unless the jewellers consented to that abatement, she was determined to return it.

The Cardinal, as usual, flew into a violent passion, loading the whole sex with the most abusive epithets, but found himself so far engaged as to be under the necessity of compliance with every caprice. The office of prime minister glittered before his eye, and endued him with a greater degree of patience than he was usually possessed of; those beams of elevation still dazzled his eye, operated as a curb upon his temper, and subjected him to sustain what otherwise would have been intolerable. He communicated to the jewellers the contents of her Majesty's letter, who, thinking the bargain ratified and confirmed, and the property delivered, were in no small degree surprised.

The jewellers remonstrated strongly; but the high position of the person insisting on the abatement, added to the fear of having it returned upon their hands, at length operated to induce them to consent to the deduction.

This was the second arrangement with the jewellers—the necklace was in her Majesty's possession, consequently at her own disposal.

From this period to that when I was charged (I am shocked at the repetition) with having stolen this jewel, difficulties arose, for the result of which I could not but tremble: a storm was gathering and approaching rapidly, which threatened the most fatal consequences. The meetings between the Queen and

the Cardinal were less frequent: the former was thoughtful and mysterious, the latter appeared unusually reserved, and frequently out of humour. I was sensibly alarmed at this change, the effects of which I frequently experienced.

The Queen was displeased with the Cardinal, and I thought I read in her present conduct a design to punish me for having been instrumental in bringing them together. Coolness in her Majesty's bosom insensibly made way for disgust, and neglect tended to raise the Cardinal's resentment, to multiply his indiscretions, and eventually to lead him to his punishment; he thought himself of consequence to the Queen, and with the most inconsiderate and incredible rashness, resolved, as he expressed himself, to mortify her Majesty by his absence.

Deluded man! what demon could have placed this bandage before thy eyes, and turned thee loose to wander over the precipice of destruction! Thy absence! Alas! there was nothing the Queen so earnestly wished; there was nothing, thy destruction excepted, that she more anxiously desired.

Have I not said that the Cardinal was guilty of some indiscretions? and will not the correspondence bear me out in the assertion? Have I not mentioned the infernal malice of the Polignacs? to add, curtail, apply—in short, to make everything answer their diabolical purposes? Is there anything that I have hitherto said that does not wear the complexion of probability? If there is, the Polignacs are amiable, the Queen virtuous, and the Cardinal discreet.

I have before said that the Queen seemed as if she was displeased with me, as if she wished to punish

me without ostensibly appearing to be actuated by that wish. I have said that she wished to destroy the Cardinal, and I hope I shall be pardoned for such frequent repetitions, because I think them necessary to prepare the minds of my readers for what I have further to relate.

One day, regarding me with her usual affability, her Majesty presented me with a box, accompanied with these words: "Here—it is a long time since I gave you anything; but don't tell the Cardinal that I have made you this present, nor even that you have seen me. Do you hear? Do not talk to him of me."

I have before said that I concealed nothing from the Cardinal, and there are some who will probably accuse me of breach of confidence, and of disobeying her Majesty's express commands. I confess I think my conduct in that respect not irreprehensible, at least it would require a much abler advocate than myself to defend it; otherwise I might insinuate my prior acquaintance with the Cardinal, the interest he seemed to take in my affairs, and his generosity, previous to my having entertained an opinion that I should ever be able to render him any service with the Queen. I might perhaps hint that my gratitude, as well as my inclination, biassed me towards the Cardinal.

Surrounded as I was with difficulties, where I had only the painful choice of selecting what to me appeared the least; harassed with these dilemmas, with little time for deliberation, and obliged to act, obliged to proceed, I thought deceiving the Queen would be attended with less hazardous consequences than being obstinately determined to defend my errors; and the

oppression and malicious falsehoods of my enemies perhaps have been sufficiently enormous, I had almost said, to render it my duty to take advantage of every argument that might eventually turn out in my favour, and possibly at once palliate my errors and diminish that weight of opprobrium with which I have been loaded. I will not only admit, but avow, that I acted wrong; yet I will not avail myself of what I have just mentioned. I have a more powerful friend in the candour and generosity of the English nation, of which protection of the oppressed is the peculiar characteristic. I confess that I have been guilty of errors, and throw myself at once upon the candour and compassion of my readers.

As soon as I had examined the contents of the box, though totally ignorant of its value, I hurried away to the Cardinal, at once to communicate what had passed at Versailles, and to exhibit this recent proof of her Majesty's munificence. In the most earnest manner I conjured the Cardinal not to betray the confidence reposed in him, in express contradiction of her Majesty's commands. I request that it may be ever remembered, and deeply impressed on the minds of my readers, that I brought these jewels to the Cardinal!

After looking hastily over the diamonds, which he poured out on his table, and after a pause of surprise and a look of astonishment, he said, "These appear to me of considerable value: how do you mean to dispose of them?" I told him that I meant to sell the greater part, and reserve the remainder for my own use. He surveyed them again yet more attentively, and proposed my leaving them with him till

the following day. I complied without the least hesitation.

This, I beg leave to remark, was another circumstance in my favour—as, by obliging the Cardinal to own they were returned, I produced an indisputable proof that, by exhibiting them to the Cardinal almost the moment they were received, I at least could not have stolen them. Had I been guilty of that crime—had I not come fairly by them—I should never have been so very simple (and my enemies allow that I was not deficient in cunning) as to run the hazard of detection by leaving them all night with the Cardinal. But what did I do? I made not the slightest scruple to the Cardinal's proposal, who said, in conducting me out, that he would weigh them, and inform me what was their intrinsic value. This was just what I wished to ascertain. I thanked him, and retired, leaving the jewels loose upon the Cardinal's table. Next day I received from him the following note:—

“DEAR COUNTESS,—

“*I return by my Swiss the box in question, and I advise you to sell the contents as quickly as possible. I will see you on my return from Versailles, when I will speak to you more fully; but dispose of what I return to you soon.*”

I confess that I was myself ignorant of the value of the present I had received. I was not very conversant with the intrinsic value of diamonds; yet I supposed, from the rank of the donor, that the gift was far from being inconsiderable.

I hastened to communicate my good fortune to my husband, but previously thought proper to appropriate some of the smaller stones to purchase some few trifles which I then had occasion for, and for which I did not choose to apply to my husband, intending them then for my own private use. Having first made provision for myself (a circumstance, indeed, but too common), I delivered the remainder to my husband, who, the very moment that he cast his eyes over them, observed that they belonged to the necklace, and on that account he conceived it necessary, from prudential motives, to advise with the Cardinal relative to the mode of their disposal; in which, as he then observed, it would be absolutely necessary to adopt the utmost circumspection, lest, through the unaccountable fluctuations, and the rapidity of the circulation of trade, these jewels should fall into the hands of either Bhomer or Bassanges, which would doubtless lead to suggestions by no means favourable to the parties concerned in the transaction.

While we were engaged in this conversation relative to the disposal of the jewels, the Cardinal arrived in great haste, informed me that he would see me on his return from Versailles, whither he was then going; in the meantime earnestly entreating me to be extremely cautious, and not show the jewels to any person whatever.

When the Cardinal returned from Versailles he informed me that, in his interview with the Queen, she did not once mention a syllable respecting the necklace, which was to him an inexplicable mystery; that upon examination of the jewels she had pre-

sented me, he had discovered the most remarkable stones in that ornament. It did not in the least surprise him that the Queen should take it to pieces, to make some alterations and disguise its form; but he thought it extremely singular that her Majesty should not speak about it. At the same time he observed that he should be very much chagrined if the jewellers should hear that this ornament had been thus taken to pieces, adding that this would probably be the case, if I should attempt to dispose of stones of so remarkable a pattern at Paris. He, therefore, to obviate every difficulty, advised me to send them to Amsterdam. "These flat oval stones," continued he, "not according with the design of her Majesty's intended suite of diamonds, she has probably considered them as trifles; but I declare to you that they are worth not less than 30,000 livres, and you cannot dispose of them with either too much privacy or expedition."

My husband perfectly coincided in the Cardinal's opinion, and immediately revolved in his own mind the means of putting his plan in execution, for which purpose he that same day called upon a Jew, named Franks, who consented to undertake a journey to Amsterdam, to dispose of the jewels.

He accordingly set forward for that purpose. The disturbances at that time prevalent in Holland rendered his journey ineffectual, in consequence of which my husband determined to take the charge upon himself, to pass over to England, and he accordingly commenced his journey on the 12th of April, accompanied by Chevalier O'Neil, a captain of grenadiers, and a knight of St. Louis.

It was during this interval that the Queen's disgust towards the Cardinal was manifestly increasing, and rapidly advancing to its acme; their interviews were less frequent, and that time which was formerly occupied in a manner infinitely more agreeable was now spent in altercation, and they separated from each other mutually displeasing and displeased.

The Cardinal now gave himself but little concern about the necklace; he sometimes remarked that it was very singular the Queen made no use of her diamonds, particularly interrogating me if I had discovered anything new about any part of her dress? To such inquiries I uniformly answered in the negative.

He seemed indeed surprised, but this surprise gave way to anxieties of far superior magnitude—anxieties to which this circumstance was, as it were, an airy trifle. He thought he perceived a decrease of his interest with the Emperor, and he suspected the Queen was the cause of that decrease. He went further, and reproached her for having trifled with him relative to the arrangements for his promised elevation; he was offended too that he was not publicly received; his whole conduct was changed by these circumstances, and he even formed the extravagant resolution of speedily compelling her Majesty to do him justice. It was in vain to remonstrate: his obstinacy was, indeed, truly alarming, but of this what I have just related is a sufficient illustration.

A few days after my husband's departure the Cardinal set out for Saverne, under the strongest conviction that her Majesty, to whom he thought himself essential, would not long be able to support

his absence, and would very soon recall him. During the absence of the Cardinal I continued paying my court to her Majesty, who very seldom mentioned his name, and when she did it was in a manner not merely indifferent, but something worse. Among the number of causes which tended to sour the temper of the Queen, jealousy bore no small part. Reports of the Cardinal's intrigues, of his indiscretions, of the light manner in which he spoke of her Majesty to noblemen and others whom he thought his friends—these reports, I say, hourly brought to her Majesty, and constantly echoed and re-echoed in her ear by those calumniators who generally swarm in Courts, had now wrought her to the highest pitch, and she wanted nothing but the opportunity of taking the most ample revenge.

Such was the state of the Queen's mind when, on the 22nd of May, I was despatched by her Majesty with a packet to Saverne, which I was charged to deliver into the Cardinal's own hands. I will confess that my curiosity was strongly excited to examine the contents of this packet, concerning which I had such positive injunctions ; but it was wrapped up so close, and bound with silk twist, and sealed every way, that it would have been impossible to have satisfied myself without the greatest risk of discovery. I flattered myself that the Cardinal would, in confidence, have trusted me with the contents. I was, however, deceived ; he said not a syllable that could lead me to conjecture what was the purport of that mysterious paper ; but the Cardinal's dejection, his apparent anxiety on its perusal, clearly demonstrated that it conveyed no pleasing intelligence, and were melan-

choly omens which induced me to augur as my fears but too strongly indicated.

He uttered a few vague expressions, informing me that he should set off for Paris next day, without giving me any reason for his departure, or what was the intent of his journey.

He returned to Paris, and wrote to Versailles, but he gained no admission—his absence had given his enemies an opportunity of being busy with his fame. The Queen's resolution was firmly fixed: in vain did he strive to weaken those unfavourable impressions which his own indiscretions and the machinations of his enemies had rendered indelible; in vain did he weary her with letters replete with remonstrance,—every argument, every supplication they contained, were equally fruitless. They were worse—they did but confirm the resolution they were intended to invalidate, and whet that desire for revenge which they were meant to destroy. His destruction was resolved: she did, indeed, condescend to write a line or two in answer; but it was only to throw him off his guard. Revenge had taught her that degree of dissimulation which was subservient to her purpose, and she yet disguised her real sentiments, and attempted to stifle those sparks of resentment which were daily kindling in her bosom, till the Baron de Breteuil, the mortal enemy of the Cardinal, blew them into flames which could not be extinguished.

The Baron de Breteuil, supreme head of the police, with fifty thousand spies in constant pay, and fifty thousand eyes so distributed in every quarter of the metropolis that nothing could escape their penetration, had been for a long time acquainted with the

secret negotiation of the necklace, and he treasured it up with secret malignity, as a corner-stone whereon to rear the destruction of the Cardinal. He had several times sent for the jewellers, and interrogated them respecting the transaction; they as often acquainted the Cardinal, who strongly enjoined them to secrecy, and advised them to say *that the necklace was sent abroad.*

This part of the drama becomes highly interesting. The minister waited with mischievous intent, and with malignant impatience, the time when the first payment should become due; hoping the clamours of the jewellers in case of non-payment, which, from the extravagance and known embarrassments of the Cardinal, he had too great reason to hope would be the case, would at once unravel this mysterious transaction and entangle the Cardinal.

The Cardinal, destitute of the means of payment within himself, looked forward to the Queen for the fulfilment of her private engagements: he looked forward with the most anxious expectation. Terrified by the Queen's aversion, and suspended between hope and fear, at one moment he was doubtful whether she would fulfil those engagements; at another, he flattered himself she would do so.

Apprised of the measures of the Baron de Breteuil, the Cardinal was doubly intent on securing the Queen's secret from discovery; indeed, his whole conduct relative to this affair sufficiently demonstrates his internal conviction that her Majesty had received the necklace, and conceived that, in whatever manner she might think proper to dispose of it, she was

bound to discharge the obligation contracted on her account. It appeared too that her Majesty was herself sensible of this, from her having given the Cardinal 30,000 livres in part payment to the jewellers for interest, which they refused to accept but as so much money on account towards the principal, and gave their receipt in that manner, acknowledging to have received the sum of 30,000 livres from her Majesty on account of the necklace.

This transaction did not escape the Argus eyes of the Baron de Breteuil, who, eager to warp everything to his own purpose, attempted by every art to alarm the jewellers; and so great was his inveteracy against the Cardinal, that he forgot the respect which was due to the Queen. Before he had made any inquiries into the transaction—before he had inquired whether the Queen had really empowered the Cardinal to purchase—he boldly asserted that this was an imposition, that the Cardinal had deceived them, and that their only resource was to exhibit their complaint in a memorial to her Majesty.

Alarmed at this declaration, the jewellers no longer preserved the secret, but minutely related all the particulars of the transaction, amongst which that of the signature of *Antoinette de France* was singularly striking. Possessed of every circumstance in the most authentic way, and professing at once the honest indignation of a good subject, blended with the highest degree of zeal for her Majesty's reputation,—assuming this plausible exterior to conceal the desire of private revenge,—the Baron hurried away with ardent impatience to request a private audience of the Queen, where he expatiated largely on the information

acquired by his vigilance, and stated strongly, in colours suited to his purpose, the nature and pernicious consequences of the discoveries he had made.

The Queen, taken thus unawares, so suddenly surprised, chose not to disclose this circumstance to the minister, nor wished to put into his possession a clue that would unravel those secrets which it was her interest to conceal; at the same time, pressed by the exigence of the moment, she affected surprise and indignation, and denied all knowledge of the transaction. She was now reduced to a disagreeable dilemma,—either to expose herself, or sacrifice the innocent.

She decided upon the latter; and as uniformity of conduct was necessary, having once acted wrongly she persisted in error. When the jewellers presented their memorial, on the perusal of the very first line, she exclaimed, with affected surprise, “*What do these people mean? I believe they are parting with their senses!*”

My husband was now returned from London, whither he had been, as I before stated, to dispose of the jewels, accompanied by the Chevalier O’Neil; the particulars of whose journey having been by himself related at large in my memoirs, I shall not introduce them here.

Towards the beginning of July, probably the day after the conference of the Baron de Breteuil with her Majesty, I remarked to the Cardinal that my house was beset with spies. He replied, that he was persuaded his own was in the same predicament, but could not conceive the meaning.

Alarmed at this intelligence, which neither of us

knew how to account for, I told the Cardinal that I would make it my business to see the Queen.

I departed immediately to Versailles, and had the honour of an interview with her Majesty, to whom I imparted what had passed. She gave me no satisfactory answers, and considerably increased my fears by affecting to divert the conversation to another subject. One thing in particular caught my attention. She asked me whether, in the course of the present season, I was not accustomed to go into the country.

I was extremely surprised at this question, to which I replied, that my only desire was to pass near her Majesty all the moments she would deign to honour me with; and that I would never absent myself without receiving her express command for that purpose.

Unable to gain any satisfactory intelligence, while everything wore the appearance of mystery, I withdrew in a state of extreme agitation. I found myself sealed for destruction, and that I should share in the punishment of the Cardinal. I immediately went to his hotel, and communicated to him, as the author, and the participant of my calamity, everything that had passed. He was reserved, thoughtful, and dejected.

The next day, having been with the jewellers, whose fears of losing their property—now more predominant than their promises of secrecy to the Cardinal—had so far biassed them that they were evidently in a league with the minister, he returned in a violent rage, bitterly inveighing against the Queen, whom he loaded with the coarsest epithets and reprobated in the vilest terms.

I was not without apprehensions that he had given vent to his rage before the jewellers; that he had not

only made use of some unguarded expressions, but even discovered some of those secrets which should not have been revealed, and which would only tend to precipitate his downfall, to accelerate his destruction. What Bassanges afterwards said to my husband convinced me that I was not wrong in my conjecture. The jewellers had no security but the Cardinal's honour, and probably feared that he too might deny the receipt of the necklace.

It is impossible for me to describe the confusion in which everything was at this juncture: I clearly foresaw the Cardinal's punishment, and in that, in dreadful characters, anticipated my own.

While I was thus harrowed up by the most disagreeable reflections, I received a little box, containing three bills on the Caisse d'Escompte, of one thousand livres each, and one hundred louis d'or in cash, accompanied with a note in her Majesty's own handwriting, stating that for particular reasons, which she would communicate at a proper time and in a proper place, she desired that I would set out for the country, promising that I should hear from her, and assuring me of her kindness.

Unfortunately for me, I had long contracted the habit of entrusting the Cardinal with everything. I accordingly informed him of this. He read in the note his immediate disgrace, and hurried away to consult that star which influenced all his actions, Cagliostro; by him he was fatally biassed, to him he gave up the reins of his understanding, and from him he imbibed those counsels which have produced such a dreadful catastrophe.

That projector of horoscopes persuaded the Cardinal

not to enter into any personal negotiation with the jewellers, which would probably have pacified them, as, not having any security but the honour of the Cardinal, they were under no small disquietude, and this circumstance made them more easily biassed by the Baron de Breteuil. He further prejudiced the Cardinal that, circumstanced as she was, the Queen would not dare to speak about this business, but would be obliged secretly to compromise it. He next suggested to him the idea of terrifying me, and by that means inducing me to remove to a place of security, that he might make my flight into a foreign country an argument of guilt, and a proof that I had defrauded the jewellers, and was in possession of the necklace.

I need not inveigh against the villany of this impostor, against the blindness, the delusion of the Cardinal—the circumstances I have just mentioned speak for themselves.

The Cardinal, implicitly guided by the counsels of this calculator of nativities, who pretended to have an intimate acquaintance with the stars, and a perfect knowledge of futurity, came to my house in the evening, and, expressly as he had been tutored by Cagliostro, pretended to have made very important discoveries, and informed me that the Queen had formed the most malignant designs against us both.

Though I had great reason, from her Majesty's note and the present sent me, to believe that her intentions to me were by no means so inimical as the Cardinal would wish to suggest, yet he laboured to terrify me as much as possible, that he might bring me to his view, and made use of the most artful insinuations to complete his purpose. Accustomed as I had

long been to be guided by his counsels, when my fears were wrought up so high as not to suffer me to attend to the dictates of prudence, he seized the moment to bear me away. Seeing me sufficiently alarmed, he told me there was but one way to save myself—that I was most inevitably ruined if I and my husband did not take refuge in his hotel.

Intimidated by what he represented, and not giving myself time to think, I hastened to depart, and only waited a few minutes to leave instructions for my return home. Accompanied by a trusty female, who at Versailles had frequently been witness to the meetings which the Cardinal and I so repeatedly had with the Queen, I blindly consented to be guided by the Cardinal's discretion, and attended by my woman accompanied him through byeways to his hotel.

When my husband came home he perused my note, which desired him on its receipt to attend the Boulevards, where he would meet M. de Carbonniere, who would immediately conduct him to me.

Surprised at the contents, and ignorant of what had happened, he repaired to the place appointed, where he met M. de Carbonniere, who, attended by two heydukes, completely armed, conducted him mysteriously to the Cardinal's hotel. He asked many questions concerning the meaning of all this, but could get no other answer than that the Cardinal would give him an explanation.

The moment the Cardinal observed him entering the courtyard, he exclaimed, in mingled accents of joy and triumph, "Ah! heaven be praised! there is nothing more to fear!" As M. de la Motte came up stairs, and was running towards me to make inquiries

concerning what had happened, the Cardinal accosted him in these words : “ All this surprises you because you are ignorant of everything ; but be not uneasy, you are now safe. I now defy the Queen, whom I laugh at, and her whole gang—we shall see what turn matters will take. It is late—go to your rest. I will see you early to-morrow, and we will talk together on the subject.” When he had said this he retired, shutting all the doors, and taking away all the keys.

My husband, surprised, desired me to explain this mystery. I explained everything, and was very severely reproached, as I very justly merited, for complying with advice so palpably absurd ; but this sudden compliance, so detrimental to my interest, is at least a proof of how I was often hurried away by that vivacity of temper which would not give me time to think, and proved how very little I was calculated for such complicated intrigues as my enemies have thought proper to charge me with.

The air of satisfaction, the accents of exultation, which the Cardinal expressed at having us in his possession, gave my husband great reason to suspect that the Cardinal had some artifice, some scheme in his mind. Justly suspicious that the Cardinal had no good intent, M. de la Motte determined that we should both depart as soon as it was day.

We laid down to rest, but agitated as we were, sleep did not weigh down our eyelids. The whole night was spent in speaking of our embarrassments, considering plans for our extrication, and reflecting upon the peculiarity of our circumstances.

About seven in the morning the Cardinal appeared. He still laboured to impress us with the idea of our

danger, and strenuously insisted that it was highly necessary and peculiarly fortunate that we had removed the preceding night, and taken refuge with him. "I believe," continued he, "there is a suspicion of your being here: we shall see to-night, and take the necessary precautions for sending you off to Couporai. Your house and mine have been surrounded all night. But you are safe—there is nothing to be feared here!"

M. de la Motte still suspecting the Cardinal of some manœuvre, resolved, if possible, to counteract it, and determined not to remain there till night. He told the Cardinal, in a resolute tone, that he could not comprehend what he meant; that not being a party concerned, nor having had anything to do with his intrigues with the Queen, and having nothing to reproach himself with, he had nothing to fear; desiring, at the same time, permission to return to his own house, where there were persons employed in packing up, previous to his return into the country, who would stand in need of his directions, and his own people, who would be uneasy at his absence.

It was about this time that all our furniture was nearly packed up, and the waggons loaded, ready to set out for Bar-sur-Aube. This circumstance, however, showed no great uneasiness as to our situation, as her Majesty had expressly enjoined us to go into the country, and we were to follow our furniture so much the earlier, in compliance with the Queen's commands.

The Cardinal was greatly disappointed at the resolute and determined tone with which my husband addressed him, and exerted all his abilities to gain

him to his purpose; but, finding his efforts vain, and M. de la Motte unalterably determined, he said, "Since, then, you will rush to your ruin, I clear my hands of it; but wait at least the return of my courier, who will bring me news from Versailles."

The Cardinal insisted so strongly upon this, that M. de la Motte, thinking it could make no very material difference, consented, on condition that he should write a few lines to his porter, to make his people easy about his absence.

The courier arrived from Versailles, and the Cardinal pretended to give us the intelligence he had brought; but all his thoughts, words, and actions were still guided by Cagliostro, and were moulded into any form that necromantic professor thought proper they should assume. "Well," continued the Cardinal, "all your schemes are now thwarted. I have at this moment certain intelligence. that search is made after you, and that you will be instantly arrested if you go out. You have now positively but one course to take, in which I will direct your proceeding. I will cause you to be conveyed to Couvrai, where you will find a carriage that will take you to Meaux; you must pass as belonging to my retinue, and the post-master will furnish you with horses. Then cross over the Rhine, and you will arrive at a village in Germany, where you will settle yourselves with a person to whom I shall recommend you: there you may remain unknown till matters shall wear a more favourable aspect. I will, however, provide you with a passport and all necessary letters."

M. de la Motte replied that though he could not see any reason personally to fear, yet as he was igno-

rant how far my imprudence might have engaged me in the unhappy affair into which the Cardinal had drawn me, and uncertain what might be the consequence from the powerful enemies I had to contend with, he was determined not to forsake me, but to accompany me in my exile, if it was judged absolutely necessary; but that he was previously determined to spend some time at Bar-sur-Aube; to prevent the astonishment and noise that would take place upon so sudden and extraordinary a departure.

This proposal of continuing at Bar-sur-Aube was by no means consonant to the Cardinal's plan, he being pre-determined to accuse me, so as to render every suspicion as plausible as possible to support the accusation. For these reasons he had persuaded me to take refuge in his hotel, whither I had also drawn my husband; for these reasons he was anxious for our immediately quitting the kingdom.

The Cardinal remonstrated, and my husband insisted, till the altercation grew rather warm; and upon the Count's threatening to jump out of the window into the garden, the Cardinal was necessitated to give up the point. "You are perverse," said he to him, "and that perverseness will be your ruin. You are suspicious of nothing. Till to-morrow take time for reflection: this day I will not permit you to go out of my house—'tis the very hour that spies prowl about. I shall see you to-morrow morning; if you then continue in the same mind, the doors shall be opened to you."

Upon the faith of this promise my husband consented to stay another night, and early the next

morning the Cardinal suffered him to depart, after taking his word of honour that he would not make known the place of my retreat.

M. de la Motte found everything at home as it should be; no strange face had been seen by the porter, nor was the least appearance of spies to be discovered in any quarter of the town. He went about his business, and appeared in places of the greatest resort, even at the Palais Royal; in short, he made himself everywhere as conspicuous as possible. He had, indeed, promised to return in the evening, but having some packages to send off in the morning, he repaired to the Boulevards at the time appointed, and told M. de Carbonniere that he could not possibly attend that evening, but would call next day, and fetch me away. He then went home to bed.

Early in the morning, as he was in the court-yard, giving directions to the people that were busily employed in loading the waggons, Bassanges appeared at the gate. Seeing the Count, he went up to him, and asked him if I was stirring. My husband told him I was at Versailles; at the same time desiring him to walk into the house, where they might converse more conveniently. "I wish," said Bassanges, "to impart to your lady that I saw the Cardinal yesterday, and he appeared greatly agitated. I am very much concerned for his disgrace, *and shall be sorry if M. Bhomer should bring him into greater distress!* His eminence makes complaints to us, exclaiming in our presence against the indignity with which he is treated, 'That is not the immediate business between us!' One day he told us that we ought to make ourselves easy,—that he had concluded all the necessary arrange-

ments about the payments,—that it was indeed just that we should be paid,—and that he would pay us. Then walking hastily about the room, he made some speeches which I cannot repeat, but concluded by telling us that, *since the necklace was denied to him, he might as well deny it too!* That was certainly done to create a great deal of uneasiness among us; for as we have no security but his integrity, were he indeed to deny the receipt of it, as he threatened, we have no resource but from authority. In this state of anxiety I came to consult the Countess, to know from her the Cardinal's ultimate resolution. We do not wish him any injury, and should be very sorry for the consequences that might ensue from this affair. But——” Here he paused.

My husband found it easy to anticipate his meaning. The jewellers were pressed by the Baron de Breteuil and his agents to make the matter public, from which they were only restrained by the fear of losing the price of the necklace; and as they were in possession of no written security to prove the purchase, the Cardinal was advised by Cagliostro to deny even the negociation of the necklace.

This was the most pernicious advice that could possibly have been given. Instead of weakening the security, he ought to have strengthened it; for notwithstanding the derangement of his affairs, yet still they knew he had many resources, that he had immense revenues, though greatly encumbered; in short, they would have preferred any settlement, however indifferent, with him, to trusting to the empty promises of the Baron de Breteuil.

Towards the close of the same day my husband,

on his return, told us the conversation that had passed with Bassanges, in consequence of his conversation with the other two parties. The Cardinal began to grow warm, and interrupted the course of M. de la Motte's narrative with such a torrent of severe reproaches, which he poured down upon the Queen, as could not have been deserved even by the most dissolute of the sex. They were at once too shocking for delicacy to hear or decency to repeat.

It was, without doubt, this unguarded temper of the Cardinal's, which frequently broke out without the least restraint, without any attention to the persons present, whether friends or foes, that had been industriously conveyed to the Queen, together with those coarse expressions that must have exasperated her to that degree of inveteracy which, as a Queen, she would be eager to revenge, and which, in fact, she could not easily forgive.

When the Cardinal was quite weary with the abusive epithets he had dealt out so largely against the Queen, he again, in compliance with the scheme of Cagliostro, introduced the conversation of our journey to Germany. My husband consented to go, but thought it indispensably necessary to spend some time previous to his journey at Bar-sur-Aube, lest such precipitate departure should be malevolently misconstrued; and the better to give colour to his journey, he would during the time of his continuance there circulate a report that he intended going to Spa.

The Cardinal remonstrated strongly against his continuing a day at Bar-sur-Aube, told him that his safety absolutely required his departure, and strongly

urged his immediate flight, and reproved him much for perverseness and obstinacy. All the Cardinal's rhetoric was, however, ineffectual: M. de la Motte was resolutely determined—he swerved not an iota from his original resolution. Finding him so firm, the Cardinal took up a card, on which he marked the day of our departure from Paris, calculated the time of our progress to Bar-sur-Aube, the time of our continuance there, and how long it would take us to pass on to Germany.

After this arrangement we took leave of the Cardinal, who was strongly impressed with the belief that my husband meant to undertake the intended journey to Germany: though, in fact, neither of us discovered any necessity for such a measure. The whole conduct of the Cardinal—his detaining us in his hotel, and his earnest desire for our immediate departure to Germany—all tended to give us strong suspicions that some extraordinary scheme was in contemplation; and our ideas were indeed but too well founded.

When we left the Cardinal, we went immediately to Bar-sur-Aube, where we spent a fortnight without the least molestation. On the 17th of August we paid a visit to the Duke de Penthièvre, at Chateau Vilain: it was the eve of that Prince's departure. From thence we proceeded to Clervaux, where we arrived in the evening. It was then that we received the first intelligence of the Cardinal being in the Bastille. We were by no means alarmed—it was no more than we expected; and had we been guilty or conscious of the least criminality, we could not have been in a better situation for making our escape, nor could our flight have been more easily effected. At that

time we had all our diamonds, a good carriage, with four fine fresh horses, and four more that had brought us from Chateau Vilain: in short, had we been conscious of any degree of guilt, or of being at all brought into question for such a charge as was afterwards exhibited, nothing was more easy than that very night to have escaped out of the kingdom, but we returned home to Bar-sur-Aube.

Having received intelligence that the Cardinal was in the Bastille, I employed myself nearly two hours in burning all the letters and notes which I then recollected to have in my possession, between the Queen and the Cardinal—in short, I thought it my duty to remove all vestiges of a correspondence between the Cardinal and the Queen. I accordingly burnt a very large collection of papers; but I had omitted some, which were not discovered by the exempts in their scrutiny—of these I shall speak hereafter.

At this moment begins the *denouement* of the plot practised against me: at this moment I am about to relate that which will move the reader with horror against a government, which all the universe has long supposed to be renowned for wisdom and justice. In the following statement, so far from being suspected of exceeding, I may possibly be censured for falling short of the truth. Is it possible for the imagination to conceive, or for the pen to describe, even in the most vivid colours, the horrors of that dreadful Bastille? I shudder even at the very name of that dungeon of despair, that tomb of broken hearts, where so many miserable victims have been immured without any accusation, without even being acquainted with the nature of their offence, but doomed by the arbitrary

will of the sovereign to pine away their miserable existence, till death, dreadful as he is to others, (basking in the sunshine of prosperity, and revelling in one continued round of fashionable amusements) wears here a very different aspect. Here he appears like a smiling angel, a kind deliverer, whose approach they anticipate with rapture, whose touch dissolves the fetters. Ye horrid towers—dire monuments of despotism! disgrace of human nature, are ye then fallen at last? Your dungeons have disgorged their victims, and, thanks to Liberty, ye are levelled in the dust! An innocent prisoner in your gloomy caves, these eyes have beheld your terrors, the recollection of which creates such a depression of spirits as nothing can equal but the joy of my heart in contemplating your destruction!

To this terrible prison was I conducted at four o'clock in the morning, entirely ignorant whither it was intended to convey me, and so little anticipating the event that I was dozing in the carriage. In the course of our journey the carriage was stopped, and questions asked by some persons without, to whom the person within said, "Don't you know this carriage?" "Oh, yes!" replied the other. "Don't stop us, then: we have nobody but a state prisoner." At this the carriage proceeded. Hearing this conversation I awoke: the termination of the dialogue roused all my faculties. "What do you say?" exclaimed I, in a tone of great agitation. "A state prisoner! Alas! am I then a state prisoner?" And these people swore that it was not so. But there is some excuse—they belonged to the police; and perjury and bearing false-witness is no small part of

their employment. Yet did they use such kind expressions that, knowing my innocence, I flattered myself I was deceived. One of them said to me, "Madame, I wish we had arrived at my house, where I could accommodate you with a bath and a bed; for as it is now," continued he, "so very early, I'm afraid we shall not be able to get an interview with the Baron de Breteuil, who gave me orders, if we arrived too early, to conduct you to my house, and to wait upon him about eleven; therefore be composed, and try to sleep a little."

All this time I remained upon my seat, till, soon after, they desired me to conceal myself in the bottom of the carriage; this was when we arrived at the gate of St. Antoine, where they endeavoured as much as possible to place themselves before me, that I might neither be seen by any one nor observe the turning to the Bastille. Finding myself rather warm, I said, "Let me see." I looked out, and discovered the Bastille. "How!" I exclaimed, with great surprise; "is it to the Bastille, then, that I am going? Oh! you are all impostors!" They endeavoured to pacify me, and begged me to make no disturbance; told me that they were not their own masters; that they had received their orders, but they assured me that they were entirely ignorant of the reason for which I was carried to the Bastille, and that they were persuaded that in a very few days I should be liberated.

By this time we had arrived at the first bridge, leading to the Governor's house. The postillion knocked, and many invalids came out. The postchaise belonging to the police advanced to the Governor's

door, who came out himself in a *robe-de-chambre* to the carriage to give me his hand, begging me at the same time to excuse his *deshabille*. He then conducted me into a large hall. Soon afterwards the King's Lieutenant arrived (of whom I shall hereafter have occasion to speak frequently), with a large book in his hand, wherein he entered the date of my arrival, and afterwards presented it to me to sign my name, with which I complied. During this ceremony, which only occupied a few minutes, the Governor, with the exempts of the police, was in the court, where they were giving him an account of every circumstance which had occurred in the execution of their orders. This done, the Governor returned and asked me if I would take any refreshment, adding, "We shall take great care of you, Madame." I then asked him into which apartment I should go to receive the Baron de Breteuil, at the same time telling him I hoped he would come at eleven, as the exempts had informed me. "Oh, there is not the least doubt of it, Madame," replied the Governor.

He then called St. Jean, the turnkey, to whom he gave my papers, to place them, as I have since heard, in the archives; after which the Governor desired the King's Lieutenant to conduct me to my apartment. Some little conversation passed relative to the place of my destination, of which the Lieutenant seemed uncertain. "Oh!" said the Governor, "La Comptée is the best; it is very light." He then left me in company with the King's Lieutenant, whose arm I took, persuaded that I should be shown into some other apartment, and for a far different purpose. As I went along I saw some soldiers (invalids) covered

with blue cloaks, large hoods over their heads, with long bands hanging down, and closed in front. As I passed several, I was not a little surprised to see them turn their backs towards me, it being the custom, when any prisoner arrives, to turn themselves round, fearing lest any should take too much notice. I began to laugh with the Lieutenant at the novelty of this, particularly at such grotesque figures thus clad in masquerade.

Since this period I have been informed that these good old invalids have said much concerning my behaviour, and have, among other things, observed to St. Jean, my turnkey, that they had never before seen a prisoner who appeared so indifferent: that they had heard me laugh, which had excited their curiosity; and that they had observed me particularly without my perceiving it. I cannot say that anything, except the passage of this bridge and the odious great gate, put me into any kind of terror; perhaps there never was a prisoner who viewed even these with so much indifference.

We passed on till we arrived at the court, whose staircase led to the tower of La Comptée. I passed on with as much vivacity as if I had been entering a drawing-room; for I was at this time so lively, and had such an incredible flow of spirits, that these places, so dreadful to others, did not in the least affect me. How great is the power of innocence, which can, with a steady eye, behold all the gloomy mansions of punishment, and the terrific engines of torture, with a gaiety that nothing but itself can inspire! Supported by this, I can with truth assert that, while

traversing this dreary cave of despair, I had not one gloomy, one desponding idea.

We now prepared to mount the staircase. Observing that the Lieutenant spoke very softly as we ascended, I did not follow his example; but, on the contrary, spoke in a louder and more confident tone. I knew nothing of the regulations of this prison, and I cared but little about them; I had, indeed, but a very imperfect idea of the nature of the Bastille, and very erroneously imagined that the Cardinal must certainly be confined in this tower; and what made me so strongly think that this must be certainly the case, was that mysterious behaviour of the Lieutenant, and the silence which he enjoined me to observe.

“Oh!” exclaimed I, “is this the way, Mr. Lieutenant? This staircase is extremely narrow.” I ascended, speaking very loudly, with the intention of making myself heard by the Cardinal, if he should chance to be there. The Lieutenant made no answer to my questions, and said little or nothing during our passage till we arrived at the apartment destined for my reception, all the gates of which were very large and open. St. Jean, who was to be my turnkey, attended me thither.

Struck with such a dismal change of situation, so very different to what I had ever been accustomed, I could not help expressing my dissatisfaction to the Lieutenant. “If this is the place,” said I, “which the Governor pleases to call my apartment, to be sure I am greatly obliged to him.” I then went to look at the bed, which was, indeed, a wretched one; told him that it would be impossible for me to sleep in a bed so miserable as that, and demanded if he

could not accommodate me with one as good as the Cardinal's? He replied, very politely, that he did not really comprehend my meaning. It must be remarked that in these cells of desolation everything wears the appearance of mystery. Nothing could be more dangerous to those who meant to oppress than the discovery of the truth. Fear is the pillar of despotism, which, viewed through the medium of mystery, appears a massive column, but examined by the eye of reason, is but a slight prop, just supporting a mutilated structure, every moment threatening its fall. The agents of tyranny, to be successful, are obliged to be secret; and it was a regulation in the Bastille that no account should be given of any of the prisoners confined there, neither of their names, accusers, or the nature of their offence; they are cut off from all communication. But a particular secrecy is observed concerning those who are unfortunately imprisoned for the same offence.

My disapprobation of the bed was attended with a favourable alteration, and the turnkey substituted for that of which I had great reason to complain an excellent feather-bed, with fine sheets and curtains. Thus accommodated, and extremely fatigued, I attempted to get some rest; but I was scarcely in my bed when the Lieutenant, with my turnkey and another, arrived, who were certainly at the gate, which they had not shut, perhaps not wishing to terrify me by the dreadful rattling of those massive bolts. The two turnkeys then took my clothes and my pockets, out of which they took all the contents, consisting of several little articles, particularly a gold etwee set with pearl; another of tortoise-shell; a

small ivory box ornamented with gold, having on its lid a small miniature, with a gold rim, containing a small mirror and some rouge; an English pocket-book, bought of Mr. Gray; a knife with a tortoise-shell handle and a gold blade; my purse, containing eighteen louis and about nineteen livres; a gold repeating watch, with a diamond chain, which I purchased of one Franks, a Jew. These articles, with several others, they took out of my pocket.

Indignant at such humiliating treatment, which I could not patiently endure, I remonstrated with some asperity, and threatened to inform the Baron de Breteuil, whom I was simple enough to believe I should see. They were, however, regardless of my threats, and having executed their orders, departed through those dreadful doors, which, with their horrid bolts, were closed upon me, and the sound pierced my very soul. Thus circumstanced, my situation may be better conceived than described, yet I was not now distressed by those fearful imaginations which afterwards tormented me. My present situation was, indeed, inconvenient; but I yet consoled myself with the hope that I should see the Baron de Breteuil, when I should be immediately released from confinement.

About eight, my turnkey came to the door: I spoke to him, but he paid me no attention, and departed without saying a word. I rose to examine this dismal habitation, and traversed the chamber in every direction, backwards and forwards: there was nothing; no furniture, but the bare walls; no cabinet, no accommodation, nothing but a stove and a small chimney. I opened the window to see if I could

discover anybody, or make myself sufficiently conspicuous for anybody to see me. I climbed up to the highest part of the window, holding my face close to the bars; but could discover nothing—as for people, it was impossible to distinguish them.

While I was thus ruminating upon the horrors of my situation, about nine o'clock I heard a knocking on the ceiling of the apartment below: I listened attentively. It began again, and as if to gain my attention, I heard five distinct knocks, after which it ceased. My heart palpitated. "Is it not the Cardinal?" thought I. "Oh, yes, it must certainly be him!" I then employed myself upon what it might mean: "Five strokes," thought I, "signifies the Queen. He is surely informing me that his correspondence has been discovered. I sat myself down on the ground that I might hear more attentively: the knocking re-commenced and was more frequent: I imagined it was really as I thought, and I answered after my own way, thinking that I understood and could make myself intelligible, and believed that this knocking was meant, where words could not be conveyed, to supply the want of conversation, I thought I understood everything better than I should be able to make myself understood, and was greatly pleased in the persuasion that this was certainly the Cardinal.

Soon after the turnkey returned to inquire what I wished to have for my breakfast, and stated that the Governor made me the offer of some excellent broth. I accepted this offer, and when my breakfast was brought, I desired the turnkey to entreat the Governor not to forget me with the Baron de Breteuil,

according as I had been promised, and to remind him that it was then near eleven o'clock.

As soon as the turnkey departed, the knocking recommenced. I laid my breakfast down on the floor to answer, but about a moment after, I heard St. Jean open the door of the chamber which I supposed to be that of the Cardinal.

About noon the Lieutenant came to fetch me. He politely desired me to put on my calash. I complied immediately, and being prepared, I begged the favour of him to go before and show me the way. My intention was, if possible, to get the Lieutenant to descend at some distance, while I stopped at the Cardinal's door, which I did. "Are you the Cardinal?" said I, in a low tone. When I came before the door, I made a noise: the Lieutenant stopped, as if he heard me. "This is a very disagreeable staircase," said I, to the Lieutenant; but I could not satisfy my curiosity. I was then conducted to the *Salle du Conseil*, at the bottom of the court, where are the six towers. I found there, instead of Breteuil, M. de Crone, Lieutenant of Police, in large black robes, and the Commissary Chenon.

After a complimentary introduction, he asked me "if we might proceed to business." I answered in the affirmative, expressing my astonishment at not seeing the Baron de Breteuil. "He is very much indisposed with the gout," replied he. My papers were then ordered to be brought. "Before I proceed I must assure you that I am charged to read attentively everything which these papers contain." He then proceeded to examine the papers as they came to hand. They seemed to pause at one whose writing

was remarkably fine. M. de Crone made the Commissary take notice of it. "Oh, no! this is not the same writing," said the Commissary to M. de Crone. "Which writing are you speaking of?" inquired I. "Nothing, nothing, Madame." "But perhaps, gentlemen, I shall be able to set you right." They would not, however, permit me to explain, nor suffer me to interfere at all in the business.

This first examination lasted three hours. In the afternoon we began again, and continued till one in the morning. That same evening M. de Crone said to me, "I beg you, Madame, to raise your hand before this image of Christ—I have questions to put which I beg you to answer me with truth and sincerity." I complied, and prepared myself to answer. "You are accused, Madame, of having gone abroad with a diamond necklace, which you have illegally appropriated to your own use."

M. de Crone could scarcely refrain from smiling—for my part, naturally inclined to laughter, this commencement, so extremely ridiculous, made me absolutely burst into a loud fit. "And pray, Monsieur de Crone, who are these simple people who have accused me thus?" I urged him to give an explanation, and in the meantime regarded him attentively. "It is the Cardinal de Rohan, Madame, who has said this." I yet could not help smiling, as I could never suspect that the Cardinal had uttered anything so palpably untrue. "Oh! my good Monsieur de Crone, I fear you are a wicked *mouton!*" It is necessary to observe that the police of Paris is composed of monsters of every description, who for money will metamorphose themselves into any shape, and use

deceptions of every kind. That class which goes under the denomination of *Moutons* is allowed a crown a-day. These beasts of prey are let loose from their secret caverns to exercise their functions upon some person who is either actually confined or suspected by the police to be guilty of some crime which he will not confess, and whom they have not sufficient evidence to convict. It is here that these *moutons* exert their talents—here they prove their adroitness in worming out of the victim they assail sufficient materials, which by the industry of these spiders is woven into a web to entangle, or if that is not sufficient, perjury comes to assist them: they swear to what they have never heard. In short, all their business is to accuse; and to such wretched subterfuges is despotism obliged to have recourse, that they take the mere assertions of these wretches for substantial proof. I know not how to convey a better idea of their office to an English reader than to compare them to an informer upon a breach of the penal statutes or an exciseman, though the latter would certainly in a great degree suffer by the comparison.

These *moutons* advance gradually from one step to another, till they are supposed to have discovered the commission of flagrant crimes. When possessed of sufficient materials, they then positively charge the person with murder, or robbery, or conspiracy against the state, according as the accusation stands, or the police wish to believe. Upon this foundation is reared the materials for the accusation, which rises rapidly, and produces in effect the destruction of the prisoner.

It will easily be seen that this term, *moutons*, is an

ironical appellation—a term given for all those qualities in which they are notoriously deficient. When these gentlemen have faithfully fulfilled their duty in the subordinate capacity of *moutons*, they are then promoted to the rank of spies, where they still assume the appearance best adapted to their purposes, and avail themselves of some very fair and plausible pretext to enter your house, as vendors of poultry or something similar; they then approach even into your very kitchen; they see everything in the twinkling of an eye; they hear everything; nothing escapes their notice; and they glean everything they can, either from the servants of the family or any disaffected person, collecting the suspicions of malevolence, which they fashion to the appearance of truth.

It is a compliment due to M. de Crone that he was but a very young lieutenant of the police, and not such an adept in his office as his predecessor, M. de Noir, whose ingenuity would have given this matter a far different direction, by putting questions more calculated to puzzle and perplex, and either tending to elicit a confession, or engaging me at least to make a strong and definite answer. I apologize for this digression, which I thought necessary in defining a class of men which the free government of England has rendered unnecessary; and return to M. de Crone.

That gentleman proceeded in his interrogatories, and added, “that I had been commissioned to make a purchase for the Queen, and that after the purchase was completed, instead of delivering it to her Majesty, which I had engaged to do, I had absconded with the article into a foreign country.” I was so

struck with this charge that I was unable to reply to so great an absurdity; and such was my natural impetuosity of temper that I could ill brook a charge like this, so alarming to my sensibility. At that moment I was about to make a disclosure of every circumstance, every transaction relative to that fatal business, but the politeness of M. de Crone, and the delicate terms he adopted to make me comprehend the cause of my commitment, tended in some measure to compose my agitated spirits, and to enable me to make such replies as the impulse of the moment and the circumstances of the charges seemed to indicate. "What absurdities! what ridiculous suppositions! How, sir! if I am really accused of such an odious crime, how is it that I should be found in my house at Bar-sur-Aube, without having removed either my own or my husband's jewels? Why have they not made the strictest search to discover whether or no the necklace was in my possession? Had they done this at the time, there could have remained no doubt, and your question would have been totally futile." I begged M. de Crone to send to my house at Bar-sur-Aube, that they might scrutinize more narrowly. He applauded my request; and I conjectured from his manner that all these ridiculous questions were arranged and settled by the Baron de Breteuil. It is an act of justice due to M. de Crone, and I wish to record it, as my enemies have asserted that it is not in my power to speak well of any one, that M. de Crone behaved to me with the utmost politeness and attention during the three days of our business together.

On the 24th, the Commissary Chenon came into my chamber alone, at ten o'clock in the morning,

with a handful of papers, quite out of breath. After having passed some hasty compliments, the turnkey brought a table for him to write upon, and gave me paper, pen, and ink. He drew up some questions in writing, nearly the same as those which had been formerly put by M. de Crone relative to the necklace: "How my husband and I came by such and such diamonds?" My first answer was, that he might send to Bar-sur-Aube and inquire. He begged me to pardon him, proceeded in writing very fast, and about an hour afterwards gabbled over something I scarcely understood, which he begged me to sign. I complied, and I believe I should almost have signed my own death-warrant to get rid of the persecution of this tedious old man, who made himself extremely disagreeable and troublesome. For the space of a week I was plagued with one or two visits a-day from this officious man. "I know very well," said he, in his last visit, "that you have received a present of diamonds from the Queen. Were I in your situation, I would say that they were given me by the Cardinal; that will save the trouble of all the questions which I am sent to put to you. You know that the Baron de Breteuil is your friend." As I am not naturally of a suspicious temper, I was very communicative to this wretch, who appeared quite conversant with everything that had passed. I gave him an account of everything, even to the very diamond which the Queen had given to Mademoiselle Dorvat. It was this cunning dissembler who made me sign those odious things which I was supposed to have said myself, and which were so detestable that when they were read by his Majesty he spat

upon them, saying, "Fie! oh, fie upon the filthy creature!"

Such was his Majesty's expression; and it is beyond a doubt that this mercenary hireling had been bribed by my enemies to render me the object of royal disgust.

This man engaged me to write every circumstance that had passed, as he said, for the inspection of the Lieutenant of Police and the Baron de Breteuil. I believed him sincere, and under that impression I gave him my confidence, at the same time desiring him to communicate to the Baron de Breteuil that I had received his letter at Bar-sur-Aube; observing to the Commissary that this letter had directed me to abide by, and informed me that I could not swerve from, my original declaration; that I could not vary my statement by saying that I had received the necklace from the Cardinal. I remonstrated strongly against this, and contended that if I should make this assertion, they would immediately have asked me what had become of the necklace? and not being able to give a satisfactory account of which, they would instantly judge that this was an evasion. But, on the other hand, as the Cardinal knew very well how the Queen had disposed of the necklace, her cause would become much clearer in naming those to whom she had given it; otherwise it would be understood that the Queen and myself were in a combination to deceive the Cardinal.

This man, however, would not swerve: he still persisted obstinately in his opinion, and to all my rational remonstrances replied, with the peevishness of age, "It is the Baron de Breteu' then, Ma-

dame, if you will force me to divulge it, who has devised these means, that the Queen may not be exposed and questioned." "And what will become of me? Will it not be said that I have deceived the Cardinal?" "No, Madame, by no means. He, indeed, may lay everything to your charge; but make yourself easy: we shall take care to saddle him with everything." He then made use of every argument to exasperate me against the Cardinal. "Only think what a monster he must be," continued he, "to charge you with having absconded with the necklace! It is impossible for you to criminate him too much. You may retaliate fairly, without the least apprehension that he will have the presumption now to flatter himself he can have an interview with the Queen. Write then every circumstance, every tittle relative to this affair, and put it into my hands."

This man, like many others skilled in the art of dissimulation, could sometimes assume the semblance of truth when he was totally deficient in the substance. Could I at that time imagine that a man could be a villain where he had no interest to be so—that he could have lured into his toils one who had never done him any injury? But perhaps I wrong the Commissary Chenon. He was subservient to higher powers. I know not the weight of this extenuation—if it is an excuse, let him plead it to his own conscience.

I accordingly complied with this request. This man had done everything in his power to exasperate me against the Cardinal, whom, from the very nature of his accusation, I was indeed bound to regard less—much less—than I did; nor had he any reason to

expect that I should attempt, in the manner I did, to ward the blow that was levelled at his head, which, by such interposition, only glanced at him, but crushed me to atoms.

When I was interrogated by Chenon, the questions were put in such singular and complicated terms that I scarcely knew what to answer; and the interrogatories were previously framed to extract such answers as might be easily moulded to the virulent purposes of that party to whom they were calculated to be subservient; add to this, that my replies were made in a state of agitation. I could not yet believe seriously that the Cardinal had made such a monstrous accusation. "All this," thought I, "may be a trap to deceive me, and make me instrumental in sacrificing the Cardinal to the Queen's resentment. If he has indeed thus traduced me by this horrid charge, as guilt is not always endowed with confidence, he surely will not dare to look me in the face."

I was nine days without seeing the Commissary. During that time I was quite spiritless: fatigued with walking to and fro in my chamber, my mind was disturbed, and my ideas rising in a melancholy succession, still exhibited in different aspects the horrors of my wretched and comfortless existence—for want of air, want of exercise, deprived me of that pleasing variety so essential to health. My countenance wore the sallow hue of langour, and my eyes were dimmed with weary watching, and hope protracted to despair. The turnkey observing my situation, communicated it to the Governor, who came to visit me, and finding me sufficiently calm, proposed my taking a walk on the tower, and continued with me a

short time previous to our walk with the old Major.

After dinner we ascended the tower. At that time there had been a slight shower, which made the stones upon which we walked very slippery. I held by the arms of these two gentlemen, and we proceeded some paces from my tower. I observed the print of a foot at a small distance from that part of the pavement upon which we walked, and a circular piece of wood painted red. At sight of this I recoiled with horror: the Governor viewed me with surprise. "Oh, no!" replied I, "I will walk no further;" keeping my eyes fixed at the same time upon the place which had so terrified me. "Certainly," said the Governor, addressing himself to the Major, "Madame believes this circle to be the place of the dungeons, for I know that such a notion prevails abroad, and people are inquiring almost every day, if it is really true that there are such things in the Bastille? To convince you, however, Madame," said the Governor, "we will go and lift up the door; but to calm your apprehension, I give you my honour, Madame, that this hole, the gate of which leads into the court on the same side with your apartment, is for the purpose of raising stones to repair the building."

The Governor and the Major then proceeded to gratify my curiosity. They, with their united strength, were not able to raise the lid; which, besides being very thick and heavy, from not having been for a long time opened, the dirt had made it stick very fast. They called one of the invalids, by whose additional assistance they effected their purpose. My prejudice was effectually cured, and I then found that the

Governor had told me the truth. I walked on with confident composure, without the least fear of dungeons; but the word created some very disagreeable reflections, which, according to my general way of speaking everything I thought, I did not endeavour to suppress.

After insinuating to the Governor that I was persuaded he detained a great number of unfortunate creatures in chains, and that many of them were doomed to be detained there for their lives, I avowed my belief that the popular opinion was not unjust; for if these prisoners are suddenly apprehended and carried off by emissaries of the police, when their families are ignorant where they are detained, they may be said to be in dungeons; while they remain in total oblivion, it may be very truly believed that there are dungeons in the Bastille. The Governor pretended that no person ever died there, but this assertion was more than I chose to credit. He told me that every prisoner was detained there either by order of their relations or the state, but that these remained here only a small number of years.

Having proceeded thus far in giving some account of what happened in the Bastille, it may not, perhaps, be unsatisfactory to give some account of many other little incidents which occurred at my first entrance into that abode of horrors, which has now disgorged its victims, who, thanks to Liberty, have burst their cerements, and again revisit the cheerful light of day. During my residence in this home of woe, I scruple not to relate those minute incidents which, however they may be censured by the austerity of criticism, may probably afford entertainment to those who

read more to gratify curiosity than to hunt for blemishes in that melancholy catalogue of misfortunes which comprise the life of a female too much agitated to attend to the propriety of diction, or to weigh the importance of the occurrences she relates, and apply them according to the disposition of her readers. She wishes not to tell a tale which the learned alone would approve; but to suggest that she is writing her life, which must naturally be supposed to be made up of minutes, as well as incidents of greater magnitude. Were she to confine herself to the latter, she might render her narrative more interesting; but by suppressing the former her truth would be suspected. To those candid readers who consider the peculiar circumstances, the distressing situation of the authoress, she addresses these minute occurrences of her comfortless existence—to these she appeals—to these she lifts up her voice—for these she guides her pen, and delineates the features of her life.

Upon my arrival at the Bastille my food was brought to me in pewter plates; these I rejected, and left the food untouched in the place where I found them. When the turnkey came to take them away, he seemed a little surprised, and after pausing some time, said, in a rude manner, "So, then, you don't choose to eat, it seems." "No," replied I, "I don't choose to eat. I desire to know if you serve the Cardinal in pewter? Inform the Governor that the Valois are as good, and entitled to equal respect with the Rohans." At this the turnkey seemed astonished. He looked at me respectfully, and answered me by solemnly protesting that he was ignorant who I was;

at the same time begging my pardon. He then departed, and returned in a moment with a better dinner, served in very beautiful dishes with silver covers. After this I had no reason to complain of their inattention, as I was furnished with everything the moment it was asked for.

But notwithstanding these advantages of good nourishment, I could not forget that I was a prisoner. This idea ever presented itself to my imagination, though I tried unsuccessfully a thousand projects to divert it; but I need not insult the understanding of my English readers by any eulogium on that invaluable blessing, whose value I could only reckon by its loss. In vain did I attempt to divert my distracted ideas—my brain was raging: I attempted to write—my thoughts crowded upon each other in wild incoherency: I dropped my pen, and climbed up to the window—it was all in vain. I fancied that by means of a knife I might make an opening through the floor. It is not customary to suffer the prisoners to have knives; but my keeper at my request lent me his, which was indeed a monstrous one, that might almost be called a sabre. It was quite equal in length and breadth, but stronger; and I thought it the better adapted to my purpose. I attempted by means of this knife to raise the squares from corner to corner; but in this effort I found so many obstacles that, quite out of humour, I gave up the undertaking. This would at least have tended to amuse me; as, if I could have opened the slightest communication below, I might have derived some advantage from conversing with the prisoner underneath, whom I still fancied must be the Cardinal.

About an hour every day I generally walked upon the tower, attended by the Governor, who behaved very politely. Returning one day, when he was going to depart I held the first door in my hand, placed myself against him, and told him with a smile that I would not suffer him to shut that door. "Is not one door enough to be shut upon me?" continued I. After some slight objections, he politely answered, "The ladies must be obeyed;" and from that time I had the gate within my chamber left open. Between these two doors were three steps.

I now imagined that I should be able to hear everything that passed more distinctly, and immediately after the departure of the Governor, proceeded to examine this additional extent I had acquired. When I had well examined the door, I tried to scrape away some pieces to make an opening, but I could discover nothing. I then laid myself down, and discovered under my door, very distinctly, the windows at the bottom of the court and my staircase. "This," thought I, "is a great point gained." I was more pleased, easy, and composed.

When I heard the turnkey or any other person upon the stairs, I ran to peep under my door, from whence I could see what passed. A day or two after this discovery, I saw my turnkey with a new prisoner. It was in the evening. I saw him very distinctly, and understood clearly, as he stopped at every step to rest himself, what he said. "This staircase is very difficult to ascend," said he. This miserable creature was nearly eighty years of age. The sight of an object so decrepid and so wretched, sometimes increased the painful sensations of my own situation by additional

reflections on the miseries of his. This poor old creature was very asthmatic, and apparently on the point of deceiving his enemies by escaping to immortality; but despotism, like death, pays no attention either to youth or age. Beauty, virtue, merit, wisdom, are all objects of destruction, all are hurried away by its influence, all are engulfed in its vortex.

The next day, about eleven in the morning, this old prisoner was summoned to the *Salle du Conseil*, where he remained nearly three-quarters of an hour. As he re-ascended the staircase, I heard him utter, in feeble and piteous accents, stopping at every interval, and fetching his breath with extreme difficulty: "A week longer and I shall no more ascend these stairs: It will certainly shorten my miserable existence." He was examined in the *Salle du Conseil*, by M. de Crone, and had, during his continuance in the Bastille, such violent attacks of his disorder, that they were under the necessity of allowing him an invalid to be near him both day and night. During his confinement, the Governor and officers visited him every day. His name, and the cause of his imprisonment, I was once acquainted with, but it will not perhaps be much wondered at if the multiplicity of my own subsequent misfortunes have erased it from my memory.

In the month of September the Commissary Chenon came to my chamber with a very cheerful air, and informed me that the Cardinal—at least his family—desired this matter might be brought on in the parliament; adding that the Cardinal had four advocates for the occasion; "but as the Baron de Breteuil thinks that you have no acquaintance with any, here are the names of three," said he, showing me the

names written at the bottom of a letter, and the writing, which I knew to be the Baron de Breteuil's, at once inspired me with confidence and hope.

The name of the first was M. Doillot; the two others I cannot recollect, but they were gentlemen of considerable eminence in their profession. The Commissary then acquainted me that he would write a circular to each of them, mentioning the names of all three in every letter, and that it was the desire of the Lieutenant of the Police that I should also write to them myself.

On the 13th, at eleven in the morning, M. Doillot arrived, went to the Police, had an interview with M. de Crone, and appeared well satisfied.

M. Doillot had scarcely departed, when the carriage of the Baron de Breteuil arrived. M. de Crone informed him that M. Doillot had been there, and was gone to see him. I learnt that the Baron de Breteuil recommended me strongly. Hostile, as I have before mentioned, to the Cardinal's interest, he seemed particularly to concern himself for mine. M. Doillot was presented to me by the Governor, who remained about a quarter of an hour, and then departed, leaving M. Doillot and me in conference together.

M. Doillot, after having communicated to me the result of his interview with the Baron de Breteuil and M. de Crone, concluded by demanding what I had written.

I communicated to M. Doillot all that I had committed to paper. He read some part of it, and appeared at first surprised. "Madame," said he, "this is very serious! And you have written one for the Commissary, Chenon?" "Oh! no," "Madame,

you should not have given him anything. M. de Breteuil has good information; he does not want to be better instructed." He took down his own remarks, and everything which he had to write the next morning, and visited me during the space of four days, after which he went into the country.

A fortnight elapsed without my seeing M. Doillot. About the first week in October he returned to assure me that everything would be favourably arranged, and that all was going on as it should be. He seemed to avoid entering into any very minute or particular detail; and from many questions which I asked respecting the Cardinal, I found he was enraged against him, and appeared to load him with reproaches. Upon finding that I persisted in my resolution of discovering the truth, he was also much displeased with me. "You will absolutely ruin yourself," he remarked. "You are but a mere worm unprotected by the Queen's support; and if you are still so obstinately inclined towards the Cardinal, what will become of you?" "I wish to be informed," replied I, "what will be the consequence to the Cardinal." "Nothing, nothing, Madame: his family will support him! But is it possible that you can forgive him such an accusation as he has made against you, that you have gone abroad with the necklace? Oh, no, Madame! Banish even the slightest sentiment in his favour, as baneful to your interest, as productive of your destruction, and address yourself to your own preservation! You ought to drop every recollection of him! From the moment that he so palpably forgot himself, he has not merited any kindness from you, since he wishes to make you the victim!"

M. Doillot particularly enjoined me to be very cautious how I mentioned the Queen. I thought within myself, that if it were really true that the Cardinal had positively accused me of having stolen the necklace, he was extremely culpable, for I could not lay anything to my own charge. I could not immediately perceive what gave M. Doillot so much disturbance. I then conjectured that the Cardinal's ruin was planned by the Baron de Breteuil: I knew that the Queen had also resolved upon his destruction, and that I was intended to be the instrument to gratify the malice of the one and the revenge of the other. I wished not to be subservient to such purposes, and I fancied that the charge which they suggested the Cardinal had made against me was intended to exasperate me to pursue him to destruction.

While M. Doillot remained with me, I heard a knocking below, and took that opportunity to represent to him that if it were really true that the Cardinal had accused me, he would not converse with me so sociably as he did at that moment. I then explained to him the meaning of the knocking underneath, which I answered. He listened attentively. "Very true!" said M. Doillot; "but let us proceed further in this dumb conversation. Ask him his name!" I gave the number of knocks requisite for the question, according to the key to our correspondence, which I do not now exactly remember, though the plan was perfectly simple, consisting only of nineteen letters of the alphabet.

After pausing some time, I was greatly surprised to find that this person, whom I suspected to be the Cardinal, was the Marquis de Pelport, a relation of my

family. Though I was particularly intimate with his relations, yet I had not seen him more than once or twice at Versailles. It was then that I believed the Cardinal was guilty of the charge which I was given to understand he had exhibited against me.

M. Doillot was very well pleased with this discovery of my mistake, hoping that I should not now betray the secrets of the Queen, and that I should be pointedly inimical against the Cardinal. M. Doillot then left me, perfectly satisfied with my behaviour, and returned no more till towards the latter end of November. At this visit he was very communicative, and spoke with great confidence of my success. On the fourth of November he prepared a memoir for the inspection of the public, entitled, "*Memoir of Jean de St. Remy de Valois, Countess de la Motte, against the Cardinal de Rohan.*" M. Doillot came that same day this memoir was published, at eleven in the morning, and brought me one for my own perusal, at the same time apprising me that he had sent seventeen to the Baron de Breteuil, and had three hundred more ready for dispersion.

After communicating this intelligence, M. Doillot took his leave, so as to give me an opportunity of perusing my memoir; promising, at the same time, that he would return about six or seven in the evening. It is impossible for me to express how much I was surprised on glancing at this memoir. "Oh!" exclaimed I to myself, "I am ruined if I do not relate the truth!" I proceeded to examine the memoir, in the perusal of which I was frequently interrupted by my tears. As soon as I had finished, I waited impatiently

the arrival of the two other advocates, whom the Baron de Breteuil had appointed to exert themselves in my defence, jointly with M. Doillot.

When M. Doillot returned in the evening, I complained bitterly of the contents of the memoir, which appeared at once so complicated and improbable that they were scarcely entitled to credibility. I could not suppose the Cardinal would have been guilty of such meanness. M. Doillot assured me that I ought not to commit an affair of so much importance to other advocates, observing that there could neither be that secrecy nor unanimity among three persons, so necessary for proceeding effectually, and that my defence would be much better managed by one. He entreated me to compose myself; and, to induce me to be calm, he affected to be countenanced by the Queen. I have some reason to suspect that he was certainly authorized to raise my spirits by encouragement, and to put words into my mouth.

M. Doillot, well versed in the arts of his profession, knew how to persuade. But perhaps at that period he might be himself mistaken—perhaps he might have been too credulous; for M. Doillot has an established reputation, and has ever been held in the public estimation as a person of unshaken integrity, and I could never bring myself to suppose that a man nearly seventy years of age could be guilty of deceit. I chose to believe him what he always appeared, rejecting the insinuations of many persons (which were probably to serve their own private purposes), that he was connected with the partizans of the Queen to sacrifice me. To these reports I gave no credit. If they were really well-founded, may God forgive him! It

was no trifling gratification to the vanity of M. Doillot that these memoirs made a noise throughout all Paris, and created such disturbances that he was obliged to have the Gué at his house during the time of their distribution. To give an idea how strongly the curiosity of the public was excited in this business, it is necessary to mention that there were not less than a thousand distributed in the course of a week, and five thousand more sold by the printers for their own benefit. It is a very remarkable circumstance that there was nothing in the style or language of these memoirs that could produce so rapid a distribution, which must be attributed solely to the curiosity of the public. M. Doillot received not less than three thousand written applications for these pamphlets, a great number of which he brought to show me. This respectable gentleman was, however, frequently in danger of being assassinated, as there were often at his house persons of his acquaintance who, after having some discourse with others who were disguised, advised him to take care of himself, as he exposed himself to great danger from having undertaken to plead my cause against the family of the Cardinal. From thence proceeded many conjectures and rumours, spread by the partizans of the house of Rohan, that he had certainly received money from the Queen, or at least that he had great expectations for being so zealous. Several anonymous letters were sent to him on this occasion, many of which I have read, tending to intimidate him. One day persons in disguise informed him that he was acting contrary to the wishes of the Queen in undertaking my defence; but M. Doillot was much better informed than to be the dupe of such an

artifice as this; and notwithstanding every attempt to intimidate him, he proceeded in defending my cause. It was indeed not very difficult to fathom these anonymous letters, to know the intent of the persons in disguise, nor the quarter from whence these efforts proceeded. M. Doillot came of his own accord to visit me every day towards the end of November, and kindly endeavoured to reason down my fears, to inspire me with confidence, and to recall my wonted gaiety. I found that I was unjustly accused. I scrutinized my inmost thoughts, which told me I was innocent, while reason seemed to assure me that innocence and peace were generally companions, and in whatever happy bosom they condescended to make their abode, the gloom of despondency could not enter, and the chains of captivity would not be felt. Hail, ye bright emanations from heaven! celestial supporters of virtue! Sustained by you, the expanding soul bursts forth, wanders at large beyond the puny efforts of tyranny to confine it, derides oppression, and disdains the chain!

The horrors of my situation began now rapidly to decrease. I sang as though I had been at large in my own house, substituting this simple amusement for conversation with the Marquis de Pelpport. In this mansion of the Bastille I frequently conversed with M. Doillot upon the blessings enjoyed by the English nation. How much did I envy the liberty of the inhabitants of that happy country, where I can now speak the truth without the danger of being molested! How much does the reflection comfort my heart that I am now in a kingdom whose equal laws protect the weak from the oppression of the powerful —where the peasant can have redress against the

injuries of the peer—where the accused is not condemned unheard, and where he can meet his accusers face to face, and their allegations are weighed in the impartial balance of justice.

I have before said that I had again assumed my wonted gaiety. Alas! there was a shock which I received from afar, and which I thought I should not so suddenly have received—a shock which was more difficult to sustain than every other. Misfortunes seldom come alone—the history of human nature proves it in almost every page.

Being possessed of my brother's letter-of-attorney, to whom I had sent frequent remittances, but through negligence had not for some time received the payments from the Treasury, three or four years' pension became due about this period, when, wishing to make some little payments, I authorized my advocate to receive some money for me at the Royal Treasury. M. Minguet, my notary, perfectly confiding in the security of my brother's brevet, brought it me himself. One morning, a little out of humour with M. Doillot, who was continually ringing in my ears demands for money, I could not help reprimanding him for neglecting to receive it at the Treasury, as I had desired. He pleaded multiplicity of business in extenuation of this omission. This answer appeared very singular, and I could scarcely believe him serious. "M. Doillot," said I, observing him with an eye of eager attention, and a countenance of disguised suspense, "is my brother dead?" He said "No;" but so mysteriously that it alarmed my apprehensions. I determined, if possible, to know the worst: and the better to engage M. Doillot to admit the truth, I as-

sumed an appearance of calmness and resignation, spoke of the mortality of human nature, and told him that whatever might be my fate, I would submit with patient resignation to the afflicting dispensations of an unerring Providence. "I will," continued I, "summon up all my resolution to sustain those misfortunes which I cannot avoid."

M. Doillot, believing me tolerably reconciled, at length informed me that my brother was dead. "He died," continued he, "at Salam, in the East Indies, where he was buried previous to the sailing of his frigate."

The Marshal de Castries, whom I had seen in the month of July, informed me of his safe arrival, but could not exactly ascertain the time. This was the crisis when I thought I should have had the firmness to stifle in resignation the rising throb of severe distress; this was the moment when I fancied myself steeled with fortitude.

If I have formerly been reproved for too much sensibility, and nerves too finely strung to bear even the slightest accent of reproof, picture to yourselves, ye sympathetic souls, if it is in the power of imagination to conceive without the melancholy experience of the event, what was the state of my distracted mind, when M. Doillot informed me of my brother's death! This was a most afflicting stroke. My father, sister, mother, all taken away; my brother was my only friend, the prop of my declining hopes, the ornament, the defender of his country; but perhaps he was prematurely called up to heaven, in an act of mercy, that he might not partake the insults offered to his family; that he might not be

a witness to the injuries heaped upon his miserable sister.

I strove, as much as possible, to conceal my emotions before M. Doillot, lest, at some future time, he might conceal from me circumstances with which I ought to be acquainted, in compassion to my sensibility. Yet did I find it very difficult to suppress those sensations which appeared strongly, even in my efforts to vanquish them, and to which I so anxiously wished to give vent.

As soon as M. Doillot quitted me, I remained in a very pensive situation, combating a multitude of the most gloomy ideas, which presented themselves in quick and painful succession. The death of my brother weighed down my heart; I walked hastily across my chamber, making every effort to drive from my thoughts ideas so intensely distressing. "Is he then dead?" said I to myself. "And will he never return? Alas! no! Well, then, let me be resolute; let me summon up all my resolution, and I have need of much to bear up against the power of my accusers, lest the grief of my heart should deprive me of the ability of making my defence, and my enemies should triumph in that stupor of grief, which, by preventing me from substantiating my innocence, will exaggerate my supposed criminality. This thought roused me. I fancied myself to be more tranquil, and strove to dissipate my troubled thoughts by writing; when the Marquis de Pelport gave a knock, which commenced a conversation, to which I answered, and communicated my grief. He was sorry that M. Doillot had told me the circumstance, and assured me that he was acquainted with it some

time ago; but that he highly disapproved of the conduct of M. Doillot, in not concealing it from me.

I laid myself down about eleven o'clock, as I thought sufficiently calm; but about three or four in the morning I was seized with a violent convulsion, and in the ravings of delirium, upset a large table, which was standing by my bedside, with all its contents. The noise alarmed the Marquis de Pelpont, who knocked violently, to know what was the matter. This knocking awakened the turnkey, who ran directly to his room. The Marquis communicated what he had heard above, upon which the turnkey came up. On opening the door, and seeing my situation, he ran away, terrified almost out of his senses, and called one of the invalids, whom he despatched instantly to wake the surgeon and the King's Lieutenant, who, upon their arrival, found me replaced in my bed, trembling under the agitation of a violent convulsion, which going off, the tears rolled down my cheeks in great abundance. "Oh, my dear brother!" exclaimed I. "Oh, pillar of my hopes! and art thou indeed dead? And shall thy affectionate sister behold thee no more?" After these words, intermixed with tears and heavy sobs, the Surgeon gave me some anodyne medicine, which tended a little to assuage the agitation of my mind, and so composed me that I fell into a slumber. The turnkey and an invalid remained with me, whom I was not a little surprised at seeing in my chamber when I awoke, which was about seven in the morning. They told me everything that had passed during the night, of which I had but a very imperfect recollection.

About ten the surgeon, attended by the Governor

and the other officers, came to pay me a visit. I sustained their presence very well, and listened to everything that they had to say to me without finding myself much affected; but I was so much fatigued and bruised from having bent myself so violently, that I was incapable of raising myself in bed. They bled me twice, which in some measure alleviated the violence of my disorder; but I have at this day pains in my head, derived from this severe affection.

Since this attack, I have grown familiar with reflections on death. I have contemplated it so often that it appears to me only dreadful at a distance; every day of its approach it loses its horrors. I have reasoned myself into that firmness, that I stand on the precipice of dissolution: I look up, and my eyes do not ache; I look down, and my heart does not tremble. I have read authors who assert that courage is in men—the characteristic of the male sex; they have expatiated on this virtue as characteristic of magnanimity; I have considered it a desirable qualification, which, though a female, I have endeavoured to attain. That brother whose death I so deeply mourned possessed it eminently; and that courage which he manifested in the hour of danger, I wished might be also inherent in me. Since this era I made it my constant study to acquire sufficient intrepidity to encounter, and resolution enough to sustain, all those miseries to which human nature is subject, of which more than a common share has fallen to my lot.

Three or four days after my illness, M. Doillot arrived. He found me up, and apparently in much better spirits than he expected. He had indeed been

reproved by the Governor for his indiscretion in making that communication which had so deeply affected me; but he was pleased at finding me in such spirits. It is indeed true that these spirits were forced, and that I affected to be more cheerful than I really was, to make M. Doillot more easy and less apprehensive of a repetition of those censures from the Governor which he had before received for what was considered his imprudent communication. He then informed me that fear and compunction for what he had done, and the apprehension of becoming the object of public censure from his conduct being submitted through the medium of my memoir to public inspection, had so affected the Commissary Chenon, that he was at that time at Charenton, at the house of *Les Peres de la Charite* (a private mad-house). Although not naturally vindictive, I was nevertheless not very uneasy to learn this news, which gave me a greater degree of resolution to hear the rest.

I suspend for an instant the narrative of my more immediate concerns to say a few words respecting my sister, who was no sooner apprized by public report of my confinement in the Bastille, than she immediately went in the greatest anxiety in quest of the Baron de Breteuil, whom she had formerly, at the Hotel de Boulainvilliers, persuaded herself was warmly my friend.

The Baron de Breteuil was not a little surprised at seeing my sister, which was at the Louvre one day when there was a public audience, as he could not foresee the reason of her visit. She very prudently only desired to speak two words to him. "I am

Mademoiselle Valois," said she, in a very low whisper, in the presence of M. de Chauspiere, an advocate. "I am sorry, Madame; but really I can do nothing for her. You should apply to M. the Count de Vergennes. I wish to avoid as much as possible that the family of Rohan should have it in their power to say that I am the enemy of the Cardinal or the friend of your sister; otherwise I am sufficiently disposed. Apply to the Count de Vergennes—it is he who has the sole management of this affair."

My sister, disheartened by this reception, shed tears and departed, determined to take the earliest opportunity of making application to the Count de Vergennes. She wrote to him at Versailles, but received no answer. She determined to go herself on the next day of public audience. She approached the Minister, and made her request. "Madame," replied he, "your sister is peculiarly fortunate. Nothing at all will be wanting—her affairs are in very good hands." "Sir," replied my sister, "the Cardinal is allowed to see all his family and his friends: my sister has no relation but me. I entreat you, then, to grant me permission to visit her. M. de Launay, Governor of the Bastille, whom I have waited upon in expectation of seeing my sister, has informed me that he has no power without an order from the Minister." "'Tis very true, Madame," replied the Count de Vergennes; "but, Madame, I am sorry that I can do nothing myself. Have you no friend near the King who has sufficient influence to procure this indulgence from his Majesty? for it is the King himself who has granted this permission to the Cardinal's

family and his friends to visit him." From this answer my poor sister, perplexed in the extreme at being thus disappointed, went to seek M. Doillot, to whom she related the difficulties she had met with and her despair of removing them; and since she could not obtain permission to visit me in the Bastille, she requested his opinion whether he thought it practicable to see me upon the tower? M. Doillot answered in the affirmative. In consequence of this my sister determined to see me in the best manner she could, and to station herself on one of the highest eminences of the Boulevards.

M. Doillot came the day preceding to inform me of the day and the hour. The next day, at one, was the time appointed. I communicated to the King's new Lieutenant, Du Puget, that I had made choice of that hour for my walk upon the tower, well knowing that all the officers would at that hour be engaged in business. I therefore walked about, only accompanied by an invalid, in whom the Governor placed great confidence. I had scarcely taken a turn upon the tower when I perceived my sister, accompanied by two gentlemen and a lady; one was the Viscount de Barrass, nephew of the Count de Barrass, a particular friend of my brother's, on account of whose friendship the Viscount paid his addresses to my sister, and would probably have married her, had not my apprehension prevented the nuptials; the others were the Abbé de Paff, and a lady. These friends waved their handkerchiefs as a signal, which I observing, did the same, but without stopping; and I waved my handkerchief behind the invalid, to prevent his perceiving me, who either did not or feigned not to see me, lest he should

be severely reprimanded. It was also contrary to the ordinances of the Bastille to stop near the parapet, except in the presence of the Governor and the other officers; but in the little cabinet opposite the coffee-house which formed the angle of the Boulevards every prisoner may, if he prefers rest to walking, continue all the time allowed him for recreation. I, however, employed my whole hour in walking, and a quarter of an hour more to rest in this cabinet, to send a kiss to my sister and salute her company, when I had done which I immediately retired without the least agitation, pleased with having seen my sister. The pleasure I experienced in having seen her was quite sufficient. I was already a philosopher, but it was different with her. The moment after I disappeared, she was taken suddenly ill in the middle of the Boulevards, and conducted by the company and many of the spectators, who kindly interested themselves in her distress, to a coffee-house, to procure her some assistance.

This incident, which soon became public, at length reached the ears of the Governor de Launay, who strictly questioned my conductor, but he answered very satisfactorily that he had seen nothing, that he had perceived nothing of the kind, and the Governor said nothing more about it. M. Doillot informed me at the next visit that my sister was somewhat better, but that she would never again be tempted to see me in that manner. The dear creature, as M. Doillot informed me, was a spectacle of grief since my imprisonment—so changed as scarcely to be known, and she had but too much reason to tremble for my fate. She judged that, from several circumstances—the

favour shown to the Cardinal, by permission being granted to his friends to visit him—from that privilege being denied to her—from the neutrality of the Baron de Breteuil—from all these reasons combined she judged, and with truth, which weight would incline the balance. She had sufficient presentiment of the event from having been refused admission to see me by the minister, when she knew that all Paris rang with the number of visitors which the Cardinal received in prison; while I, unfortunate, friendless, and unprotected, was denied even the privilege of seeing my own sister, and doomed to pine in solitary silence and to read the horrors of the future in the page of my present misery.

It may easily be imagined what little comfort a person in such a situation, suspected of a crime the very idea of which makes her start with horror, could have had when left to herself in solitary bondage. Such a situation might weigh down even the greater fortitude of the other sex. I should have been depressed, even to the grave, had I been really guilty of the crime laid to my charge; but the fullest conviction of my integrity, and a confidence in His arm who defends the innocent and succours the oppressed, alone sustained me amidst the present and the melancholy anticipation of future miseries, while a cheerful acquiescence to the will of Heaven illumined my countenance with a smile, even in the devouring jaws of the Bastille.

There were moments when I thought everything would terminate successfully, and when, through the medium of hope, the future appeared a pleasing prospect. “The Cardinal,” said I, to myself, “from the

influence of his family, will be soon set at liberty, and I shall owe my deliverance to her Majesty's generosity, who will suspend all further process." Thus calmly did I sometimes reason on what was reputed to be our common crime. At some moments I had such a flow of spirits that I frequently amused myself with singing a number of songs as they succeeded one another in my mind, blending them all together without any attention to regularity. Many of the invalids who heard me reported to the Governor that a lady in the third *comptée* sang at least sixty different songs and airs every day, and that she got up to the window, where they saw her very plainly.

The Governor, upon this intelligence, ordered them to come and listen to what I sang; he also stationed another person to listen attentively to the words of my songs. I was aware of my spy, though he spoke very low. I redoubled my efforts, and sang this passage from *Richard Cœur de Lion*—"Oh, Richard! oh, mon Roi!" substituting instead of the name Richard that of Valois, "by all the world forsaken!" I took occasion in the course of my song to introduce the name of the Governor, and finished with a loud laugh. The poor Marquis de Pelpert, who saw our spy, dared not utter a word; but I, not at all alarmed at the spy, nor having the least fear of the Governor, continued my song.

At eight the same evening the Governor came to see me. "Oh, oh!" said I to him, gaily, "you are very obliging to make me a visit. You wish, then, to gain the good-will of the prisoners by coming to see them?"

He smiled. "But you are a singer," said he. "I

The Diamond Necklace.

am very sorry to have interrupted you." And this Governor, so very rigid and austere, who had prohibited singing in the Bastille, entreated me to do him the favour to sing a song. I at first hesitated, but after some little consideration began to sing, and, that I might be heard throughout the Bastille, I sang a brisk tune. As soon as I had finished, I said, in a rallying tone, "Very well, Governor, you have not behaved with the greatest consistency in sending my turnkey, St. Jean, to desire me not to sing, because it is contrary to the rules of the Bastille, when I can actually say that I have authority to sing even from the Governor himself!" I then informed him what I heard, calling him a spy. Though this was all spoken in a jocular manner, he made no reply, which indeed I did not regret; for underneath this disguise of exterior affability there was much latent falsehood, of which I had but too much reason to complain.

From this epoch he has fulfilled the measure of his malevolence against me; but this I cease to mention: otherwise I could not only state the times, but the occasions. This same person visited me every evening, and passed an hour or two with me, which was constantly occupied in trifling chit-chat; for it is not a little singular that, during the six months I was in the Bastille, neither the Governor nor any other person ever said a word relative to my affairs, nor ever spoke of the Cardinal, except once, when he mentioned that he walked every day in his garden, about eleven o'clock, and that he passed upon his rounds under my window, accompanied by the Prince de Montbasson and his brother. "They stopped directly opposite to your tower," said he, "on hear-

ing you sing; in consequence of which I beg that you will not sing at that time again." I promised to obey this injunction, though my curiosity was strongly excited by the manner in which I saw the Cardinal, who constantly fixed his eyes on the window of my prison, and appeared anxious to see me: he also spoke in an elevated tone, with a view doubtless that I might clearly understand him.

A few days subsequent to this interview with the Governor, the Lieutenant came to my apartment, and conducted me to the same hall where I had been first examined. I cannot say I felt myself much agitated on this examination, which might be deemed a private one compared to those which followed. On my arrival I received the *decrets* from the hands of two *gressiers*, one of whom, named M. Fremyn, I shall have occasion frequently to mention, as a person strongly prejudiced in favour of the Cardinal; and though my inveterate enemy, yet assuming the specious disguise of affability and concern for my interest, which made him more dangerous, as having greater power to deceive. The business being finished, and the *decrets* delivered, after a few complimentary expressions, I was again conducted to my apartment, and secured within those many bars, the dreadful emblems of tyranny and oppression.

I was here, indeed, shut up from all communication with the world, and denied the privilege of even speaking to my sister—my sister-in-law being confined in the Bastille six months for only attempting to see me. With an imagination naturally active and energetic—qualities, alas! fatal to its own repose—to what could I have recourse for amusement? I sometimes

had recourse to the ingenious expedient which necessity had taught me, of holding conversation with the Marquis de Pelpont; devoted some hours to contemplation; and the remaining time was occupied in addressing fervent supplications to that heavenly throne which yet regards the cries an earthly tribunal may have thought proper to reject.

The loss of my brother, joined to my own unhappy situation, had weaned me from every hope of happiness on earth. My attachment for worldly comforts being destroyed, the native energy of my mind sought to fix itself on that rock where it could view the storms of oppression unheeded beneath. But alas! such is the frailty of human nature, such was sometimes my despondency, that notwithstanding my reliance on the Omnipotent Being whose power is over all, I blush to confess there were moments when my heart failed me,—“when my soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;” there were moments when, to use the expression of the Psalmist, “I communed with myself, and was silent.”

THE END.

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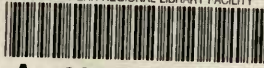
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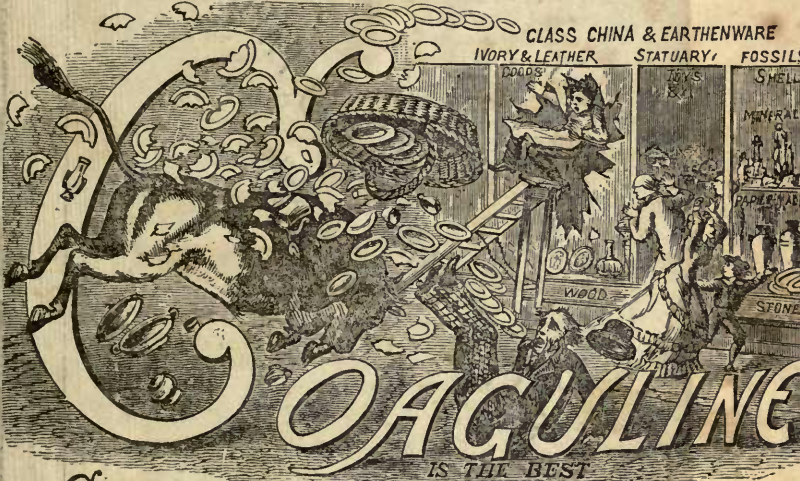
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