LE CHEVALIER DE MAISON-ROUGE
"I have been badly upset by the smell of the tobacco which monsieur smokes."
Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge
Alexandre Dumas
Illustrated by Harold Piffard

London & Glasgow
Collins' Clear-Type Press
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CHAPTER I

THE VOLUNTEERS

It was the evening of 10th March, 1793. Ten o'clock had just rung out from Notre-Dame, each stroke vibrating sadly and monotonously. Night had descended upon Paris, not blustering and stormy, but cold and foggy. Paris itself was not the Paris that we know—dazzling at night with a thousand reflected lights, the Paris of busy promenaders, of roystering suburbs: it was a city timid, yet busy, whose few inhabitants ran on their errands from street to street, and took refuge behind their portes-cochères, as wild beasts tracked by the hunters creep into their lairs. It was, in short, as we have said, the Paris of the 10th March, 1793.

A word or two upon the situation which had produced this change in the aspect of the city, and then begins the recital of those events upon which our story hinges.

France, by the execution of Louis XVI., had broken with all Europe. To her three former enemies—Prussia, the Empire, Piedmont—were now joined England, Holland, and Spain. Sweden and Denmark alone, busied in watching Catherine II. wrecking Poland, maintained their former attitude of neutrality. The situation was appalling. France, less despised for her physical force, but also less respected for her moral strength since the massacres in September and the execution of the 21st January, was literally
besieged by the whole of Europe. England had invaded her coasts; Spain was ready to pour her troops through the Pyrenees; Piedmont and Austria through the Alps; Holland and Prussia were gathered in the north of the Netherlands; whilst from the Upper Rhine to Escaut two hundred and fifty thousand men marched with one accord to war against the Republic.

On all sides her generals were repulsed. Miaczinski had been compelled to abandon Aix-la-Chapelle and to retreat on Liège. Steingel and Neuilly were thrown back into Limbourg; Miranda, who was besieging Maëstricht, had fallen on Tongres. Valence and Dampierre, reduced to beat a retreat, had been obliged to leave part of their ammunition behind them. More than ten thousand men had already deserted and scattered themselves throughout the interior. Sensitive at heart as a living body is, France felt at Paris, her very heart's core, each of the blows which invasion, revolt, or treachery dealt her from the most distant quarters. Each victory was signalised by an outburst of joy, each defeat produced a feeling of terror. One can easily understand, therefore, into what a state Paris had been thrown by the news of the successive reverses which France had just experienced.

The night before (the 9th March) a most stormy outburst had occurred in the Convention. All the officers had received orders to rejoin their regiments forthwith; and Danton, that bold proposer of impossible projects which yet got executed, Danton, mounting the rostrum, had shouted: ‘You say that soldiers are lacking? Give Paris a chance of saving France; ask her for thirty thousand men to send to Dumouriez, and not only is France saved, but the conquest of Belgium and Holland is assured.’ The proposal had been greeted with cries of enthusiasm. Lists had been opened in the various assemblies, the members of which were summoned to meet together at night. Places of amusement had been closed so that there
should be no counter-attraction, and the black flag hoisted over the Town Hall, in token of distress. By midnight thirty-five thousand names were enrolled. Moreover, as had happened in September, the recruits had expressed the desire that, before their departure, the traitors should be punished.

The traitors were, as a matter of fact, the contra-revolutionaries, the secret conspirators who menaced from within the Revolution which was attacked from without. But, as is easily understood, the meaning of the word was extended according to the whim of the extreme parties who were then rending France asunder. The traitors signified the weakest party; and the Girondins chanced to be that party. The Montagnards decided that the Girondins were the traitors.

The next day, being the 10th March, all the Montagnard deputies attended the meeting. The Jacobins, armed, had filled the galleries, after ejecting the women from them; the Mayor appeared with the Council of the Commune, confirmed the report of the Commissioners of the Convention as to the citizens' devotedness, and repeated the wish unanimously expressed the night before for the establishment of an extraordinary tribunal to judge the traitors.

A report from the Committee was at once loudly demanded, and the Committee thereupon withdrew in order to deliberate. Ten minutes later, Robert Lindet announced that a tribunal would be appointed, and that it would consist of nine judges, elected without formality. This tribunal, divided into two permanent sections, would prosecute, either directly or at the instigation of the Convention, those who essayed to lead the people astray—a clause which, as we see, had a wide application. The Girondins, realising that it was directed against them, rose in a body. 'Death,' they shouted, 'rather than consent to the establishment of this Venetian inquisition!'
As a reply to this outburst, the Montagnards cried for the voice of the Assembly, and the majority, in spite of all expectations, supported these three measures: first, that jurymen be appointed; second, that these be chosen in equal numbers from each department; third, that they be nominated by the Convention. As these measures were being passed, loud cries arose outside. The Convention, accustomed to visits from the people, sent to inquire what was wanted; reply came that a deputation of the recruits wished to pass in review before it.

Immediately the doors were thrown open, and six hundred men, half drunk, armed with sabres, pistols, and pikes, marched round the hall amid cheers, loudly calling for the death of the traitors. ‘Yes,’ answered Collot d’Herbois, ‘yes, friends, despite all intrigue, we will save you—you and liberty!’ The words were accompanied by a glance at the Girondins, who fully recognised their perilous position. Indeed, no sooner was the meeting ended than the Montagnards, rushing to the other clubs—to the Cordeliers and the Jacobins—proposed to cut the traitors’ throats that very night.

Louvet’s wife, in her house in Rue Saint-Honoré, near the meeting-place of the Jacobins, alarmed by the commotion, descended to the hall, heard the proposal, and returned hastily to warn her husband. Louvet, rushing to inform his friends, found them all out, and, learning that one was at Pétion’s house, went there, and discovered them calmly discussing a decree to be presented the next day. This they were confident would be adopted. Louvet unfolded the plots that were being hatched, urging them to take active measures. Then Pétion, rising calm and impassive as ever, opened the window, thrust out his hand to withdraw it wet and dripping. ‘It is raining,’ was his remark; ‘nothing will happen to-night.’

This same night, while these events were occurring,
a woman, enveloped in a lilac-coloured cloak, was gliding along the Rue Saint-Honoré, hiding in doorways when any of the night-watch appeared, holding her breath till they passed, then resuming her hurried, uneasy walk. She had already passed safely through part of the Rue Saint-Honoré, when, at the corner of Rue de Grenelle she encountered a little troop of the brave, newly-enrolled recruits, who, after dining in the Corn Exchange, found their patriotic feelings highly intensified by the numerous toasts they had drunk to their future victories. Uttering a faint cry, the poor woman tried to escape.

'Hallo! citizeness. Where are you going?' cried the chief of the party, for these worthy patriots had already chosen leaders.

Without replying, the fugitive continued running. 'Present arms! It is a man disguised, an aristocrat who attempts to escape.' There was a sound of guns rattling in hands rather too unsteady to take good aim, and the poor woman hastily retraced her steps, exclaiming, 'No, no! citizen, you are wrong; I am not a man.'

'Advance, then, and reply to my questions in a straightforward fashion,' ordered the chief. 'Where are you going, fair one?'

'I am not going anywhere, citizen; I am returning.'

'It is a late hour for a respectable woman, citizeness.'

'I have been visiting a relative who is ill.'

'Poor little dear! where is your passport?'

'My passport! Why do you ask that question?'

'Have you not read the decree of the Commune?'

'Oh, no. What does it say?'

'This decree forbids any one to be abroad after ten o'clock at night without a civic pass. Have you yours?'

'Alas! no. I was not aware of the necessity for having one.'

'Then let us go to the first police office; there you
can give a pretty little explanation to the captain, and, if he is satisfied, he will see that you are safely escorted home, otherwise he will keep you until further information is forthcoming. To the left, quick march!

The cry of terror uttered by the prisoner revealed how much she dreaded this ordeal.

'Oh! oh,' said the leader; 'I feel sure we have captured some one of importance. Come forward, my little ci-devant.'

Seizing the woman's arm, he dragged her, in spite of cries and tears, towards the police office of the Palais-Egalité. The party had reached the barrier des Sergents when suddenly a tall young man in a cloak turned the corner of Rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs, just as the prisoner was begging to be released. Headless of her supplications, her captor dragged her roughly forward. The young woman uttered a cry, half in fear, half in pain, and the young man rushed across the street towards the little group.

'What is happening, and what are you doing to this woman?' he asked.

'Instead of asking me questions, mind your own business.'

'Who is this woman, citizens, and what is your business with her?' repeated the young man in still more commanding tones.

'But who are you, to question us thus?'

Opening his cloak, the new-comer displayed a military uniform, on which blazed an epaulet.

'I am, as you see, an officer in the Civic Guard,' he observed.

'Well! what does that matter to us? Do you think we recognise the officers of the Civic Guard?'

'What is he saying?' asked another volunteer in a tone of irony.

'He says that if the epaulet cannot win respect for the officer, the sword will for the epaulet,' answered the young man, as, stepping back, he drew from the
folds of his cloak a glittering sword. With a deft movement, seizing the leader by his collar, he placed the point of his weapon on his throat.

'I warn you that, at the slightest motion you or your men make, I run you through the body,' said he. 'You asked me who I was; though you have no right to ask, I will tell you. My name is Maurice Lindey; I am a lieutenant in the National Guard and secretary to the Company of Brothers and Friends. Does that satisfy you?'

'Ah! citizen lieutenant, that is quite another matter,' answered the leader. 'If you are really what you say, a good patriot——'

'There, I knew we should understand one another. Now, answer; why was this woman crying, and what were you doing to her?'

'We were taking her to the Poste. She has no civic card, and the last decree of the Convention ordered the arrest of any person appearing in the streets after ten o'clock without one. Do you forget that the country is in danger, and that the black flag floats over the Town Hall?'

'The black flag floats over the Town Hall, and the country is in danger, not because a woman runs through the streets of Paris after ten o'clock, but because two hundred thousand slaves march against France. Still, citizen, the decree exists; you were only obeying orders. It is right to be patriotic, but it is also well to be polite; the officer first to be respected by the citizens is that one they have themselves appointed. Now, carry off this woman if you wish; you are free.'

'Oh! citizen,' cried the woman, seizing Maurice's arm; 'do not leave me to the mercy of these rough men.'

'Very well, take my arm, and I will escort you to the Poste.'

'The Poste! Why so, seeing I have harmed no one?'
'We take you there because you have no passport, and there is a law forbidding any one to be abroad without one.'

'But, monsieur, I was ignorant of such a law.'

'Citizenship, you will find worthy men at the Poste who will appreciate your reasons; from them you have nothing to fear.'

'Monsieur,' said the young woman, pressing the officer's arm, 'it is not insult I dread now, it is death; if I am taken to the Poste, I am lost.'

CHAPTER II

THE UNKNOWN

The young woman's voice was so cultured and withal betrayed such fear that Maurice started. Turning towards the volunteers, who were evidently discussing plans for regaining the ground lost, he stood irresolute, with brows knit and sword in hand. As a man he felt compelled to defend this woman, while his duty as a citizen impelled him to retain her in custody. Suddenly a glint of arms appeared at the corner of Rue Bons-Enfants, and the measured tread of a patrol was heard. Perceiving our group, the patrol halted, and the corporal exclaimed,—

'Who goes there?'

'A friend!' answered Maurice. 'Advance, Lorin.'

'Ah! it is you, Maurice; what is your business in the streets at this hour?'

'I was returning home when I found the citizeness in the hands of the citizen-volunteers, so I inquired why they were arresting her.'

'Just what I should have expected from you,' answered Lorin. 'Why were you arresting her?' he continued, addressing the volunteer leader.
We have already told the lieutenant; because she had no passport. Don’t you know the law passed by the Commune?

Of course I do! but there is another law annulling that one; here it is:—

On Pindar and Parnassus,
Love’s law exists to say,
That Youth, and Grace, and Beauty,
At any time of day,
May safely on their travels go,
And ne’er a passport need to show.

What do you think of that law, citizen? It is a gallant one, in my opinion.

Yes; but it hardly appears workable. For one thing, it is not published in the Moniteur, and, besides, we are neither on Pindar nor on Parnassus; finally, it is night, not day, and the citizeness is perhaps neither young, nor fair, nor graceful. My own opinion is that she is some low-born spy in the pay of the aristocrats.

Oh! monsieur, exclaimed the young woman, stepping towards Maurice and displaying a charming refined face, resplendent with youth and beauty. ‘Oh! look at me; do I seem like what he calls me?’

Maurice felt dazed. Never had he even dreamed of anything so fair. ‘Lorin,’ said he, in low tones, ‘demand the prisoner that you may conduct her to your guard-house; it is within your rights as leader of patrol.’

‘Good! I thoroughly understand you,’ replied the young corporal. ‘Come, my fair one,’ continued he, addressing the woman, ‘you must follow us.’

‘How follow you?’ cried the leader of the volunteers.

‘Certainly, we are going to escort the citizeness to the Town Hall, where we are on guard; there we shall investigate the matter more thoroughly.’

‘Not at all; she is ours, and we retain her.’

‘Ah! citizens, citizens, we are getting angry.’
'Be angry, or don't be angry; it's all one to us. We are true soldiers of the Republic, and whilst you patrol the streets, we go to shed our blood at the frontier.'

'Take care not to spill any on your way, citizens; such a thing may well happen, unless you become more polite in your manners.'

'Politeness is a virtue of the aristocracy, and we are sans-culottes.'

'Madame,' exclaimed Maurice, 'you see what is happening, and can guess that in five minutes ten or eleven men will be cutting themselves in pieces for you. Is the cause that we have decided to champion worthy of the blood that will be shed in its defence?'

'Monsieur, I can only assert that my arrest will cause such misfortune to myself and others that I would rather you killed me and threw my corpse into the Seine.'

'Very good, madame; I accept the full responsibility,' answered Maurice. Then, turning to the National Guards: 'Citizens,' said he, 'as your officer, as a patriot, as a Frenchman, I order you to protect this lady. And Lorin, bayonet these fellows if they utter a word!'

'Arms ready!' commanded Lorin.

The volunteers made a show of resistance, and a pistol-shot passed through Maurice's hat. 'Fix bayonets,' said Lorin.

Then followed in the darkness a brief contest, marked by the report of arms, and by oaths and curses; but nobody came to inquire into the cause of the trouble, for, as we already mentioned, a massacre was vaguely expected, and people took this to be the beginning. A few windows were opened, and instantly shut again. The volunteers, inferior in numbers and arms, were quickly overpowered. Two were severely wounded, four others were pinioned against the wall with bayonets at their chests.
'Now,' said Lorin, 'I hope you will all be as gentle as lambs. Citizen Maurice, I order you to escort this woman to the guard-house. You understand that you are responsible.'

'Yes,' answered Maurice; 'and the password?'

'Ah, the deuce!—the password—I will tell you presently, but let us first settle with these fellows. Afterwards I should like to give you some good advice,' said Lorin, returning to the National Guards, who still kept guard over the volunteers.

'There, now, have you had enough?' he asked the latter.

'Yes, cursed Girondin,' answered the leader.

'You are mistaken, friend; we are better sans-culottes than you, being members of the Thermopylae Club, whose patriotism, I trust, no one challenges. Let the citizens go,' continued Lorin; 'they will make no further trouble.'

'All the same, should this woman be a suspect—'

'Had she been a suspect, she would have escaped during the fight, instead of waiting to the finish. Moreover, we shall have an opportunity of discovering what she is, since my friend is taking her to the Poste, whilst we go to drink the nation's health. I know a nice little tavern at the corner of Rue Thomas-du-Louvre.'

'Ah! why did you not mention that at once, citizen? We are vexed at having doubted your patriotism; as proof of it, let us embrace, in the name of the nation and its laws.'

Thereupon the Guards and the volunteers embraced heartily.

'En route, friends, for Rue Thomas-du-Louvre.'

'Are we to be left here?' asked the wounded in plaintive tones.

'Yes, we must abandon you, the brave who fell fighting for the Fatherland; but we will send litters.
Meanwhile, amuse yourselves by singing "The Marseillaise," said Lorin.

Then, approaching Maurice, 'I promised to give you some advice,' said he. 'Here it is. Come with us, instead of compromising yourself by protecting the citizeness, who seems charming, doubtless, but still is on that account all the more suspicious; for charming women who run about the streets of Paris at midnight—'

'Monsieur, I beg you not to judge by appearances; let your friend continue his kindness by escorting me home.'

'Maurice! think what you are about to do; you are compromising yourself horribly.'

'I am aware of that; but what can I do? If I abandon the poor woman, she will be arrested at every step.'

'Oh! yes, yes, whilst with you, monsieur—citizen, I mean, I am saved.'

'You hear, saved!' interrupted Lorin. 'She is, therefore, in great danger?'

'Come, my dear Lorin, be fair. She is either a good patriot or an aristocrat. If she is an aristocrat, we have done wrong to protect her; if she is a good patriot, it is our duty to preserve her.'

'Excuse me, dear friend, but your logic is stupid.'

'Come, Lorin, let us speak seriously; do you or do you not wish to give me the password?'

'You will not abuse it? Swear on the altar of the Fatherland,' commanded Lorin, presenting his hat with the cockade side up to Maurice, who swore the necessary vow on the improvised altar.

'Now, here is the password: "France and Lucretia!"'

'Citizeness, I am now at your service. Thanks, Lorin.'

'I wish you a pleasant walk,' replied the latter, replacing the altar of the Fatherland on his head as he strolled off humming a song.
On finding himself alone with the young woman, Maurice felt for a moment embarrassed. The fear of being duped, the attractive power of her wonderful beauty, a slight feeling of remorse troubling his conscience, restrained him from offering his arm to the stranger.

'Where have you to go, citizeness?' he asked.

'Alas! monsieur, a long way off. Near the Jardin des Plantes.'

'Very good; let us start.'

'Ah! monsieur, I am inconveniencing you; but had the danger I dreaded been an ordinary one, believe me, I would not thus abuse your generosity.'

'But, madame, how comes it that you are in the streets at this hour?'

'Monsieur, I told you; I had been paying a visit in the suburb of Roule. Setting out at midday in ignorance of what was happening, I was returning, likewise in ignorance; all my time has been spent in rather a retired house.'

'Yes, in some resort of the aristocrats,' muttered Maurice. 'Confess, citizeness, that you are laughing secretly at my assistance.'

'Why should I laugh?'

'Because a Republican acts as your guide, and, in doing so,betrays his cause.'

'But, citizen, you are wrong; I am as ardent an admirer of the Republic as you are.'

'Then, being a loyal patriot, you have nothing to conceal. Where had you come from?'

'Oh! monsieur, for pity's sake!' she pleaded.
'Surely,' thought Maurice, 'this woman returns from a meeting with her lover.'

Without understanding the reason, he felt his heart sink, and kept silence. In this way they arrived at the bridge of La Tournelle.

'We have now reached your neighbourhood, I believe,' observed Maurice, setting foot on the Quai Saint-Bernard.

'Yes, citizen; but it is just here I stand most in need of your help.'

'Indeed, madame, you forbid questions and, at the same time, do all you can to arouse my curiosity. It is unkind of you. Come, a little confidence; I have well deserved it, I think. Will you not honour me by informing me to whom I am speaking?'

'You are speaking, monsieur, to a woman whom you have saved from the greatest danger she has ever incurred, and who will be everlastingly grateful to you.'

'I do not ask for so much, madame; be less grateful, and simply tell me your name.'

'Indeed, impossible.'

'You would have told, however, had you been arrested.'

'No, never.'

'But, you would have been sent to prison—to the guillotine; you would have preferred that?'

'To treason . . . to reveal my name would be to betray!'

'Ah! I told you what a strange rôle I am playing for a Republican!'

'You act the part of a generous-hearted man! Finding a poor woman being insulted, instead of despising her for her lowly station, you conduct her to her wretched quarters—that is all.'

'Yes, you are right; that is as far as appearances go. I might have thought so had you not spoken to me; but your speech and beauty proclaim you a lady
of quality. That fact, contrasted with your dress and this squalid district, shows me that some mystery is connected with your being abroad at this hour. But let us say no more about it; are we still far from your dwelling, madame?

They were at that moment entering the Rue des Fossés-Saint-Victor.

'You see that small black building? When we arrive there, you will leave me,' replied the stranger, pointing out a house next to the Jardin des Plantes.

'Very well, madame. Command; I am here to obey you.'

'You are annoyed?'

'I? Not at all; besides, what does it matter to you?'

'It matters a great deal, since I have still a favour to get. I desire that you will leave me in a friendly manner.'

'Friendly! You honour me too much, madame. A strange friend who is ignorant of his friend's name, from whom she conceals her address, doubtless in order to be spared the unpleasantness of seeing him again.'

The young woman drooped her head without replying.

'Madame,' continued Maurice, 'if I have guessed some secret, you must not blame me; it was quite accidental.'

'Here is my destination, monsieur,' observed his companion.

They were now opposite the Rue Saint-Jacques, a street with numerous narrow lanes, filled with factories and tanneries, opening off it.

'Here? You dwell here? Impossible!'

'Nevertheless, it is true. So, farewell, my brave knight, my kind protector!'

'Farewell, madame; but first relieve my fears by assuring me that you are in no danger.'

'In none.'
'In that case, I take my leave,' remarked Maurice, bowing coldly, as he stepped back.

'I should not like to leave you so unceremoniously,' the woman said. 'Come, give me your hand, Monsieur Maurice.'

On stretching out his hand, Maurice felt her slipping a ring on his finger.

'Oh! citizeness, take care. You are in danger of losing a ring.'

'Oh! monsieur, this is ungrateful of you. Come, what do you wish?'

'In payment of my services, do you mean?' asked the young man, with some bitterness.

'No, but as compensation for withholding my secret from you.'

'All I wish is to see you again.'

'That is impossible.'

'Only once, for an hour, a minute, a second.'

'Impossible, I repeat.'

'Madame, you are trifling with me,' exclaimed Maurice, throwing back his head as though to escape from a power which held him in spite of himself. The stranger regarded him with an unfathomable expression, apparently not blind to the feelings she inspired.

'Listen,' said she. 'Will you swear on your honour to shut your eyes while you count sixty?'

'If I swear, what will happen to me?'

'I will prove my gratitude to you as I will prove it to none other, I promise you, though that other should render me a greater service than yourself; although that would be a difficult task.'

'Well, yes, I swear.'

'You will not open your eyes, whatever happens—even though you should feel a dagger at your heart?'

'Indeed, you bewilder me with your demands.'

'Swear, monsieur; you do not risk much.'

'I swear, whatever happens,' said Maurice, shutting
his eyes. Then, opening them: 'Let me see you once more,' he begged. Throwing back her hood with a smile, she revealed, in the moonlight, her long, raven curls, almond-shaped eyes, velvety and expressive, an exquisitely-shaped nose, lips fresh and brilliant as coral.

'Oh! you are very beautiful, too beautiful!' cried Maurice, shutting his eyes again. Taking his hands, the woman turned him round as she wished. Suddenly he felt a perfumed breath near his face, a mouth touched his, leaving between his lips the ring he had already refused. Maurice felt a sensation so unexpected and deep as to be almost painful. He stretched out his arms. 'Your oath!' called a voice from a distance. Instead of counting, or even thinking, Maurice stood trembling. A second later a door shut fifty or sixty yards away; then all was quiet.

Reopening his eyes, he gazed around him like a man who awakes from sleep. He might even have imagined himself to be awaking from some dream, had he not held clenched in his teeth the ring which proved the reality of this extraordinary adventure.

CHAPTER IV

THE MANNERS OF THE TIME

After a moment's hesitation, the young man proceeded towards his apartments in Rue du Roule. Passing through Rue Sainte-Avoie, he was surprised at the number of patrols on duty.

'What is happening, sergeant?' he asked the leader of a troop which had been conducting a search in Rue des Fontaines.

'Why, my officer, to-night there has been an attempt to release the woman Capet and all her swarm. A
patrol of *ci-devant* managed to procure the password and, dressed as chasseurs in the National Guard, entered the Temple. Luckily the make-believe corporal addressed the officer on guard as Monsieur, so betraying himself—the aristocrat!

'The deuce! Have the conspirators been arrested?'

'No; the patrol gained the street, and scattered. There is only one whom it is important to capture, however—a tall, thin man. How he made us run, the rascal! But he must have discovered some back-door and escaped through the Madelonnettes.'

Maurice found his servant sleeping; waking him carefully, he sent him out. Then, as it was late, and he was young, fell asleep in spite of his troubled thoughts.

Next morning a letter lay on his table; the writing was unknown to him—fine and elegant. On the seal was the English word 'Nothing.' Inside were the following words: 'Thanks! Eternal gratitude in return for eternal forgetfulness!'

Maurice called for his servant, who had been rebaptised Scaevola in 1792.

'Do you know anything about this letter?' he asked him.

'No, citizen.'

'Who handed it to you?'

'The concierge.'

'Kindly ask him to speak to me.'

It appeared that a strange man had brought the letter about eight in the morning. In vain Maurice questioned and cross-questioned; the concierge could give no further information. Left alone, the young man crushed the letter disdainfully, throwing it on the table along with the ring; then he turned over to sleep; but in an hour he began kissing the ring and re-reading the letter, a charming little note, bearing unmistakable signs of its aristocratic origin. The ring was inset with a very fine sapphire. While Maurice
was examining these the door opened; so, placing the ring on his finger, he hid the letter below his pillow.

The unannounced visitor was attired as a patriot, but in the most elegant style. His jacket was of fine cloth, his trousers of cashmere, and his coloured stockings of fine silk; his Phrygian bonnet would have put Paris's own to shame.

'Ah! you are sleeping, Brutus, and the country is in danger. Shame on you!' he cried.

'No, Lorin, I am not sleeping but dreaming.'

'Yes, I understand, dreaming of your Eucharis.'

'I, for my part, do not understand. Who is this Eucharis?'

'The woman of Rue Saint-Honoré, the unknown for whom we risked our lives last night.'

'Oh! yes, the strange woman!' answered Maurice, feigning not to understand.

'Well, who was she?'

'I have no idea.'

'Where does she live?'

'I have no idea.'

'Impossible! But you escorted her home.'

'She escaped from me at the Pont Marie.'

'Escaped from you?' exclaimed Lorin, with a loud laugh, as he began quoting a verse of poetry.

'Lorin, why can't you speak like the rest of mankind? That atrocious poetry of yours grates on me.'

'But I speak better than every one else, it seems to me. And as for my verses, dear fellow, a certain Emilie I know finds them charming; but, let us return to your own.'

'My verses?'

'No, your Emilie.'

'Have I an Emilie?'

'Come! come! your gazelle has been showing her claws like a tigress—with the result that you are feeling annoyed, though still in love.'

'I in love!' answered Maurice, shaking his head.
‘Well, let us talk of politics. Besides, that was what I came to do; have you heard the news?’

‘I heard that the Widow Capet tried to escape.’

‘Bah! that’s nothing. The famous Chevalier of Maison-Rouge is in Paris.’

‘Really! When did he come?’

‘Last night.’

‘How did he manage it?’

‘He was disguised as a chasseur in the National Guard. A woman, believed to be an aristocrat, but dressed as one of the common people, brought him some clothes to the Barrier; afterwards they entered, arm in arm. It was not till they had passed that the sentry suspected something. First a woman with a bundle passes, then reappears with a soldier on her arm; that seemed odd, so, raising an alarm, he hurried after them. They entered an hotel in Rue Saint-Honoré, the door opening for them as if by magic. This hotel also opened on the Champs-Elysées, so presto! the Chevalier and his accomplice vanished. The hotel will be demolished, the proprietor guillotined, but that won’t prevent the Chevalier making a third attempt, like the first which failed four months ago, and the second of last night.’

‘You must acknowledge that his efforts require great courage.’

‘Or great love.’

‘You believe in the Chevalier’s love for the Queen?’

‘I don’t believe it; I simply state the fact like every one else. Besides, she has bewitched so many others that there is nothing surprising in this case.’

‘Then you say that the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge —?’

‘Is being tracked at present, and will be clever indeed if he escapes arrest.’

‘What is the Commune doing?’

‘It is about to issue an order that every house shall display on its front the names of all its occupants.’
'Oh! what an excellent idea!' cried Maurice, hoping that, by this means, he might find some trace of the fair unknown.

'Yes, isn't it? I have wagered already that we shall capture at least five hundred aristocrats. By the way, we received a deputation of the new recruits at the club this morning; our adversaries of last night accompanied them; they were laden with bunches of flowers and wreaths of immortelles. There were thirty altogether, shaved for the occasion, and wearing buttonholes.

"Citizens of the Thermopylæ Club," said the spokesman, "being true patriots, we deprecate any misunderstanding between friends, and have come to renew our compact of brotherhood."

'Then?'

'Oh, of course, we fraternised with them all over again; they called three times for you, as the hero of the fête, in order to crown you; but, since you made no answer, not being there, they crowned the bust of Washington instead.'

As Lorin finished this tale, noises were heard in the streets, and the beating of drums, first distant, then gradually nearer, resounded.

'What is that?' asked Maurice.

'The new law of the Commune is being proclaimed.'

'I must run off to headquarters,' cried Maurice, leaping out of bed and calling his servant.

'And I must return to bed; thanks to these mad volunteers, I had only two hours sleep last night. If there is only a little fighting, let me sleep on; if there is much, come and fetch me. Farewell, dear friend,' and Lorin shook hands heartily with the young secretary.
CHAPTER V

DESCRIPTS CITIZEN MAURICE LINDEY

While Maurice Lindey betakes himself to the Section of which he was secretary, let us give a brief account both of his family and position. He had spoken truly the night before in stating his name as Maurice Lindey, residing at Rue du Roule; he could have added that he belonged to that demi-aristocracy accorded to members of the legal profession. His ancestors, for two hundred years back, had shed a lustre on their name by that unending Parliamentary opposition by which the Molés and Maupéou distinguished themselves. His father, after battling all his life against despotism, had died when the Bastille was taken, horrified to see despotism replaced by militarism. He left his only son independent in circumstances and a Republican in sentiment.

The Revolution had found Maurice in the full vigour of young manhood, equipped for life's battle. Constant attendance at clubs, and the reading of innumerable pamphlets, had completed his education as a Republican. A dislike of the hierarchy, deeply rooted and founded on reason, a due appraisement of the elements which go to form the commonwealth, absolute denial of all nobility other than personal, an impartial appreciation of the past, ardent for new ideas, sympathy with the people, allied to a highly aristocratic temperament—such tendencies formed our hero's moral character. Maurice Lindey, a man of twenty-five or twenty-six, was about five feet eight inches in height; handsome in a style characteristically Frankish, with an open brow, blue eyes, fair curly hair, red cheeks, and teeth white as ivory.
Let us now indicate his position as a citizen. Independent, though not rich, the bearer of a respected name, known for his liberal education and still more liberal principles, Maurice had placed himself at the head of a party comprising all the young bourgeois patriots. Very likely the sans-culottes considered him a little lukewarm, and sectionaries rather too dainty. But the former became reconciled when he broke stout cudgels as though they were frail reeds, and the latter pardoned his elegance when he felled with a blow those who treated him disrespectfully.

Maurice had assisted in the taking of the Bastille, had formed one of the expedition to Versailles, had fought like a lion on the 10th August, when, to do him justice, he had attacked as many patriots as Swiss, disliking equally assassins wearing a Republican’s blouse and an enemy of the Republic dressed in red.

He had thrown himself at the mouth of a loaded cannon, in order that the defenders of the Château might be induced to surrender, and so prevent bloodshed; he had been the first to enter the Louvre through a window, braving the fusillade of fifty Swiss Guards, and as many noblemen in ambush. On the outbreak of war, Maurice enlisted, setting out for the frontier, as lieutenant, with the first fifteen hundred volunteers. At Jemappes, his first battle, a bullet was lodged in his back; sent back to Paris by the people’s representative, he lay for a month in a high fever, but by January had assumed the leadership of the Thermopylae Club, the members of which—some hundred youths of the Parisian bourgeoisie—were pledged to oppose by force of arms all measures in favour of the tyrant Capet.

Such was the man who wended his way towards Rue Lepelletier on the morning of 11th March: our story will record more incidents in his eventful life. About ten o’clock Maurice arrived at his Section; great excitement prevailed. A proposed address to
the Convention, urging it to suppress the plots of the Girondins was being discussed. Maurice was eagerly awaited. The return of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge to Paris, where a price was set on his head, the connection between this return and the attempted rescue at the Temple, also formed subjects of debate, each member expressing his hatred and indignation against traitors and aristocrats. Contrary to all expectations, Maurice remained silent; and having prepared the address and finished all his work, he set out in the direction of Rue Saint-Honoré.

He reached the corner of the street where the Fair Unknown had appeared struggling with the soldiers. Traversing again the streets he had walked in her company, he stopped where the various patrols had stopped him, repeating the words interchanged. In the Rue Victor Maurice soliloquised thus:—

'Poor woman! she never reflected last night that her secret would be revealed in the morning. Now I can find the door by which she disappeared, and perhaps even see her at some window,'

Entering the old Rue Saint-Jacques, Maurice shut his eyes, first standing where the stranger had placed him; he may even have expected to feel anew that burning kiss upon his lips. Opening his eyes he perceived two lanes, one on either hand. They were muddy, badly paved, filled with barriers, traversed by little bridges thrown across a small stream. Here and there was a garden enclosed by hedges, fences used as vine props, or walls; skins, drying in sheds, filled the air with the disagreeable smell of a tannery. Maurice searched for two hours, but discovered no clue; all trace of the woman had vanished with the mist and rain.

'I have been dreaming,' thought Maurice. 'This filthy place could shelter only for an instant my beautiful fairy of last night.'

This fierce Republican had more true poetry in his
nature than his friend who composed sentimental verses; he refused to destroy, even in thought, the halo surrounding the head of his Unknown. True he went home in despair murmuring, 'Farewell! lovely and mysterious one; you have treated me as a fool or a child. For, after all, would she have led me there, had it been her true dwelling? No! she only passed through, as a swan hurries over some pestilent swamp. Her path leaves no more trace than that of a bird!'

CHAPTER VI

LE TEMPLE

As Maurice, in pensive mood, recrossed the Pont de la Tournelle, several of the Municipal Guard, accompanied by Santerre, Commander of the Paris National Guard, were conducting a strict examination in the Tower of the Temple, converted into a prison since the 13th August, 1792. Their inspection was mainly confined to a suite of apartments on the third story, in one room of which were seated two women, a young girl and a child of nine, all dressed in mourning. The elder of the women, who appeared to be about seven or eight and thirty, sat near a table reading; the second, who was working on a piece of tapestry, seemed about twenty-eight or twenty-nine. The girl, who might have been fourteen, stood near the child, who lay ill in bed, with eyes closed as if in sleep, though sleep was evidently impossible amid the noise and confusion.

Some of the soldiers turned over beds, others examined the linen; others, having finished their search, gazed insolently at the unhappy prisoners. The elder woman—tall, pale, but beautiful—continued to gaze at her book; one of the Guards, approaching, knocked it out of her hand; taking another book from
the table, the prisoner resumed her reading. The Montagnard made an angry gesture, as if to seize the second book, whereupon the young girl, rushing forward, threw her arms round the reader’s neck, crying, ‘Ah! my poor mother!’ The prisoner, appearing to embrace her, whispered, ‘Marie, there is a note hidden in the stove; take it away.’

‘Come along!’ cried the guardsman, dragging the girl from her mother. ‘Will you make an end of your kissing?’

‘Monsieur, has the Convention passed a law forbidding children to kiss their mother?’

‘No, but it has decided to punish traitors, aristocrats, and ci-devant, so we have come to ask some questions. Come, answer, Antoinette.’

The person thus rudely addressed did not deign even to look at her interrogator. On the contrary, she turned her head away, while a faint colour stole into her pale cheeks.

‘It is impossible that you are ignorant of the attempted rescue of last night. Who was concerned in it?’

There was no reply.

‘Answer, Antoinette,’ commanded Santerre, approaching her. ‘Last night an attempt was made to release you from that captivity imposed by the will of the people, until you meet with the due punishment for your crimes. Did you know anything of this plot?’

Marie Antoinette, shuddering at the sound of this voice, drew herself as far away as possible, but made no answer.

‘You refuse to reply?’ The prisoner picked up a third volume. Santerre turned away; the brutal power of this man, who commanded 80,000 men, lost its effect when confronted with the dignity of one unhappy woman whom he could not humiliate.

‘You, Elisabeth,’ he continued, addressing the
other woman, 'will you answer? Last night there was an attempt to set you free, and you must know the guilty parties.'

'We hold no communication with the outside world, monsieur, so we cannot know what is being done for or against us.'

'Good; we will see what your nephew has to say,' remarked Santerre, approaching the Dauphin's bed. Marie Antoinette rose at this threat.

'Monsieur, my son is ill and sleeping. . . . Do not waken him.'

'Answer, then,'

'I know nothing.'

'The Austrian defies us! Well, that being the case, let us carry out the decree of the Commune strictly, Rise up, Capet.'

'What do you wish to do?' cried the Queen, forgetting herself. 'Would you kill my son? Don't you see that he is ill and feverish?'

'Your son is a constant source of alarm to the Temple authorities. Tison! call Tison.'

Tison was a workman charged with all the common tasks about the prison. He was forty years old, with a swarthy skin, coarse features, and black, shaggy hair falling over his eyes.

'Tison, who brought the prisoners' food yesterday?' Tison gave the person's name.

'Who brought their linen?'

'My daughter.'

'You were told to examine the linen thoroughly.'

'Well, don't I carry out my instructions? Yesterday, for example, there was a handkerchief with two knots in it. I carried it to the council, who ordered my wife to iron it out and give it to Madame Capet without saying anything.'

At the mention of the knotted handkerchief, the Queen started and exchanged a glance with Madame Elisabeth.
'Your daughter, Tison, is a citizeness whose patriotism none suspects; but from to-day she enters the Temple no more.'

'Oh! what are you telling me? I shall never see my daughter till I go out?'

'You will never go out.'

Tison gazed wildly around, and suddenly exclaimed, 'I shall not go out! I resign, then; I am not a traitor, an aristocrat, to be shut up in prison.'

'Citizen, obey the orders of the Commune, or you may get into trouble. Stay here, and watch what happens. You are being watched, I warn you.'

Meanwhile the Queen, having recovered her serenity, replaced her son in his bed.

'Tell your wife to come up,' said Santerre to Tison.

Madame Tison presently appeared.

'Come here, citizeness; while we pass into the anteroom, you will search the prisoners,' ordered Santerre, who then withdrew, leaving four men at the door to assist Tison's wife, should the Queen resist her. On the Queen's person was found a handkerchief knotted in three places, a pencil, a scapulary, and some sealing-wax.

'Ah! I was sure of it,' cried Madame Tison; 'I told the Municipal Guards that she wrote, the Austrian!'

'Oh! madame, only show the scapulary,' pleaded the Queen.

'Very likely I should feel any pity for you! Have they had any for me! . . . They are taking my daughter from me.'

Nothing was found on the other two ladies, so Madame Tison, calling in the Guards, handed them the articles, which were passed from one to the other. Various conjectures were offered, the handkerchief, knotted in three places, especially exercising the imagination of these persecutors of the Royal Family.

'Now,' announced Santerre, 'we will read the decree
of the Convention, ordering you to be separated from your son.'

'This decree exists then?'

'Yes. The Convention is too anxious about the welfare of a child committed to its care to leave it with a mother as depraved as yourself—'

'At least frame some accusation against me,' cried the Queen, with flashing eyes.

'That is quite easily done,' said one of the Guards.

'Oh!' exclaimed the Queen, pale with indignation, 'I appeal to the heart of every mother.'

'This is all very fine, but we cannot waste all day here; get up, Capet, and follow us.'

'Never! never!' exclaimed the Queen, rushing between the Guards and young Louis; 'I will never let you carry off my child!'

'Speak then; give up the names of your accomplices; explain what the knots in the two handkerchiefs signify, and we will leave your son.'

'Farewell, my son,' said the Queen, proudly wiping away a tear, 'do not forget your father who is in heaven, and your mother who is soon to meet him there. Repeat every night and morning the prayers I taught you. Farewell.'

Then she addressed the Guards coldly: 'I know nothing, messieurs; do as you please.' The three women were left alone, and the silence was broken only by sobbing. The Queen was the first to speak.

'What about this letter, my daughter?' she asked.

'I burned it as you directed me, my mother.'

'Without reading it?'

'Yes.'

'Farewell, our last gleam of hope!' murmured Madame Elisabeth.

'But you, at least, noticed the writing, Marie?'

'Yes.'

The Queen walked to the door to ascertain if she
were observed, then, drawing a letter from a chink in the wall, she handed it to Madame Royale.

'Think well before you answer, my daughter,' she said; 'was the writing the same as this?'

'Yes, yes, I recognise it.'

'God be praised!' cried the Queen, falling on her knees; 'if he has written since this morning, he has escaped.'

'Of whom are you speaking? Tell me this friend's name, my mother, that I may pray to God for him.'

'Yes, my daughter, you are right; never forget this name, the name of an honourable and brave man. He has never seen the Queen of France, or rather she has never seen him, yet he devotes his life to defending her. Perchance he will meet with the usual reward of virtue in these days—a violent death. . . . But, if he dies—then I will thank him in heaven. He is called the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge,' ended the Queen, lowering her voice—'pray for him!'

CHAPTER VII

THE GAMESTER'S OATH

The daring attempt at rescue had aroused the anger of some and the interest of others. To the Committee of General Safety the fact that, within the last three weeks, a number of emigrants had returned to France was decidedly suspicious; for, evidently, those people were not endangering their lives for nothing, but, in all probability were anxious to assist in the rescue of the Royal Family. Already, on the suggestion of Osselin, the terrible decree had been issued, which condemned to death all emigrants who returned to France, all French people forming plans to emigrate, and all who in any way aided or gave shelter to an
emigrant. This would have ushered in the Reign of Terror, only that the law as to suspected persons was not in being. The return of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, that active and bold enemy, led to the adoption of severe measures. Careful examinations were conducted in a number of houses whose inhabitants were suspected, but these only resulted in the easy capture of a few women and old men. As may be supposed, the various Sections were busily employed, and the Secretary of the Lepelletier Section, one of the most influential in Paris, had scant time to dream about his Fair Unknown. At first Maurice had tried to forget, and had, at least, succeeded in keeping secret from his friend all the particulars of the adventure. Lorin, knowing his friend's gay, expansive nature, and seeing him now in a dreamy state, shunning society, concluded that he had fallen in love.

During eighteen centuries of monarchy, France had seldom experienced such a year as that of 1793. The Chevalier was not captured; no mention was made of him. The Queen, widowed and deprived of her son, spent her time weeping in company with her daughter and sister. The young Dauphin, committed to the care of 'Simon the Shoemaker,' was entering upon that martyrdom which in two years united him to his father and mother. There was a moment of calm. The Montagnard volcano rested before sweeping away the Girondins. Maurice felt this calm weighing heavily upon him, and having nothing to occupy his leisure, which drove him back upon his thoughts, he resolved, regardless of his vow, to make another attempt to clear up the mystery.

He had considered the question of applying to the Secretary of the Jardin des Plantes Section for information; but his conviction that the lady was connected with some political plot restrained him. The idea that through indiscretion on his part this charming woman might lose her head made Maurice shudder
with horror. Finally he decided to make the attempt unaided. His plan, moreover, was quite simple. The lists placed before each door would give the first clue; skilful questioning of the concierges would surely solve the remaining mystery. In his capacity of Secretary of the Lepelletier Section, he had a right to question. Maurice was ignorant of the name; but, he argued, so beautiful a creature would possess a name in harmony with herself, the name of some sylph, fairy, or angel; the name would infallibly guide him.

Clad in a blouse of coarse brown cloth and a ‘bonnet rouge,’ such as was worn on special occasions, and armed with a stout cudgel know as a ‘constitution,’ Maurice set out alone on his explorations. In his pocket he had put his commission as Secretary of the Lepelletier Section, at once his physical safeguard and moral guarantee. He traversed Rue Saint-Victor and Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques, reading by the fading light all the names written up before each door. He had reached his hundredth door without finding anything to help him, when a worthy shoemaker, glancing over his spectacles at Maurice, inquired, ‘Do you wish to know about the tenants of this house? If so, I am ready to tell you.’

‘Thanks, citizen, but I was merely looking for a friend’s name.’

‘What name, citizen? I know everybody in this neighbourhood.’

For a minute Maurice, taken by surprise, hesitated; then he gave the first name that occurred to him: ‘René.’

‘And his occupation?’

‘An apprentice tanner.’

‘In that case, you had better ask the tannery manager,’ answered a bourgeois, who had stopped near them, and was regarding Maurice with a certain curiosity not unmixed with suspicion.
'That is quite correct,' agreed the porter; 'the masters know the names of their workers; here is Citizen Dixmer, the director, who has over fifty workmen in his tannery. He will tell you what you want.'

Turning, Maurice saw a worthy burgess, tall and placid-looking, dressed in the comfortable style of a wealthy manufacturer.

'I shall want to know the surname,' said the burgess. 'I have said it: René.'

'René is only a Christian name, and I am asking for a surname. All the workers have their surnames on my list.'

'The deuce! I don't know his surname,' answered Maurice, growing a little impatient at this cross-questioning.

'In that case, it is highly improbable that you will ever find your friend again,' remarked the burgess, in ironical tones, as, bowing graciously to Maurice, he walked off towards a house in Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques.

'The fact is that, if you do not know his surname——' said the porter.

'Well, then, I don't know it,' answered Maurice, who would not have objected to a quarrel, if only for the sake of venting his bad temper upon some one. 'What have you to say to that?'

'Nothing, citizen, nothing; only, if you don't know your friend's name, it is probable, as the Citizen Dixmer said, that you will not find him,' observed the porter, shrugging his shoulders as he returned to his lodge.

Night was falling, and Maurice made use of the daylight remaining to examine two lanes close at hand. For two hours he conducted a fruitless search, peering into corners, climbing over walls, glancing through keyholes, knocking at empty shops. Nine o'clock rang; all sound and sign of life had vanished from this deserted quarter. Maurice was about to withdraw in despair when he suddenly saw a light at
the turning of a narrow alley. He plunged into this dark passage without noticing that a curious person, who had been spying on his movements from the midst of a clump of trees, suddenly disappeared behind the wall enclosing them. A few seconds later three men, appearing from a door in the same wall, entered the alley, whilst a fourth took the precaution to block the entrance into it.

At the end of the passage Maurice found a courtyard, behind which the light was shining. He knocked at the door of a lonely, squalid house, but at the first knock the light was extinguished. Realising that he would simply be wasting time if he continued knocking, Maurice entered the alley again. At the same moment the house door was softly opened to let out three men, and some one blew a whistle. Turning round, Maurice saw three shadows at a few yards' distance, whilst in the darkness three blades glittered. Maurice tried to swing his cudgel round his head, but the lane was so narrow that he touched both sides of it. At the same moment a violent blow from behind stunned him, and his opponents, throwing him to the ground, bound his hands and bandaged his eyes.

He had not uttered a single cry for help; moreover, in this deserted place, nobody would have responded. Besides, he argued, the ruffians would not have bandaged his eyes had they meant to kill him immediately. Summoning all his presence of mind, he waited calmly.

'Who are you?' asked a voice, in excited tones.

'A man who is being murdered.'

'More than that, you are a dead man: if you call out.'

'Had I meant to, I should have done so already.'

'Are you ready to answer my questions?'

'Question me first, I shall see afterwards whether I will reply or not.'

'Who sends you here?'

'Nobody.'
'You come of your own accord?'
'Yes.'
'You lie.'
'I never lie,' retorted Maurice, struggling to free his hands.
'In any case, you are a spy.'
'And you are cowards! You are seven or eight against a bound man, and yet you insult him. Cowards!'
This violence appeared to pacify his captors, suggesting that he could not merit their accusation. A real spy would have begged tremblingly for mercy.
'There is no insult intended,' exclaimed a voice, gentler though more imperious than the others. 'At the present time, one can be a spy without being a dishonourable man; only one risks one's life. What brought you into this quarter?'
'I was seeking for a woman.'
A murmur of incredulity greeted this statement.
'You lie! Confess your purpose, or die.'
'Unless you are regular brigands, you surely will not kill me for the mere pleasure of it,' answered Maurice, making a second violent effort to free his hands. Suddenly he felt something cold at his chest, which caused him momentarily to shrink.
'Ah! you feel that. There is more to follow,' said one of the men.
'Make an end,' answered Maurice calmly.
'Who are you? Answer!' ordered the gentle but firm voice.
'It is my name you wish? I am Maurice Lindey.'
'What! Maurice Lindey, the Revolutionary, the Patriot! Maurice Lindey, Secretary of the Lepelletier Section?' demanded another voice in tones so excited that Maurice felt that to reply in one way or another would settle his fate. Maurice was incapable of cowardice. In firm and resolute tones he replied stoutly: 'Yes, Maurice Lindey, Secretary of the
Lepelletier Section; Maurice Lindey, the Patriot, the Revolutionary, the Jacobin; Maurice Lindey, whose happiest moment will be when he dies for the sake of liberty.'

A deadly silence followed. Maurice presented his breast, expecting every moment that the blade, whose point he had already felt, would be plunged into it. 'Is this quite true?' asked a voice, with some emotion.

'Search my pocket and you will find my commission. Look at my breast and, unless effaced by blood, you will see my initials, an M and an L, sewn on my shirt.'

Maurice was immediately caught up in strong arms and carried off; he heard first one door opening, then a second. The second was narrower than the first, hardly admitting his bearers. 'I am lost,' thought Maurice; 'they are going to tie a stone round my neck and throw me into the Bièvre.' But, a second later, he felt himself carried up some steps. A warm air fanned his cheek, and he was laid on a seat. He heard a door being double-locked, the footsteps moved away, and he was alone. Listening with the eager attention of a man whose life depends on a word, he thought he heard the evident leader of the party say, 'Let us deliberate upon this.'

CHAPTER VIII

GENEVIÈVE

A quarter of an hour, which seemed a century, passed away. Maurice understood that he was shut up somewhere; but was he guarded? Once more he tried to break his bonds. His iron muscles stiffened, the cord cut into his flesh, but did not break. The worst
was that his hands were tied behind his back, so that he could not pull off his bandage. If he could see, perhaps he could escape. His feet encountered something soft—sand perhaps; a pungent odour as of some vegetable substance greeted his nostrils. Moving a few steps, he touched a wall, and groping with his hands, felt some garden implements. With unheard-of efforts he examined each of these in turn, and at last came to a spade. Owing to the way he was bound, it cost him a great effort to turn the spade, iron end uppermost. On the iron he slowly cut the rope that bound his wrists. Suddenly the perspiration broke out on his brow, he heard the sound of footsteps. Making a last supreme effort, he succeeded in breaking the rope and uttered a cry of joy; at least he would die defending himself.

Snatching the bandage from his eyes, he glanced around eagerly. He was in a kind of pavilion, in which some plants had been put for the sake of warmth. Opposite him was a barred window, and outside stood a man armed with a carabine. At the opposite end of the garden, about thirty paces away, was a little building similar to that in which he was confined. The blind was down, but a light shone through. Listening, Maurice heard the sentry pacing to and fro; whilst from the bottom of the corridor came confused sounds which suggested that the deliberation had become a heated argument. Though unable to follow all that was said, Maurice caught the words 'spy,' 'dagger,' 'death.' A door opened, and he heard more distinctly.

'Yes, he is a spy,' said a voice. 'He has certainly been sent to surprise our secrets. In setting him free we run the risk of his denouncing us.'

'But his promise?'

'He will give it, and break it. Is he a gentleman that we should trust his word?'

'How can he denounce us? He knows nothing.'
‘Except where to find us! He will return with an escort.’

‘Well, it is agreed. You keep to your decision?’ asked the one whom Maurice took to be the leader.

‘Certainly, and I hope you will not oppose it.’

‘I have but one voice to plead for his liberty. You six have resolved he shall die. Let it be death, then.’

‘He will raise an alarm. Have you sent away Madame Dixmer?’

‘Madame is unaware of these proceedings; she is in the pavilion opposite.’

‘Madame Dixmer,’ soliloquised Maurice; ‘I begin to understand. I am in the house of that master tanner who spoke to me in the Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques. But why on earth should he wish to kill me? In any case, before dying, I shall kill more than one.’ And he seized upon the peaceful implement, which, wielded by him, would become a very deadly weapon. Then with beating heart he stationed himself behind the door, so as to be hidden by it. Suddenly he shuddered from head to foot. ‘If you take my advice,’ one man was saying, ‘you will simply break a pane and shoot him through the bars.’

‘Oh! no, no, the noise would arouse suspicion, Dixmer, decide for us. Shall it be a shot or a stab with a knife?’

‘The knife, decidedly. Let us go.’

‘Forward!’ repeated five or six voices together.

At this word Maurice, in spite of his iron nerve, was agitated, and he made the sign of the cross, which his mother had taught him as a child. The steps approached, stopped, the door slowly opened. Uttering a savage cry, Maurice dashed out, knocking down the two foremost men, thrusting aside the others, and, gaining a door at the end of the corridor which led to the garden, leaped down to run towards the gate. The gate was locked and bolted. Maurice drew the bolts, but could not unlock it. Meanwhile
his pursuers had reached the steps. 'There he is, fire on him, Dixmer; kill him!' they shouted. Maurice was shut in the garden; the walls were ten feet high. Looking round him with the desperation of a condemned man, he noticed the pavilion, the blind and the light burning behind it. Rushing towards it, he broke the window, tore aside the blind, and burst into a lighted room where a woman sat reading beside a fire. At sight of him, she called in terror for help.

'Stand aside, Geneviève, while I shoot him!' cried Dixmer's voice, and Maurice perceived a musket aimed at him. But the woman, glancing up suddenly, threw herself with a cry between him and the barrel of the weapon. Maurice looked at her in wonder, and then cried out in his turn, for it was his Fair Unknown, so long sought for.

'You!' he exclaimed.

'Silence!' she returned, in a low whisper.

'Oh! you shall not kill him!' she exclaimed, turning to the assassins, who had approached the window.

'He is a spy, and must die,' answered Dixmer.

'A spy! he, a spy? Come here, Dixmer, that I may prove to you that you are quite wrong.' Geneviève whispered something in Dixmer's ear, at which the tanner raised his head.

'He, you are sure?' he asked. Instead of replying, the young woman held out her hand to Maurice. Dixmer's expression changed, and he beckoned to his companions, who followed him from the room.

'Hide that ring; every one here knows it,' ordered Geneviève quickly. Maurice slipped it into his pocket. Dixmer then returned alone and unarmed.

'Pardon me, citizen,' said he, approaching Maurice; 'why did I not know sooner my debt to you! My wife, though deeply grateful for the service you rendered her on 10th March, had forgotten your name. Whom we were dealing with we knew not; otherwise,
we should never for a moment have suspected your honour or questioned your intentions. Once more, I beg your pardon!'

Maurice was stupefied; his head seemed to be turning round, and, having some difficulty in standing straight, he leaned against the mantelpiece.

'But, after all, why did you wish to kill me?' he asked.

'Ah! that is a secret which I will trust to your loyalty not to betray. I am, as you already know, a master-tanner. Most of the acids which I use in preparing my skins are prohibited goods. As the smugglers I employ had heard of some information being given to the General Council, I was afraid of you. My smugglers were still more afraid of your 'bonnet rouge' and air of decision, and I may tell you that you were a doomed man.'

'I am well aware of that, since I both heard your discussion and saw your rifle.'

'I have already begged your pardon. Let me add that, thanks to the unsettled state of the times, my partner M. Morand and myself are making a large fortune. We supply knapsacks to the army, on an average fifteen hundred or two thousand per day. The Municipality has no time to verify our accounts, so I may confess we are doing very well, all the more so as by smuggling the material we gain two hundred per cent.'

'I fully appreciate your fears of being denounced,' said Maurice; 'but now you are reassured!'

'I need not even ask for your word,' said Dixmer, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder. 'Now we are alone, may I ask what brought you here? Of course, if you do not wish to answer, you are not compelled to do so.'

'Pardon me, citizen; I quite agree that I owe you an explanation. I was looking for a woman who, the other evening, from under her mask, told me she
lived in this district. Though ignorant of her name, station, and home, I am madly in love with her. She is petite, fair, and seemed sprightly... a grisette, in short.'

Geneviève was tall, dark, and had large pensive eyes.

'That explains everything,' said Dixmer, apparently satisfied, but with a slightly cunning expression. Geneviève, feeling her face crimson, had turned away.

'Poor Citizen Lindey,' said Dixmer laughing, 'what a time we have given you, and yet you are the last person I could have wished to harm; so good a patriot, a brother; but, really, I thought some scoundrel had stolen your name.'

'Do not let us dwell longer on that,' said Maurice, feeling that he ought to retire; 'set me on my way and let us forget——'

'Set you on your way? Ah! not at all! my partner and I are giving a supper to-night to these worthy fellows who were anxious to kill you. I shall be very pleased if you will join us; they are honest patriots like yourself, and, besides, I shall not believe you have pardoned me till we have broken bread together.'

'Indeed, I am afraid of embarrassing you, Citizen... This dress... my dishevelled appearance...'

'We invite you most heartily,' observed Geneviève, glancing timidly at Maurice.

'Then I shall have great pleasure, citizeness,' answered the latter, bowing.

'I will tell our guests; meanwhile, make yourself comfortable,' said Dixmer, leaving the room.

'Ah! monsieur, you have been indiscreet,' cried the young woman in a voice which she endeavoured to make reproachful.

'Madame, have I offended you? If so, forgive me; I will go and never——'

'You are wounded! your shirt is all blood-stained!' exclaimed Geneviève, rising.
'Oh! have no fear, madame; one of the smugglers touched me with his dagger.'

'Pardon me for bringing this upon you,' said Geneviève, seizing his hand; 'you saved my life, and I was nearly the cause of your death.'

'Have I not obtained my reward in finding you, for, surely you knew it was you I sought.'

'Come with me,' interrupted Geneviève; 'I will find you a change of linen. . . . Our guests must not see you in this state, for they would feel it a terrible reproach.'

'I am a great trouble to you, am I not?' said Maurice, sighing.

'Not at all; I am doing my duty, and even doing it with great pleasure.'

She conducted him into a large dressing-room, furnished with a certain taste and elegance unusual for the house of a master-tanner. Then, opening all the cupboards, 'Take what you wish; you are at home,' said she, and withdrew. When Maurice had dressed he found Dixmer waiting for him.

'Let us go in to supper,' said he; 'they are all there but you.'

CHAPTER IX

THE SUPPER

When Maurice entered the dining-room, the table was set, but the guests had not arrived. Presently they came in, six men, mostly young, pleasant-looking, and dressed in the style then adopted, most of them even wearing a blouse and 'bonnet rouge.' Dixmer introduced Maurice, and, turning to the young man, added: 'You see, Citizen Lindey, all those who help me in business. Thanks to revolutionary principles, which have abolished class distinctions, we all live
on an equal footing. Twice a day we meet at table, and I am delighted that you have consented to join us. Now, citizens, let us begin!'

'And ... M. Morand, shall we wait for him?' asked Geneviève timidly.

'True; Citizen Morand is, as I informed you, my partner, charged with the financial part of the business. He works harder than the rest of us, and is occasionally late. I will have him called.'

Just then, however, Citizen Morand entered. He was a little, dark man, with shaggy eyebrows; tinted glasses partly concealed his black eyes, the light from which occasionally flashed through them. As soon as he spoke Maurice recognised the firm yet gentle voice which had, during the terrible discussion, continually pleaded for merciful treatment. He was dressed in a brown coat with large buttons, and a white silk vest; his fine lace frill was often smoothed down by a white, delicate hand which Maurice could not help admiring. Morand was seated on Geneviève's right hand, while Maurice sat on her left, and Dixmer opposite; the other guests placed themselves as they chose around the oblong table. The supper was an excellent one, and Dixmer did the honours with great heartiness. Citizen Morand spoke little, ate less, and laughed seldom; Maurice soon felt himself strangely drawn to him. He was intensely puzzled about his age, sometimes imagining him to be forty or forty-five; at others, reckoning him as quite a young man.

Dixmer felt obliged to give his guests some explanation of the presence of a stranger in their little company. He did so simply and awkwardly enough, but his hearers appeared perfectly satisfied. Maurice looked at him in astonishment. 'Can this really be the same man who, with flashing eye and threatening voice pursued me with murderous intent three-quarters of an hour ago? Mordieu! how the love of hides transforms a man!'
While Maurice reflected thus, he experienced both joy and sadness. At last he was beside the Fair Unknown whom he had so ardently sought; as he had dreamed, she had a lovely name, and he was intoxicated with the happiness of being near her. But, while the very sound of her voice thrilled him to the heart, yet that heart was wounded by what he saw. Geneviève was precisely what he had imagined her—young, elegant, pensive, and refined; a lady of culture compelled for some reason to marry into the middle class. Dixmer was an honest fellow, undeniably rich, and apparently desirous of doing all in his power to make Geneviève happy. But, despite his worthy efforts, his kindliness, his wealth, what a gulf separated husband and wife, the tradesman of commonplace appearance and the pensive, charming young girl! What could compensate Geneviève for this? The answer was but too simple—love. So he returned to his former impression—namely, that on the night he had met her, she had been visiting her lover. This thought was a torment to Maurice.

Then, again, listening to this sweet musical voice, studying this frank glance which seemed to reveal her very soul, Maurice began to argue that such a being could not be guilty of deceit; then he felt a bitter joy in the knowledge that this fair creature would always be linked to the worthy ‘bourgeois’ with his honest smile and somewhat banal jests.

The conversation turned wholly on politics, as might be expected at this epoch. Suddenly one of the guests, speaking for the first time, made an allusion to the prisoners in the Temple. Maurice started at the sound of this voice, which belonged to the man who had voted for his death. Yet this man, head of the workroom, as Dixmer proclaimed him, soon restored Maurice’s good humour by expressing most patriotic sentiments and most revolutionary principles. Maurice was not opposed, in certain circumstances, to the
forcible measures so much favoured by Danton, but he would not have butchered a person he suspected of being a spy. Instead, sword in hand, he would have fought with him. But he reflected that it was too much to ask of a tanner that he should act in the same way as himself.

This honest workman seemed to advocate strong measures in politics as well as in private affairs; he expressed surprise that the custody of the prisoners should be given to a permanent Council, easily bribed, and to Municipal Guards, whose loyalty had been more than once tampered with.

'Yes,' answered Citizen Morand; 'but we must agree that up to now the conduct of the Guards has justified the nation's confidence in them.'

'Doubtless, doubtless, but because something has not yet happened we cannot conclude that it will never happen. It is the same thing with the National Guard; the various companies are put on duty at the Temple, in any order. Do you not admit that in a company of twenty or twenty-five men there might be eight or ten determined fellows who, one fine night, could kill the sentries and carry off the prisoners?'

'Bah! you should know the weakness of that plan, citizen, since it has already been tried without success,' said Maurice.

'Yes, because one of the aristocrats in the patrol was rash enough to use the word "monsieur,"' replied Morand.

'And also, because the entry of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge into Paris was known,' added Maurice, determined to uphold the guards.

'They discovered that Maison-Rouge had entered Paris?' asked Morand calmly. 'Did they learn the manner of his entry?'

'Perfectly.'

'Ah! that should be an interesting story; we have not heard any definite account of it. You, citizen,
secretary of one of the chief sections in Paris, should be able to inform us,' observed Morand, leaning forward to look at Maurice.

'Without a doubt; and what I relate has the merit of being the exact truth. The Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, having safely traversed France with his usual good luck, reached the Barrière du Roule in the daytime. At nine o'clock a woman, disguised as a citizen, left the city by this gate, carrying to the Chevalier the uniform of a Chasseur of the National Guard. Ten minutes later she returned with him. The sentry's suspicions were aroused; the alarm was raised; but the two traitors, disappearing into a hotel, escaped by another door to the Champs-Elysées. It seems that a whole patrol devoted to the tyrants awaited the Chevalier in Rue Bar-du-Bec. You are acquainted with the rest.'

'But, the woman. What became of her?'

'No one has the slightest idea who she is, or where she went.'

Dixmer and his partner appeared to breathe more easily. Geneviève had listened, pale, silent, and motionless.

'But who can be sure that the Chevalier was one of those who stormed the Temple?' asked Morand, calm as ever.

'One of my friends on duty that day at the Temple recognised him.'

'What is he like in appearance?'

'He is a man of twenty-five or six, small, fair, pleasant-looking, with beautiful eyes and splendid teeth.'

'Why did your friend not arrest him?'

'He was afraid of being deceived by a resemblance, and besides, he is not impulsive, my friend, so he restrained himself.'

'You would not have done that, citizen?' remarked Dixmer, with a laugh.
‘No, I admit; I should never have let such a dangerous person escape. I should have had all the doors shut, and, going straight up to the patrol, seized the Chevalier, crying, “Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, I arrest you as a traitor to the nation!” Once he was captured, I would not have released him, I assure you.’

‘But what would have happened to him?’ asked Geneviève.

‘He would have been tried and sent to the guillotine; that’s all.’

Geneviève, shuddering, glanced fearfully at her neighbour; but the Citizen Morand did not appear to notice.

‘Have they discovered what has become of this Chevalier?’ asked Geneviève.

‘Bah! he probably left Paris immediately,’ cried Dixmer.

‘Not at all. He has never left it.’

‘Oh! for my part I cannot believe that, citizen; it would mean such unpardonable rashness,’ said Geneviève.

‘You, being a woman, will understand the one reason that could cause a man like the Chevalier to neglect all considerations of personal safety.’

‘What is it, then, citizen, that could outweigh the fear of such a dreadful death?’

‘Love, citizeness. Have you not heard that the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge is in love with Antoinette?’

One or two in the company laughed incredulously, but timidly. Dixmer gazed searchingly at Maurice. Geneviève trembled and tears filled her eyes. Citizen Morand, spilling the wine he was about to drink, became so deadly pale that Maurice, had he not been attending to Geneviève, must have been alarmed.

‘You said that, being a woman, I should understand. Such devotion as this, though opposed to our
principles, always affects us women,' Geneviève answered.

'The Chevalier's devotion is all the greater in that he has never spoken to the Queen.'

'Ah! Citizen Lindey,' said the man of extreme measures, 'it seems to me that you show great indulgence toward this Chevalier——'

'Monsieur, I admire all proud, brave spirits, but that does not prevent my opposing them when they belong to the enemies of my country. I do not despair of meeting the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge some day. And, if I meet him—well, I shall fight him.'

Supper was over. Geneviève rose from table, just as the clock struck.

'Twelve o'clock,' announced Morand.

'Already!' cried Maurice.

'That exclamation pleases me,' said Dixmer; 'it proves you have not been bored, and makes me hope we shall see you again. It is a good patriot's house you have entered, citizen, and I trust you will soon realise that it is a friend's.'

Maurice bowed and turned to Geneviève.

'Does the citizeness permit me to come again?' he asked.

'I do more; I beg you to return. Farewell, citizen,' answered Geneviève, as she withdrew.

Taking leave of the guests, and a particularly affectionate farewell of Morand, he departed in a tumult of emotion, though feeling more gay than sad.

'An unfortunate meeting!' said the young woman to her husband, bursting into tears.

'How! the Citizen Maurice Lindey, a well-known patriot, secretary to a section, popular and beloved, is rather a valuable acquisition for a poor tanner who deals in smuggled goods.'

'So, you believe——?'

'I believe it is practically a certificate of absolution
he grants to our house; I imagine even that, from henceforth, the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge himself might be safe here.'

Dixmer, kissing his wife with fatherly affection, left her in the little pavilion which she occupied.

CHAPTER X

SIMON THE COBBLER

The month of May had arrived; warm sunlight fell on the gloomy walls of the Temple. At the inner turnpike the soldiers on guard laughed and smoked. In spite of the fine weather and of permission to walk in the garden, the three women prisoners remained in their room, so that the Municipal Guards spent their time without incident. About five o'clock a man came down to speak to the sergeant. 'Ah! it is you, Father Tison!' exclaimed the latter.

'Yes, citizen, I bring from your friend, Maurice Lindey, the permit granted by the Council, enabling my daughter to visit her mother here to-night. I am obliged to go out, very much against my will. This cursed service compels me to go to the Commune with a report. A coach is awaiting me, and I depart just as my Sophie arrives.'

'Unhappy father!' exclaimed the sergeant, who was none other than our friend Lorin.

'Citizen Sergeant, you will permit my daughter to pass?'

'When your daughter comes, she shall pass.'

'Thanks, brave Thermopylan,' said Tison, taking his leave.

'Do you know, sergeant,' remarked one of the guards as he watched Tison departing, 'these things make me shiver.'
'What things, Citizen Devaux?' asked Lorin.

'Why! to see this stern, hard-hearted man, this pitiless jailer of the Queen, go off with tears in his eyes at the thought of his wife seeing their daughter while he will not see her! It does not do to reflect too much upon this, sergeant; it is too sad.'

'Doubtless it is; that is why he does not reflect, this man who goes off with tears in his eyes, as you say.'

'What should he be thinking of?'

'That it is three months since the woman he guards has seen her child. He does not dwell on her unhappiness, but on his own. It is true this woman is a queen, so one is not obliged to show her as much respect as one would to a workman's wife,' the sergeant finished in mocking tones.

Suddenly a loud noise was heard to the left of the spot where the men stood.

'What is that?' asked Devaux, Lorin's companion. 'It is like a child's voice,' answered Lorin, listening. 'Will you sing?' asked a hoarse voice, beginning a coarse song.

'No, I will not sing,' answered the child. 'Ah! little wretch!' cried the same hoarse voice. There was the sound of a lash, and the child howled with pain.

'Ah! it is that odious Simon beating the little Capet,' exclaimed Lorin.

Presently a low door opened, and the royal child rushed into the courtyard, pursued by his jailer, who, striking him heavily with his whip, caused him to fall on one knee.

'Bring me my last, you little monster, or else——'

Rising, the child shook his head defiantly.

'Ah! you refuse? Wait, you will see something,' cried Simon the cobbler, in a mad frenzy.

'Stop, there! what are you going to do, Master Simon?' demanded Lorin, with a frown.
‘To punish this little cub. He will neither sing like a good patriot, nor work like a good citizen.’
‘What does that matter to you? Did the nation entrust Capet to you that you might teach him to sing?’
‘What business is it of yours, and why are you interfering, citizen sergeant?’
‘This concerns any man of spirit. It is unworthy of any one to see a child beaten without putting a stop to it.’
‘Bah! the son of the tyrant.’
‘He is a child who has had no share in his father’s crimes; a child who is not guilty and, consequently, must not be punished.’
‘I say he is given to me to do as I like with. I wish him to sing “Madame Véto,” and he shall sing it.’
‘Unfeeling wretch, to make this child sing a vile song about his own mother! Would you like your son forced to denounce his father as a scoundrel?’
‘I? Ah! wretched aristocrat of a sergeant! I will have you arrested.’
‘Ah, an excellent conceit to have a Thermopylan arrested.’
‘Very good! Meanwhile, pick up my last, Capet, and come to your shoemaking, or——’
‘He shall not pick up your last; he shall not make shoes; do you hear, stupid?’ cried Lorin who, pale with rage, approached Simon with clenched teeth. ‘You have your sword there, but that doesn’t frighten me.’
‘Ah! murder!’ roared Simon, blenching with fear.
At that moment two women entered the yard, and one holding out a paper approached the sergeant.
‘It is the girl Tison, wishing to speak to her mother,’ explained the sentry.
‘Let her pass, since the Council permits it,’ ordered Lorin, without turning from Simon. The women
were mounting the dark stair when they met Maurice Lindey coming down. Owing to the darkness he could not distinguish their features.

'Who are you, and what do you wish?' he asked.

'I am Sophie Tison, and have permission to visit my mother,' answered one of the women.

'Yes, but the permission is granted to you alone.'

'My friend came to keep me in countenance amid all the soldiers.'

'Very good; but your friend must stay below. Guards, allow the citizeness Tison to pass. Her friend remains on the stair;' see to it that she is treated respectfully,' said Maurice addressing the sentries on the landings. Then he descended rapidly into the courtyard crying out,—

'What is the meaning of this noise? A child's cries can be heard even in the prisoners' ante-room.'

'It is this traitor, this aristocrat, who won't let me beat Capet,' replied Simon, expecting that Maurice would support him.

'Yes! I prevent it,' cried Lorin, drawing his sword; 'and if you call me ci-devant or traitor, I will run my blade through your body.'

'A threat!' shouted Simon; 'help me, citizen municipal!'

'The sergeant is right; you are disgracing the nation,' said Maurice; 'coward, to strike a child.'

'Can you guess why he is beating him, Maurice? Because the child refuses to sing “Madame Véto”; because the son will not insult his mother.'

'Wretch!' cried Maurice.

'Ah! you too? Then I am surrounded by traitors?'

'You rascal! to call Maurice Lindey a traitor,' cried Maurice, seizing Simon's lash and bringing it sharply across his shoulders.

'Thank you, monsieur,' said the boy; 'but he will take vengeance on me.'

'Come, Capet, my child; if he beats you again,
call for help, and he shall have a thrashing. Run back to your tower, little Capet,' said Lorin.

'Why do you, my protector, call me Capet? You know Capet is not my name.'

'It's not your name? What is your name?'

'Louis Charles de Bourbon. Capet was the name of one of my ancestors. I know the history of France; my father taught it to me.'

'And you wish a child to make shoes to whom a king has taught the history of France!'' cried Lorin.

'Be assured, I shall report this,' added Maurice.

'And I shall make a report, too. I shall say, for one thing, that two women were allowed to pass, when only one had permission,' retorted Simon.

The two women were just leaving the tower; Maurice advanced to them.

'Well, did you see your mother?' he inquired of the one nearest him. Sophie Tison stepped quickly between the guardsman and her companion:

'Yes, thank you, citizen,' she replied. Maurice would have liked to see the girl's friend or to hear her voice, but she was wrapped up in her cloak, and seemed determined not to speak a word. Maurice fancied she trembled, which aroused his suspicions, and flying upstairs he was in time to see the Queen hiding something like a letter in her pocket. 'Oh! have I been duped?' he thought, calling on his colleague. 'Citizen Agricola, enter Marie-Antoinette's room immediately, and keep your eye on her.' Then, turning to a Municipal Guard, 'Send for the woman Tison,' he ordered.

Five minutes later the latter appeared, looking very happy.

'I have seen my daughter,' she announced.

'Where?' asked Maurice.

'Here, in this ante-room.'

'Good. Did your daughter enter the Austrian's room?'
'No.'

'While you were speaking to your daughter, no one left the prisoners' room? Think well.'

'Ah! I believe I remember, that young Marie-Thérèse came out.'

'She spoke to your daughter?'

'No.'

'Your daughter handed her nothing?'

'No.'

'She picked up nothing, Marie Antoinette's daughter, I mean?'

'Yes, she picked up her handkerchief.'

'Ah! the wretch!' cried Maurice, rushing to an alarm-bell, and pulling the cord violently.

CHAPTER XI

THE NOTE

The other two Municipal Guards ran up immediately; a detachment of the post accompanied them. The doors were shut and all exit barred.

'What do you wish, monsieur?' asked the Queen, as Maurice entered her room. 'I was going to bed when the Citizen Municipal rushed in without telling me why.'

'Madame, it is I who wish to ask you something, not my colleague.'

'You, monsieur' said Marie Antoinette, looking at Maurice, whose behaviour had almost inspired her with gratitude.

'Yes, I wish you to hand me the note you were hiding when I entered.'

Madame Royale and Madame Elisabeth trembled, while the Queen became very pale.

'You are mistaken, monsieur; I was concealing nothing,' she declared.
'You were hiding a note, citizeness, and you must give it up. It is the one brought by the girl Tison, which your daughter picked up with her handkerchief.'

'But, monsieur, this is worse than tyranny,' the Queen exclaimed.

'Make no mistake,' said Maurice firmly. 'We are neither judges nor executioners, but guardians, and as such act under orders. To break them is treason. So I beg you to give me the note which you have concealed.'

'Gentlemen, search and deprive us of our sleep tonight, as usual,' said the Queen haughtily.

'God forbid that we should lay hands on a woman. I shall inform the Commune, and await its orders; only you must sleep on these chairs, and we must watch by you. If necessary, a search will be made.'

'Whatever is the matter?' asked Tison's wife, gazing wildly into the room.

'Just this, citizeness, that, by conniving at treachery, you have deprived yourself of the pleasure of ever seeing your daughter again.'

'Seeing my daughter? What are you saying, citizen?'

'I will explain myself. Your daughter came here, not to see you, but to bring a letter to Madame Capet, therefore she comes no more. This time you have nobody to blame, for it is all your fault.'

'Oh! my fault? Nothing has happened, I swear to it. Oh! if I thought anything had happened, woe to you, Antoinette; you should pay dearly for it!' cried the poor woman, shaking her fist at the Queen.

'Threaten nobody, but rather obtain by gentleness what we must have; you are a woman, and Citizeness Antoinette, who is herself a mother, will doubtless have pity on a mother. To-morrow your daughter will be arrested, imprisoned, and, should anything be discovered, she and her companion are lost.'

'You hear, Antoinette?... My daughter!'...
You will be the cause of her death!' cried Tison's wife, gazing wildly at the Queen.

'Come, Madame Tison, I wish to speak to you,' said the Queen, who appeared horrified at the despair in the woman's eyes.

'We will go behind this partition, Citizen Agricola, and, if you trust me, you will turn your back, as I do. I feel sure that a person to whom we show this kindness will not make us repent it,' said Maurice.

The Queen glanced gratefully at him as he walked off, followed by Agricola.

'You see this woman,' observed Maurice to Agricola; 'as a Queen, she is very guilty; as a woman, she is noble and high-souled. It is a good thing to dethrone royalty, suffering purifies.'

'Sacrebleu! how well you talk, Citizen Maurice! I like to hear you and your friend Lorin talk. Is this poetry you are reciting?'

Maurice smiled.

The woman Tison approached the Queen.

'Madame,' said the latter, 'your grief breaks my heart; I have no wish to be so cruel as to deprive you of your daughter, but, remember, if you do what these men want, your daughter will perhaps be ruined, all the same.'

'Do what they desire!' cried the woman.

'First, you had better reflect on what it means. Your daughter brought a friend with her. That friend handed her a note, which she dropped. Marie, who was passing, picked up this note, quite an insignificant piece of paper, but into which evil-intentioned people might read some sinister meaning. That is all; you wish me to surrender this paper. Do you wish me to sacrifice a friend, although that sacrifice may be of no benefit to your daughter?'

'Do as they bid! do as they bid!'

'But, think, suppose this paper should compromise your daughter!'
'My daughter is a good patriot; the Tisons are well known for their patriotism! Do as they bid!'
'How I wish I could convince you!'
'My daughter! I want my daughter! Give me the paper, Antoinette.'
'Here it is, madame,' said the Queen, handing the unhappy creature a piece of paper which she waved above her head, crying, 'Come, come, citizens; I have the paper. Take it and restore my daughter.'
Maurice and his colleague, approaching at her cries, took the paper and opened it, reading the words, 'In the East, a friend is still watching over you.' Maurice trembled on seeing the hand-writing. ‘Can it be Geneviève’s?’ he thought. ‘But no, that is impossible. There is a resemblance, but how could Geneviève be communicating with the Queen.’
‘You have performed a good action,’ said he to Madame Tison, ‘and you, citizeness, as well,’ addressing the Queen.
‘Then, monsieur, follow my example and burn this paper.’
‘You are joking surely,’ remarked Agricola; ‘burn a paper which may help us to light upon a whole swarm of aristocrats? That would be too stupid.’
‘Burn it, for it may compromise my daughter,’ pleaded Madame Tison.
‘I know that, your daughter and others as well,’ said Agricola, taking from Maurice the paper which the latter would certainly have burned, had he been alone. Ten minutes later the suspicious note was handed to the members of the Commune, who made various comments on it.
‘“A l'Orient, un ami veille,” what the deuce does that mean?’ asked one.
‘Why! that’s quite clear, à Lorient is a little town in Brittany, between Vannes and Quimper. It should be burned, if it contains many aristocrats who are still watching over the Austrian,’ declared another.
'I have not the least idea where the "Orient" can be, but it is certainly not in Brittany,' said Maurice to himself, on being told of this suggestion.

Next day the Queen asked permission, on behalf of herself and the other two prisoners, to take an airing on the top of the tower. This was granted, but Maurice, mounting at the same time, stationed himself behind a little sentry-box near the staircase, and there awaited events. The Queen at first walked to and fro carelessly, then, stopping, she gazed fixedly towards a certain house in the east; at a window of this house several people were standing, one of them holding a handkerchief.

By the aid of a telescope, Maurice distinguished a young man, with fair hair and pale complexion, and behind him a woman; he was about to focus the glass on this woman, who also held a telescope, when she drew back, pulling the young man with her. Maurice imagined that he recognised the features of Geneviève. Was it in reality Geneviève, and had she recognised him? After waiting to see if they would return, Maurice urged on Agricola the necessity for watching carefully, and then ran quickly downstairs to hide at the corner of Rue Porte-Foin. His vigil, however, was useless, since not a soul appeared from the house. Then, unable to resist the feeling of suspicion which had first assailed him, when the friend of Tison's daughter persisted in remaining hidden and silent, Maurice set out for Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques.

On his arrival, he found Geneviève sitting at breakfast under an arbour. Greeting Maurice cordially, she invited him to share her repast, while Dixmer, who just then came out, expressed his joy at seeing Maurice at such an unexpected hour, and insisted on the young man's accompanying him to the tannery, before he breakfasted.

'I have some very important news for you, my dear Maurice,' said he; 'my honourable friend Morand,
who, as you are aware, is a most distinguished chemist, has discovered how to make a red morocco such as is not known at present, a fast dye, I mean. Come, you shall see Morand at his work; he is a real artist.'

Following Dixmer through the workrooms, Maurice found the Citizen Morand busy in a little private laboratory, his hands and arms red with the dye he was employing on a dirty sheepskin. He bowed to Maurice.

‘Well, Citizen Morand, what are we saying now?’ asked Dixmer.

‘We shall gain a hundred thousand pounds a year with this process alone,’ Morand answered.

Leaving them to talk, Maurice rejoined Geneviève, thinking as he did so: ‘Being a Municipal Guard seems to have a bad effect on one. Why, after a week’s duty at the Temple, I might be denouncing myself as an aristocrat. Honest Dixmer, worthy Morand! charming Geneviève! How could I suspect them for an instant!?’

Geneviève was awaiting Maurice with her customary smile, which caused him entirely to forget the disturbing ideas he had been harbouring. She was now, as always, gracious, sweet, and friendly. The hours Maurice spent in her company were the only ones in which he really lived. All the rest of the day he was devoured by that fever which in ’93 divided Paris into two opposing camps, making of each hour an unending struggle.

Towards noon he was obliged to leave Geneviève and return to the Temple. At the end of Rue Saint-Avoye he encountered his friend Lorin, who immediately left his rank to speak to him. ‘By the way,’ he remarked on parting, ‘you have still three days at the Temple, Maurice; I entrust little Capet to your care.’
CHAPTER XII

LOVE

At this period of his life, Maurice was both very happy and very unhappy. His work at the Lepelletier Section occupied him during the day, whilst his evenings were spent in visiting at Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques and occasionally at the Thermopylae Club. He did not hide from himself that to see Geneviève every night was to fall more and more deeply in love with her. Geneviève was one of these timid, mild-looking women who frankly give a friend their hand or kiss him on the brow in sisterly confidence or virgin ignorance. Before such persons words of love seem blasphemy and all material desires sacrilege.

One evening as he sat alone with her at the open window, Maurice ventured to ask how it happened that she, so young, so refined, so poetical, had married a man already past middle age, common by birth and education, and wholly absorbed in his business of dyeing skins. ‘First of all, tell me your maiden name,’ he urged.

‘Geneviève du Treilly,’ she answered; ‘my family was ruined after the American War, in which both my father and my eldest brother took part.’

‘Noblemen?’ asked Maurice.

‘No, no; my family was rich, but in no way connected with the aristocracy,’ replied Geneviève, blushing; ‘in America my father was intimate with M. Morand’s father, who employed M. Dixmer as his business manager. M. Morand, knowing that we had lost our fortune and that M. Dixmer was wealthy, introduced the latter to us. I felt that in marrying him I should gratify the wishes of my family, so I accepted his offer. I have now been M. Dixmer’s
He burst into a lighted room.
wife for three years, and have never had a moment’s regret.’

‘When you married M. Dixmer, he was not the manager of this tannery?’

‘No, we lived at Blois. In August, M. Dixmer bought this house with its adjoining workrooms. In order to spare me the sight of anything offensive, he gave me this pavilion, where I live quietly, indulging my fancies as I please, happy when a friend like yourself comes to interrupt or to share in my reflections,’ replied Geneviève, extending her hand, which Maurice kissed warmly.

‘Now, my friend,’ continued Geneviève, colouring and withdrawing her hand, ‘you have learned how I became M. Dixmer’s wife.’

‘Yes; but you have not explained why M. Morand became M. Dixmer’s partner.’

‘The explanation, however, is very simple. M. Dixmer, though possessing some fortune, was not wealthy enough to buy this important business. The son of his protector, M. Morand, supplied half the funds and, being interested in chemistry, threw himself with enthusiasm into that branch of the business, to the great benefit of all concerned.’

‘M. Morand is also one of your dear friends, madame?’

‘He has a noble nature and one of the best hearts,’ answered Geneviève seriously.

‘He is still young, is he not? With these glasses of his, it is difficult to guess his age.’

‘He is thirty-five.’

‘You have been acquainted long?’

‘Since our childhood.’

Maurice bit his lips. He had always suspected Morand of loving Geneviève. This time he took his departure, more in love than ever, for he was now jealous. However blind his love rendered him, yet, reflecting on Geneviève’s story, he remembered many
awkward pauses, many discrepancies and omissions, which troubled him strangely. Even the liberty granted to him by Dixmer of talking to Geneviève as much and as often as he pleased could not reconcile him to this. For Maurice, now a constant guest, not only stayed alone with Geneviève, but even escorted her in the little walks she took in the neighbourhood.

Moreover, notwithstanding the familiar footing which he had acquired in the household, one thing surprised him—the more he tried to court Morand's friendship, the more this strange man drew away from him. Maurice complained bitterly to Geneviève, feeling sure that Morand regarded him as a rival.

'Citizen Morand hates me,' said he to Geneviève.

'You? M. Morand hates you?' asked Geneviève, with astonishment in her beautiful eyes.

'Yes, I am sure of it.'

'And why should he hate you?'

'Do you wish me to tell you?'

'Certainly I do.'

'Well, because I——' Maurice stopped; he was going to say, 'Because I love you.'

'I cannot tell you why,' he resumed, blushing. With Geneviève the fiery Republican was timid and hesitating as a young girl. Geneviève smiled.

'Say, rather, that you have nothing in common, and I will perhaps believe you,' said she. 'You have an impulsive nature, a keen brain, and refined tastes. Morand is timid and reserved. It is his modesty which keeps him from making advances.'

'Who asks him to make advances? I have made plenty, but he has not responded to them. No, that is certainly not the reason.'

'What is it, then?'

Maurice thought it wiser not to answer.

Next day, on arriving at the house, Maurice found Geneviève preparing to go out.

'I am going to Auteuil,' she said; 'the weather is
delightful, and we can walk after driving beyond the barrier. Then, when I have finished my business, the carriage can pick us up.

On reaching Auteuil, Geneviève stopped. ‘Wait for me in the vicinity of the park,’ she said.

‘Where are you going?’ her companion asked.

‘To visit a friend.’

‘Can I not accompany you?’

‘No, that is impossible.’

Maurice paced up and down, knocking off with his stick the heads of the flowers and thistles that strewed the wayside. One thing filled his thoughts, one question interested him—did Geneviève love him or not? Her manners with the young man were those of a sister or friend; but he felt this was not enough. He loved her with his whole heart; she had become his sole thought by day, his dream by night. Formerly he had only wished to see Geneviève; now this no longer sufficed, he wished her to love him.

In an hour Geneviève, returning, took Maurice’s arm, saying, ‘Here I am; I am sorry to have kept you waiting so long.’ Together they turned into a shady lane leading on to the highway. Maurice was silent, Geneviève pensive; with one hand she pulled to pieces the flowers of a bouquet.

‘What is wrong?’ asked Maurice suddenly; ‘what makes you so sad today?’

‘And yourself? Are you not sadder than usual?’

‘I have cause for melancholy, I am unhappy; but you?’

‘You, unhappy?’

‘Certainly; does not the tone of my voice tell you that I am suffering? When I am talking to you or your husband, have you not seen me get up sometimes as though struggling for more air?’

‘But what causes this suffering?’

‘If I were a fine lady, I should say my nerves troubled me.’
'Are you suffering at present?'
'Very much.'
'Then, let us hurry home.'
'Already, madame?'
'Certainly.'
'Ah! true, it is late, and I was forgetting that M. Morand is to return at nightfall.'
Geneviève glanced reproachfully at Maurice.
'Still?' said she.
'Well, it is your own fault. Why did you praise M. Morand so highly?'
'I did not know it was forbidden to express one's esteem for one friend to another.'
'It must be a very high esteem to cause one to hasten home as you are doing now, as though fearful of losing even a few minutes.'
'You are extremely unjust to-day, Maurice; have I not devoted part of my time to you?'
'You are right; I am too exacting,' he answered, giving rein to his ill humour; 'let us go to see M. Morand!'
Geneviève felt that she, too, was losing patience.
'Yes, let us go to meet M. Morand; he, at least, is a friend who has never grieved me,' she said.
By this time they had reached the high road. The horizon was red, reflecting the setting sun whose last rays shone on the gilded dome of Les Invalides. The first star of evening trembled in the blue sky. Geneviève removed her hand from her companion's arm with an air of resigned sadness.
'What is wrong that you should make me suffer?' she asked.
'Ah! the trouble with me is that I am less clever than some people; I do not know how to make myself beloved.'
'Maurice!'
'Oh! madame, if he is always kind, always the same, it is because he does not suffer.'
Geneviève laid her white hand again on Maurice's arm.

'I beg you not to speak any more,' she said.

'Why, then?'

'Because your voice pains me.'

'Everything about me, even my voice, displeases you?'

'Be quiet, I beseech you.'

'I obey, madame,' answered the passionate young man, passing his hand over his fevered brow.

Geneviève recognised that he was really suffering. People of Maurice's temperament have griefs undreamed of by others.

'You are my friend, Maurice,' she said, 'very precious to me; do not let me lose my friend.'

'Oh! you would not regret the loss for long!'

'You are mistaken, I should regret it for ever.'

'Geneviève! have pity on me!'

Geneviève trembled. It was the first time Maurice had pronounced her name in such tones.

'Since you have guessed my secret, let me confess everything, Geneviève; for, though you kill me with a glance—— I have been silent too long; I will speak.'

'Monsieur, in the name of our friendship, I have begged you not to speak; monsieur, again I entreat you, for my sake, if not for your own. Not another word, in the name of Heaven, not another word!'

'Friendship! I do not wish your friendship, Geneviève; I must have more than others.'

'That is enough, Monsieur Lindey,' exclaimed Madame Dixmer, with a queenly gesture; 'here is the carriage, kindly accompany me to my husband's home.'

They got into the carriage, Geneviève taking the back seat, while Maurice settled himself opposite her. Neither uttered a word; Geneviève held her handkerchief to her eyes. When they reached the tannery,
Dixmer was busy in his office; Morand, having just arrived from Rambouillet, was changing his clothes.

Geneviève held out her hand to Maurice, saying, 'Farewell, Maurice, it is your wish.' Without replying, the young man walked to the mantelpiece, took down a portrait of Geneviève, kissed it fondly, pressed it to his heart, replaced it, and left the house.

Maurice reached home without knowing exactly how he had got there; he had passed through the streets oblivious to all sights and sounds. The recent events recurred to his mind, but he could not explain to himself either his words or the feeling which had inspired them. There are moments when the calmest and most self-controlled nature gives way to violence, obeying the lower suggestions of the imagination.

Maurice changed his dress without calling his valet; made no reply to his cook, when she informed him supper was ready; and read all his letters without understanding a word of them. The mists of jealousy that clouded his reason were not yet dispelled. At ten o'clock he went to bed in a mechanical fashion, as he had done everything since leaving Geneviève. Such conduct on the part of any one else Maurice would have denounced as crass folly and perfectly indefensible; but now all he realised was that a terrible blow had been dealt at hopes on which, vague though they were, rested all his dreams of happiness.

As usually happens in such cases, Maurice slept soundly till morning, being awakened by his servant, who came to open the windows and to bring fresh flowers. Maurice began again to consider the reasons for his ill humour, and admitted that they all centred in jealousy of Morand. He paid no attention to the meeting in the house at Auteuil, where Geneviève had stayed over an hour; the constant and only idea that tortured him being that Morand was in love with Geneviève. After all, it was a strange fantasy,
since never by gesture, look, or word had Dixmer’s partner given any cause for such a supposition.

The voice of his valet woke him from his reverie. ‘Citizen,’ said he, glancing at the letters on the table, ‘do you wish to keep any of these, or am I to burn them all?’

‘Burn what?’ asked Maurice.
‘The letters which the citizen read last night.’

Maurice could not remember having read a single one. ‘Burn them all,’ he ordered.

‘Here are to-day’s, citizen.’

Maurice took the bundle, and thought he detected a familiar perfume. Looking through the letters he saw a seal and writing which made him tremble. The valet approached to ask what was wrong; but Maurice motioned to him to withdraw. After turning over this letter several times, fearing that it contained some ill news, he finally summoned up courage to open it and read the following:—

‘Citizen Maurice,—Our intimacy must cease, since you show a disposition to overstep the bounds of friendship. You are a man of honour, citizen, and now that a night has passed since our interview, you will realise that your presence here is no longer desirable. I leave you to make what excuse you please to my husband. When your letter to M. Dixmer arrives to-day, I shall have, unfortunately, to deplore the loss of a friend whom I am prevented by every sense of honour from meeting again.

‘Farewell for ever,

‘Geneviève.

‘PS.—The bearer awaits an answer.’

Maurice called; his valet reappeared.
‘Who brought this letter?’
‘A citizen porter.’
‘Is he there?’
'Yes.'

Maurice rose from bed, sat down at his desk, and taking a sheet of paper, penned the following:—

'CITIZEN DIXMER,—I shall always retain the friendliest feelings toward you, but it is impossible for me to continue my visits to your house.' (Maurice paused to consider why he could no longer fraternise with Dixmer, and one reason, which might have occurred to any one at this time; presented itself to his mind. He continued thus:) 'Certain reports are abroad as to your lukewarmness in public affairs. I have no desire to accuse you, but I can hardly consider it my mission to defend you. Accept my regrets, and rest assured that your secrets will remain buried in my heart.'

Maurice did not even read over his letter, written as it was on the impulse of the moment. He had no doubt as to the effect which it would produce. Dixmer, excellent patriot as Maurice knew him by his speeches at least, would feel annoyed; his wife and Morand would no doubt encourage him in cherishing ill-feeling; he would not even reply, and the happy past would be changed into a sad future. After signing and sealing the letter, Maurice gave it to his servant, who handed it to the porter. Then, sighing, the Republican took his gloves and hat and departed to his Section, hoping in hard work to recover his usual cheerful vigour.

Affairs continued in a terrible state, and the 31st of May drew near. The Terror endeavoured to overthrow the barriers opposed to it by the Girondins, those moderate spirits who had dared to demand vengeance for the September massacres and had conspired to save the King. Whilst Maurice threw himself with enthusiasm into public work, the messenger had carried surprise and dismay into the household in Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques.
Dixmer read the missive without at first understanding it; then he communicated it to Citizen Morand, who buried his head in his hands. To them in their present situation, a situation actually unknown to Maurice, but which our readers will doubtless have guessed at, this letter came as a thunderbolt.

'Is he an honest man?' asked Dixmer in anguish.

'Yes,' answered Morand unhesitatingly.

'No matter! We did wrong, as you well see, in saving his life.'

'My friend, we are fighting against violence; we disgrace it by calling it crime. Whatever happens, we have done well not to kill a man; I repeat, too, I believe Maurice to be an honest, noble soul.'

'Yes, but being such an ardent Republican, if he has discovered some secret, he may consider it a crime not to sacrifice his own honour, as they say, on the altar of the Fatherland.'

'But, do you think he knows anything of importance?'

'Why! don't you hear? He speaks of secrets which will remain hidden in his heart. Those are evidently the secrets which I confided to him, referring to our smuggling; he knows no others.'

'Did he suspect nothing in the Auteuil visit? You remember, he accompanied your wife?'

'I myself told Geneviève to take Maurice with her for safety.'

'Listen, we shall easily discover whether our suspicions are correct. In a week our battalion is due at the Temple; you are Captain, Dixmer, and I am Lieutenant. If our battalion or our company ever receives a counter-order, such as was issued the other day to the Butte-des-Moulins battalion, then all is discovered, and we must flee from Paris or die fighting. On the contrary, should things go on as usual—'

'We are equally lost,' answered Dixmer.
'Why?'

'Pardieu! does not everything depend on this man's co-operation? Was he not designed, unknown to himself, to open a road for us?'

'That is true,' admitted Morand, crestfallen.

'So you see that at all costs we must renew our intimacy with him.'

'But should he refuse, should he dread being compromised?'

'I will question Geneviève; she saw him last and will perhaps know something.'

'Dixmer, it grieves me to see you connecting Geneviève with all our plots; not that I fear any indiscretion on her part, but we are playing a terrible game, and I feel sorry and ashamed at placing the head of a woman at stake.'

'A woman's head counts for as much as a man's. Cunning, candour, or beauty can accomplish as much as brute force or courage. Geneviève shares our principles and our interests, so she shall share our fate.'

'Do as you please, dear friend; I have given my opinion. Geneviève is in every respect worthy of the mission with which you have entrusted her, or rather which she has decreed to herself. It is from saints that martyrs spring,' answered Morand, holding out his white, womanly hand to Dixmer.

The latter entering Geneviève's apartments found her seated with downcast eyes at a table. She turned at the sound of the opening door.

'Ah! it is you, my friend?' said she.

'Yes; I have received a letter from Maurice, which I do not at all understand. Here it is, read it and give me your opinion,' said Dixmer, smiling serenely.

In spite of her enforced self-control, Geneviève's hand shook as she took the letter; Dixmer watched her carefully.

'Well?' he asked, when she had finished.
'I believe M. Maurice Lindey is an honest man, and that we have nothing to fear from him.'

'You think he is ignorant as to the people whom you visited at Auteuil?'

'I am sure of it.'

'Why should he form this hasty resolve? Did he appear to you yesterday colder or more expansive than usual?'

'No; I thought him the same as ever.'

'Consider well what you answer, Geneviève; your reply, as you must be aware, will greatly influence all our plans.'

'Wait a moment, then,' answered Geneviève, with emotion.

'Good! trace everything back in your memory, Geneviève.'

'Yes, I remember; he was sulky yesterday; M. Maurice is somewhat tyrannical in his friendships . . . and occasionally we were on bad terms for weeks at a time.'

'So it is merely a case of sulking?'

'Probably.'

'Geneviève, understand that in our position, probabilities do not answer, but certainties.'

'Well, my friend . . . I am certain.'

'This letter is therefore only a pretext for not returning to the house?'

'How can you wish me to say such things?'

'Speak, Geneviève, I would ask no other woman.'

'It is a pretext,' answered Geneviève, lowering her eyes.

'Ah!' exclaimed Dixmer. Then, after a moment's silence, during which he tried to restrain the beatings of his heart,—

'Do me a service, dear friend,' said he.

'What is that?' asked Geneviève, turning in surprise.

'Prevent even the slightest chance of danger;
Maurice is perhaps better acquainted with our secrets than we imagine. What you believe to be a pretext, is perchance a reality. Write him a few words.'

'I?'

'Yes, you; say you opened his letter, and wish an explanation; he will come, you can question him and easily learn what is wrong.'

'Oh! certainly not; I cannot do what you ask; I will not.'

'My dear Geneviève, when such powerful interests are at stake, how can you draw back before wretched considerations of amour propre?'

'I have given you my opinion of Maurice, monsieur; he is honest and courteous, but he is capricious, and I have no wish to submit to any authority but that of my husband.'

This was said so calmly, and yet with such firmness, that Dixmer understood further arguments would be, for the present, useless; so without adding a word he looked at Geneviève, passed his hand across his fevered brow, and went out. Morand was anxiously awaiting him, and Dixmer related all that had happened.

'Very good, let us leave the matter at that and think no more about it,' advised Morand. 'Rather than grieve your wife, rather than wound her feelings, I would renounce——'

Dixmer put his hand on his shoulder.

'You are either mad, monsieur, or you do not consider what you are saying,' he exclaimed.

'How, Dixmer; you think——'

'I think, Chevalier, that you have no more right than me to obey your impulses. Neither you, nor I, nor Geneviève belong to ourselves, Morand. We are but individuals called on to defend a principle, and principles resting upon people crush them.'

Morand shuddered and remained silent, sad, and dreamy. Together they walked round the garden several times. Then Dixmer left his companion.
‘I have some orders to give,’ he remarked in a perfectly calm voice. ‘I must leave you, Monsieur Morand.’ Morand held out his hand to Dixmer, and watched him disappear.

‘Poor Dixmer,’ he murmured, ‘I very much fear that he risks the most in this affair.’

Entering the workrooms, Dixmer issued some orders, re-read the papers, gave instructions for bread and fuel to be distributed amongst the poor of the Section, and afterwards returning to the house, dressed himself in his outdoor clothes.

CHAPTER XIII

THE EXPLANATION

An hour later, whilst Maurice was busy at the Section, his servant came to interrupt him. ‘Citizen Lindey, some one who claims to have important matters to reveal to you, is waiting for you,’ he said.

Returning to his rooms, Maurice was much surprised to find Dixmer installed there. The latter, rising smilingly, extended a hand to the young man.

‘What possessed you to write to me in that style?’ he asked; ‘you have wounded me greatly, my dear Maurice. So you describe me as being lukewarm and a false patriot, do you? Come, you cannot accuse me thus to my face; confess that you were seeking the grounds of a quarrel.’

‘I will confess everything you wish, my dear Dixmer, for your conduct has always struck me as that of an honest citizen; but, none the less, I have formed a resolution which is irrevocable——’

‘How is that? You admit there is nothing to reproach us with, and yet you are deserting us?’
'Dear Dixmer, understand that to act as I am acting, to abandon such a friend as you, I must have extremely powerful reasons.'

'Yes; but, in any case, they are not the ones you put forward. What you wrote is merely a pretext.'

Maurice reflected for a moment.

'Listen, Dixmer, we are living at a time when suspicion, expressed in a letter, can and ought to annoy you; I admit that. No honourable man, therefore, would leave you to bear such annoyance, so I will state frankly that my reasons were only a pretext.'

This confession, which should have reassured the tanner, seemed rather to make him gloomy.

'Then what is your real motive?' he asked.

'I am not at liberty to disclose it; I can only say you would approve of it unhesitatingly.'

Dixmer continued to press him.

'You are absolutely determined to know?' Maurice inquired at length.

'Yes.'

'Well, then, you have a young and beautiful wife, whose fair fame is spotless; yet people have dared to misinterpret the reasons for my visits to your house.'

Dixmer paled slightly.

'Really?' he exclaimed, after a pause; 'then, my dear Maurice, the husband must thank you for the pain you inflict on the friend.'

'You understand I am not foolish enough to believe that my visits can hurt either you or your wife, but they may give occasion for scandal, and the more absurd the tale, the more readily is it believed.'

'Child!' cried Dixmer, shrugging his shoulders.

'We shall be no less good friends apart,' Maurice pleaded, 'since we shall have nothing to reproach ourselves with; whilst if we were near——'

'Well, in that case?'

'Things might occur——'
'Do you imagine that I could have thought——'
'Ah! mon Dieu!'
'But why did you write, instead of telling me frankly?'
'Simply to avoid this very interview.'
'Are you annoyed, Maurice, that I am sufficiently fond of you to come to ask an explanation?'
'Oh! quite the contrary; and I am pleased to have seen you once again; it is for the last time.'
'For the last time?' Dixmer repeated; 'still we are very fond of you,' pressing the young man's hand. Maurice started.
'Morand,' continued Dixmer, noticing the start, 'said to me this morning, "Do all you can to bring back dear M. Maurice."
'Ah! monsieur, I am surprised to learn that the Citizen Morand thinks so well of me.'
'You doubt it?' asked Dixmer.
'I neither believe nor doubt, and have no motive for questioning it; when I visited at your house, Dixmer, I went to see you and your wife, not the Citizen Morand.'
'You do not understand him, Maurice; Morand is a noble man.'
'I grant it,' agreed Maurice, smiling bitterly.
'Now to return to the object of my visit. You say certain reports have been put in circulation?'
'Yes, citizen.'
'Well, let us be frank. Why should you be disturbed by the silly gossip of idle neighbours? Have you not a clear conscience, and is not Geneviève beyond reproach?'
'I am younger than you, and perhaps exaggerate the importance of the affair. Nevertheless, the reputation of such a woman as Geneviève must not be assailed even by the tittle-tattle of ignorant fools. Permit me, therefore, my dear Dixmer, to adhere to my resolution.'
'Come, since we are in such a mood for confession, admit yet one other thing.'

'What else do you wish me to confess?' asked Maurice, blushing.

'That neither politics nor reports about yourself are making you desert us.'

'What is the cause then?'

'The secret you have discovered. The smuggling business you learned about the night we became acquainted in such a strange manner. You have never forgiven me the fraud, and accuse me of being a disloyal Republican, because I use English products in my tannery.'

'My dear Dixmer, I assure you I completely forgot, in my visits to your house, that you were a smuggler.'

'You have no other reason for forsaking us than the one you have told me?'

'On my honour, no.'

'Then, Maurice, I sincerely hope you will abandon this resolution, which has grieved us all so much,' answered Dixmer, rising to go.

Maurice bowed without replying, which implied a refusal. Dixmer departed in despair at having failed to maintain friendly relations with this man who was still not only useful but almost indispensable to him. Maurice himself was a prey to a thousand conflicting emotions. Dixmer begged him to return; Geneviève might pardon him. Why then should he be miserable? Lorin, in his place, would certainly have found countless cheering phrases out of his favourite authors. Maurice had Geneviève’s letter, the formal dismissal, which he carried about next to his heart along with the little note she had written the day after he had come to her rescue. More than that, the young man’s jealousy of the hated Morand, the first cause of his quarrel with Geneviève, was undiminished, and he therefore kept strictly to his resolve.
Still it must be conceded that he missed his daily visit to Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques, and when the hour arrived at which he usually set out, a profound melancholy seized him. He woke each morning expecting to find a letter from Dixmer, and had to confess to himself that he would have yielded to a letter. Each day he went out hoping to meet Geneviève, having arranged numerous schemes for speaking to her; each evening he returned home, with the hope of finding the messenger who had one morning, all unconsciously, brought him such profound sorrow.

Often, too, in moments of despair, his strong nature rebelled at having to endure such torture without being able to inflict the same on Morand, who was the prime cause of all his ills. So he resolved to pick a quarrel with Morand. But Dixmer’s partner was so frail, so harmless, that the notion was unworthy of a Colossus like Maurice.

Lorin, who came to cheer him, sought by every means in his power to awaken his interest in public affairs. But, though the situation was critical enough to have drawn Maurice into the political arena, yet the young Republican had not regained that ardour which had made a hero of him on the 14th July and the 10th August. The two parties, which for some time past had been in bitter opposition, were now preparing for a struggle that could end only in the destruction of one. The two sections were the Moderates or Girondins, represented by Brissot, Pétion, Vergniaud, Valazé, Lanjuinais, and Barbaroux; and the Montagnards, represented by Danton, Robespierre, Chénier, Fabre, Marat, Collot d’Herbois, and Hébert.

After the 10th August, power seemed to pass inevitably into the hands of the Moderate Party. A Ministry had been formed from the remnants of the preceding one, with several additions. The former ministers, Roland, Servien, and Clavières had been recalled; Danton, Monge, and Le Brun newly appointed. All
the other ministers except one belonged to the Moderate Party. We must, of course, understand that Moderate is a relative term. But the 10th August had roused foreign countries to action; the Coalition had hastened to the support of Louis XVI. and of the Royalist principles thus rudely shaken. Then Brunswick’s threatening words were uttered, and, as if in dreadful confirmation, Longwy and Verdun had fallen into the enemy’s possession. Then the Terrorist Reaction had taken place; Danton, after scheming for the deeds of September, had triumphed, and the enemy had beheld France struggling with all the energy of despair for her existence. The deeds of September had saved France, but they had also placed her beyond all law.

France once saved, excessive energy became unnecessary, so the Moderate Party had regained ground. It had tried to pass judgment on the September massacres, pronouncing the words, ‘Murderer’ and ‘Assassin.’ A new word was even added to the nation’s vocabulary, ‘Septembriseur.’ Danton had bravely accepted it. Another chance for Terrorist ascendancy was afforded by the King’s trial. Violence and moderation struggled for supremacy. Violence triumphed, and the head of Louis XVI. fell. As on 10th August, so on 21st January, the Coalition again became active, directed still against the same man. Dumouriez, hindered by the disordered state of affairs from procuring help of men of money, broke with the Jacobins, whom he blamed for the disorganisation, and by joining with the Girondins, caused the ruin of the latter.

Then La Vendée rose, the departments threatened hostility; reverses led to treachery, which in its turn produced reverses. The Jacobins, accusing the Moderates, wished to attack them on the 10th March, the night on which our story began. But undue haste on their adversaries’ part, and perhaps also the rain which caused the shrewd Pétion to remark, ‘It is raining, nothing will be done to-night,’ saved them.
Since that date, however, all had augured badly for the Girondins: Marat was accused and acquitted; Robespierre and Danton joined forces against the common enemy; Henriot, the Septembriseur, was appointed Commander of the National Guard; all presaged the awful day when the last barrier raised against The Terror would be swept away.

Such were the great events in which, in ordinary circumstances, Maurice would have played an active part. But, fortunately or unfortunately for Maurice, neither Lorin's exhortations nor the pressure of affairs could drive from his mind the one idea which possessed him. Hence, when the 31st May arrived, the bold assailant of the Bastille and the Tuileries lay tossing in a fever, which kills even the strongest, but which, nevertheless, may be cured by a look or a word.

CHAPTER XIV

THE 31ST MAY

On the 31st of May, that memorable day when tocsins and drums resounded from earliest daybreak, the battalion of the Faubourg Saint-Victor entered the Temple. After the various formalities had been gone through, the Municipal Guards on duty arrived, and four additional pieces of ordnance were placed besides that already in use. At that moment Santerre appeared with his yellow woollen epaulettes and his uniform, whereon large stains of grease emphasised his patriotism. Reviewing the battalion, he was pleased to consider it satisfactory, and proceeded to count the Municipal Guards.

'Why three?' he asked. 'What citizen is missing from his post?'

'Not a lukewarm citizen,' answered our old friend
Agricola; 'it is Maurice Lindey, the Secretary of Lepelletier Section and the leader of the brave Thermopylæ.'

'Very good; I also admit his patriotism, but, nevertheless, unless he arrives in ten minutes, he will be marked as an absentee,' said Santerre, passing to other matters.

A few yards from the general, a captain of chasseurs and a soldier were standing by themselves.

'Do you hear? Maurice has not arrived,' observed the captain, in low tones.

'Yes, but he will come, be sure, unless something unexpected has happened.'

'If his coming were doubtful, I would place you as sentry on the staircase, and as she will probably mount to the tower, you could speak a word to her.'

At this minute a man with the tricolor sash of a Municipal Guard appeared. He was a stranger both to the captain and to the soldier, who regarded him keenly.

'Citizen General,' said he, addressing Santerre, 'I beg you to accept me instead of Citizen Maurice Lindey, who is seriously ill; here is the doctor's certificate; my turn of service comes in a week, so I am exchanging with him.'

'Very good; sign the register in place of Maurice Lindey, and record the reason for this exchange,' answered Santerre.

The captain and the chasseur exchanged a look of joyful surprise. 'In a week,' they said to themselves.

'Captain Dixmer, take your place in the garden with your company,' ordered Santerre.

'Come, Morand,' said the captain to his companion.

Drums were beat as the company marched off to its allotted place. Arms were piled up, and the soldiers, separating into groups, began to stroll up and down at will. The garden was the one in which, during Louis XVI.'s lifetime, the Royal Family sometimes
took the air. It was now bare, deserted and completely stripped of flowers, trees, and greenery. About twenty-five paces from the wall overlooking Rue Porte-Foin was a cabin, built for the convenience of the National Guards, who could obtain refreshment there when compelled to remain inside the grounds. There had been numerous applications for the post of innkeeper; finally it was granted to an excellent patriot named Plumeau, the widow of a faubourien killed on 10th August.

The little cabin, built of wood, stood in the middle of a flower-bed bordered by a dwarf box hedge. It consisted of one room, twelve feet square, below which a cellar extended; the stair leading to the cellar was roughly cut out. Here the widow Plumeau stored her wines and provisions, she and her daughter taking turns to guard them. The National Guards, as we have stated, strolled about the garden, some glancing at the drawings on the walls, which were all patriotic, others conversing with Madame Plumeau upon the state of their appetite. Among these last were Captain Dixmer and his companion.

'Ah! captain, I have some fine Samur wine,' exclaimed the cantinière.

'Good, Citizeness Plumeau; but that, in my opinion, is worth nothing without some cheese of Brie,' answered the captain, after carefully examining the goods on the shelves and noting the absence of this favourite article.

'Ah! captain, it's a fact, the last piece is gone.'

'Then, no cheese of Brie, no Saumur wine, and mark you, citizeness, my order was worth having, as I meant to treat the whole company.'

'My captain, give me five minutes, and I will beg some from the lodgekeeper, who always keeps that cheese in stock.'

'Yes, go; and meanwhile we will choose our own wine in the cellar.'
'Make yourself at home, captain,' replied widow Plumeau, running towards the porter's lodge, while the captain and chasseur, carrying candles, descended to the cellar.

'That is all right,' said Morand, after a moment's examination; 'the cellar extends toward Rue Porte-Foin. It is from nine to ten feet deep, and there is no other mason-work.'

'What is the nature of the soil?' asked Dixmer.

'A chalky tufa. It is all artificial soil; all these gardens have been upturned several times, there is no rock anywhere.'

'Quick, I hear our hostess coming back; take two bottles of wine and let us go up.'

They appeared at the trap-door as the widow entered, carrying the famous cheese so urgently demanded. Behind her came several chasseurs, attracted by the tempting look of the dainty. Dixmer, doing the honours, offered twenty bottles of wine to his company, whilst Morand recounted the stories of Curtis's devotion, the disinterestedness of Fabricius, and the patriotism of Brutus and Cassius, tales almost as much enjoyed as Dixmer's cheese and wine, which is saying a good deal. Eleven o'clock struck. At half-past eleven the sentries would be relieved.

'Is it not usually from twelve to one that the Austrian takes a walk?' Dixmer asked Tison, who was passing.

'Exactly, from twelve to one,' answered the latter, beginning to sing:—

Madame mounts to her tower—
Mironton, tonton, mirontaine.

The fresh witticism was greeted with loud laughter. Dixmer then called over the men in his company, who were on duty from half-past eleven till half-past one, bidding them hurry with their lunch, and instructed Morand to place himself at the top step of the tower, in the same sentry-box where Maurice had hidden.
Morand, on receiving this simple order, might have been seen to grow pale.

Suddenly a dull noise shook the courtyards, and cries and shouts were heard in the distance.

‘What is that?’ asked Dixmer.

‘Oh! nothing,’ replied Tison; ‘a little disturbance these wretched Brissotins are making before passing to the guillotine.’

The noise became more ominous; the roll of cannon was heard, and a troop of people passed close to the Temple, shouting, ‘Long live the Sections! Long live Henriot! Down with the Brissotins! Down with the Rolandistes! Down with Madame Véto!’

‘Capital! capital!’ exclaimed Tison, rubbing his hands; ‘I will open the doors for Madame Véto that she may hear what affection the people bear her.’

‘Hallo! Tison!’ cried a commanding voice.

‘My general?’ answered Tison.

‘No exercise for the prisoners to-day; they will not leave their room.’

Dixmer and Morand exchanged gloomy looks. To pass the time until summoned to duty, they walked up and down between the canteen and the wall overlooking Rue Porte-Foin. There Morand began to measure the distance with steps a yard long.

‘What distance is it?’ asked Dixmer.

‘From sixty to sixty-one feet,’ was the reply.

‘How many days will be needed?’

Morand reflected, tracing some figures in the sand with a stick.

‘Seven days, at least,’ said he at length.

‘Maurice is on duty in a week. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, for us to make friends with him before then.’

The half-hour struck. Morand, sighing, shouldered his gun, and went to relieve the sentry who was walking on the platform of the tower.
CHAPTER XV

DE VOTION

On the day following the events we have just narrated, Geneviève, at ten o'clock in the morning, was sitting in her usual place near the window. She was questioning herself why for the past three weeks the dawn had brought only sadness, and the days had passed so slowly, and why she had looked forward with apprehension to the evening. Her nights, too, had been gloomy, nights formerly so pleasant, filled with dreams of past and future happiness. As she thus reflected, her eyes fell on a frame filled with striped and red carnations, which she had been keeping in her room all the winter. Maurice had shown her how to cultivate them in this mahogany case; she had watered and pruned them as long as Maurice was there, eager every day to point out to him what progress the flowers had made. But, since Maurice's visits had ceased, the poor carnations, hung neglected, with yellowed, unopened buds.

At sight of these flowers, Geneviève understood the reason of her own sadness. Flowers, she pondered, are like certain friendships, which if carefully cultivated cheer the heart; but if neglected cause the heart to droop and languish. Now she comprehended why she suffered so keenly; the feeling she had endeavoured to overcome was struggling for mastery, assuring her that it would die only when her heart ceased to beat. For a moment despair seized her, for she feared the struggle would prove too severe; bending her head she kissed one of the withered buds and began to weep.

Her husband entered as she dried her eyes. Dixmer, however, absorbed in his own thoughts, was unaware
of her suffering, and he paid no attention to her reddened eyelids. True, Geneviève had risen quickly and was standing near the window in the shadow.

'Well?' she asked.

'There is no news; it is impossible to approach her, impossible to convey anything to her; impossible even to see her.'

'What?' exclaimed Geneviève; 'and after all that disturbance!'

'It is just this commotion which has increased her jailers' suspicions; they feared we might take advantage of the general agitation to make an attack on the Temple. Her Majesty was about to mount to the tower, when Santerre issued an order forbidding the Queen, Madame Elisabeth, and Madame Royale to go out.'

'The poor Chevalier would be terribly upset!'

'He almost despaired when it became certain that our chance was lost. He grew so pale that I led him away, lest his agitation should betray him.'

'But, had you no friends among the Municipal Guards?' asked Geneviève timidly.

'We counted upon one, but he was not present.'

'Who was that?'

'Citizen Maurice Lindey,' answered Dixmer, trying to speak carelessly.

'Why did he not come?' asked Geneviève, bravely controlling her voice.

'He was ill, and rather seriously, too. Patriot as you know him to be, he was obliged to give place to another. But, indeed, had he been there, it would have made no difference. Considering our strained relations, he might even have refused to speak to me.'

'My friend, you exaggerate the gravity of the situation. M. Maurice has a whim not to come here, and there are no doubt certain trifling reasons for his not seeing us; but he is not, on that account, an enemy. Coldness does not exclude politeness, and had
he seen you approaching, he would have met you half-way.'

'Geneviève, what we need from Maurice is not mere politeness but strong friendship. That at present is shattered, and we can hope for nothing now in that direction,' replied Dixmer, sighing deeply and knitting his brows.

'If you think M. Maurice is so essential to our plans——' began Geneviève.

'I despair of seeing them succeed without him.'

'Then, why not try some new means of bringing him back?'

'No, no, I have done all I could; to take a fresh step would appear strange and would necessarily arouse his suspicions. And, believe me, Geneviève, I see further in this matter than you; there is something rankling in Maurice's mind.'

'What do you mean? Speak out, my friend,' cried Geneviève, very much affected.

'I mean, and you are as convinced as I, Geneviève, that something more than a whim has brought about our estrangement with Citizen Lindey.'

'What do you imagine is the real cause?'

'Pride. He honoured us with his acquaintance, this semi-aristocrat, who preserved along with his patriotism his susceptible feelings; he honoured us, this Republican of recognised standing in his Section, his club, and his municipality, in favouring a poor tanner with his friendship. Perhaps our returns have been too cold, or we may in some manner have forgotten ourselves.'

'Let us suppose you are correct; surely your ample apology would have atoned for all that.'

'Yes, assuming that it was I who had offended him; but if, on the contrary, it is with you he is annoyed?'

'What makes you fancy that I have offended M. Maurice?'

'Who can tell what may have given him offence?
He has a peculiar temperament. Did you not yourself accuse him of caprice? Geneviève, I am still of the opinion you were unwise not to write to Maurice.'

'Is it possible?'

'Yes; I may confess this matter of Maurice’s defec-
tion has weighed on my mind very seriously.'

'And—' asked Geneviève timidly.

'And I consider that you ought to write to him.'

'Oh! no, no, Dixmer, do not exact that from me.'

'You know, Geneviève, I never exact anything from you; I merely request you. Well, do you follow me? I beg you to write to Citizen Maurice.'

'But—'

'Listen; either grave reasons exist for this disagree-
ment between you and Maurice (for he has never com-
plained of my conduct), or it is the result of mere childishness.'

Geneviève made no reply.

'If it is simply a childish quarrel, the situation is ridiculous; if, on the contrary, the cause is serious, our present position prevents us from standing too much on our dignity. Do not weigh in the balance with overwhelming interests the quarrels of young people. Control yourself, write a few lines to Citizen Maurice Lindey, and he will return.'

Geneviève reflected for a moment.

'Could we not devise a less compromising plan?' she suggested.

'Compromising, you call it? It seems to me, rather, perfectly natural.'

'No, not for me, my friend.'

'You are very obstinate, Geneviève.'

'Permit me to say that you have only now dis-
covered it.'

'That,' answered Dixmer, 'is why I am so astonished.'

'Good gracious! is it possible, Dixmer, that you do not understand why I object? Will you force me to speak?' cried Geneviève, letting her head droop
listlessly. Dixmer, taking her hand and raising her head, gazed keenly at her, laughing the while in a forced manner.

‘I see what it is,’ he said; ‘indeed I must have been blind. With all your intelligence and culture, my dear Geneviève, you have been so stupid as to fear that Maurice might fall in love with you.’

Geneviève felt a chill seize her. This irony expressed about Maurice’s love, a love whose strength she realised, and which she shared, without, however, confessing it to herself, petrified her. She could not look up; she felt it would be impossible to reply.

‘I have guessed aright, have I not?’ resumed Dixmer. ‘Reassure yourself, Geneviève, Maurice is an ardent Republican in whose heart there exists room only for love of the Fatherland.’

‘Monsieur, are you quite convinced of that?’

‘Certainly; if Maurice loved you, he would not have sought a quarrel, he would have redoubled his attentions to me. If Maurice loved you, he would not so easily have renounced the title of friend of the family, a name which often covers so much.’

‘I beseech you not to joke about such matters!’

‘I am not joking, madame; I simply repeat that Maurice does not love you.’

‘And I say you are mistaken,’ cried Geneviève blushing.

‘In that case, Maurice is an honourable man to keep away rather than betray his host’s confidence. Such people are rare, and we ought not readily to abandon them. You will write to Maurice, Geneviève, will you not?’

‘Oh! mon Dieu!’ exclaimed his wife, letting her head fall forward on her hands. Her husband, to whom she had trusted for help in the moment of distress, failed her, and was indeed thrusting her more deeply into danger.

Dixmer looked at her for a moment; then, trying
to smile: 'Come, dear friend,' he said, 'let us have no wounded vanity; should Maurice make a fresh declaration, laugh at it as you did at the first. I trust you, Geneviève; you have a noble heart, and I am sure of you.'

'Oh!' cried Geneviève, falling on one knee, 'who can be sure of others when no one is sure of himself?'

Dixmer turned pale.

'Genèviève, I did wrong in permitting you to suffer such agony. I should have said frankly, "Geneviève, we live in an age marked by acts of devotion; I have devoted to the Queen, our benefactress, my strength, my mind, my happiness; others will imperil their lives for her. I shall do more, for I shall risk my honour; if it is lost, it will be but a drop in the ocean of misfortunes about to engulf France. But my honour under the safeguard of a woman like my Geneviève is in no danger."'

Dixmer had fully revealed himself for the first time. Geneviève gazed at him with admiration shining in her fine eyes, and, rising slowly, she lifted her face to his.

'You wish it?' she asked. Dixmer nodded assent. 'Dictate it, then,' she said, taking a pen. 'No, no,' he replied, 'it will be better to come wholly from you,' and again kissing his wife, Dixmer thanked her and departed.

Geneviève then wrote with trembling hand:

'Citizen Maurice,—You know what affection my husband had for you. Have you forgotten it during these three weeks which to us have seemed a century? Come; we await you; your return will be welcomed.

'Geneviève.'
CHAPTER XVI

THE GODDESS REASON

As Maurice had intimated to General Santerre, he was indeed seriously ill. Since he had been confined to the house, Lorin had visited him regularly, doing all he could to make him rouse himself. Maurice, however, remained deaf to his entreaties; there are some maladies of which we do not wish to be cured. On the 1st of May, Lorin arrived at one o’clock.

‘What is the meaning of all this finery?’ asked Maurice, pointing to his friend’s dress.

Lorin, in fact, had on the prescribed costume of the period—the ‘bonnet rouge,’ blouse, and tricolor belt adorned with two weapons, then known as ‘the Abbé Maury’s cruets,’ but since quite honestly called pistols.

‘First of all,’ answered Lorin, ‘to speak generally, there is the overthrow of the Girondist Party, which is imminent; then, coming to particular matters, there is a grand ceremony the day after to-morrow, to which I invite you.’

‘But to-day? What is going on to-day?’

‘Oh, we have the rehearsal to-day.’

‘Which rehearsal?’

‘The rehearsal of the grand ceremony.’

‘My dear fellow, you know I have not been out for a week; I am in the deepest ignorance, and I need to be enlightened.’

‘How! did I not tell you about it?’

‘You told me nothing.’

‘Well, you are already aware that we abolished God, replacing Him by the Supreme Being.’

‘Yes, I know that.’
'Well, it seems that people have asserted that the Supreme Being is a Modéré, a Rolandist, a Girondin.'

'Well, it seems that people have asserted that the Supreme Being is a Modéré, a Rolandist, a Girondin.'

'Lorin, do not joke about sacred things; you know I dislike irreverence.'

'What would you have, my dear fellow? one must keep up with the times! But good Republicans are already tired of the Supreme Being, who, it would appear, is not without fault. Since his installation, everything has gone wrong, so our legislators have decreed his abolition.'

Maurice shrugged his shoulders derisively.

'Shrug your shoulders as much as you please, but we are going for a time to worship the Goddess Reason.'

'And you actually take part in all these follies?'

'Ah! friend, if you were as intimate with the Goddess Reason as I am, you would be one of her most devoted followers. I wish you to meet her, and shall introduce you to one another.'

'Do not annoy me with your nonsense; I am worried enough.'

'Morbleu! then she will cheer you, she is a kind creature. But, indeed, you are already acquainted with the austere goddess whom the Parisians intend to crown with laurels and to exhibit in a gilded chariot! It is—guess.'

'How can I guess?'

'It is Arthemise.'

'Arthemise!' echoed Maurice, searching his memory for any clue to this name.

'Yes, a tall brunette whose acquaintance I formed last year at the Bal de l'Opéra. Why, you had supper with us!'

'Ah! true, I had forgotten. So it is she?'

'She is the first favourite. I presented her name, and all the Thermopylæ have promised their votes. In three days the general election takes place; to-day
is the preparatory dinner, when we pour out the wine of Champagne; in two days we may be shedding blood! But no matter what happens, Arthémise will be goddess or I am much mistaken! Come, we will go and help to attire her.'

'Thank you. That kind of tomfoolery has never appealed to me.'

'Peste! you are hard to please, my dear fellow.'

'I am ill, Lorin, and pleasure does not attract me. Even the merriment of others annoys me.'

'Ah! you really frighten me, Maurice; you no longer fight or laugh; are you by any chance engaged in some plot?'

'That might be a relief; but leave me, Lorin, I cannot, I will not go out; I am in bed, where I mean to stay.'

At that moment Maurice's servant entered with a letter. His master took it indifferently, but scarcely had he touched it when he trembled and, after eagerly gazing at the writing and seal, opened the envelope, paling as he did so.

'Oh! oh! our interest is aroused, evidently,' murmured Lorin.

Maurice paid no heed, but read with all his soul Geneviève's note. After re-reading it several times, he let his hands fall, and regarded Lorin with a stupefied air.

'The devil! this letter seems to contain wonderful news,' remarked Lorin.

Maurice perused his letter for the fifth time, his face crimsoning. His eyes lost their strained look, a sigh escaped from him; then, forgetting his illness and consequent weakness, he leaped out of bed.

'My clothes, my clothes, my dear Agésilas!' he cried to his astonished servant. 'Ah! my poor Lorin, my good Lorin, I have been expecting this but hardly hoping for it, every day. Quick, my white trousers, and a frilled shirt; dress and shave me at once!'
"Will you sing?"
The servant hastened to execute his master's orders.

'Oh! to see her again! Lorin, truly, I never knew before what happiness was.'

'My poor Maurice, I think you would do much better to come with me.'

'Oh! dear friend, excuse me; indeed I have lost my reason.'

'Then I offer you mine,' exclaimed Lorin, laughing at his atrocious jest.

More astonishing still, Maurice laughed too; happiness had made him less fastidious in the matter of wit. Nor was this all.

'Here,' he said, cutting some blossoms from an orange-tree, 'present these with my compliments to the worthy Widow of Mausole.'

'Good! there is gallantry for you!' cried Lorin. 'However, I can excuse you for that. I see, too, that you are in love, and I have always felt deeply for any one in such distress.'

'Yes, I am in love, and can confess it openly, for she loves me in return. Since she has sent for me, she must love me; is it not so, Lorin?'

'Certainly,' answered the worshipper of Reason obligingly; 'but, be careful, Maurice; your headstrong ways alarm me.'

Maurice paid no heed, but running downstairs at a breakneck speed, set off for Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques. Lorin followed more calmly. Arthemise was not Geneviève. Hardly had he appeared in the street when a crowd of young people to whom he was in the habit of distributing coppers or kicks, according to his mood, followed him respectfully, no doubt regarding him as one of those virtuous men whom Saint-Just proposed presenting with white robes and bouquets of orange flower. The procession increased in numbers so rapidly that several thousand young people were assembled when Lorin offered the bouquet to Arthemise, an act of homage not to the liking, one may well believe,
of her various rivals. That same evening all Paris echoed with the celebrated song:

Long live the Goddess Reason,
: Pure flame and guiding light.

As no record of the authorship exists, we might almost venture to assert that the song was composed in honour of the Fair Arthémise by our friend Hyacinthe Lorin.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PRODIGAL CHILD

MAURICE could scarcely have gone more quickly had he possessed wings. The streets were crowded with people, but he paid no heed to them, save when they barred his way. He did not hear them complaining that the Convention was being besieged, and that really the people were being attacked through the persons of their representatives. The rumour was probably correct, for the tocsin and alarm-gun were sounding. But what cared Maurice for these notes of alarm? What mattered it to him whether the deputies were being held prisoners, since he was under no such restraint? He ran on his way with no other care.

And all the while he pictured Geneviève waiting at the little window beside the garden, smiling from afar in her most gracious manner. Dixmer, too, hearing of this happy return, would hasten to grasp Maurice’s hand in frank, hearty greeting. He liked Dixmer today; his affection extended even to Morand, with his black hair and green spectacles, through which he had previously imagined his rival to be flashing looks of enmity and hatred. He was in love with everybody, for he was happy, and he would gladly have made the whole world as joyous as himself.
Yet, he was bitterly disappointed, poor Maurice, as we almost always are when we base our hopes on our wishes. Instead of welcoming him with a sweet smile, Geneviève had determined to show only a cold politeness, a feeble rampart to oppose to the torrent which threatened to overwhelm her. Retiring to her room upstairs, she determined to come down only when sent for. Alas! she, too, was deceiving herself. Only Dixmer harboured no self-deceptions; spying on Maurice through a grating he smiled ironically. Citizen Morand phlegmatically dyed some small tails which were to be attached to white catskin in order to imitate ermine.

Maurice pushed open the little gate leading to the garden. Geneviève, standing near the closed window, trembled and dropped the curtain she had drawn aside. Maurice’s first feeling was one of disappointment; Geneviève was not waiting for him downstairs, and he had even to stay in the little salon like a stranger. His heart swelled. Dixmer appeared first and embraced Maurice with an exclamation of joy. Then Geneviève descended; she had been rubbing her cheeks, but in spite of this they were pale as death. Maurice, observing her in the doorway, advanced with a smile to kiss her hand. Only then did he notice how changed she was. She, on her part, was conscious of his wasted frame, and of the feverish sparkle in his eyes.

‘So you are here, monsieur?’ she said, unable to command her voice.

She had quite intended to say in careless tones, ‘Good-morning, Citizen Maurice; where have you been all this time?’

Dixmer cut short all questionings and explanations by announcing that dinner was ready, and Maurice, passing into the dining-room, noticed that a place had been set for him. Citizen Morand came in, dressed in his customary brown coat and vest, with his green
spectacles, shaggy black locks, and white jabot. Maurice was as friendly as possible towards this man, who inspired him at close quarters with much less fear than when far away. And really what could make him fancy that Geneviève loved the little chemist? He must indeed be foolish to entertain such extravagant notions. Besides this was no time to be jealous. Close against his beating heart pressed Geneviève's letter.

Geneviève had regained her serenity. Women are so constituted that the present nearly always suffices to blot out all traces of the past, all fears for the future. She had become again mistress of her emotions, calm, cold, though affectionate, and this, too, Maurice was unable to understand. Lorin would easily have found explanations in Parny, in Bertin, or in Gentil Bernard.

The conversation turned upon the Goddess Reason; the overthrow of the Girondins and the new cult were the two interesting events of the day. Dixmer confessed that he would not have been displeased had the post of honour been offered to Geneviève. Maurice affected to laugh at the idea. Geneviève, however, shared her husband's opinion, and the young man was astonished to find how ill-balanced patriotism could thus lead astray such a sensible person as Dixmer, such a poetical nature as was Geneviève's. Morand developed a theory concerning the political woman from Théroigne de Méricourt, the heroine of the 10th August, to Madame Roland, soul of the Girondist party. He made a few hits, in passing, 'at the 'tricoteuses,' and some of his sayings caused Maurice to smile. His sarcasm was, however, bitter against those female patriots who were called later by the terrible name of 'harpies' of the guillotine.

'Ah! Citizen Morand,' observed Dixmer, 'let us respect patriotism, even if it leads us into error.'

'For my part, I consider women sufficiently patriotic as long as they are not too aristocratic,' said Maurice.
'You are quite right,' declared Morand; 'I frankly admit I think a woman who apes men's ways is as contemptible as a man who insults a woman, though she happens to be his bitterest enemy.'

Morand had quite naturally led their visitor on to delicate ground. Maurice had answered with an approving nod, when Dixmer put in,—

'A moment, Citizen Morand; you except, I hope, those women who are enemies of the nation.'

The silence which greeted this remark was broken by Maurice.

'Let us except no one,' he said sadly. 'Alas! the women who oppose a nation are sufficiently punished, it seems to me.'

'You mean the prisoners of the Temple, the Austrian, the sister and daughter of Capet?' asked Dixmer, speaking with a volubility that deprived his words of all expression.

Morand paled whilst awaiting the young Guardsman's reply.

'Precisely, it is of them I speak.'

'What! is the common report true, Citizen Maurice?' asked Morand, in a voice, strangled by emotion.

'What is the common report?'

'That the prisoners are cruelly ill-treated by those whose duty it is to protect them.'

'There are always men who do not deserve the name of men. There are cowards who have never fought, and who, in torturing the vanquished, persuade themselves that they are conquerors.'

'Oh! you are not one of them, I am quite sure,' cried Geneviève.

'Madame, I mounted guard near the scaffold on which the late King perished. I had my sword in hand, prepared to kill any one who attempted to rescue him. Yet, when the King appeared, in spite of myself I raised my cap, saying to my men, "Citizens, I warn you that I will run my sword through the first man to
insult the prisoner.” I defy any one to say a word was heard from my company. I, too, wrote out the first of the ten thousand placards distributed throughout Paris, when the King returned from Varennes: “Whoever salutes the King shall be thrashed; whoever insults him shall be hanged.”

‘I have proved, therefore,’ continued Maurice, oblivious to the terrible effect of his words, ‘that I am an honest patriot, detesting kings and their partisans. I declare, despite my opinions, which are really deep convictions, despite my belief that the Austrian is largely responsible for the troubles afflicting France, never shall any man, even Santerre himself, insult her in my presence.’

‘Citizen,’ interrupted Dixmer, shaking his head to show he disapproved of such rashness, ‘you ought to be very sure of your ground to say such things before us.’

‘Before you as before everybody, Dixmer; I will add this—she may perish as did her husband; but I am not afraid of a woman, and shall always respect anything weaker than myself.’

‘And the Queen, has she shown herself sensible to this consideration to which she has been so long a stranger?’ asked Geneviève.

‘She has thanked me several times for my attentions, madame.’

‘Then, she will welcome your return to duty?’

‘I believe so.’

‘Since you own to possessing what one no longer avows—a kind heart—you will not ill-treat children?’ asked Morand, in a voice trembling as a woman’s.

‘I? Ask that odious Simon the weight of the Guardsman’s arm, before whom he dared to beat little Capet.’

This reply caused a general stir at Dixmer’s table, the guests all rising reverently. Maurice remained seated, aware that he was the cause of this manifestation.
'What is the matter?' he asked in surprise.
'I thought somebody called from the workroom,' answered Dixmer.
'No, no, I thought so too, but we were wrong,' said Geneviève, and they all sat down again.
'Ah! you then are the Municipal Guardsman who has been so much talked of, the one who so nobly defended a child?'
'People have spoken about it?' asked Maurice, with a sublime simplicity.
'Oh! here is a noble heart,' cried Morand, rising to suppress his emotion, and retiring to the workroom as if business claimed him.
'Yes, citizen, people have spoken of it; all brave and generous souls have praised you, without knowing you,' answered Dixmer.
'Let him remain unknown,' said Geneviève, 'the fame we would bring him would be dangerous.'

Thus, in this curious conversation, each had unconsciously spoken of heroism, of devotion, and of feeling. There had been almost a mention of love.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MINERS

As they were leaving the table, Dixmer was informed that his lawyer awaited him; so excusing himself to Maurice, as in similar circumstances he had often done before, he withdrew. The business was connected with the purchase of a small house in Rue de la Corderie, opposite the Temple garden. It was more a piece of ground than a house that Dixmer was buying, for the actual building was falling to pieces; but he intended to have it restored. The proprietor did not haggle over the terms, and the bargain was quickly
concluded: that very same morning the notary and
he had agreed upon the price. The contract was
now to be signed, and the money handed over; and
the proprietor pledged himself to vacate the house
that day, so that workmen could be sent in immediately.

When the contract was signed, Dixmer and Morand
accompanied the lawyer to Rue de la Corderie to see
the new acquisition for the first time. The building
was three stories high, with an attic above. The base-
ment, possessing splendid cellars, had been formerly
rented to a wine merchant. The proprietor had been
loud in praise of these cellars, which were the remark-
able feature of the house. Dixmer and Morand
apparently attached little importance to them, yet
both obligingly descended to inspect them.

The proprietor had not exaggerated, for the cellars
were really wonderful: one stretched under Rue de la
Corderie, and from it the carriages could be heard
rolling past. Still Dixmer and Morand were only
faintly impressed with these advantages; they even
spoke of filling up the cellars, which no doubt were
useful to a wine merchant, but were unnecessary for
honest burgesses. Next a visit was paid to the first
story, the second, and the third, which last looked
directly into the Temple garden, as usual filled with
National Guards. Dixmer and Morand saw their
friend, the Widow Plumeau, actively doing the honours
of her canteen, but possibly they were not anxious to
be recognised, for they kept hidden behind the pro-
prietor. The purchaser next asked to be shown the
attic, evidently an unexpected request; but, influenced
by the roll of bank-notes, the proprietor went to fetch
the key.

'I was not mistaken,' said Morand, 'this house
suits our purpose admirably.'

'And what do you think of the cellar?'

'It is a stroke of luck which will save us two days' work.'
'Do you think it goes straight in the direction of the canteen?'
 'It turns a little to the left, but no matter.'
 'But how can you follow the underground passage, and be sure it comes out where you wish?'
 'That's all right, dear friend, that is my business.'
 'Ought we to show the signal that we are watching over her?'
 'The Queen could not see it from the platform; only the attics, I believe, are on a level with it, and even that is doubtful.'
 'No matter; Toulan or Maury may catch sight of it from some opening, and they will inform Her Majesty,' answered Dixmer, knotting the ends of a white curtain which he placed outside the window, as if the window had blown it. Then both mounted the stair to meet the proprietor, first cautiously shutting the door, that the worthy man might not pull in his fluttering curtain. The attic, as Morand had suspected, was not on a level with the tower. This fact was at once a difficulty, because one could not communicate with the Queen, and an advantage, because it freed one from the suspicion of doing so. High houses were, naturally, the most watched.
 'We must find some means of informing her through Maury, Toulan, or the girl Tison, that she must keep on her guard,' murmured Dixmer.
 'I will arrange that,' answered Morand.
 On descending they found the lawyer waiting with the signed contract.
 'That is quite correct, the house suits me,' said Dixmer. 'Count out the money to the citizen, and get him to sign a receipt.'
 The proprietor, carefully seeing that the amount was correct, signed his name.
 'Remember, citizen, the principal item in our bargain is that the house be given up to-night, so that the workmen may enter to-morrow,' said Dixmer.
'I shall comply with the conditions, citizen; you may have the keys, and to-night at eight o'clock the house will be empty.'

'Ah! excuse me, citizen, did you say there was another door in Rue Porte-Foin?'

'Yes, citizen, but I had it closed up, for my servant had plenty to do without attending to both doors. It can be put right with two hours' work. Would you care to see it, citizen?'

'It is unnecessary, thank you; I have no special use for such a door.'

At nine o'clock, the two returned with five or six men, who passed unnoticed in the general confusion. The proprietor had kept his word, for the house was deserted. Closing the shutters carefully, the men lit some candles which Morand had brought. They were the same smugglers who had wished to kill Maurice, but were now his friends. They descended to the cellars, now become the most important part of the house. All openings were closed to shut out curious eyes, then Morand traced on paper some geometrical figures, whilst his friends, conducted by Dixmer, leaving the house, proceeded along Rue de la Corderie till they met a closed carriage.

A man seated in this carriage handed out digging implements to each in silence—a spade, a pickaxe, and a lever. Each man, concealing the tools as well as possible under cloak or great-coat, returned to the house. Morand, who had finished his drawing, went straight to an angle of the cellar. 'Dig there,' he ordered, and the workers immediately began their task.

The situation of the prisoners in the Temple had become more and more grave and sorrowful. For a moment the Queen, Madame Elisabeth, and Madame Royale, had dared to hope; two Municipal Guards, Toulan and Lepitre, filled with compassion for their prisoners, had interested themselves in their behalf.
At first the poor women, little accustomed to sympathy, had mistrusted them; but when one hopes, one regains faith. Besides, what could happen to the Queen, separated by death from her husband, by a prison from her son?—only that she should perish as her husband! It was a fate she had contemplated so long that she had become accustomed to it.

When Toulan and Lepître mounted guard, the Queen desired them to prove their interest in her fate by telling her about the King's death. It was a sore test for their sympathy; but Lepître, who had witnessed the execution, obeyed her orders. The Queen next asked to see some newspapers containing an account of the tragedy. These Lepître promised to bring when next on guard, in three weeks' time. There were now only three guards on duty, one during the day and two at night; so Toulan and Lepitre concocted a plan for being both together at night. The periods were drawn for; on one ticket the word 'day' was written, and on two others 'night.' Each drew a ticket from a hat.

Every time Lepître and Toulan were on guard they wrote 'day' on three tickets, presenting the hat to the third Guardsman, who perforce drew out a ticket marked 'day.' Toulan and Lepître thereupon destroyed the other two, complaining audibly against the fate which always gave them the most troublesome duties.

When the Queen was sure of her two guardians' loyalty, she put them into communication with the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, and an escape was planned. The Queen and Madame Elisabeth were to fly, disguised as officers of the Municipal Guards. Now, the lamplighter at the Temple was in the habit of bringing with him two children of the same age as the Princess and the Prince, so Turgy agreed to get himself up like the lamplighter and to carry off Madame Royale and the Dauphin.

Let us give a brief account of this Turgy. Formerly an attendant at the King's table, he had been brought
to the Temple with several other servants, His Majesty at first being fairly well treated. Indeed, the first month of his imprisonment cost the nation thirty or forty thousand francs, but this expense, naturally, was not permitted to continue. The Commune issued orders for all the cooks and scullions to be dismissed. One attendant alone was kept—Turgy—who became an intermediary between the prisoners and their supporters, since, having liberty of movement, he could carry letters and answers to and fro. The notes were usually rolled to form stoppers in the carafes of milk of almonds which were sent in to the Queen and Madame Elisabeth. Written in lemon juice, the writing was only legible when held near a fire.

Preparations for the escape were actually complete when Tison one day, lighting his pipe with one of these stoppers, saw letters appear on the burning paper. Blowing it out, he carried the unburnt half to the Temple authorities, who held it over a flame, but could decipher only a few unconnected words. The writing, however was the Queen’s. Tison, on being questioned, repeated certain attentions he had seen Lepître and Toulan bestow on the prisoners. The two Guardsmen were denounced and forbidden to enter the Temple. Only Turgy remained.

Suspicion was keenly aroused, and Turgy never being left alone with the princesses, communication with the outside became impossible. One day, however, Madame Elisabeth gave Turgy a little gold-bladed fruit-knife to clean, and Turgy managed to loosen the handle while cleaning it. Inside was a note with a whole alphabet of signs. Turgy returned the knife to Madame Elisabeth, but a Guardsman present, seizing it, separated the blade from the handle. Fortunately the letter was no longer there. The knife was confiscated none the less. Then the indefatigable Chevalier had planned a second attempt to be accomplished by means of the house Dixmer had
bought. In spite of this the prisoners gradually lost all hope. On the day of which we are writing, the Queen, terrified by the cries in the streets, which announced the impeachment of the Girondists, the last advocates of moderate measures, had been wrapped in gloom. The Girondists destroyed, the Royal Family would possess no friends in the Convention.

Supper was served at seven o'clock. The Guardsmen examined each dish carefully, unfolded all the serviettes, inspected the bread and walnuts, lest a note might be concealed in any of them. These precautions taken, the Queen and the Princesses were invited to seat themselves at table with these words,—

'Widow of Capet, you may eat.' The Queen shook her head to imply she was not hungry. But, at that moment Madame Royale managed to whisper, 'Sit down, madame, I believe Turgy makes a sign to you.'

Trembling, the Queen raised her head. Turgy stood opposite her, a napkin over his left arm, while he touched his eye with his right hand. At this the Queen rose and seated herself in her accustomed place. Her feet met and pressed Madame Elisabeth's, under the table. None of Turgy's gestures escaped her notice. Moreover, they were all so natural that they could not possibly alarm the Guards. After supper the same care was displayed in removing the things; the smallest pieces of bread were picked up and examined, then Turgy withdrew, followed by the Guards. The woman Tison remained.

The latter had become almost ferocious since being separated from her daughter, of whose fate she was quite ignorant. Every time the Queen embraced Madame Royale she was seized with a mad rage, so that the Queen, understanding her sorrow, often refrained from this, her sole remaining consolation. Tison arrived to fetch his wife, but she announced that she would not leave till the Widow Capet was in bed. Madame Elisabeth then retired to her room. The Queen and
Madame Royale then lay down, and Tison’s wife went away with the candle. The Guards were already lying on their folding beds in the corridor. The moon shone through the window, and a diagonal shaft fell from it to the foot of the Queen’s bed. For a moment all was calm and quiet in the apartment, then a door turned gently on its hinges, a shadow glided into the light and approached the bedside. It was Madame Elisabeth.

‘Did you see?’ she asked in low tones.
‘Yes,’ answered the Queen.
‘And you understood?’
‘So well that I can scarcely believe it.’
‘Come, let us repeat the signs.’
‘First of all, he touched his eye to show there was something new.’
‘Next he passed his napkin from his left arm to the right, which means that some one is planning our deliverance.’
‘Then he carried his hand to his brow, signifying that help is coming from within and not from outside.’
‘When you asked him not to forget the milk of almonds to-morrow, he made two knots in his handkerchief.’
‘So it is still the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge. Noble man!’
‘It is he,’ said Madame Elisabeth.
‘Are you sleeping, my daughter?’
‘No, my mother.’
‘Then, pray for you know whom.’

Madame Elisabeth quietly regained her room, and for five minutes her voice was heard appealing to God in the silence of the night. At the same time, on Morand’s orders, the first strokes of the pickaxe were struck in the cellars of the house in Rue de la Corderie.
CHAPTER XIX

CLOUDS

Maurice had felt somewhat disappointed at Geneviève's reception, and now trusted that a private interview with her would enable him to regain the place he had apparently lost in her affections. Geneviève, however, had been planning not to grant him this favour; she realised too well that such interviews, pleasant as they had been, were dangerous. Maurice hoped to meet her alone next day, but found a relative present who had doubtless been sent for. He had, however, no justification for complaint, since it might not be Geneviève's fault. Maurice was requested to escort the relative home to Rue des Fossés-Saint-Victor, and went off scowling; but Geneviève smiled at him, and Maurice registered this smile as a promise. Next day, the 2nd June—that awful day which witnessed the fall of the Girondins—Maurice, dismissing Lorin, who was eager to take him to the Convention, put aside all business to visit his friend.

Geneviève received him in her little drawing-room with much graciousness. Seated near the window, marking handkerchiefs, was a young sewing-maid, who did not withdraw. Maurice knit his brows. Geneviève, perceiving his ill humour, became doubly gracious, but did not dismiss the maid. Maurice, losing his patience, left an hour sooner than usual. As all this might be merely chance, the young man decided to keep calm. That evening, too, public matters had reached such a crisis that some rumours attracted even his attention. Nothing less than the downfall of a party which had held power for ten months could distract his thoughts from his absorbing passion.
Next day Geneviève pursued the same course. Maurice had also arranged his plan of action; ten minutes after his arrival, finding that the sewing-maid had begun a fresh piece of work, he looked at his watch, rose, and, bowing to Geneviève, left without saying a word. More serious still, he did not once turn round. Geneviève, who had risen to watch him crossing the garden, stood pale and trembling; then sank down on a chair, terrified at the result of her diplomacy. At that moment, Dixmer entered.

‘Maurice has gone?’ he asked in amazement.
‘Yes,’ stammered Geneviève.
‘But he had only just come?’
‘He has been here about a quarter of an hour.’
‘Then he will return?’
‘I do not think so.’
‘Leave us, Muguet,’ ordered Dixmer. The sewing-maid had assumed this name out of hatred to the name of Marie, which she unfortunately shared with the Austrian. At her master’s words she left the room.

‘Now, dear Geneviève, are you and Maurice reconciled?’
‘On the contrary, my friend, I believe we are more estranged than ever.’
‘This time, who is in the wrong?’
‘Maurice, certainly.’
‘Come, let me judge.’
‘What! you do not guess?’ asked Geneviève, blushing.
‘Why he is angry? No.’
‘It seems he has taken a dislike to Muguet.’
‘Really? Then we must send her away. I cannot lose such a friend as Maurice for the sake of a sewing-maid.’
‘Oh! I hardly fancy that you need go that length; he would be satisfied——’
‘How?’
'If we sent her out of my room.'

'He is quite right. His visits are to you and not to Muguet; it is unnecessary that Muguet should be present when he comes.'

Geneviève gazed in surprise at her husband.

'But, my friend——' she expostulated.

'Geneviève, I considered you an ally who would lighten my self-imposed task, and yet you are increasing our difficulties. Four days ago I imagined all was agreed upon between us, but now all has to be explained afresh. Have I not said, Geneviève, that I trusted in you and in your honour? Have I not told you that Maurice's friendship with us must be renewed, and on a more intimate basis than ever? Oh! my goodness! what a hindrance women are to our plans!'

'Can you suggest no other course? I have already said it would be better for us all if M. Maurice were not to come here.'

'Yes, for us all, perhaps; but for the sake of her who is above us, for whom we have vowed to sacrifice our fortunes, our lives, even our honour, this young man must return. Do you know Turgy is suspected, and there is some talk of giving the Princesses another attendant?'

'Very well, I will dismiss Muguet.'

'Ah! Geneviève,' exclaimed Dixmer, with an impatience unusual to him, 'why speak to me of that? why create fresh difficulties? Do what, as an honourable, devoted woman, you think is right; that is my wish. To-morrow I shall be away, as I take Morand's place in supervising the miners. I shall not dine at home, but Morand will; he wishes to ask Maurice something, and will explain to you what it is. Believe me, Geneviève, the important matter is not the end at which we are aiming but the means to it; it is the last hope of this noble and devoted man, our protector, for whom we should lay down our lives.'
‘I would sacrifice mine!’ cried Geneviève, with enthusiasm.

‘Well, somehow, Geneviève, you have not succeeded in making Maurice friendly to him, and it is specially important that these two should be on good terms. As matters stand now, Maurice may refuse to grant Morand’s request, and this concession we must at all costs obtain. Shall I tell you, Geneviève, where all your scruples and sentimental feelings will lead Morand?’

‘Oh! monsieur, let us never talk of that,’ cried Geneviève, turning pale and clasping her hands.

‘Well, be strong and resolute,’ answered Dixmer, kissing his wife as he withdrew.

‘Oh! mon Dieu!’ sighed Geneviève, ‘they force me to accept that love to which my heart responds!’

Next day was Sunday. The established custom in Dixmer’s house, as in all the ‘bourgeois’ families of that time, was to make Sunday’s dinner a longer and more ceremonious meal than usual. Maurice had been invited to come every Sunday, and formerly had never missed a day. On these occasions, though dinner was not until two o’clock, he always arrived at midday. Geneviève had almost despaired of seeing him. Twelve o’clock rang and there was no sign of him; half-past twelve, then one o’clock. It is impossible to describe how Geneviève felt as she waited. At first she had dressed as simply as possible; then, seeing he delayed, she had added some flowers to her costume, some at her belt, some in her hair, and waited with sinking heart. It was nearly time to sit down to table, and Maurice had not arrived.

At ten minutes to two Geneviève heard the sound of his horse approaching. ‘Oh! here he is; his pride cannot conquer his love,’ cried Geneviève; ‘he loves me!’ Dismounting, Maurice handed his horse to the under-gardener, with instructions to hold it for him. Geneviève noted with anxiety that it was not
taken to the stable. Maurice entered, looking extra-
ordinarily handsome. He wore a wide black coat with
large lapels, a white waistcoat, and trousers of chamois
leather; a fine muslin collar, luxuriant locks waving
over a broad, open brow, completed a picture of elegant
yet manly beauty. At sight of him Geneviève’s heart
beat fast; she received him with beaming face.

‘Ah! you have come to dine with us?’ she said, hold-
ing out her hand.

‘On the contrary, citizeness, I came to beg you to
excuse me,’ answered Maurice coldly.

‘To excuse you?’

‘Yes, some business at the Section claims my
attention. I was afraid of keeping you waiting, which
would not have been polite, therefore I came.’

Geneviève felt her heart sink.

‘Oh! and Dixmer is from home to-day, but expects
to meet you on his return. He told me not to let you
go!’ she cried.

‘Ah, I understand why you insist, madame, seeing
it is your husband’s order. And I was too stupid to
guess! Really, I shall never grow wise.’

‘Maurice!’

‘But I ought rather to consider your actions than
your words, madame. If Dixmer is away, I cannot
stay, since his absence will but make you more uncom-
fortable.’

‘Why?’ asked Geneviève timidly.

‘Because lately you have made a point of avoiding
me; I came back on your account, as you know, yet
you will never permit me to see you alone.’

‘You are still annoyed, my friend, and yet I try
my best.’

‘No, Geneviève, you can do better—either receive
me as formerly, or banish me altogether.’

‘Come, Maurice, consider how I am placed and what
I suffer,’ said Geneviève, approaching the young man
and looking sadly at him. Maurice was silent.
'What is it you want?' she went on.
'I want your love, for I can live no longer without it.'
'Maurice, for pity's sake!'
'Then, madame, you must let me die.'
'Die?'
'Yes, die or forget.'
'So you could forget?' cried Geneviève, her eyes filling with tears.
'Oh! no, no; I could die, but never forget—never!' exclaimed Maurice, falling on his knees.
'Yet, it would be wisest, Maurice, for this love is criminal,' said Geneviève sternly.
'Did you say that to M. Morand?' asked Maurice, affected by this sudden coldness.
'M. Morand is not a madman like you, and has never to be told how he should behave in a friend's house.'
'I wager that Morand is not away, though Dixmer dines out,' said Maurice in ironical tones. 'Ah! that is what will keep me from loving you, Geneviève; as long as this Morand is hovering round you, never leaving your side, I shall not love you, at least I shall not own my love.'
'I swear to you, Maurice, once and for all, that Morand has never spoken to me of love, that he has never been in love with me, and never will be; I swear it on my honour, by all that is most sacred to me.'
'Alas! alas! I should like to believe you!'
'Believe me, poor fool!' exclaimed Geneviève, with a smile which would have seemed a charming confession to any but a jealous man. 'Besides, would you know more? Morand loves a woman before whom all others fade into insignificance, as the field flowers are eclipsed by the stars of heaven.'
'What woman can it be who outshines all others when Geneviève is to be reckoned amongst them?'
'She whom one loves is always the most beautiful in the world,' said Geneviève, with a smile.
'Then, if you do not love me, Geneviève, can you promise me never to love another?'

'Oh! that I can promise, Maurice, with all my heart,' cried Geneviève, delighted that he should give her this chance of making a compromise with her conscience. Maurcie, seizing her two hands, kissed them passionately.

'Now I shall be kind, good-tempered, trustful. I shall smile on you and be happy.'

'You will ask nothing more?'

'I will try not to.'

'Now they can take your horse to the stable. The Section can wait.'

'Oh! Geneviève, the whole world can wait, and I will make it wait for you.'

Steps were heard in the courtyard.

'They come to announce that dinner is ready,' observed Geneviève.

It was Morand, who came to inform them that they were waited for, and he, too, had dressed himself gaily for this Sunday dinner.

CHAPTER XX

THE REQUEST

In his grand dress Morand seemed a stranger figure to Maurice than before. The most elegant dandy could not have found fault with the knot of his necktie, the neatness of his boots, or the fineness of his linen. True, he still had the same black hair and wore the same spectacles. Maurice, however, reassured by Geneviève's words, viewed now the spectacles and the hair in a different light.

'Deuce take me,' he murmured, advancing towards him, 'if I am ever jealous of you again, worthy Citizen
Morand! Wear your Sunday coat, every day if you choose, and have one made of cloth of gold for Sundays. Henceforth I promise to see nothing but your hair and your spectacles, and will never suspect you of loving Geneviève.'

He shook hands with Citizen Morand more frankly and heartily than usual.

The dinner was a quiet one, only three places being set at a small table. Maurice observed that he could touch Geneviève's foot under this table. She sat between him and the light, her black hair shining like a raven's wing, her face beaming, her eyes tender. Maurice pressed her foot softly, and saw her first flush, then grow pale; but the little foot was not moved away. Morand seemed to have recovered the wit and spirits he had formerly shown. He uttered a thousand witticisms without ever laughing; indeed, the whole force of his jests lay in this fact that he remained so imperturbably grave. This merchant who had travelled far on business affairs, this chemist with the red arms, knew Egypt as well as Herodotus, Africa as Levailvant, and was as familiar with operas and boudoirs as any dandy.

'Why! Citizen Morand, you are not only a clever but a learned man,' Maurice exclaimed.

'I have seen and, above all, read much, in order to prepare for the leisured life I hope to lead as soon as my fortune is made. It is time, Citizen Maurice, quite time!'

'Bah! you speak like an old man; how old are you?'

Morand started at this perfectly natural question.

'I am thirty-eight,' he answered; 'that is what comes of being learned, as you say, one is prematurely aged.'

Geneviève laughed, Maurice joined, but Morand merely smiled.

'Then you have travelled a great deal?' asked Maurice.
'Part of my youth was spent in foreign countries.'
'You have seen, or rather observed, much? A man such as you could not see without at the same time observing.'
'Much—yes, I might say I have seen all things.'
'That is asserting a great deal, citizen, if you stop to think a little.'
'Ah! yes, you are right. There are two things I have never seen, but these are becoming very rare nowadays.'
'What are they?'
'The first is a god,' answered Morand gravely.
'Ah! we have no god, but I can show you a goddess.'
'How?' interrupted Geneviève.
'A Goddess of purely modern creation—the Goddess Reason. I have a friend of whom you have heard me speak sometimes, my brave Lorin, with a heart of gold and only one fault—that of writing verses and making puns.'
'Well?'
'Well, he has just presented the town with a Goddess Reason, who entirely suits the rôle. She is the Citizeness Arthémise, ex-dancer at the Opéra, and now a perfumer in Rue Martin. As soon as she is definitely installed I will take you to see her.'
Morand bowed solemnly to express his thanks, and continued.—
'The other is a king.'
'Oh! that will be more difficult to manage,' observed Geneviève, trying to smile; 'there is no king now.'
'You should have seen the last; it would have been wise,' Maurice suggested.
'So I have no idea what a crowned head is like; it must be rather a depressing sight.'
'Very sad, truly; I can certify that, since I see one nearly every month.'
'A crowned head?' exclaimed Geneviève.
'Yes, or at least, one that has borne the heavy burden of a crown.'

'Ah! the Queen. Yes, it must be a sorrowful spectacle,' said Morand.

'Is she as beautiful and as haughty as people say?' asked Geneviève.

'Have you never seen her, madame?'

'I? Never!'

'That is strange.'

'Why strange? We lived in the provinces till '91, and since then I have stayed in the Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques, which is very much like the provinces, only with no sun, less air, and fewer flowers. You know what my life is, Citizen Maurice; it has been always the same, so how could I see the Queen. I have had no opportunity.'

'And I hardly think you will take the chance which will, unhappily, soon present itself.'

'What do you mean?'

'Citizen Maurice refers to something which is now publicly known, the probable condemnation of Marie Antoinette, and her death on the same scaffold where her husband perished. The citizen, in short, means you will not go to see her when she leaves the Temple for the Place de la Révolution,' said Morand, with wonderful calmness.

'Oh! certainly not,' cried Geneviève.

'Then you had better renounce all hope of seeing her, for she is well guarded, and the Republic has the power of rendering invisible any one it chooses,' continued the chemist.

'I confess, though, I have been very much wishing to see this unhappy woman,' Geneviève remarked.

'Would you really care to?' asked Maurice, eager to comply with all her wishes. 'Then, simply say the word; the Republic, I grant, wields a wonderful power, but I, as a Municipal Guard, am somewhat of a magician.'
'You could let me see the Queen, monsieur?' cried Geneviève.

'Certainly!'

'How, then?' asked Morand, exchanging a rapid glance with Geneviève.

'There is nothing simpler. True, some of the Municipal Guards are suspected, but I have given sufficient proof of my devotion to the cause for my loyalty to be questioned. Besides, the Guards and the commanders of the Poste together decide who shall be permitted to enter. Now my friend Lorin will be commander of the Poste when I am on guard, so come next Thursday to the Temple.'

'Now I trust you are satisfied; you see how it can be managed,' said Morand.

'No, no, I do not wish to go,' cried Geneviève.

'Why not?' asked Maurice, to whom this visit was merely a further opportunity of seeing the woman he loved.

'Because you might get into trouble; and were you to suffer in any way through humoring my fancy, I should never forgive myself.'

'That is wisely spoken, Geneviève,' observed Morand. 'Believe me, suspicion is widespread; even the best patriots are mistrusted at present. Renounce this project, which, as you admit, is simply the outcome of idle curiosity.'

'One could fancy you are jealous, Morand, that others should see what you have never seen. Come, do not let us argue; make one of the party yourself.'

'I? oh, no!'

'It is no longer the Citizeness Dixmer who wishes to visit the Temple; it is I who beg her, and you too, to come to amuse a poor prisoner. For, once the great doors are shut, I am as much a prisoner as the Queen,' pleaded Maurice.

Pressing Geneviève's foot, he continued, 'Do come, I beseech you.'
'Come, Morand, accompany me,' said Geneviève. 'It is simply time lost, and will mean delaying my retirement for a day,' answered Morand. 'Then I shall not go,' Geneviève declared. 'Why?' he asked. 'The reason is clear. I cannot rely on my husband to accompany me, and I have not courage to face the soldiers alone, and ask for a Municipal Guard only a few years my senior.' 'If you consider my presence indispensable—' began Morand. 'Come now, learned citizen, be gallant, like an ordinary man, and sacrifice half your day to your friend's wife.' 'Very well, I agree!' said Morand. 'There is only one thing I would say: be careful. A visit to the Temple is always suspected, and if anything unusual were to happen we should all be guillotined. The Jacobins do not jest! You see how they have treated the Girondins.' 'What Citizen Maurice says is worth considering. That method of retiring from commerce would not suit me.' 'Did you not hear the citizen say "all"? ' asked Geneviève smilingly. 'Well, all!' 'All together.' 'Yes, no doubt, I should be in pleasant company; still, I prefer to live in your company, fair sentimentalist, than to die in it.' 'What folly to imagine this man was in love with Geneviève!' thought Maurice. 'Then it is settled,' Geneviève exclaimed. 'Morand, it is to you, dreamer, that I speak; next Thursday is the day fixed, so do not begin some chemical experiment on Wednesday night which will occupy you twenty-four hours, as often happens.' 'Keep your mind at rest: besides, you will remind me before then,' he laughed.
Geneviève rose from table, Maurice following her example; Morand also was preparing to get up when a workman brought in a small phial, which immediately absorbed his attention.

‘Let us hurry,’ Maurice suggested, taking Geneviève’s arm.

‘Oh! do not worry; he has something to interest him for an hour at least,’ she replied, giving Maurice her hand, which he pressed tenderly. She felt remorseful, and wished to atone to him by being kind.

‘Do you see my flowers are dead,’ she asked, pointing to the carnations, which had been brought into the air.

‘What killed them? Your carelessness; poor carnations!’

‘Not my carelessness, but your desertion, dear friend.’

‘Still they did not need much care; a little water, nothing else, and while I was away, you had ample leisure to give them that.’

‘Ah! if flowers could be nourished with tears, these poor carnations would not be dead.’

Maurice, drawing her to him and, unable to restrain himself, kissed her on the brow, whilst Geneviève, feeling she had much with which to reproach herself, was indulgent.

Dixmer, on returning later, found Morand, Geneviève, and Maurice all discussing botany together in the garden.

CHAPTER XXI

THE FLOWER-GIRL

At last the famous Thursday arrived. It was early in June, a glorious summer day, with the sky of the deepest blue. Paris was clean as a carpet, and sweet scents filling the air, wafted from the trees and flowers,
made the inhabitants of the capital partly forget the blood with which their squares were reeking.

Maurice was due at the Temple at nine o’clock; Mercevault and Agricola were his two colleagues. At eight o’clock he arrived in Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques, in the full uniform of a Municipal Guard, a tricolor sash round his waist. He had ridden, as usual, and had received numerous flattering remarks from the zealous patriots who met him. Geneviève was ready; she wore a simple muslin dress, a light taffeta cloak, and a little hat trimmed with a tricolor cockade. In this attire she looked dazzlingly beautiful.

Morand, who had needed so much persuasion, had put on his everyday costume, which made him look something between a burgess and a workman. He had just come in, and his face appeared worn and tired. He explained that he had been at work all night. Dixmer left as soon as Morand entered.

‘Have you decided how we shall manage to see the Queen, Maurice?’ asked Geneviève.

‘My plans are arranged. I shall arrive at the Temple with you, entrust you to my friend Lorin, who commands the sentinels, take up my own position, and send for you at a favourable opportunity.’

‘But where and how can we see the prisoners?’ Morand asked.

‘Whilst they are having dinner, you can look at them from behind the grating where the Guards stand.’

‘Capital!’ Morand said.

Maurice saw him approach the sideboard, pour out a glass of wine and swallow it hastily. This surprised him, for Morand’s usual drink was water, reddened with a little wine. Geneviève, noting his astonishment, said: ‘Just imagine how this unhappy man is killing himself; he has eaten nothing since yesterday morning.’

‘Did he not dine here?’
'No, he was working in town.'
Morand ate a slice of bread with equal haste.
'Now, I am ready, my dear Citizen Maurice; when you choose, we will start.'
Maurice took Geneviève's arm. 'Let us go at once, then,' he said, and accordingly they set out. Maurice felt so happy that he could almost have shouted. What more could he desire? He was sure Geneviève did not love Morand; he suspected that she loved him. The sun was shining, Geneviève's arm rested on his; the publiccriers, loudly announcing the triumph of the Jacobins and the downfall of Brissot and his friends, showed that the country was saved. There are moments when the heart of man is too small to contain the happiness or sorrow which wells up in it.
'Oh! what a lovely day!' Morand cried, and Maurice glanced at him in surprise. It was the first time this reserved man had indulged in enthusiasm.
'Oh! yes, yes, very lovely,' agreed Geneviève, leaning on Maurice's arm, 'may it stay like this till evening, fair and cloudless!'
Maurice, applying these words to himself, felt twice as happy. Morand glanced through his green spectacles at Geneviève with a look of deep gratitude; perhaps he, too, applied these words. Thus they continued their way, crossing the Petit Pont, Pont Notre-Dame, and afterwards passing through Rue Barre-du-Bec and Rue Sainte-Avoye. As they advanced Maurice's steps grew lighter, but his companions seemed slackening their pace. Suddenly, at the corner of Rue des Vieilles-Audriettes, a flower-girl, barring their passage, displayed her barrow-load of flowers.
'What splendid carnations!' Maurice exclaimed.
'Yes, they are lovely; evidently the growers had no preoccupations, for these are not dead,' said Geneviève. Maurice was affected by the sweet words.
'Ah! my handsome Guard, buy the citizeness a bouquet,' urged the flower-seller. 'Her dress is white,
Here are some fine crimson carnations; white and crimson go well together. She can put the flowers at her heart, and since that is very close to your blue coat, the three will make the national colours.

The flower-seller was young and pretty; the little compliment was neatly put and well suited the occasion. Besides, the flowers were almost symbolical. They were carnations similar to those that had perished in the mahogany case.

'Yes,' said Maurice, 'I will buy some—only because they are carnations, understand. All other flowers I detest.'

'Oh! Maurice, it is unnecessary; we have so many in the garden!' Geneviève protested.

Yet, in spite of this appeal, her eyes plainly revealed that she longed for this bouquet. Maurice took the finest bunch of all, the one the pretty seller held out. It consisted of twenty scarlet carnations, in the midst of which one towered splendidly above the rest.

'Here,' cried Maurice, throwing a five-franc note into the barrow, 'that is for you.'

'A thousand thanks, my handsome Guard,' replied the flower-girl, moving off to attract fresh customers.

While this apparently simple scene was taking place, Morand, shaking all over, was wiping his brow, and Geneviève looked pale. With a convulsive gesture she took the bouquet from Maurice's hand, burying her face in the flowers to conceal her agitation.

They continued their way in high spirits as far as Maurice was concerned. Geneviève's gaiety was forced; Morand behaved in a strange fashion, now stifling a sigh, then laughing loudly and making rather wild jokes. At nine o'clock they reached the Temple. Santerre was calling over the names of the Municipal Guards. 'Here I am,' responded Maurice, leaving Geneviève in Morand's care. 'Ah! welcome,' answered Santerre, holding out his hand, which Maurice took gladly. Santerre's friendship was much valued at
this time. At sight of this man who had ordered the famous beating of drums, Geneviève trembled, while Morand grew pale.

‘Who is the fair citizeness, and what does she here?’ Santerre inquired.

‘It is worthy Citizen Dixmer’s wife; you have heard of him, Citizen General, have you not?’

‘Yes, yes, a tannery manager, captain of the chasseurs of the Victor legion.’

‘The same.’

‘Very good! in truth she is pretty. Who is the grotesque figure who holds her arm?’

‘Citizen Morand, her husband’s partner and chasseur in his company.’

Santerre walked over to Geneviève.

‘Good-morning, citizeness,’ he said. Geneviève controlled herself. ‘Good-morning, Citizen General,’ she answered, with a smile which flattered Santerre.

‘Why are you here, fair patriot?’ he continued.

‘The citizeness, having never seen the Widow Capet, would like to see her,’ replied Maurice.

‘Yes,’ said Santerre, ‘before——’ and he made a horrible gesture.

‘Exactly,’ answered Maurice coldly.

‘Good; only do not let any one see you going in. It might furnish a bad precedent; but I trust to you,’ and Santerre shook Maurice by the hand again before returning to his duties.

After some military evolutions along with grenadiers and chasseurs, Maurice returned to Geneviève’s side, and, followed by Morand, advanced towards the guardhouse, at the door of which Lorin, hoarse with shouting, was issuing orders.

‘Ah! there is Maurice,’ he said to himself; ‘the deuce! with a rather pretty woman, it seems. Does the cunning dog intend her as a rival to my Goddess Reason? If so, poor Arthémise!’

‘Now then, Citizen Adiutant,’ called the captain.
'Ah, true! Attention! Left wheel—Good-morning, Maurice. Quick—march!' cried Lorin. Amid the beating of drums the companies took up their various positions, and when all were in order Lorin advanced to greet Maurice. Geneviève and Morand were introduced to him, and the necessary explanations given.

'Yes, I understand perfectly; you wish the citizen and citizeness to enter the keep. That is a simple thing; I am about to visit the sentinels, and will give instructions for you and your friends to pass.'

Ten minutes later, Geneviève and Morand entering with the Municipal Guards, stationed themselves behind the partition.

CHAPTER XXII

THE RED CARNATION

The Queen had just risen. Having been ill for a few days, she slept longer than usual, but being told what a beautiful day it was, she had made an effort to rise, and had asked and obtained permission to walk on the terrace. Another reason, too, influenced her. Once from the top of the tower she had seen the little Dauphin in the garden. At the first signs of greeting between the two, however, Simon had ordered the child indoors.

Still she had seen him, and that counted for much. True the poor little prisoner was very pale and altered in appearance. He was clad as a child of the people, in a blouse and coarse trousers; but he still wore his pretty fair curls, which floated round him like an aureole. If she could but see him again, what comfort it would bring her! There was also a third reason which decided the Queen.

'My sister,' Madame Elisabeth had said, 'you know we found in the corridor a straw left standing upright.
In the language of our signs that means we are to be on the alert, for a friend approaches.

‘That is true,’ answered the Queen, glancing pitifully at her sister and daughter, for whose sake she endeavoured not to despair.

Maurice, having performed his duties, found himself drawn for day duty, and consequently he had more power to make arrangements for his friends. Agricola and Mercevault, being on night duty, had gone away after leaving their report with the Temple authorities.

‘Well, citizen guard, so you are bringing some strangers to see our pigeons?’ said Tison’s wife as she greeted Maurice; ‘I am the only unhappy one, condemned not to see my poor Sophie.’

‘These are friends of mine who have never seen Capet’s widow.’

‘They will be all right behind the partition.’

‘Of course.’

‘Only we shall seem like cruel, inquisitive people who gaze with pleasure through a grating at a prisoner’s misery.’

‘Why not take them to the tower staircase? Widow Capet and her sister and daughter are walking there to-day. They have permitted her to keep her daughter, but, because I have done nothing wrong, they have taken away mine. Oh! these aristocrats! they will be always favoured, in spite of what one does, Citizen Maurice.’

‘They have taken away her son,’ he replied.

‘Ah! if I had a son, I should miss my daughter less,’ sighed the woman.

Meanwhile Geneviève had been exchanging glances with Morand.

‘My friend,’ she said to Maurice, ‘the citizeness is right. If you could contrive by some means to place me on Marie-Antoinette’s path, I should be better pleased than gazing at her from here. This spying at
prisoners through the bars of a cage is humiliating both for them and for us.'

'Generous Geneviève, there you show your real delicacy of feeling.'

'Pardieu! citizeness,' cried one of Maurice's colleagues, who was breakfasting in an ante-room, 'if you were a prisoner and Widow Capet anxious to see you, she would not be so particular how she gratified her fancy.'

Geneviève glanced anxiously at Morand to see how he received these remarks. He was trembling, while he clenched his fists for a moment, and a strange wild light shone in his eyes; but all this passed so quickly that no one else noticed it.

'What is this man's name?' asked Geneviève.

'Citizen Mercevault,' Maurice answered. Then, as if to excuse his coarseness, 'a stone-cutter,' he added.

Mercevault, hearing this, cast a sidelong glance at Maurice.

'Come along,' said Madame Tison, 'finish your breakfast, that I may clear away.'

'It is not the Austrian's fault I am here to finish it,' growled the guard; 'she would have had me killed on the roth of August. Well, when the time comes for her to walk to the guillotine, I shall be in the front row.'

Morand turned pale as death.

'Let us go where you promised to take us, Citizen Maurice,' urged Geneviève; 'I feel like a prisoner here, I am stifled.'

Maurice escorted them out; the sentries, having orders from Lorin, permitted them to pass without trouble. They stationed themselves in a little passage on the top story, so that the august prisoners, on mounting to the platform, must necessarily pass before them. As they had only ten minutes to wait, Maurice stood close beside his friends, and in order that no suspicion might be attached to this somewhat illegal
visit, he had brought Citizen Agricola with him. Ten o’clock rang.

‘Open!’ cried a voice from below, which Maurice recognised as Santerre’s.

Immediately the Guards took up arms, the gratings were closed, and the sentinels stood ready. Such a noise of iron clanging and of feet clattering on stone pavements was heard in the courtyard that Morand and Geneviève were deeply affected, and Maurice perceived that they turned pale.

‘What precautions to guard three women!’ whispered Geneviève.

‘Yes,’ agreed Morand, with a forced laugh. ‘If their would-be rescuers knew of all these obstacles they would abandon their attempts.’

‘Indeed, I begin to think they will not escape,’ Geneviève remarked.

‘I hope not,’ answered Maurice.

Then, leaning over the staircase, he added, ‘Look, here are the prisoners.’

‘Name them, I do not know which is which,’ said Geneviève.

‘The two coming first are Capet’s sister and daughter. The third, with a little dog in front of her, is Marie-Antoinette.’

Geneviève advanced a step, but Morand, instead of looking, stood close to the wall. His lips were more ashen gray than even the stones around. Geneviève, with her white dress and beautiful eyes, looked like an angel waiting to brighten the darkness of the prisoners’ path and to bring some gladness to their hearts. Madame Elisabeth and Madame Royale, as they passed, glanced in surprise at the strangers; the former, no doubt, concluded they were the friends indicated by the signs, for she turned quickly to press Madame Royale’s hand and dropped her handkerchief as though to warn the Queen.

‘Look, sister, I have dropped my handkerchief,’
she said, as she walked on with the young Princess. The Queen, whose laboured breath and dry cough betokened ill-health, stooped to pick up the handkerchief, but her little dog, rushing forward, seized it, and carried it in triumph to Madame Elisabeth. Ascending a few steps, the Queen found herself in front of Geneviève, Morand, and the young Guardsman.

‘Oh! flowers! it is long since I saw any,’ she cried. ‘What a lovely smell! how happy, madame, you must be to possess them!’

Quick as thought, Geneviève, at these sad words, held out the bouquet to offer it to the Queen. Then Marie-Antoinette, raising her head, looked at her, while a faint flush stole over her pale forehead. Maurice in passive, mechanical obedience to regulations, stretched out his hand to restrain Geneviève. The Queen hesitated; looking at Maurice she recognised him as the young Guardsman who usually addressed her firmly yet respectfully.

‘Is it forbidden, monsieur?’ she asked.

‘No no, madame,’ answered Maurice. ‘Geneviève, you may offer your bouquet.’

‘Oh, thank you, thank you, monsieur!’ the Queen cried, with a lively gratitude, as she put forth an emaciated hand and selected at hazard one carnation.

‘Take them all, madame,’ Geneviève urged timidly.

‘No,’ said the Queen, with a sweet smile; ‘perhaps this bouquet comes from one you love, and I do not wish to deprive you of it.’

Geneviève blushed, which made the Queen smile.

‘Come, Citizeness Capet; you must walk on,’ Agricola interrupted. The Queen, bowing, continued her way, but, before disappearing, she turned round to murmur,—

‘How delightfully the carnation smells, and how lovely she is!’

‘She did not see me,’ said Morand, who had been almost kneeling in the dim light of the corridor.
'But you had a good view of her, had you not, Morand, and you, Geneviève?' asked Maurice, happy at having granted his friends' wishes, and also because he had given pleasure to the unhappy prisoner in such a simple way.

'Oh! yes, yes, I saw her very well, and now, though I live to a hundred, I shall remember her.'

'What did you think of her?'

'She is very beautiful.'

'And you, Morand?'

Morand clasped his hands, but returned no answer.

'Tell me, then, is it the Queen Morand loves!' whispered Maurice laughingly to Geneviève. She started, but immediately controlling herself, answered lightly,—

'Indeed, it really looks like it.'

'You have not told me what you thought of her, Morand,' Maurice repeated.

'I thought her very pale.'

Maurice took Geneviève's arm, and they descended to the courtyard. In the dark stairway, it seemed to Maurice that Geneviève kissed his hand.

'What does that mean?' he said.

'It means, Maurice, that I shall never forget you risked your life to gratify my whim.'

'Oh! what exaggeration! Besides, gratitude is not the feeling I wish to inspire in you.'

Geneviève gently pressed his arm. Morand followed them with unsteady steps. In the yard Lorin came forward to show them out of the Temple, but before leaving Geneviève made Maurice promise to dine in Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques the following day.
Maurice returned to his post with a heart filled with joy; he found Madame Tison weeping.

'What is the matter now, mother?' he asked.

'I am angry, that is all.'

'Why?'

'Because it is the poor people who get all the injustice in this world.'

'But, now—?'

'You are rich, a bourgeois; you are here only for a day, and pretty women who offer flowers to the Austrian come to visit you; I am here always, and I cannot see even my poor Sophie.'

Maurice slipped a ten-franc note into her hand.

'Come, good Tison, take this and be brave. *Mon Dieu!* the Austrian will not last for ever.'

'It is kind of you; but I would rather have a curl-paper that had been in my daughter’s hair.'

As she finished speaking, Simon came along, but he had heard the words, and had seen the woman place the note in her pocket. Let us describe Simon's state of mind. He had just met Lorin in the courtyard, and between the two men there was a decided antipathy. This was not occasioned so much by the violent scene we have already described, as by that personal difference which is a perpetual source of likes and dislikes otherwise not easily explainable. Simon too was ugly, Lorin handsome; Simon was dirty in appearance, Lorin was daintily dressed and perfumed; Simon was a bragging Republican, Lorin, an ardent patriot, had merely made some sacrifices. 'Again, if ever they came to blows, Simon felt instinctively
that the dandy's fist, no less elegant than Maurice's, could yet deal a thoroughly plebeian blow.

Simon, on seeing Lorin, had stopped short, paling a little.

'So that battalion mounts guard still!' he growled. 'What about it? It seems to me as good as any other,' answered a grenadier, whom the remark offended.

Simon, drawing a pencil from his pocket, pretended to write down something on a sheet of paper almost as black as his hands.

'Eh! then you can write, Simon, since you have become Capet's tutor? See, citizens; on my honour, he takes notes; it is "Simon the Censor."

A burst of laughter on the part of the young National Guardsmen, almost all well educated, stupefied the wretched cobbler.

'Very good,' said he, gnashing his teeth and paling with rage; 'I am told you let strangers enter the keep without permission of the Commune. Very good, I will have a report made out by the Municipal Guard.'

'He, at least, can write,' answered Lorin; 'it is Maurice, Maurice with the iron hand; do you remember?'

At that very moment Morand and Geneviève entered the yard. At sight of them, Simon rushed into the keep just in time to see Maurice handing Madame Tison a ten-franc note by way of consolation. Maurice paid no heed to Simon, from whom he recoiled each time they met, as one avoids a poisonous reptile.

'Ah! so you are anxious to get yourself guillotined?' said Simon, addressing Madame Tison, who was wiping her eyes with her apron.

'I! what do you mean?'

'You take money from Municipal Guards to let aristocrats in to see the Austrian!'

'I! Be quiet; you are mad.'
'This will be noted in the report,' Simon announced emphatically.

'Nonsense, these were friends of Citizen Maurice, one of the soundest patriots.'

'Conspirators, I tell you. However, the Commune will be informed; it will judge.'

'So, you are going to denounce me, police spy?'

'Certainly, unless you denounce yourself.'

'What should I denounce?'

'What has happened?'

'But nothing has happened.'

'Where were the aristocrats?'

'There, on the staircase.'

'When Widow Capet mounted to the Tower?'

'Yes.'

'They spoke to her?'

'They exchanged two words.'

'Two words, mark; besides, there is a perfume of an aristocrat, here.'

'You mean, there is a smell of carnations.'

'Why carnations?'

'Because the citizeness had a bouquet of them.'

'Which citizeness?'

'The one who watched the Queen passing.'

'You say the Queen, do you notice; mixing with aristocrats is corrupting you. What is this I am treading on?' he continued, stooping down.

'Ah! yes, that is a flower—a carnation; it must have dropped from Citizeness Dixmer's bouquet, when Marie-Antoinette picked a flower out of it.'

'Then Capet picked a flower from Citizeness Dixmer's bouquet?'

'Yes, and I gave it to her, do you hear?' interrupted Maurice in threatening tones; he had been listening impatiently to the colloquy for some time.

'Very good, one sees what one sees, and one knows what one says,' muttered Simon, still keeping in his hand the carnation crushed by his big foot.
'And I know one thing which I will tell you; you have no business in the keep, your executioner's post is down yonder beside little Capet, whom you can't beat while I am here to defend him.'

'Ah! you threaten me and call me executioner!' cried Simon, crushing the flower in his fingers. 'Ah! we shall see if that is allowed to aristocrats—Well, what is this?'

'What?' asked Maurice.

'This that I feel in the carnation! Ah!' Simon, before Maurice's astonished eyes, drew from the heart of the flowers a small piece of paper, folded with great care, which had been deftly placed in the centre.

'Oh! what is it, mon Dieu?' cried Maurice.

'We shall see, we shall see,' Simon answered, approaching the window. 'Ah! your friend Lorin says I cannot read? Well, you shall discover.'

Lorin had insulted Simon, who could read printed matter of every description, and handwriting when it was of a certain size. But the writing was so minutely scrawled that Simon required his spectacles. He had placed the note on the window ledge and was searching in his pockets, when Citizen Agricola opened the door of the ante-room exactly opposite the window. The slight draught blew away the paper, so that when Simon, finding his spectacles and placing them on his nose, turned round, he searched for it in vain; the note had disappeared. He roared with rage.

'There was a piece of paper,' he cried; 'but be careful, Citizen Guard, for it will have to be found.' Then he walked quickly downstairs, leaving Maurice in a state of stupefaction.

Ten minutes later, three members of the Commune entered the keep. The Queen was still on the terrace, and orders had been issued to keep her in ignorance of what had just passed. The members were conducted to her presence. The first thing they noticed was the red carnation which she held in her hand.
They looked in surprise at one another, and the
president of the deputation approached her.
‘Give that flower to us,’ he demanded.

The Queen, unprepared for their visit, started and
hesitated.
‘Give up that flower, madame,’ exclaimed Maurice,
in apparent terror; ‘I beg you to do so.’

The Queen held out the carnation. The president,
taking it, withdrew, followed by his colleagues, into
an adjoining room to investigate matters. The flower,
when opened, was found to be empty. Maurice
breathed freely.

‘Wait a moment, the heart of the carnation has been
removed,’ said one of the members. ‘The calyx is
empty, it is true, but a note has been hidden in it,
assuredly.’

‘I am prepared to furnish all necessary explana-
tion,’ Maurice interrupted; ‘but, first of all, I demand
to be arrested.’

‘We will take note of your request,’ said the
president, ‘but we are not empowered to grant it.
You are known as a loyal patriot, Citizen Lindey.’

‘And I answer, with my life, for the friends I so
rashly brought here.’

‘Answer for nobody,’ the other advised.

A great stir was heard in the yards. Simon, after
vainly searching for the note, had related to Santerre
the attempted rescue of the Queen, elaborating his
recital with all the vigour of his imagination; Santerre
had changed the Guard and placed a strict watch on
every one, much to Lorin’s anger.

‘Ah! wretched cobbler, you are the cause of this
move,’ he cried, threatening him with his sword; ‘but,
never mind, I will pay you back for it.’

‘Rather, you will pay, all of you, to the nation,’
answered the cobbler, rubbing his hands.

‘Citizen Maurice, be prepared to appear before the
Commune. It will desire to question you.’
'I am at your orders, General; but I have already demanded to be arrested, and I still demand it.'

'Wait a bit, wait a bit,' muttered Simon; 'since you are so extremely anxious, we will try to arrange it for you.'

And he went off to find Madame Tison.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE GODDESS REASON

All day long a search was conducted in courtyard and garden for the note which had caused such com- motion; every one believed that its discovery would reveal proof of a plot to liberate the prisoners. The Queen, first separated from her sister and daughter, was questioned, and replied simply that she had taken a flower from the bouquet of a young woman whom she had met on the stair; she mentioned also that the Municipal Guard Maurice had not raised an objection. This was all she had to say; it was the truth in all its plainness and force. On this being reported to Maurice, he declared the statement to be perfectly accurate.

'Nevertheless, this meeting formed part of some conspiracy,' the President declared.

'That is impossible; I, myself, when dining with Madame Dixmer, proposed bringing her to see the prisoner, whom she had never seen. But nothing was settled as to when or how I could effect this.'

'The flowers had been provided, though; this bouquet had been prepared beforehand!'

'Not at all! I bought the flowers in the ordinary way from a flower-girl who offered them for sale at the corner of Rue des Vieilles-Audriettes.'

'The flower-seller, then, presented this bouquet to you?'
‘No, citizen, I chose it from amongst several; true, I chose the prettiest one.’

‘The note must have been slipped in afterwards!’

‘Impossible, citizen; I never left Madame Dixmer’s side, and the operation you suggest—Simon, you know, asserts there was a note in each flower—would have needed, at least, half a day.’

‘Could not two such notes have been placed in the bouquet?’

‘In my presence, the prisoner picked a flower at random, after refusing the whole bunch.’

‘Then, in your opinion, Citizen Lindey, there is no plot?’

‘On the contrary, there is a plot, and I am the first to believe in and also to declare it; only this plot has no connection with my friends. Nevertheless, as the nation must not be exposed to alarm, I offer surety, and ask to be arrested,’ answered Maurice.

‘Not at all,’ was Santerre’s reply; ‘we do not act in that way with tried patriots like yourself. If you demand to be arrested in order to answer for your friends, I must arrest myself to answer for you. The thing is simple; there will be no actual denunciation. No one will know what has happened. Let us increase our vigilance, you especially, and we shall get to the root of the matter, whilst avoiding publicity.’

‘Thank you, General. I shall act as you yourself would in my place. The affair cannot be left at this stage; we must find the flower-seller.’

‘The flower-seller is far away; but, never mind, she will be found. Watch your friends carefully, and I will keep my eye on the prison correspondence.’

They had not considered Simon in all this, but Simon had his own ideas on the matter. He arrived at the end of the discussion, to ask for news, and learned the decision of the Commune.

‘Ah! only a denunciation is needed to settle this
affair,' he exclaimed. 'Wait five minutes and I will bring it.'

'What is it you speak of?' the President asked.

'Just that the brave Citizeness Tison denounces that supporter of the aristocracy, Maurice, and the suspicious actions of his friend, another false patriot, Lorin.'

'Take care, Simon! Your zeal for the nation leads you astray,' the President suggested; 'Maurice Lindey and Hyacinthe Lorin are true patriots.'

'That will be seen at the tribunal,' Simon answered.

'Consider well, Simon! Your accusation will greatly disturb all loyal citizens.'

'What do I care about that? At least the truth will be known about the traitors.'

'So you persist in your denunciation, in the name of the Citizeness Tison?'

'I shall lodge information at the Cordeliers this very evening, against you, Citizen President, amongst others, unless you arrest the traitor Maurice.'

'Very well, let it be so,' said the President, who cowered, as was the custom of the time, before the man who spoke loudest. 'He will be arrested.'

During this discussion Maurice had returned to the Temple, where he found the following note waiting him:

'As our guard has been violently broken up, I shall be unable to see you till to-morrow morning. Come and have breakfast with me and tell me about the plots discovered by Master Simon. I, in my turn, will tell you the opinion of Arthémise.

'Ever yours,

'LORIN.'

'There is nothing new,' Maurice wrote back; 'sleep in peace to-night, and breakfast without me to-morrow,
as, on account of what has occurred, I shall probably not be free till midday.

'Ever yours,

'Maurice.

'PS.—I believe, moreover, that the plot is only a false alarm.'

Lorin had left at eleven o'clock, before the rest of his battalion, owing to the shoemaker's violent action. He had consoled himself for this humiliation with a quatrain and a visit to Arthémise. The latter was delighted to see Lorin arrive. As it was lovely weather, she proposed to go for a walk by the quays, to which Lorin agreed. They had passed the coal depot, Lorin relating how he had been driven from the Temple and discussing the reason for it, when, on reaching Rue des Barres, they noticed a flower-girl walking in the same direction.

'Ah! Citizen Lorin, will you not buy me a bouquet?' said Arthémise.

'Two, if it will please you,' he answered lightly.

They hastened to overtake the flower-seller, who was also walking quickly. On reaching the Pont Marie the young girl, leaning over the parapet, emptied her basket into the river. The single flowers turned round about for a moment in the air, while the bunches, being heavier, fell more rapidly; then flowers and bouquets floated down on the current.

'Ah!' exclaimed Arthémise, looking at the person who was behaving in such an extraordinary manner, 'one would say—yes—no—yes, though—what an odd thing!'

The flower-girl laid a finger on her lip as though to counsel silence, and then disappeared.

'Why, what is this? Do you know this mortal, Goddess?' asked Lorin.

'No. I thought, at first—— But I am surely mistaken.'
'Yet, she certainly made you some sort of signal!'

'Why is she masquerading in this fashion?' said Arthémise, talking to herself.

'You admit you know her, then, Arthémise?'

'Yes, she is a girl from whom I sometimes buy flowers.'

'In any case, she has a strange way of disposing of her wares.'

After giving another glance at the flowers, the two continued their way to La Rapée, where they meant to dine. The incident had no immediate sequel, yet the strangeness and mystery attached to it made a powerful appeal to Lorin's poetical imagination. Meanwhile Madame Tison's denunciation of Maurice and Lorin caused considerable commotion at the Jacobin Club. Maurice was informed that his liberty was threatened; which was practically a friendly invitation to hide himself if he were guilty. But, knowing his conscience clear, the young man remained at his post till they came to arrest him. He was immediately questioned. While persisting in keeping his friends' names out of the affair, Maurice had no intention to be sacrificed without defending himself, and he therefore asked that the flower-girl should be examined. At five o'clock Lorin, returning home, learned of Maurice's arrest and of the demand he had put forward. The curious incident of the Pont Marie immediately came into his mind; it was like a sudden revelation. The girl's strange conduct, the fact of its being in the same district, the half confession of Arthémise—all these things, he felt instinctively, could explain the mystery which Maurice wished to solve.

Rushing from his room, and dashing downstairs, he quickly reached the dwelling of Arthémise, who was engaged in sewing gold stars on a blue gauze dress, her costume as the Goddess Reason.

'A truce to the stars, dear friend,' exclaimed Lorin.
Maurice was arrested this morning, and I shall probably be arrested to-night.'

'Maurice arrested?'

'Mon Dieu, yes. Great events are very common in these days; one pays little attention to them, because they occur so frequently. Now, nearly all big events can be traced to trifling causes, so let us not neglect trifles. Who was the flower-girl we met this morning?'

Arthémie started. 'Which flower-girl?' she asked.

'Why! the one who was throwing her flowers into the Seine in such reckless fashion.'

'Mon Dieu! was that a very serious incident, that you insist on talking about it so often?'

'So serious, my dear girl, that I beg you to answer me immediately.'

'I cannot.'

'Goddess, nothing is impossible to you.'

'I am bound by honour to keep silence.'

'And I am in honour bound to make you speak.'

'Why do you insist in this way?'

'That Maurice may not have his head cut off.'

'Ah! mon Dieu! Maurice guillotined!' cried the young woman in terror.

'Not to speak of myself, for I can scarcely feel sure of keeping a head on my shoulders.'

'Oh! no, no, it would surely ruin her,' cried Arthémie.

At this moment Lorin's servant ran into the room.

'Ah! citizen, fly, fly,' he exclaimed.

'Why should I fly?'

'Because the soldiers are searching for you. While they were breaking down the door, I escaped by the roof to warn you.'

Arthémie uttered a terrible cry. She really liked Lorin.

'Arthémie, do you weigh the life of a flower-girl in the balance with that of Maurice and your friend. If so, I declare that, instead of acknowledging you
Goddess of Reason, I shall proclaim you Goddess of Folly.'

'Poor Héloïse!' exclaimed the ex-dancer at the Opéra, 'it is against my will I betray you.'

'Very good! dear friend, you have given me her Christian name; kindly add the surname and address,' said Lorin, presenting a paper to Arthémise.

'Oh! write it down, never! never!' she cried; 'to tell you is another story.'

'Tell me, then, and have no fear that I shall forget it.'

Arthémise gave the name as Héloïse Tison, living at No. 24 Rue des Nonandières. On hearing the name, Lorin gave one cry and rushed from the room. He had not turned the corner of the street when a letter was brought to Arthémise, containing the following three lines:

'Not a word about me, dear friend; the revelation of my name would assuredly ruin me. . . . Wait till to-morrow before you name me, for I shall be leaving Paris to-night.

'Ever yours,

'Héloïse.'

'Oh! mon Dieu!' cried the future Goddess; 'if I had only known that, I would have waited!' She flew to the window to recall Lorin, if possible, but he was already out of sight.

CHAPTER XXV

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

We have already stated that, in a few hours, news of this event spread through Paris. The information, terrible and threatening, reached Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques; two hours after Maurice was arrested, this
was also known. Thanks to Simon’s activity, details of the plot had circulated freely; but, as each person who heard added something to the story, a somewhat grotesque version of it came to Dixmer’s ears. Rumour declared that the Queen had received a poisoned flower, with which she was to stupefy her jailers and effect an escape; moreover, it was reported that suspicion had been cast on the fidelity of the battalion dismissed by Santerre, and that several members of it already were pointed out as probable victims of the people’s vengeance. In the Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques, no doubt existed as to the true state of affairs; Morand and Dixmer immediately left the house, leaving Geneviève a prey to the most violent despair.

If misfortune overwhelmed Maurice, Geneviève would be the cause; she had led him blind and unsuspicous into the cell where he was now imprisoned, a cell which in all probability he would quit only for the scaffold. In any case, he must not be permitted to sacrifice his life for having gratified her caprice. If he were condemned, she would accuse herself to the Tribunal, and confess everything. At the cost of her own life, she would save Maurice! Instead of shrinking at the idea of death, she experienced rather a bitter joy in it. She loved this young man more than was seemly in a woman who belonged to another, and a voluntary expiation such as she contemplated would enable her to give back her soul to God, pure and stainless as she had received it from Him.

On leaving the house, Morand and Dixmer separated, the latter proceeding to Rue de la Corderie, while the former hurried to Rue des Nonandières. At the end of the Pont Marie, Morand observed a crowd of those idle, curious people, who gather in Paris whenever and wherever any event has occurred, as crows hover over a battle-field. At sight of them Morand stopped short; his strength failed him, so that he was
obliged to lean against the parapet of the bridge. In a few seconds, however, his wonderful self-control asserting itself, he mingled with the crowd, and learned, in answer to his questions, that ten minutes previously a young woman had been arrested at 24 Rue des Nonan dières. In the opinion of the speakers she was evidently guilty of the crime charged against her, since she had been caught in the act of preparing for flight. Morand inquired in which club the young woman was to be examined, and immediately proceeded there.

The club was densely packed, but after a strenuous and persistent struggle Morand succeeded in getting in. The first thing he noticed was the tall figure of Maurice, who stood with haughty air at the prisoners' bench, glancing scornfully at Simon, who was delivering loudly the following speech:

'Yes, citizens, the Citizeness Tison accuses Citizen Lindey and Citizen Lorin. Citizen Lindey speaks of some flower-girl, upon whose shoulders he would fix the crime; but I warn you beforehand, his mysterious flower-girl will never be found. This plot, citizens, was concocted by the aristocrats, cowards that they are. You see for yourselves that Citizen Lorin fled when the officers went to arrest him, and he is no more likely to return than the flower-girl.'

'You have lied, Simon; he will return, for here he is,' cried an angry voice, and Lorin dashed into the hall.

'Make way! make way!' he continued, forcing a passage through the crowds to get beside Maurice. This entry of Lorin's, so simple and unpremeditated, yet exhibiting the young man's frank, vigorous nature, produced considerable effect on the spectators in the galleries, who applauded loudly. Maurice smilingly stretched out his hand to his friend with the air of one saying, 'I knew I should not long remain here alone.'

The audience regarded with evident interest the
two handsome young men whom the wretched cobbler of the Temple was accusing, and Simon perceiving that he was losing ground, resolved to strike a last blow.

‘Citizens,’ he called out, ‘I demand that the noble-hearted Citizeness Tison be heard. Let her speak, let her make her accusation.’

‘Citizens,’ retorted Lorin, ‘let the young flower-girl, who has just been arrested, and who will shortly be brought before us, be heard.’

‘No,’ exclaimed Simon passionately; ‘this is some false witness, some supporter of the aristocrats; besides, the Citizeness Tison is eager to help the course of justice.’

Lorin was all this time whispering to Maurice.

‘Yes,’ cried the mob, ‘let us have the woman Tison’s deposition; yes, yes, let her depose!’

‘Is the Citizeness Tison in the hall?’ asked the President.

‘Certainly she is here,’ cried Simon; ‘Citizeness Tison, say you are here.’

‘Here I am, President; if I tell my story, will you give me back my daughter?’

‘This matter is not connected with your daughter; make your deposition first, and afterwards you may appeal to the Commune to restore your daughter.’

‘Do you hear? The Citizen President orders you to make your deposition,’ roared Simon; ‘do so, then, instantly.’

‘One moment, please,’ exclaimed the President, turning to Maurice, whose unusual calmness surprised him; ‘have you anything to say first, Citizen Guard?’

‘No, Citizen President, except that Simon would have shown more wisdom in getting up a stronger case before accusing me of treason to the State.’

‘You say?’ repeated Simon, with the sneering accent peculiar to the populace of Paris.

‘I say, Simon, that you will be cruelly punished
presently when you learn the actual truth,' answered Maurice, more sad than angry.

'What is going to happen, then?'

'Citizen President,' Maurice continued, without answering his accuser, 'I join my entreaties to those of my friend, that the young girl just arrested should be heard before this unhappy woman, whose deposition has no doubt been invented for her.'

'Do you hear, citizeness,' cried Simon, 'do you hear? They assert you are a false witness!'

'A false witness?' Madame Tison exclaimed. 'Ah! just wait and you will learn something.'

'Citizen, command this unhappy woman to be silent,' Maurice urged.

'Ah! you are afraid, you are afraid! Citizen President, I demand the Citizeness Tison's deposition,' Simon cried.

'Yes, yes, the deposition!' howled the people.

'Silence!' the President exclaimed, and at that moment the sound of wheels was heard outside, mingled with a loud noise of arms and voices.

Simon turned uneasily toward the door.

'Leave the witness-box,' the President ordered 'You have no longer the right to be there.'

The gendarmes entered with a young woman, whom they pushed towards the front.

'Is it she?' Lorin asked Maurice.

'Yes, yes. Oh! unfortunate woman, she is lost!'

'The flower-girl! the flower-girl!' murmured some of the audience, moved by curiosity.

'I demand, first of all, the Citizeness Tison's deposition,' yelled the cobbler; 'you ordered her to depose, Citizen President, and she has not yet obeyed.'

Finally the woman was called, and she gave a terrible and circumstantial account of the plot. In her opinion, the flower-girl was guilty, but Maurice and Lorin were her accomplices. This statement produced a great effect on the public, and Simon was still triumphant.
'Gendarmes, bring up the flower-girl,' the President ordered.

'Oh! this is terrible!' Morand muttered.

The flower-girl was placed opposite Madame Tison, who had just denounced her so bitterly, and in a moment she raised her veil.

'Héloïse! my daughter—you here?' Madame Tison exclaimed.

'Yes, mother,' answered the young girl softly.

'Why did you come in between those men?'

'Because I am accused, mother.'

'You—accused? by whom?' the wretched woman exclaimed in anguish.

'By you, mother.'

A stupefying silence suddenly fell on the noisy crowds, and the horror inspired by this dreadful scene seemed to overwhelm each heart.

'Her daughter, the wretch!' muttered some voices from the back of the hall.

With deep pity and reverent grief expressed in their faces, Maurice and Lorin gazed at accuser and accused. Simon waited anxiously for the end of the scene in which he hoped Maurice and Lorin would be compromised, but he endeavoured to avoid Madame Tison's glance, as she wildly cast her eyes around.

'What is your name, citizeness?' asked the President, himself affected at sight of the young girl, calmly resigned.

'Héloïse Tison, citizen.'

'How old are you?'

'Nineteen.'

'Where do you live?'

'At number 24 Rue des Nonandières.'

'Was it you who sold the Citizen Lindey here a bunch of carnations this morning?'

The girl turned to Maurice and scrutinised his face.

'Yes, citizen, it was I,' she answered at length.
Madame Tison gazed at her daughter, her eyes dilating with terror.

'Are you aware that each of these carnations contained a note addressed to Widow Capet?'

'Perfectly.'

A feeling of horror, mingled with admiration, ran through the hall.

'Why did you offer these carnations to Citizen Maurice?'

'Because he wore the sash of a Municipal Guard, and I concluded he was going to the Temple.'

'Who are your accomplices?'

'I have none.'

'What! You made up the plot by yourself?'

'If it is a plot, then I alone made it.'

'Was Citizen Maurice in the secret?'

'That these flowers contained notes?'

'Yes.'

'Citizen Maurice is one of the Municipal Guard, and at liberty to talk with the Queen at any time. If Citizen Maurice wished to tell the Queen anything, there was no need to write, since he could speak.'

'Were you acquainted with Citizen Maurice?'

'I had seen him in the Temple when I lived there with my mother; but I knew him only by sight.'

'Do you see, wretch! Do you see what you have done?' cried Lorin, shaking his fist at Simon, who bent his head, dismayed at the course events were taking. All eyes were turned indignantly on him. The President calmly continued his questioning.

'Since you presented the bouquet and knew that a note was hidden in each flower, you ought to know what was written in these notes!'

'Certainly I know.'

'Well, then, tell us what was written.'

'Citizen,' answered the young girl firmly, 'I have said all I could, all I wished to say.'

'You refuse to answer?'
'Yes.'
'You are aware what risks you run?'
'Yes.'
'You are trusting, perchance, to your youth and beauty to save you?'
'I trust only in God.'
'Citizen Maurice Lindey, Citizen Hyacinthe Lorin, you are discharged,' announced the President; 'the Commune recognises your innocence and true patriotism. Gendarmes, lead the Citizeness Héloïse to the prison belonging to the Section.'
At these words the mother seemed to waken; with a fearful scream she tried to rush forward to embrace her daughter, but the gendarmes prevented her.
'I pardon you, mother,' the young girl cried, as she was carried away.
Madame Tison, with a wild shriek, fell down powerless.
'Noble girl!' murmured Morand sadly.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE LETTER

Following the events we have just related came one last scene which must be described since it forms part of the sad drama which is gradually unfolding itself. Madame Tison, aghast at the tragedy, deserted by the friends who had accompanied her to the trial, for there is something revolting even in involuntary crime, and a mother, in sacrificing her daughter, even through an excess of patriotism, commits a very great crime. Madame Tison, then, after lying for a time in a helpless state, raised her head, gazed wildly around, and, finding herself alone, rushed with a cry toward the door. A few curious people still remained, and as
she appeared they drew back, pointing at her and saying: 'Do you see that woman? She denounced her own daughter.' With a despairing shriek the poor woman fled towards the Temple. Half-way along Rue Michel-le-Comte a man, hiding his face in his cloak, stepped in front of her barring her way.

'Are you satisfied now that you have killed your daughter?' he asked.

'Killed my child? no, no, it is not possible,' cried the unhappy mother.

'It is the case, however, for your daughter is arrested.'

'Where have they taken her?'

'To the Conciergerie, and on leaving there she will appear before the Revolutionary Tribunal. You know what usually becomes of people who go there!'

'Stand out of my way, let me pass,' she exclaimed.

'Where are you going?'

'To the Conciergerie.'

'What will you do there?'

'See her again.'

'They will not let you in.'

'They will let me lie down at the door, surely; live there, sleep there. I will stay till she comes out, and so shall see her once more.'

'Suppose some one promised to restore your daughter to you?'

'What are you saying?'

'I ask you, suppose a man promised to restore your daughter, would you do as he told you?'

'Anything for my daughter! Anything for my Héloïse!' the woman cried, wringing her hands despairingly.

'Listen, God is punishing you,' said the stranger.

'For what?'

'For the tortures you have inflicted on another unhappy mother.'

'Of whom are you speaking? What do you mean?'
‘You have often reduced the prisoner to the same despair in which you now find yourself, by your petty tale-bearing and your harsh treatment. God punishes you by delivering over to death the daughter you love so much.’

‘You said there is a man who can save her; where is he? what does he wish me to do?’

‘This man wishes you to cease persecuting the Queen, to beg her forgiveness for past insults, and if you see this woman, who is also a mother, suffering, weeping, in despair, on the point of escaping from her prison, to aid her by every means in your power.’

‘Listen, citizen, you are this man?’

‘We will suppose so.’

‘You promise to save my daughter?’ There was no answer.

‘Do you promise? Will you swear to it? Answer!’

‘Listen to me. All that a man can do to save a woman, I will do to save your child.’

‘He cannot save her!’ cried Madame Tison hysterically; ‘he cannot save her. He lied when he promised to save her.’

‘Do what you can for the Queen, I will do what I can for your daughter.’

‘What is the Queen to me? A mother with a daughter, that is all. If any one’s head is cut off, it will be hers, not my daughter’s. Let them take my head and save my daughter’s. Let them lead me to the guillotine, on condition that not a hair of her head is injured, and I will go singing.’ Madame Tison began singing wildly, but, suddenly stopping, she laughed loudly. The man in the cloak, dismayed at this sign of madness, drew back a step.

‘Oh! you will not go away like that,’ exclaimed Madame Tison in despair, catching hold of his cloak; ‘people do not come to a mother to say “Do this and I will save your child,” and then say later, “Perhaps.” Will you save her?’
'Yes.'
'When?'
'The day she is taken from prison to the scaffold.'
'Why wait? why not to-night, this very minute?'
'Because I cannot.'
'Ah! you recognise clearly that you cannot; but I can.'
'What can you do?'
'Persecute the prisoner, as you call her; spy on the actions of the Queen, as you say, aristocrat that you are! I can enter the prison at all hours, by day or night, and will take care to do so. As to her escape, we shall see. If you are unwilling to save my daughter, we shall see whether she will escape. A head for a head, you wish? Madame Véto has been a Queen, I know that; Héloïse Tison is only a poor girl. But on the guillotine all are equal.'
'Well, so be it!' said the stranger; 'save her and I will save your child.'
'Swear it.'
'By what shall I swear?'
'By whatever you please. Have you a daughter?'
'No.'
'Well, then, by what can you swear?' asked Madame Tison in dejected tones, letting her arms fall limply down.
'Listen, I swear in God's name.'
'Bah! you know they have abolished God.'
'I swear by my father's tomb.'
'Do not swear by a tomb, that would be unlucky. Oh! mon Dieu! when I think that in three days I may be swearing by my daughter's tomb! My poor Héloïse!' cried Madame Tison so loudly that several windows opened at the noise. On seeing the windows opening, another man glided from the shadow of a wall towards the first.
'It is useless talking to that woman, she is mad,' the first man declared.
'No, she is a mother,' answered the latter, drawing his companion away...

Madame Tison, seeing them depart, seemed to realise everything.

'Where are you going? Are you going to save Héloïse?' she cried; 'wait for me, then, I will come too. Wait for me, I say!'

The unhappy woman ran along screaming, but she soon lost sight of the two men. Not knowing which direction to take, she stood looking all around, when finding herself alone and hearing no sound, she uttered a piercing cry and fell unconscious on the pavement.

Ten o'clock was just ringing. In the Temple the Queen, with her sister and daughter, was seated near a smoky lamp, and hidden from the warder's eyes by Madame Royale. The latter, pretending to embrace her mother, was re-reading a small note written on very thin paper, in characters so fine that eyes, worn with weeping, could scarcely make it out. The note contained the following instructions:—

'To-morrow, Tuesday, ask to be allowed into the garden; the permission will be readily granted, since this privilege is yours on request. After walking for a short time, make a pretence of being exhausted; go to the canteen and ask Madame Plumeau's leave to sit down there. Then pretend to become worse and to faint. The doors will be shut till help can be brought, and you will be left with Madame Elisabeth and Madame Royale. The trap-door of the cellar will suddenly open; throw yourselves into the opening, and you are saved, all three.'

'Mon Dieu! is the unhappy fate that dogs our footsteps growing weary?' Madame Royale asked.

'Or is this note only a snare?' suggested Madame Elisabeth.

'No, no; this writing has always revealed to me
the presence of a mysterious friend, very brave and very faithful,’ the Queen declared.

‘It is the Chevalier’s writing, is it not?’ Madame Royale asked.

‘His own; let us each read the note again that we may remember all the details.’

As they were finishing reading, they heard the door creak; the two princesses turned round, the Queen remained where she was, only with an almost imperceptible gesture she slipped the note into her hair. One of the Guards opened the door.

‘What do you wish, monsieur?’ asked Madame Elisabeth.

‘Hum! you are late in going to bed to-night.’

‘Has the Commune issued a new decree deciding when I am to go to bed?’ interrupted the Queen, turning with her customary dignity.

‘No, citizeness; but, if need be, one will be passed.’

‘Meanwhile, monsieur, respect, I will not say a Queen’s, but a woman’s, bed-chamber.’

‘Truly, these aristocrats always talk as if they were of importance,’ growled the guard as he retired, a trifle subdued by this royal power dignified by three years of patient suffering. A moment later the lamp was extinguished, and the three women undressed as usual in the darkness. Next day at nine o’clock the Queen, after reading the letter again that she might not forget any part of the instructions, tore it into tiny pieces, and, dressing herself behind the curtains, proceeded to her daughter’s apartment. A moment later she came out, calling on the guards.

‘What do you wish, citizeness?’ asked one, appearing on the threshold; the other did not leave his breakfast to obey the royal command.

‘Monsieur,’ answered Marie Antoinette, ‘I have come from my daughter’s bedroom, and the poor child is really very ill. Her legs are swollen and painful, for she takes too little exercise. You are aware, monsieur,
that I myself condemned her to this inactive life; I received permission to descend to the garden, but my courage failed at having to pass the room once occupied by my husband, so I confined my walking to the terrace. This limited exercise is not sufficient for my poor child's health. So I beg you, citizen, to obtain from General Santerre, in my name, the privilege I formerly possessed; I shall be grateful too.'

The Queen had spoken with such gentle, dignified accents, she had so carefully avoided wounding the Republican feelings of her hearer, that the latter gradually raised the 'bonnet rouge,' which he had not removed on entering, and, bowing low, answered,—

'Rest assured, madame, that the permission you desire shall be asked for.' Then as if to convince himself that he had not yielded through weakness, he murmured as he departed, 'It is only right, after all.'

'What is right?' asked his companion.

'That this woman should take her daughter for a walk.'

'What else does she wish?'

'She asks to be permitted to walk in the garden for an hour.'

'Bah! let her ask to walk from the Temple to the Place de la Révolution; that will serve her purpose.'

The Queen, hearing this, paled, but speedily became inspired with fresh courage for carrying out the new attempt to escape. The guard, finishing his breakfast, went downstairs.

Madame Royale, keeping up the pretence, remained in bed, the Queen and Madame Elisabeth sitting beside her. At eleven o'clock Santerre arrived, heralded by the beating of drums and the entrance of the new battalion to relieve guard. When Santerre had inspected both battalions, and had paced round the courtyard on his clumsy horse, he paused for a moment, affording an opportunity for any who had requests
or complaints to make, or any information to give. The Municipal Guard approached him.

'What do you want?' asked Santerre brusquely.

'Citizen, I come on behalf of the Queen——'

'What does that mean, the Queen?'

'Ah! true. What am I saying? Am I mad? I come from Madame Véto to tell you——'

'Good, I understand now. Well, what have you to tell?'

'The little Véto is ill, it seems, through lack of air and exercise.'

'Well, is the nation to be blamed for that? It gave them permission to walk in the garden, and they refused.'

'That is exactly the point; Madame Véto now repents, and begs your leave to descend to the garden.'

'There is nothing against that. You hear,' he continued, addressing the battalion, 'Widow Capet is coming to walk in the garden. The nation has authorised the step; but see that she does not escape, since in that case you will all lose your heads.'

A burst of laughter greeted the Citizen General's joke.

'Now that you have your instructions, I am going to the Commune. Roland and Barbaroux have been reunited, and will be given their passport for the next world,' he added.

This news seemed to have put the Citizen General in high good humour. He galloped off, followed by the battalion just relieved from duty. One of the new guard proceeded to inform Marie Antoinette that the General granted her request.

'Lord, is Thy wrath now appeased,' murmured the Queen, gazing up at the sky, 'and does Thy terrible judgment no longer weigh upon us?'

Aloud she said, 'Thank you, monsieur! thank you,' and smiled with that charming smile which proved Barnavé's ruin and led astray so many others. Then,
turning to her little dog, which seemed to guess something unusual was happening, 'Come, Black, we are going for a walk,' she said.

The dog barked joyfully and, after looking carefully at the guard who had apparently caused his mistress's joy, he bounded towards him, wagging his long, silky tail, and even ventured to caress him. The man, who might possibly have remained obdurate to the Queen's pleading, was quite affected by the dog's caresses.

'You should go out oftener, Citizeness Capet, if only for the little animal's sake. We are commanded to take care of all creatures,' he remarked.

'When shall we go out, monsieur? Do you not think the sunshine would do us good?' the Queen asked.

'You may go when you please; nothing was said specially on the matter. However, if you arrange for twelve o'clock, the sentinels change then, so less commotion will be caused in the tower.'

'Well, let it be at midday,' the Queen replied, pressing her hand to her heart to still its beating. Looking at this man who appeared less stern than his comrades, she reflected that, as a reward for having yielded to her wishes, he might lose his life in the attack meditated by the conspirators. At the same moment the Queen's soul in her arose to quell this womanly compassion. She thought of the 10th of August, and the dead bodies of her friends strewing the floor of her palace, the 2nd of September and the Princesse de Lamballe's head borne past her windows on the end of a pike; she thought of the 21st January, her husband dying on the scaffold with the sound of drums drowning his voice; she thought of her son, whom she had heard crying with pain, without being able to go to him, and her feelings changed.

'Alas!' she murmured, 'misfortune is like the blood of the ancient hydras: it nourishes future harvests of unhappiness.'
"Not a word, or you are a dead man."
CHAPTER XXVII

BLACK

The Guard went to summon his colleagues, and to read over the report of the men just relieved from duty. The Queen remained with her sister and daughter; the three looked at one another earnestly, and Madame Royale, throwing herself into the Queen’s arms, embraced her tenderly. Madame Elisabeth caught her sister’s hand.

‘Let us pray to God,’ said the Queen; ‘but in low tones so that no one may suspect our secret.’ At a time like this even prayer becomes suspicious in men’s eyes, since prayer expresses either hope or thankfulness. Now, to the jailers, hope or thankfulness on the Queen’s part was regarded with uneasiness, as she could hope for one thing only—to escape.

Their prayer finished, the three sat in silence. Eleven o’clock rang, and finally midday arrived. When the last stroke of twelve resounded, the noise of arms was heard on the staircase.

‘They are relieving the sentries. They will come presently to fetch us,’ said the Queen. Her sister and daughter turned pale.

‘Be brave!’ she urged, yet becoming pale herself.

‘It is twelve o’clock,’ cried a voice from below; ‘bring down the prisoners.’

‘We are here, monsieur,’ the Queen answered, glancing round almost regretfully at the gloomy walls and plain furniture of her prison. The first door, leading to the corridor, opened; the dark passage permitted the three captives to hide their emotion. The little dog ran on in front, but on reaching a second door which Marie Antoinette tried to avoid looking at, the faithful animal, laying his nose to the panels,
began to cry piteously, and finally howled slowly and sadly. The Queen proceeded on quickly, steadying herself against the wall. After a while her strength failed, and all three stopped, standing in a mournful attitude, the Queen with her face resting on her daughter’s head.

‘Well, is she coming down or not?’ some one called out.

‘Here we are,’ announced the guard who had remained silent, respecting this grief, so impressive in its simplicity.

‘Let us walk on,’ the Queen said, resuming her way.

When the prisoners reached the foot of the stair, the drums were heard rolling to summon the guard; a deep silence succeeded, and then the heavy door was slowly opened, creaking on its hinges. A woman was seated or rather lying on the ground at the corner. It was Madame Tison, whom the Queen had not seen for a whole day and whose absence had surprised her. The Queen was already gazing at the trees, the garden, and the canteen where she had no doubt friends awaited her, when the woman, hearing footsteps, glanced up, revealing a pale, lined face, and gray hair. The change was so striking that the Queen stopped in astonishment. Then, in that deliberate way common to those bereft of their reason, the woman knelt down so as to bar Marie Antoinette’s passage.

‘What do you want, my good woman?’ asked the latter.

‘He told me I must beg your pardon.’

‘Who then?’

‘The man in the cloak.’

The Queen glanced with surprise at her sister and daughter.

‘Come now, let the Widow Capet pass; she has permission to walk in the garden,’ said the guard.
'I know it, and that is why I came here. They forbade my going up, and since I had to ask her forgiveness I waited.'

'Why did they refuse to let you enter?' the Queen asked.

The woman laughed. 'Because they pretend I am mad!'

The Queen perceived that a strange gleam, indicating the absence of all intelligence, shone in the poor creature's eyes.

'Oh! mon Dieu! what has happened to you, my poor woman?'

'You do not know? You must know, since it is on your account she is condemned——'

'Who?'

'Héloïse.'

'Your daughter?'

'Yes, my poor daughter!'

'Condemned—but by whom? how? why?'

'Because she sold the bouquet of carnations. She is not a flower-seller, though,' the woman continued, striving to regain her lost wits.

'How did she manage to sell this bouquet?'

The Queen shuddered, both with pity and with fear, and she reflected that while she stood there the precious moments were passing swiftly.

'My good woman, I pray you, let me pass; you shall tell me your pitiful story later,' she urged.

'No, I must tell you at once; you must forgive me, and I must help you to escape. Only on these conditions will he save my daughter.'

The Queen became pale as death, and turning to the guard: 'Monsieur, kindly send this woman away,' she said; 'you see that she is mad.'

'Move on, mother, move on,' the guard commanded; but the woman Tison clung to the wall.

'No, she must forgive me, or he will not save my daughter,' she repeated.
'But who is he?'
'The man in the cloak.'
'My sister, speak consolingly to her,' Madame Elisabeth suggested.
'Oh! most willingly,' the Queen said; 'it may be the quicker way.' She turned to the mad woman.
'Tell me what you want, my good woman,' she urged.
'I want your forgiveness for all I have made you suffer, and the denunciations I made against you, and I want you to tell the man in the cloak to save my daughter, since he will do anything you ask him.'
'I am ignorant of whom you mean by the man in the cloak,' the Queen answered; 'but if all you need is my pardon for the wrong you think you have done me, oh! I most sincerely pardon you, poor woman! May those I have wronged pardon me as freely!'
'Ah!' cried Madame Tison with indescribable joy, 'now that you have pardoned me, he will save my daughter. Give me your hand, madame.'
The Queen, overwhelmed with astonishment, held out her hand, which Madame Tison seized and kissed. At that moment a crier's hoarse voice was heard from the street calling out: 'This is the verdict and sentence of death pronounced on Héloïse Tison for the crime of conspiracy!' No sooner had the words reached the mother's ears than her face underwent a terrible change, and rising to her knees she stretched our her arms to prevent the Queen passing.
'Oh! mon Dieu!' sighed the latter, who had lost no word of the dreadful announcement.
'Condemned to death? My daughter condemned? My Héloïse lost?' cried the mother; 'so he has not saved her, and cannot save her? It is too late, then? Ah!'
'My poor woman, I am sorry for you, believe me.'
'You? You pity me? Never! never!'
'I pity you most sincerely; but let me pass.'
'Let you pass!' Madame Tison burst into laughter.

'No, no! I agreed to help you because of his promise. If I asked your pardon, he said my daughter should be saved. Since my daughter must die, you shall not escape.'

'Help me, gentlemen!' the Queen cried. 'Mon Dieu! you see quite well the woman is mad.'

'I am not mad; I know what I am saying. Do you remember the conspiracy which Simon discovered? It was my daughter, my poor daughter, who provided the bouquet. She confessed it before the Revolutionary Tribunal—a bouquet of carnations—there were letters in it.'

'Madame, in Heaven's name!' the Queen urged. Once more the crier's voice was heard repeating his announcement.

'Do you hear it?' roared the madwoman, now surrounded by the National Guards; 'do you hear it? Condemned to death! It is for your sake they are about to guillotine my daughter, do you hear, Austrian?'

'Gentlemen, for pity's sake! if you cannot remove this poor woman, at least let me go back. I cannot bear her reproaches; unjust though they are, they kill me,' the Queen exclaimed, turning aside and sobbing piteously.

'Yes, weep, hypocrite!' cried the madwoman; 'your bouquet has cost her dear. She should have known better, for all who try to help you die. You carry misfortune, Austrian; they killed your friends, your husband, your supporters. Now they will kill my daughter. When will they kill you, in your turn, that nobody else may die for you?' The poor creature hurled these last words at the Queen and made a threatening gesture.

'Unhappy one! do you forget that you speak to the Queen?' interrupted Madame Elisabeth.
'The Queen—she? If she is the Queen, let her forbid the executioners to kill my daughter—let her pardon my Héloïse. Kings grant pardon. Come, give me back my daughter, and I will acknowledge you as the Queen. Till then, you are merely a woman who brings misfortune on others, who kills!'

'Ah! for pity's sake, madame, see my grief, and my tears,' cried Marie Antoinette, as she tried to escape from this fearful ordeal.

'Oh! you shall not pass; you wish to escape, Madame Véto. Ah, ah, I know; the man in the cloak told me. You want to rejoin the Prussians. But you shall not,' continued Madame Tison, clutching the Queen's dress; 'I will prevent you! Away with Madame Véto! To arms, citizens! "Marchons... qu'un sang impur..."' With her gray hair floating in the breeze, her face purple with passion, her eyes bloodshot, the poor woman fell back, tearing off the piece of the dress she had been grasping. The Queen was preparing to fly to the garden, when suddenly a terrible cry, mingled with barking and strange noises, roused the guards who, attracted by this scene, were surrounding Marie Antoinette.

'To arms! to arms! treason!' cried a voice, which the Queen recognised as Simon's. The shoemaker, sword in hand, guarded the door of the cabin, while, near him, Black barked furiously.

'To arms, all the guards! we are betrayed,' shouted Simon. 'Send the Austrian back. To arms! to arms!'

An officer ran up. Simon, with glaring eyes, pointed inside the cabin. Then the officer too began to cry: 'To arms! to arms!'

'Black! Black!' called the Queen, stepping forward, but the dog, paying no heed, continued to bark loudly. The National Guards, snatching up their arms, rushed to the cabin, while the Municipal Guards, seizing the Queen, her sister, and her daughter, compelled them
to enter the tower again. The door was shut behind them.

'Prepare arms!' cried the Municipal Guards to the sentries, and the prisoner heard a sound of guns being charged.

'It is there, under the trap door,' cried Simon. 'The door moved, I will swear it. Besides the Austrian's dog barked at the conspirators, hidden probably in the cellar. Eh! listen, he is barking again.'

The officer seized the ring of the trap-door. Two stalwart grenadiers, perceiving his inability to raise it, assisted him, but in vain.

'They are holding it down from below,' exclaimed Simon. 'Fire! fire through the trap door!'

'Oh! you will break my bottles,' Madame Plumeau cried.

'Fire! fire!' repeated Simon.

'Be quiet, you blusterer!' the officer ordered. 'Bring axes, you others, and smash the planks; have your guns ready. Attention! fire into the cellar directly the door is opened. A noise of planks announced that some internal movement had been effected.

Shortly afterwards a noise as of an iron gate being closed, was heard.

The officer called to the sappers, who came running up. The axes fell on the boards, and twenty rifle barrels were lowered towards the opening, which became wider every minute. No one, however, was visible through this gap. Lighting a torch, the officer threw it into the cellar, but it only revealed emptiness. The trap-door was lifted up, and now no resistance was offered.

'Follow me,' cried the officer, running bravely down the steps.

'Forward! forward!' yelled the National Guards as they followed their officer.
'Ah! Madame Plumeau, you lend your cellar to the aristocrats!' exclaimed Simon.

The wall was broken down. Footprints were plainly seen in the damp earth, and a passage three feet wide and five feet high, had been cut in the direction of Rue de la Corderie. The officer, determined to pursue the aristocrats even into the bowels of the earth, plunged into this tunnel; but after he had advanced a few steps he discovered that an iron grating barred his way.

'Stop,' he called to those behind, 'we can go no farther; some obstacle blocks the way.'

'What is there? Tell us,' cried the Municipal Guards, who after confining the prisoners were eager for news.

'Parbleu! there is a conspiracy,' asserted the officer, reappearing; 'the aristocrats intended to rescue the Queen whilst she was out walking, and probably she was aware of the scheme.'

'Let Citizen Santerre be summoned, so that he may inform the Commune!'

'Soldiers, remain in this cellar, and shoot any one who appears,' the officer commanded.

'Ah! ah!' exclaimed Simon, rubbing his hands, 'will they say now that I am mad? Brave Black! Black is a true patriot, he has saved the Republic. Come here, Black, come!'

As the little dog, attracted by his kind looks, approached Simon, the unfeeling wretch kicked it roughly away.

'Oh! I am pleased with you, Black! you will get your mistress's head cut off. Come here, Black, come!' he continued. But this time, instead of obeying, Black, howling piteously, ran off towards the keep.
CHAPTER XXVIII

THE DANDY

The startling events just described had all occurred by about two o'clock. Lorin was walking up and down Maurice's room, sometimes stopping to question through the open door Agésilas, who was brushing his master's boots in the ante-room.

'You say your master left the house this morning?' asked Lorin.

'Oh! mon Dieu, yes.'

'At his usual hour?'

'Ten minutes later, or earlier, I cannot tell exactly.'

'And you have not seen him since?'

'No, citizen.'

Lorin resumed his walk in silence, but after a few turns stopped once more.

'He had his sword?' he asked.

'Oh! when he goes to the Section, he always carries it.'

'You are sure he has gone to the Section?'

'He told me so, at least.'

'In that case, I will go there. If we happen to miss each other, tell him I intend to return here.'

'Wait a moment; I hear his step on the stair.'

Almost immediately the door opened to admit Maurice. Lorin, glancing quickly at him, perceived that he bore no traces of unusual agitation.

'Ah! you are here at last! I have waited since two o'clock for you,' he observed.

'All the better; you would have ample leisure to compose your distichs and quatrains,' Maurice replied, smiling.

'Ah! my dear Maurice, I have ceased to compose. I am too miserable.'
‘You! miserable?’

‘Yes, I suffer from remorse of conscience. I had to choose between you and her, my dear fellow; there was no middle course. As you are aware, I did not hesitate, but Arthemise is in despair, for the girl was her most intimate friend.’

‘Poor girl!’

‘And as she gave me the address——’

‘It would have been wiser to let things take their course.’

‘Yes, and by now you would have been condemned in her place. Powerfully reasoned, dear friend. And I came here to ask your advice! I thought you cleverer than that.’

‘Never mind, ask me all the same.’

‘Well, do you understand? I am longing to do something for the poor girl. If I could strike a blow in her defence or receive one, it would do me good.’

‘You are mad, Lorin,’ said Maurice, shrugging his shoulders.

‘Suppose I appealed to the Revolutionary Tribunal?’

‘It is too late; she is condemned.’

‘It is terrible to see such a young girl perish in this horrible way.’

‘All the more terrible, since my release has meant her death. After all, Lorin, it is certain she did conspire, and that should console us.’

‘Eh! mon Dieu! is not everyone conspiring, more or less, nowadays? She has acted no differently from the others, poor young woman!’

‘Do not pity her too much, my friend; above all, not aloud, since we ourselves are concerned in this. Believe me, we are not by any means clear of suspicion. At the Section to-day the Captain of Chasseurs of Saint-Leu called me a Girondin, and I was compelled to spit him, in order to convince him of his mistake.’

‘That is the reason for your late return?’
'Precisely.'
'Why did you not send for me?'
'Because in affairs of that sort, one cannot control oneself; it is essential to finish the business immediately. Each of us appealed to friends who were on the spot.'
'That low wretch called you a Girondin—you, Maurice?'
'Mordieu! yes; which just proves, my dear fellow, that another adventure like this would bowl us over. You know, Lorin, that nowadays to be suspected is to be unpopular.'
'True, and 'tis a word to make the bravest shudder; still it hurts me to think the poor Héloïse will go to the guillotine without my asking her pardon.'
'What is it you intend doing?'
'First, I want you to stay at home, Maurice, since you have nothing with which to reproach yourself; but for me it is different. Since I cannot help her, I will at least make the attempt to beg her forgiveness.'
'I shall accompany you.'
'Impossible, friend; just reflect; you are a Municipal Guard, Secretary of a Section, and have already stood your trial in connection with this very case. I have only spoken in your defence, and therefore risk nothing.'
Lorin's arguments were so sound as to be unanswerable. If detected even in making a sign to the girl Tison on her way to the scaffold, Maurice would be regarded inevitably as her accomplice.
'Go, then, but be prudent,' he said.
Lorin, smilingly shaking his friend's hand, departed, and Maurice, after watching him from the open window until he disappeared, sank down on a chair, yielding to a state of stupor, which in strong, excitable natures generally presages some stupendous misfortune. He was only aroused from this lethargy by his servant, who entered very excitedly and obviously anxious
to disclose some news he had heard outside. Seeing
Maurice preoccupied, he feared to disturb him, and
merely paced up and down the room.
‘What is wrong?’ Maurice asked carelessly. ‘Speak, if you have anything to say.’
‘Ah! citizen, another conspiracy!’ Maurice shrugged his shoulders.
‘Ah, but this one is wonderful, marvellous! Only to think of it makes the blood of all good patriots run cold.’
‘Come, let me hear about it.’
‘The Austrian was on the very point of escaping.’
‘Bah!’ commented Maurice, though listening more attentively.
‘It is true. It was all arranged with Widow Capet through the girl Tison, who is to be guillotined to-day.’
‘How did the Queen communicate with her?’ asked Maurice, feeling the perspiration break out on his brow.
‘By means of a carnation. Just imagine, citizen, the whole plan was sent her in a carnation.’
‘Who sent it?’
‘Monsieur le Chevalier de—wait now—it is a well-known name, too—but I always forget names. Chevalier de Château—there are no Châteaux now—Chevalier de Maison—’
‘Maison-Rouge?’
‘Yes.’
‘Impossible.’
‘Why impossible? They have discovered an underground passage. Ah, it is astounding!’
‘Go on; even as a story, it is interesting.’
‘It is no story, citizen, far from it; I had the whole account from the porter. The aristocrats have dug a tunnel from Rue de la Corderie right to the cellar of Madame Plumeau’s cabin, and she herself barely escaped being accused. You know her, citizen?’
‘Yes; but what next?’
'Well, Widow Capet was to escape by this underground passage. She had her foot on the first step when Citizen Simon pulled her back. Listen, they are beating the drums in the town, do you hear? It is rumoured that the Prussians are at Dammartin, and have reconnoitred as far as the provinces.'

From this story, where truth and falsehood, sense and absurdity, were mingled, Maurice succeeded in finding the main thread. Everything sprang from the carnation handed to the Queen in his presence, and bought by him from the unfortunate flower-girl. This carnation contained the plan of a conspiracy which had just been discovered.

At that moment the noise of a drum approached, and Maurice heard these words cried in the street: 'Great conspiracy discovered in the Temple by Citizen Simon! Great conspiracy in favour of Widow Capet discovered at the Temple!'

'Yes, yes, it is precisely what I think. There must be some truth in all that. And Lorin, amid the general agitation, going to greet that girl and get torn to pieces,' said Maurice, as he took his hat and, buckling on his sword, went into the street. 'Where has he gone? To the Conciergerie, no doubt,' he reflected, proceeding toward the quay.

At the end of the Quai de la Mégisserie, pikes and bayonets caught his eye, and in the midst of those who carried them he distinguished the uniform of a National Guard. This guard, menaced by a company of Marseillais, was Lorin; pale, with clenched teeth, threatening glance, his hand on his sword-hilt, he was preparing to fight for his life. Two paces away stood Simon, who with savage laughter was addressing the Marseillais.

'Look! see this one; I had him driven from the Temple yesterday as an aristocrat—he is one who favours correspondence in carnations. He is the accomplice of the girl Tison who will come this way
presently. See how calmly he walks on the quay, while his accomplice marches to the guillotine. Perhaps, indeed, she is something more than his accomplice, and he has come to bid her farewell, or to attempt to save her.

Lorin’s anger overmastered him, and he drew his sword from its scabbard. At the same moment, the crowd parted before a man, who rushed in, overturning with his broad shoulders two or three of the excited spectators.

‘Rejoice, Simon,’ he cried; ‘for doubtless you were sorry I was not here, so that you might denounce in the grand style. Denounce, Simon, here I am.’

‘Faith, yes, and you come in the nick of time,’ answered Simon, chuckling horribly. ‘This is the handsome Maurice Lindey,’ he continued, ‘who was accused along with the girl Tison and escaped because he is rich.’

‘To the lamp-post with him! Hang him!’ cried the Marseillais.

‘Try it,’ said Maurice contemptuously, stepping forward to graze one of them on the brow with his sword.

‘Seize the murderer!’ cried the man, blinded by a stream of blood.

The Marseillais lowered their pikes, raised their axes, and loaded their guns; the onlookers, departing in terror, left the two friends alone, exposed like a double target, to every blow. They glanced at one another with a last, sublime smile, expecting to be butchered in this onset, when suddenly the door of the house they leaned against opened and a swarm of young people dressed as Muscadins, armed with swords and pistols, falling upon the Marseillais, engaged in a fierce contest.

‘Hurrah!’ cried Lorin and Maurice together, cheered by this timely aid, without stopping to consider that in fighting on the side of the new-comers they were
meriting Simon's accusations. If they did not think of themselves, another thought for them. A short young man of twenty-five or six, with blue eyes, handling with great zeal and skill a sapper's sword which his delicate hands looked incapable even of lifting, seeing that Maurice and Lorin were not escaping by the door left purposely open, turned to them and whispered: 'Flee by this door; what we have come here to do does not concern you, and you are but endangering your lives needlessly.'

Then, perceiving the two friends' hesitation, he suddenly cried, 'Away with you! no patriots for us; Municipal Lindey, we are aristocrats.'

At the name and at the boldness with which this man owned to belonging to a party under sentence of death, the crowd yelled loudly. But the fair young man, along with three or four friends, drove Maurice and Lorin into the alley and closed the door on them; then they returned to the crowd, which had become denser owing to the approach of the fatal cart. Maurice and Lorin, saved in so miraculous a manner, gazed at each other in astonishment. This exit seemed specially prepared; entering a courtyard, they discovered at one end a secret door leading into Rue Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois.

At that moment a detachment of gendarmes appeared from the Pont au Change; they preceded the cart which was leading the unfortunate Héloïse to the guillotine.

'Faster!' a voice exclaimed; 'faster,' and the horse set off at a gallop. Lorin perceived the young girl standing boldly upright, a smile on her lips and a proud look in her eyes. But he could not exchange any sign with her; she passed without seeing him, amongst the surging crowd who cried,—

'To death with the aristocrat!'

The noise died away in the distance as the procession advanced to the Tuileries. Then the little door
through which Maurice and Lorin had emerged opened, and three or four 'Muscadins,' with torn and blood-stained clothes, came out. This was probably all that remained of the company. The fair young man came last.

'Alas! this cause then is cursed!' he cried; and, throwing away his notched and blood-stained sword, he ran in the direction of Rue des Lavandières.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE CHEVALIER DE MAISON-ROUGE

Maurice returned in haste to the Section, in order to lodge a complaint against Simon. Lorin, it is true, had advocated a speedier method of settling matters—to assemble a few Thermopylæ, waylay Simon on his leaving the Temple, and kill him in open fight. But Maurice was violently opposed to this scheme.

'You are lost if you appeal to force,' he asserted; 'let us crush Simon, but let us do it legally, which should be an easy matter for the lawyers.' So Maurice lodged his complaint at the Section next morning.

To his astonishment, the president turned a deaf ear to his appeal, declaring himself unwilling to interfere with two true patriots, filled with love for their country.

'Very good!' said Maurice. 'Now I know how to deserve the character of a worthy citizen. Just get together a crowd of people to kill your enemy, and then profess to be animated by patriotism and love of country! I must accept Lorin's plan, which I was a fool to argue against. Henceforth, I mean to demonstrate my patriotism in the approved manner, and will begin the experiment with Simon.'

'Citizen Maurice, Simon is perhaps less worthy of
censure than you in this affair; he has served the nation well in a matter which lay outside his province. You, whose duty it was to detect this conspiracy, saw nothing suspicious. Moreover, you have connived—by chance or of set purpose, we cannot decide—but you have communicated with the nation's enemies.'

'I! This is indeed news; with whom, then, Citizen President?'

'With the Citizen Maison-Rouge.'

'I—I, communicate with the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge? But I am not even acquainted with him, I have never—'

'You were seen speaking to him.'

'I?'

'Shaking him by the hand.'

'Where? When? Citizen President, you lie,' cried Maurice, carried away by the consciousness of his innocence.

'Your zeal carries you too far, Citizen Maurice; you will regret your aspersion presently, when I have proved the truth of my assertion. Here are three different reports, all accusing you.'

'Come now! do you really imagine me stupid enough to believe in your Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?'

'Why should you not?'

'Because he is merely a myth, the veriest ghost of a conspirator who comes and goes to suit your convenience.'

'Read the denunciations.'

'I refuse to read anything; I protest that I have never seen the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge and have never spoken to him. Any one who disbelieves my word can tell me so, and I shall know how to answer him.'

The president shrugged his shoulders; Maurice, not to be outdone, followed suit. The proceedings were finished in a grave and somewhat subdued
manner, and at the end the president approaching Maurice, said, 'Come, Maurice, I wish to speak to you.'

Maurice accompanied him into a little room adjoining the hall, where the president, looking him straight in the face, and laying one hand on his shoulder, exclaimed: 'Maurice, I knew and respected your father; therefore I respect and love you. Believe me, you run a grave danger in permitting yourself to lose faith; that constitutes the first downward step for a true Republican. Maurice, my dear friend, as soon as one loses faith, one loses fidelity. You refuse to believe in the existence of the nation's enemies, and therefore become their unconscious instrument.'

'What, in Heaven's name, does this mean, citizen? I am certainly a zealous patriot, but my zeal does not render me a fanatic; the Republic credits this man with twenty supposed conspiracies. I demand, once and for all, to be confronted with the originator of these reports.'

'You have no belief in conspirators, Maurice. Tell me this: Do you believe in the red carnation which caused the girl Tison to be guillotined yesterday?'

Maurice shuddered.

'Do you believe in the underground passage leading from Citizeness Plumeau's cellar to a certain house in Rue de la Corderie?'

'No.'

'Then, imitate Thomas the Apostle; go and see.'

'Not being on duty, I shall not be admitted.'

'Any one can enter the Temple nowadays.'

'How is that?'

'Read this report; since you are so incredulous, I will quote only official documents.'

'What!' cried Maurice, reading; 'things are at this stage? They mean to carry the Queen to the Conciерgerie?'

'Do you imagine the Committee of Public Safety
would take such a grave step over some mere fancy, some idle tale?"

'This measure has been proposed, but it will not be executed. I have seen——'

'Read to the end,' answered the president, handing him another sheet of paper.

'The report is signed by Richard, jailer of the Conciergerie!' Maurice exclaimed.

'She was imprisoned there at two o'clock.' This time Maurice remained thoughtful.

'The Commune, you must admit, acts with foresight; it has digged a furrow, wide and straight. Its measures are not childish, and it has put into execution this principle of Cromwell's: "One must strike only at the head of Kings." Read this secret note from the Chief of Police.' Maurice read as follows: "'As we have undoubted proof of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge's presence in Paris; as he has been seen in various quarters, and has left traces of his complicity in several plots, happily frustrated, I request all Heads of Sections to redouble their vigilance.'"

'What do you think of it?' the president asked.

'I must believe you, Citizen President,' Maurice admitted, as he continued reading: "'Description of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge: In height, five feet three inches; fair hair, blue eyes, straight nose, chestnut coloured beard, rounded chin, gentle voice, hands like a woman's. Age, thirty-five or six.'"

A sudden flash of inspiration came to Maurice, who thought of the young man commanding the little troop of 'Muscadins' the night before, his saviour, who had attacked the Marseillais so boldly. 'Mordieu!' he murmured, 'could it be he? If so, the charge against me of speaking to him is correct. Only I do not recall having clasped his hand.'

'Well, Maurice, what do you think of it now?' asked the president.

'I believe you,' answered Maurice, as he meditated
sadly; for some time past, under the spell of some gloomy influence, he had been viewing everything darkly.

'Do not risk your popularity in this way, Maurice. To-day, popularity means life itself; unpopularity means the suspicion of treason, mark you, and Citizen Lindey must not be suspected of treachery.'

Maurice had no reply to a theory he acknowledged as his own. Thanking his old friend, he left the Section.

'Ah! let me breathe freely,' he sighed. 'Enough of suspicion and struggle. Let me go where innocence and joy reign; let me go to Geneviève.'

On arriving at the house, a servant barred his way, instead of admitting him as usual. It appeared that Dixmer and Morand were attending Geneviève, who had a severe nervous attack. 'Announce me all the same,' said Maurice, feeling anxious; 'if Dixmer cannot receive me, I will retire.'

The servant entered the garden pavilion, while Maurice remained in the garden. He noticed a strange look about the house; the tanners, instead of being at their work, were walking in the garden with an uneasy air. Dixmer himself appeared at the door.

'Come in, my dear Maurice; the door is not shut against you.'

'But what is wrong?' the young man asked.

'Geneviève is ill, delirious even.'

'Ah! mon Dieu! what is the matter?'

'As you know, my dear fellow, there is no understanding a woman's ailments.'

Geneviève was stretched out on a chair; Morand stood near her, holding out smelling salts.

'Well, how is she now?' asked Dixmer.

'The same as ever,'

'Héloïse!' Héloïse!' murmured the young woman, her lips white, and her teeth clenched.

'Héloïse!' repeated Maurice, with astonishment.
‘Yes, mon Dieu!’ Dixmer put in hurriedly; ‘Geneviève was out yesterday and, unfortunately, met the ill-fated cart carrying to the guillotine a poor girl called Héloïse. Since then she has had five or six nervous attacks, and she keeps repeating this name. What specially affected her was her recognition of the girl as the flower-vendor who sold her the carnations you know about.’

‘I have cause to remember them; they almost caused me to lose my head.’

‘Yes, we heard all that, dear Maurice, and, believe me, our grief was inconsolable; but Morand attended the trial and saw you go free.’

‘Hush! she is speaking again,’ Maurice interposed.

‘Oh! disconnected words, quite incoherent,’ answered Dixmer.

‘Maurice! they will kill Maurice. Help him, Chevalier!’ murmured Geneviève.

Deep silence succeeded this startling outburst.

‘Maison-Rouge! Maison-Rouge!’ Geneviève continued.

Maurice felt a vague suspicion, but soon forgot it; besides, he was too affected by Geneviève’s suffering to pay much heed to the words.

‘Have you sent for a doctor?’ he asked.

‘Oh! it is nothing serious, only a touch of delirium, that is all,’ Dixmer answered, shaking his wife’s arm so violently that she recovered consciousness and opened her eyes with a faint cry.

‘Ah! you are all here, Maurice as well,’ she said; ‘I am so glad to see you, my friend; if you knew how I have——’ She checked herself, and continued, ‘How we have suffered these last two days!’

‘Yes, we are all here,’ Maurice answered; ‘so reassure yourself and do not be so terrified again. But let me advise you not to repeat one name which is in ill odour just now.’

‘Which name?’ Geneviève asked quickly.
"That of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

'I mentioned the name of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?' Geneviève exclaimed in amazement.

'Of course you did,' Dixmer answered, with a forced laugh; 'but there is nothing surprising in that, since it is publicly asserted that he was the girl Tison's accomplice, and directed the attempt at rescue which, happily, failed yesterday.'

'I do not say there is anything surprising in that; only he will be well advised to go into hiding,' replied Maurice.

'Who?'

'The Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, parbleu! The Commune are searching for him, and their bloodhounds have a keen scent.'

'Let us trust they will capture him before he invents a new plan which may succeed better than the last,' said Morand.

'In any case, his new plan cannot benefit the Queen, who is too securely lodged now.'

'Where is she?' asked Dixmer.

'In the Conciergerie; they put her there last night.'

Dixmer, Morand, and Geneviève uttered a cry which Maurice understood to express their surprise.

'So, you see, farewell to the Chevalier's plans!' he continued. 'The Conciergerie is more secure than the Temple.'

Morand and Dixmer exchanged a glance which Maurice failed to notice.

'Ah! mon Dieu! there is Madame Dixmer growing pale again,' he exclaimed.

'Geneviève, my child, you must go to bed; you are in pain,' said Dixmer. Maurice, regarding this as a dismissal, kissed Geneviève's hand and took his departure. Morand accompanied him as far as the street, where he stopped to speak to a servant who held a horse saddled and ready for a journey. Maurice was so preoccupied that he did not even ask Morand
who the man was or why the horse was there. Traversing Rue des Fossés-Saint-Victor, he arrived at the river-side.

‘Am I losing my nerve?’ he wondered, as he walked along; ‘or have events become graver and more complicated? Everything seems exaggerated, as if viewed through a magnifying-glass.’ In order to recover his calmness, Maurice bared his brow to the evening wind and leaned over the parapet of the bridge.

CHAPTER XXX

THE PATROL

As he stood watching the river with that melancholy interest displayed by all true Parisians, Maurice heard measured steps like those of a patrol advancing towards him. Turning round, he perceived a company of the National Guard at the other end of the bridge, and in the semi-darkness thought he recognised Lorin. It was indeed Lorin, who, catching sight of Maurice, rushed at him with open arms.

‘So it is you at last! I have had considerable difficulty in finding you,’ he exclaimed.

‘What are you doing here with a patrol?’

‘I am engaged on a special mission, dear fellow; we must re-establish our tottering reputation.’ Then, turning to the patrol,—

‘Shoulder arms! present arms! lodge arms!’ he ordered. ‘My children, it is not yet sufficiently dark for our purpose. We must wait here for a while.’

Then, addressing Maurice, he added, ‘I learned two important pieces of information at the Section to-day.’

‘What are they?’

‘The first is that we are beginning to be suspected.’

‘I was aware of it. And next?’
The second is that the whole conspiracy of the carnation was planned by the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge.'

'I know that too.'

'But you are not aware that the conspiracy of the red carnation and that of the underground tunnel are one and the same.'

'Even in that you tell me nothing new.'

'Then, let us pass to my third subject. I am convinced that you do not know we are going to capture the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge to-night.'

'You have become a gendarme, then?'

'No, but I am a patriot. A patriot must devote his life to his country. Now, my country, greatly endangered by this Chevalier, who makes innumerable plots, orders me, a patriot, to rid it of such a nuisance. Therefore I obey my country's call.'

'All the same, it is a strange rôle for you to undertake.'

'As it happened, the commission was thrust upon me. Still, I should have applied for it, in any case. We must do something signal to re-establish our reputation. That not only assures our safety, but also enables us to despatch the odious Simon when an opportunity presents itself.'

'How is it known that the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge directed the conspiracy of the underground passage?'

'It is not actually known, but one presumes it was he.'

'Ah! you are only inferring it?'

'We have some proof.'

'How did you get it? For, after all——'

'Pay great attention to me.'

'I am doing so.'

'Directly I heard the announcement: “Great conspiracy discovered by Citizen Simon”—that wretched cur seems to be omnipresent!—I wished to judge of
the truth myself. Now, there was mention of an underground tunnel.'

'Does it exist?'

'Oh! certainly it exists, for I have seen it; I have walked through it, and it leads from Citizeness Plumeau's cellar to a certain house in Rue de la Corderie, number 12 or 14—I forget which.'

'Really! you walked through it, Lorin?'

'Right through it, and, faith! I tell you it is a clever piece of work; moreover, it is divided into three different sections by iron gratings, which we were obliged to demolish. Had the plot succeeded, the conspirators, by sacrificing some of their number, would undoubtedly have spirited Madame Capet away to a place of safety. Happily, things turned out differently, and that awful Simon discovered this plot as well.'

'It seems to me, though, that the first step was to arrest the inhabitants of the house in Rue de la Corderie.'

'Precisely, but the house was found absolutely tenantless.'

'Still, it must belong to some one.'

'Yes, to a new proprietor whom no one knows; that the house changed hands a fortnight or three weeks ago, is all people had gathered. The neighbours heard strange noises, but, remembering the house was an old one, they imagined it was being repaired. The former proprietor had left Paris. Thus matters stood when I arrived. "The deuce!" I said to Santerre, drawing him aside, "you seem in an awkward fix."' "'That is true,"' he replied; "'we are."' "'This house was sold, I believe?"' "'Yes."' "'A fortnight ago?"' "'A fortnight or three weeks ago."' "'Sold before a notary?"' "'Yes."
"'Well, we must examine all the notaries in Paris, ascertain who sold this house, and obtain the deed of sale. This will reveal the name and address of the purchaser.'

"'Capital! that is excellent advice,' said Santerre; 'and from a man accused of being an indifferent patriot, too! I shall re-establish your good name yet, Lorin.'

To be brief, my plan was followed. The notary was discovered, the agreement produced with the new owner's name and address. Then Santerre, remembering his promise, sent me to hunt him up.'

'Then this name was that of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?'

'No, probably only his accomplice.'

'Why, then, do you talk of arresting the Chevalier?'

'Because we intend to capture both together.'

'First of all, could you recognise this Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?'

'Easily.'

'You have a description of him?'

'Parbleu! Santerre gave it to me: Five feet two or three inches in height, fair hair, blue eyes, straight nose, chestnut-coloured beard; besides, I have seen him.'

'When?'

'This very day.'

'You have seen him?'

'And you too.' Maurice started.

'That little fair man, who saved our lives this morning, you remember, the leader of the "Muscadins" who struck such hard blows?'

'That was he, was it?'

'Himself. He was followed, but he disappeared at a spot near the dwelling of our proprietor in Rue de la Corderie; hence the inference that they are living together.'

'Indeed that seems probable.'

'It is certain.'
'But, Lorin, this action of arresting to-night our deliverer of the morning savours strongly of ingratitude.'

'Come now! Do you fancy he saved us for the mere sake of saving us?'

'I should imagine so.'

'Not at all. They were lying in wait there to carry off poor Héloïse Tison when she passed. Our assailants being an obstacle to their plan, they attacked them. We were saved by an accident, as it were. Now, as everything depends on a person's intention, you cannot reproach me with the smallest ingratitude. Moreover, Maurice, necessity compels me to take this step, for it is absolutely essential to regain our reputation by doing something striking. I have answered for you.'

'To whom?'

'To Santerre; he regards you as being the real leader of the expedition.

'How is that?'

'Are you sure of securing these traitors?' he asked.

'Yes,' I replied, 'provided Maurice joins me.'

'Can you rely on Maurice? He has appeared lukewarm for some time.'

'Those who say so are his traducers. Maurice is no more lukewarm than I am.'

'You will answer for him?'

'As for myself.'

'Then I proceeded to your rooms, but you were out. So I marched this way, remembering it is a favourite walk of yours, and it suited me equally well. Now I have met you, so forward, march!'

'My dear Lorin, I am terribly distressed; I have not the slightest wish to join the expedition; pray report that you did not meet me.'

'Impossible! all the company saw you.'

'Well, say you met me, and I refused to join.'

'Still impossible.'
‘Why?’
‘Because, in that case, you will be classed not as half-hearted, but as suspect. . . . You are aware what happens to that class; they are led to the Place de la Révolution and invited to salute the statue of Liberty, not with their hats but with their heads.’

‘Well, Lorin, let things take their course. I wonder if you will consider what I am going to say, strange?’

Lorin, opening his eyes wide, gazed at Maurice. The latter resumed: ‘I am tired of life.’ Lorin burst out laughing.

‘Good!’ he cried, ‘we have had a quarrel with our beloved, so naturally we take gloomy views of things. Come, be a man, and we shall make a citizen of you; I am never a better patriot than when I have quarrelled with Arthémise. By the way, Her Divinity the Goddess Reason sends you a thousand kindly greetings.’

‘Thank her in my name. Farewell, Lorin.’

‘Why, farewell?’

‘I am going.’

‘Where are you going?’

‘Home, of course.’

‘Maurice, you are going to wreck and ruin.’

‘It is immaterial.’

‘I have not told you all—’

‘All what?’

‘All Santerre said to me.’

‘What did he say?’

‘When I asked permission to take you with us, he said: “Be careful! Maurice frequently visits in that district.”’

‘“In what district?”’

‘“The one in which the Chevalier dwells.”’

‘How, then! The Chevalier lives near here?’ cried Maurice.

‘It is supposed so, at least, since his accomplice, the purchaser of the house in Rue de la Corderie lives near here.’
'Faubourg Victor?'
'Yes.'
'In which street?'
'Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques.'
'Ah! mon Dieu!' gasped Maurice, stunned as by a lightning flash.
Then he covered his eyes with his hand. But, in an instant, he had recovered all his equanimity.
'What is his occupation?' he asked.
'A tannery manager.'
'And his name?'
'Dixmer.'
'You are right, Lorin; I am coming with you,' Maurice exclaimed, concealing all traces of his emotion.
'You do well. Are you armed?'
'I have my sword, as always.'
'Take these two pistols in addition.'
'And yourself?'
'I have my carabine. Shoulder arms! forward, march!'

The patrol began to move on, a little man in gray walking at the head and directing it; he was the agent of police. From time to time various men, appearing from street corners or doorways, exchanged a few words with the man in gray; these were inspectors. They reached the lane; the man in gray, without a moment's hesitation, turned into it, and stopped before the garden-gate through which Maurice had been led bound.

'Here it is; we shall find the two traitors here,' the agent remarked.
Maurice leaned against the wall; he felt himself collapsing.
'There are three entrances,' continued the man in gray: 'the main entrance, this one, and one leading into a garden pavilion. I will enter by the principal door with six or eight men; guard this one with five or six, and place three reliable men at the pavilion exit.'
I will climb over the wall and keep watch in the garden,' Maurice decided.

'Capital, and you can open the door to us from within.'

'Most gladly. But do not come before I call. I shall get a view of all that happens in the house from the garden.'

'Then you are acquainted with the house?' Lorin asked.

'At one time I wished to buy it.'

Lorin stationed his men in the corners of the hedges and doors, whilst the police agent disappeared with eight or ten of the National Guards, to force the principal entrance. In a few minutes the sound of their footsteps died away, without having attracted any attention in this deserted quarter. Maurice's men took up their position, concealing themselves as well as possible. Nobody could have suspected that anything extraordinary was happening in Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques. Maurice prepared to climb over the wall.

'Wait a bit; the pass-word,' said Lorin.

'Ah! true.'

'"Carnation and tunnel." Arrest all who do not repeat these words. Let all who say them pass. Those are our orders.'

'Thanks,' said Maurice, jumping down into the garden.

CHAPTER XXXI

'CARNATION AND TUNNEL'

The shock of Lorin's information was so terrible that Maurice had to exert all his self-control to conceal his emotion; once alone in the garden, however, once in the silence of the night, his feelings calmed down,
his ideas, instead of crowding confusedly into his mind,
became clear and connected. What! this house
which Maurice had so often visited with such pleasure,
which had become his earthly paradise, was an abode
of deceit and intrigue! The warm welcome accorded
him was mere hypocrisy; Geneviève’s expressions of
love prompted only by fear!

Gliding from shrub to shrub, Maurice finally found
shelter from the moonlight by the shadow of the green-
house where, on one occasion, he had been imprisoned.
This outhouse was opposite the pavilion occupied by
Geneviève. To-night the light, instead of shining in
her room alone, appeared to flit from one room to
another. Maurice saw Geneviève through a curtain,
disarranged by accident; she was hurriedly packing
various articles into a bag, and he noticed with amaze-
ment that she was armed. He raised himself on
a post to see more clearly into the room; a fire blazing
on the hearth attracted his attention. Geneviève was
burning papers.

Suddenly a door opened, and a man whom Maurice
at first took for Dixmer entered. Running to him,
Geneviève seized his hands, and both stood facing one
another, apparently overcome by deep emotion.
Maurice was unable to learn its real nature, for their
conversation was inaudible to him. Presently Maurice
measured the man’s height with his eye. ‘It is no
Dixmer,’ he murmured. Indeed, the young man was
small and slight, whilst Dixmer was tall and strongly
built. Jealousy is a wonderful sharpener of the faculties;
in a minute Maurice had contrasted the stranger’s
form with Dixmer’s. ‘It is not Dixmer,’ he repeated,
as though forcing himself to become convinced of
Geneviève’s perfidy.

He approached the window, but saw less clearly the
nearer he advanced; his brain was on fire. His foot
struck against a ladder, which he lifted up and placed
against the wall. Having climbed up—the window was
seven or eight feet from the ground—he gazed through the opening in the curtain. The stranger in Geneviève's room was a young man of twenty-seven or eight, blue-eyed, and of elegant appearance; he held the young woman's hands and spoke softly, at the same time wiping away the tears that filled her beautiful eyes. A slight noise made by Maurice caused him to turn towards the window. Maurice repressed a cry; he had recognised his mysterious deliverer of the Place du Chatelet. At the same moment, Geneviève, drawing her hands from the stranger's, advanced to the fireplace to make sure that the papers were consumed.

Maurice could restrain himself no longer; love, jealousy, revenge seethed in his heart. Pushing the window violently open, he jumped into the room. Two pistols were at once placed on his chest. Geneviève had turned at the sound, but, seeing Maurice, she remained speechless.

'Monsieur,' said the young Republican coldly to the man who thus held his life in his hands, 'you are the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge.'

'What if I am?'

'Only that, if you are, you are a brave man,' and, consequently, a calm one, and I can tell my story.'

'Speak,' answered the Chevalier, without withdrawing the pistols.

'You may kill me, but not before I have time to give the alarm. If I cry out, the men who surround this house will soon reduce it to ashes. Lower your pistols, then, and listen to what I am going to say to Madame.'

'To Geneviève?'

'To me?' repeated the young woman.

'Yes, to you.'

Paler than a statue, Geneviève seized Maurice's arms, but he pushed her away.

'You remember what you told me, Madame,' he began, with supreme contempt, 'I understand now
"This paper," shouted Dixmer. "you will take it."
that you spoke truth. As a matter of fact, you do not love M. Morand.'

'Maurice, listen to me!' cried Geneviève.

'It is useless, Madame, since you have deceived me. You have severed all the links which united our hearts. You swore to me that you did not love M. Morand, but you did not add that you loved some one else.'

'Monsieur, what are you saying about Morand, or rather of which Morand are you talking?' asked the Chevalier.

'Morand the chemist.'

'Morand the chemist stands before you. Morand the chemist and the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge are one and the same.'

Stretching out his hand toward a table, the Chevalier donned the black wig which had concealed his identity so long from the young Republican.

'Ah! yes,' Maurice continued with renewed scorn; 'yes, I understand; it is not Morand you loved, since Morand has no existence; but the deception, though clever, is still contemptible.'

The Chevalier made a threatening gesture.

'Monsieur, let me talk to madame for a moment,' Maurice continued; 'be present at our interview, if you choose; it will not last long, I assure you.'

Geneviève signed to Maison-Rouge to be patient.

'So, you, Geneviève, have made me a laughing-stock to my friends! an object of abhorrence to my people! You used me, blind as I was, as an instrument in all your plots. Listen; it is a shameful action, but you will be punished, madame, since this gentleman is about to kill me before your eyes! But, in less than five minutes he, too, will be lying dead at your feet, or, if he lives, it will be to lose his head on a scaffold.'

'He to lose his head on a scaffold!' Geneviève cried. 'Maurice, he is my protector, for whom I would gladly
give my life. If he dies, I shall die. If you mean Love to me, he means Religion?"

'Ah! perhaps you will say you still love me. Truly, women are weak and cowardly.' Turning round, he added to the young Royalist: 'Come, monsieur, you must either kill me or die.'

'Why?'

'Because, unless you kill me, I shall arrest you,' Maurice answered, stretching out his hand to seize the Chevalier by the collar.

'I will not fight for my life,' the young man declared, throwing his weapons on a chair.

'Why will you not fight for your life?'

'It is not worth the remorse I should feel at slaying a gallant gentleman, and, besides, Geneviève loves you.'

'Ah! you are always good, kind, loyal, and generous, Armand!' she exclaimed, clasping her hands.

Maurice gazed at them both in blank amazement.

'I shall return to my room, not to escape, I pass my word, but in order to conceal a portrait,' the Chevalier said.

Maurice looked quickly at the place where Geneviève's portrait hung; it was still there. Maison Rouge either guessed his thoughts or wished to express his generosity.

'Come,' he said; 'you are a Republican, but you have also a pure and faithful heart. I will trust you to the end; look!' Drawing from his breast a miniature, he showed it to Maurice; it was the Queen's portrait. Bending his head, Maurice carried his hand to his forehead.

'I await your orders, monsieur,' the Chevalier continued; 'knock at this door when the time comes for me to surrender. Life contains no further interest, since the hope of saving the Queen has ceased to sustain me.'

When he had gone, Geneviève threw herself at the young man's feet. 'Pardon me, Maurice,' she said,
‘for all the wrong I have done you; forgive me my deceptions, for the sake of my sufferings and tears, since, I assure you, I have wept long and suffered bitterly. Ah! my husband left me this morning; I am ignorant where he has gone, and perhaps shall never see him again; one friend alone remains; not a friend but a brother, and you intend to slay him. Forgive me, Maurice! forgive!’

Maurice raised her.

‘What would you have?’ he exclaimed; ‘these’ things are commonplace; every one risks his life nowadays; the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge has staked his like the rest, and has lost, so he must pay.’

‘That is, if I understand aright, he must die.’

‘Yes.’

‘He must die, and you tell me so;’

‘It is not I, Geneviève; it is fate.’

‘Fate has not yet got control, since you can save him.’

‘At the betrayal of my word, consequently of my honour! I understand, Geneviève.’

‘Be blind, Maurice, that is all I ask, and earn my eternal gratitude.’

‘It would be useless to shut my eyes, madame; there is a pass-word, without which nobody can leave. I repeat, the house is surrounded, and no one can leave without a knowledge of the pass-word.’

‘But you know this pass-word?’

‘Naturally.’

‘Maurice, my friend, my dear Maurice, tell me the word; I must have it.’

‘Geneviève! by what right do you say: ‘Maurice, in the name of your love for me, break your word, sacrifice your honour, betray your cause and abandon your principles?’’ What have you to offer me in exchange for all this?’

‘Oh! Maurice, save him, save him first, and then claim my life.’

‘Listen to me,’ Maurice answered, in a gloomy voice.
'I have already one foot on the downward road, before losing myself entirely I should at least like to have some passable reason. Geneviève, swear to me that you do not love the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge.'

'I love him as a sister, as a friend, not otherwise, I swear to you!'

'Geneviève, do you love me?'

'Maurice, I love you; before God, I swear it is true.'

'If I carry out your wishes, will you leave friends and country to flee with the traitor?'

'Maurice! Maurice!'

'She hesitates—oh! she hesitates!' Maurice cried, drawing back in disdain. Geneviève, who had been clinging to him, fell on her knees.

'Maurice,' she exclaimed, clasping her hands; 'all you wish, I swear to do; command, and I will obey.'

'You will be mine, Geneviève?'

'Yes.'

'Swear by Christ!'

Geneviève extended her arms.

'My Lord! pardon me as you pardon sinners,' she murmured. Tears rolled down her cheeks, mingling with the long hair which floated round her.

'Not thus, do not swear thus,' Maurice expostulated, 'or I cannot accept your oath.'

'My God!' she continued, 'I swear to devote my life to Maurice, to die with him and, if need be, for him, if he saves my friend, my protector, my brother, the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge.'

'Very good; he shall be saved,' Maurice declared, going towards the Chevalier's room.

'Monsieur, assume the costume of Morand, the tanner,' he said. 'I release you from your promise; you are free. And, madame, the pass-words are, "Carnation and Tunnel."'

As though ashamed of staying in the room which had witnessed his traitorous act, he opened the window and leaped down into the garden.
CHAPTER XXXII

THE SEARCH

Maurice resumed his post in the garden, opposite Geneviève’s window, which was now dark, as she had gone to the Chevalier’s room. He had returned just in time, for scarcely had he reached the corner of the greenhouse when the garden gate opened and the police agent, followed by Lorin and five or six grenadiers, appeared.

‘Well?’ inquired Lorin.

‘You find me still at my post,’ said Maurice.

‘No one has attempted to break through?’

‘No one,’ he answered, happy to avoid a falsehood, owing to the wording of the question; ‘and what have you done?’

‘We have ascertained that the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge entered the house an hour ago, and has not left it,’ replied the police agent.

‘Have you learned where his room is situated?’ Lorin asked.

‘It is only separated from the Citizeness Dixmer’s by a corridor.’

‘What are we to do now?’ Maurice asked, in a voice strangled by emotion.

‘We have decided to seize him in his room, possibly even in his bed.’

‘He suspects nothing?’

‘Absolutely nothing.’

‘What is the plan of the house?’ Lorin asked.

‘We have a perfectly accurate plan: a pavilion in the corner of the garden—there it is; mounting four steps, which you can see from here, you reach a landing; to the right is the door of the Citizeness Dixmer’s room; that is, no doubt, the window we can see. Opposite
the window, at the far end, a door opens on the corridor, where we shall find the door of the traitor's room.'

'Capital; that is a most elaborate description. With all this knowledge, we could find our way blindfolded.' Let us advance.'

'Are the streets well guarded?' Maurice asked, with an interest which the others naturally attributed to his anxiety for the Chevalier's capture.

'The streets, the passages and cross-roads, every spot; I defy even a mouse to pass without the passport,' the agent declared exultingly.

Maurice shuddered; with all these precautions, he had probably betrayed his trust to no purpose.

'How many men shall we need to capture the Chevalier?' the police agent inquired.

'How many men? Maurice and I will suffice,' replied Lorin. 'Don't you think so, Maurice?'

'Yes, certainly, we shall be sufficient.'

'Mark you, no useless bragging; are you determined on taking him?'

'Morbleu! I should say we are determined! We must take him; is it not so, Maurice?'

Lorin laid emphasis on the words. As he had said, a vague suspicion began to hover around them, and this must not be permitted to take definite form and shape. Now, Lorin argued, no one would question the patriotism of two men who succeeded in capturing the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge.

'I should advise taking three men with us, rather than two, four rather than three; the Chevalier always sleeps with a sword under his pillow, and two pistols on a side-table.'

'Morbleu! let us all go; let there be no preference,' exclaimed a grenadier in Lorin's company; 'if he surrenders, we shall reserve him for the guillotine; should he resist, we shall cut him in pieces.'

'Well spoken,' Lorin said. 'Forward! Do we enter by the door or through the window?'
'By the door; we may find the key in the lock; to get in at the window would mean smashing the glass, and the noise would waken him.'

'Make for the door, then; as long as we get inside, it little matters how. Come, sword in hand, Maurice.'

Maurice mechanically drew his sword from its scabbard. The troop advanced towards the pavilion. As their guide had indicated, they found first the steps, then ascending to the landing, they came to the corridor.

'Ah!' exclaimed Lorin joyfully; 'the key is in the door.' Stretching out his hand in the darkness, he had felt the cold iron touch his fingers.

'Open it, then, Citizen Lieutenant,' ordered the agent.

Lorin carefully turned the key in the lock, and the door yielded. Maurice wiped the perspiration from his brow.

'We are at the place,' Lorin said.

'Not yet; if our plan is correct, this chamber belongs to the Citizeness Dixmer.'

'We can easily make certain; light some candles at the fire.'

'Torches rather; they do not blow out like candles,' the agent suggested, lighting two torches at the dying fire. He handed one to Maurice and the other to Lorin.

'You see, I was not mistaken; here is the door opening into Citizeness Dixmer's bedroom, there the one opening into the corridor.'

'Forward! into the corridor,' Lorin ordered.

Opening the door at the far end, they faced the entrance to the Chevalier's room. Maurice had seen it twenty times without ever asking whether it led; for him, the whole world centred in the apartment in which Geneviève received him.

'We must change our tactics; there is no key, and the door is fast,' Lorin muttered in low tones.
'But, are you quite sure this is the chamber?' asked Maurice, almost unable to speak.

'If the plan is accurate, it must be,' answered the police agent; 'however, we are going to verify that. Grenadiers, break open the door and you, citizens, be ready to dash inside.'

Four men, selected by the police agent, raised the butt-end of their guns, and, at a sign from the leader, aimed a blow at the door; it shivered into pieces.

'Surrender, or you are a dead man!' cried Lorin, rushing inside. No answer was returned; the bed-curtains were drawn close.

'Watch the bedside! present arms and fire at the first movement of the curtain.'

'Wait; I will open them,' said Maurice. Doubtless hoping Maison-Rouge was concealed behind them, he drew the curtains along their rod. The bed was empty.

'Mordieu! nobody!' cried Lorin.

'He must have escaped,' stammered Maurice.

'Impossible, citizens, impossible! He was seen entering an hour ago; no one has seen him attempt to leave, and all the exits are guarded.'

Lorin, opening doors, cabinets, and wardrobes, looked all round, even in corners where a man could not possibly be hidden.

'There is no one here; you see for yourself, no one,' he said.

'No one!' repeated Maurice, with easily understood emotion.

'But Citizeness Dixmer's room; perhaps he is there,' suggested the police agent.

'Oh! respect a woman's bedroom,' Maurice urged.

'Certainly, we will respect it, and Citizeness Dixmer too, but we must complete our search,' answered Lorin.

'Then let me go first.'

'It is your right; you are the captain.'

Leaving two men to guard the Chevalier's chamber, they returned, and Maurice approached the door leading
into Geneviève’s bedroom, his heart beating fast. The key was in the door. He laid his hand on the key, but hesitated.

‘Open it,’ said Lorin.

‘The citizeness may be in bed?’

‘We must examine the bed and the space beneath it, the fireplace and the presses; afterwards, if we find no one, we will bid her good-night.’

‘Not at all, we shall arrest her,’ the police agent interposed; ‘Citizeness Geneviève Dixmer is an aristocrat, known to be an accomplice of the girl Tison and the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge.’

‘Let some one else open it then,’ Maurice exclaimed, withdrawing his hand from the key; ‘I do not arrest women.’

The police agent glanced sideways at him, while the grenadiers grumbled amongst themselves.

‘Oh! you are dissatisfied, are you? Then, put me into your black books as well, since I agree with Maurice,’ said Lorin, stepping back. The agent, seizing the key, turned it violently; the door opened, and the soldiers rushed into the room. Two candles were burning on a little table, but the chamber was vacant.

‘Empty!’ cried the police agent.

‘Empty!’ repeated Maurice, paling; ‘where can she be?’

Lorin gazed in surprise at him.

‘Let us search,’ said the agent. Followed by the soldiers, he began searching the house from cellar to workshop. As soon as their backs were turned, Maurice, running into the room, opened the presses he had already examined and called out anxiously,—

‘Geneviève! Geneviève!’ But Geneviève made no reply, the room was really forsaken. Then, in a sort of frenzy, Maurice searched the house in his turn. Greenhouses, sheds, outhouses, all were visited, but in vain. Suddenly a loud noise was heard, and a troop of armed
men, exchanging the pass-word with the sentry, swarmed into the garden and filled the house. At their head shone Santerre’s red plume.

‘Well! where is the conspirator? What have you done with him?’ Santerre asked Lorin.

‘I shall put that question to you. Your company should have captured him, if it guarded the exits properly, for he was not here when we entered the house.’

‘What are you saying? You have let him escape?’

‘We could hardly do that, since we have never even seen him.’

‘Then I understand nothing about it.’

‘About what?’

‘About what your messenger told me.’

‘Do you mean that we sent a messenger to you?’

‘Certainly. A man in a brown suit, with black hair and green spectacles, informed us that you were endeavouring to capture Maison-Rouge, but he was defending himself like a lion; on hearing this news, I hurried to your assistance.’

‘A man in a brown suit, with black hair and green spectacles!’ repeated Lorin.

‘Yes, with a woman leaning on his arm.’

‘Young, pretty?’ exclaimed Maurice, running towards the General.

‘Yes, young and pretty.’

‘It was he and Citizeness Dixmer.’

‘Who is he?’

‘Maison-Rouge—Oh! fool that I am, not to have killed them both!’

‘Come, come, Citizen Lindey, we may overtake them.’

‘But how came you to let them pass?’ asked Lorin.

‘Pardieu! I let them pass because they gave the pass-word.’

‘They gave the pass-word! but, then, there must be a traitor amongst us?’
'No, no, Citizen Lorin, we know you all; we are assured there is no traitor amongst you.'

Lorin, glancing anxiously around, encountered Maurice's gloomy brow and wandering eye.

'Oh! what does this mean?' he murmured.

'The man cannot be far off,' said Santerre; 'search the neighbourhood; perhaps he has met a patrol cleverer than ours, who have not suffered him to escape.'

'Yes, yes, let us search,' agreed Lorin, seizing Maurice's arm and dragging him from the garden.

'Yes, let us search,' said the soldiers; 'but, before searching——' And one threw his burning torch into a shed, filled with sticks and dried turf. Maurice followed Lorin like a child, and both ran as far as the bridge without speaking. There they stopped, and Maurice turned round. A red glow arose in the sky near the faubourg, and above the house countless sparks were mounting.
CHAPTER XXXIII

THE OATH OF FIDELITY

Maurice shuddered as he pointed towards the Rue Saint-Jacques.
‘The fire! the fire! mon Dieu! if she has returned?’
‘Who?’
‘Geneviève.’
‘Geneviève is Madame Dixmer, is she not?’
‘Yes,’
‘There is no chance of her returning; she did not go away with that intention.’
‘Lorin, I must find her again; will you help me to find her?’
‘Pardieu! that will be an easy matter.’
‘How, then?’
‘If you are as interested in the Citizeness Dixmer as I suppose, you are probably acquainted with her intimate friends. She has most likely gone to one of them, and to-morrow morning you will very possibly receive a charming note from the hands of a Rose or a Marton, begging you to call at some address, and to ask for Madame Trois Etoiles; that is all.’
Maurice shrugged his shoulders; he felt convinced that Geneviève had no friend from whom to seek shelter.
‘We shall never find her,’ he murmured.
‘Let me assure you of one thing, Maurice; it would not be an unalloyed misfortune if we didn’t find her.
‘If we do not, Lorin, I shall die,’ Maurice answered.
‘Ah! diable! it was your love for her that nearly killed you before.’
‘Yes.’
Lorin pondered for a minute.

‘Maurice,’ he said at length; ‘it is nearly eleven o’clock, the neighbourhood is quiet, here is a stone seat apparently placed specially for two friends. Grant me the favour of a private interview, as one said under the old régime. I promise to speak only in prose.’

After looking all round, Maurice sat down beside his friend. ‘Speak,’ he said, ‘leaning his head wearily on his hand.

‘Listen, dear friend! Without preliminary or comment, I make the assertion that we are driving headlong to ruin, or rather that you are driving us there.’

‘How is that?’ Maurice asked.

‘A certain decree of the Committee of Public Safety brands any one communicating with the country’s enemies as a traitor. Are you aware of this decree?’

‘Certainly.’

‘Well, I fancy you are in some degree a traitor to your country. What do you think?’

‘Lorin!’

‘Unless, of course, you regard as fervid patriots those who give lodging and food to Monsieur le Chevalier de Maison-Rouge. He, at least, is not exactly an ardent Republican, and has never yet been accused of having fomented the September massacres.’

‘Ah! Lorin!’ Maurice sighed.

‘So you appear to have been—perhaps to be still—rather too friendly with the country’s enemy. Come, do not be indignant, but confess frankly that you are no longer a zealot.’

Lorin had spoken with all the gentleness of which he was capable, and had selected his words with truly Ciceronian skill. Maurice protested by a gesture alone, which Lorin entirely disregarded.

‘Were we still living under the old régime,’ he continued, ‘one could afford to cool one’s ardour occasionally; but to-day the temperature has risen so
high that even a fair heat appears lukewarm and even cold. Unhappily, when one is cold one becomes suspect, and when one becomes suspect, you are too intelligent, my dear Maurice, not to be aware what one inevitably becomes, or rather what one ceases to become.'

'Let them kill me and make an end of it,' cried Maurice; 'I am tired of life.'

'For the last quarter of an hour! I certainly cannot permit you to please yourself in this matter. Again, when one dies nowadays, it must be as a Republican; but you would die as an aristocrat.'

'You are going too far, my friend,' Maurice cried, beginning to grow angry.

'I shall go still further; since I warn you, should you become an aristocrat——'

'You will denounce me?'

'No, I shall shut you up in a cellar and have a search instituted to the sound of drums, as if you were a lost object. Afterwards, I shall declare that the aristocrats, afraid of your patriotic zeal, imprisoned, tortured, and starved you; so that when you are finally discovered, you will be crowned publicly with flowers by the ladies of the market-place and the rag-pickers of Section Victor. Unless, therefore, you return to your rôle as an Aristides this will be your fate.'

'Lorin, you are right; but I am impelled, forced along the downward path. Are you angry because fate is driving me on?'

'Not at all, I am merely quarrelling with you. Do you remember the scenes between Pylades and Orestes, which prove conclusively that friendship is but a paradox, since these model friends argued from morning to night?'

'Leave me, Lorin; you will be wise.'

'Never I!'

'Then, leave me to love, to be mad as I choose, to be a criminal, perchance, since I shall probably kill her.'
'Or fall at her feet. Ah! Maurice! I never anticipated your falling in love with an aristocrat. You remind me of poor Osselin who loved the Marquise de Charny.'

'Step, Lorin, I beseech you!'

'Maurice, I shall cure you, in spite of yourself. I refuse to have you drawn in the lottery of Sainte Guillotine, as the grocer in Rue des Lombards said. Have a care, Maurice, you will end in exasperating me. You will make me bloodthirsty. Already I long to set fire to the Island of Saint-Louis; a torch, a firebrand!'

Maurice smiled.

'But you really exasperate me with your folly; come, drink if you like, Maurice, let us soak ourselves in wine, let us study political economy, but, in the name of Jupiter, let us fall in love with nothing but Liberty.'

'Or Reason.'

'Ah! true, the Goddess sends you many messages; she thinks you are a charming mortal.'

'And you are not jealous?'

'Maurice, in order to save a friend, I am capable of every sacrifice.'

'Thank you, my poor Lorin; I appreciate your devotion. But the best way to console me is to let me nourish my grief. Adieu, Lorin, go to visit Arthémise.'

'Where are you going?'

'Home,' Maurice answered, walking off towards the bridge.

'So you stay near Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques nowadays?'

'No; but I choose to pass that way.'

'To have another look at the empty nest?'

'To see if she has returned. O Geneviève! I cannot believe you capable of such treachery!' and Maurice sighed deeply.
The two friends resumed their walk toward the Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques. As they approached, a loud noise was heard, lights shone, and patriotic songs floated in the air. Sung in daylight and in the sunshine these songs sounded like hymns of victory; but, by night, in the glare of the burning house, they savoured more of some savage orgy.

Maurice, in a state of frenzy, proceeded in front of Lorin, the perspiration streaming down his brow.

All Paris appeared to have congregated at the scene. Maurice was forced to pass through companies of grenadiers drawn up in line, groups of Sectionists, excited crowds of common people who, at this period, always eager, always furious, rushed with fierce cries from one spectacle to another. Maurice quickened his steps. Lorin found some trouble in following closely, but he loved him too well to leave him at such a time. All was nearly over; from the shed where the soldier had thrown his burning torch, the fire had spread to the workshops, which were constructed of planks, roughly put together, with gaps left for the free circulation of air. The goods had been destroyed, and now the house itself was in danger.

'Oh! mon Dieu! suppose she has returned and is in one of the rooms, surrounded by flames, waiting for me, calling on me——' murmured Maurice, nearly mad with grief, as he rushed towards the door. Lorin still followed, as he would have followed into the very jaws of death.

The roof was burning, the fire spreading to the staircase. Maurice searched through the first story, the drawing-room, Geneviève's chamber, and the Chevalier's bedroom, calling out in anguished tones, 'Geneviève! Geneviève!' No one answered. Returning to the first room the two friends saw the flames leaping in at the door. In spite of Lorin's cries, Maurice proceeded doggedly, searching the yard, dining-room, Dixmer's room, and Morand's office;
everywhere they encountered flames, debris, broken panes; the fire devastated this part of the house too.
Maurice searched every room and passage, even the cellars, where he thought Geneviève might have fled. No one could be found.

'Morbleu!' Lorin exclaimed, 'it is very certain that only salamanders could live here, and it is not a salamander we seek. Come; we will question the bystanders; some of them might possibly have seen her.'

Lured by this hope, Maurice left the house and began his new investigations. The neighbourhood was scoured, women passing casually were stopped and questioned, lanes were examined, but all in vain. By one o'clock in the morning, despite his vigorous strength, Maurice was exhausted, and forced to abandon his search and his ceaseless jostling with the crowd. Lorin hailed a passing cab.

'My dear friend,' he said whimsically, 'we have done all that is possible to a human being to find your Geneviève; we have tired ourselves out, we have been singed and cuffsed on her account. Even the God of Love, exacting as he is, can expect nothing more from a man in love, and more especially from one not in love, so let us take this cab and go home.'

Maurice obeyed him without speaking, and they drove to the former's rooms. As Maurice alighted, a window was heard shutting.

'Ah! good! they are waiting up for you,' said Lorin, and, as the door opened, added, 'Good-night! don't leave the house in the morning before I come.'

'Good-night!' Maurice repeated mechanically. On the stair he met his servant.

'Oh! Citizen Lindey, you have caused us a lot of anxiety.'

The word 'us' struck Maurice.

'You?' he said.
'Yes, myself and the little lady waiting for you.'
'The little lady! You did well to mention her. I am going to sleep at Lorin’s house.'
'Impossible! She was at the window and saw you get down.'
'What difference does it make if she knows I am here or not? I don’t wish to see her. Tell her so, and that she has made a mistake.'
The servant turned to obey, but stopped.
'Ah! citizen, I think you are wrong; your visitor was sad enough before, my answer will drive her to despair.'
'What kind of woman is she?'
'I have not seen her face; she is wrapped in a cloak, and is weeping. That is all I know.'
'She is weeping!'
'Yes, but very, very softly, so that one can scarcely hear her sobs.'
'She is weeping,' repeated Maurice; 'there is some one with sufficient interest in me to be actually concerned at my absence?'
He walked upstairs slowly behind his servant. In the corner of the room was a quivering form, with face buried in cushions, a woman whom one might have thought dead, but for the convulsive sobbing which shook her frame. Maurice, signing to his servant to withdraw, advanced toward his visitor, who raised her head.
'Geneviève! he cried, 'Geneviève here! I must be mad!'
'No, you are not mad, my friend,' she answered; 'do you forget my promise if you saved the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge? You have saved him, and I am here! I was waiting for you.'
Not grasping the sense of her words, Maurice, drawing back a step, looked at her sadly.
'Then you do not love me, Geneviève?' he said softly.
Geneviève's eyes filled with tears; turning away her head, she leaned against the back of the sofa and burst into a fresh fit of sobbing.

'Alas! it is plain that you love me no longer—nay, you must hate me, Geneviève, to be in such despair.'

'Maurice spoke with such dignity and sadness that Geneviève, sitting up, took his hand in hers.

'Mon Dieu! will he whom I have considered the noblest of men be for ever selfish?' she exclaimed.

'Selfish, Geneviève; what do you mean?'

'Then you cannot understand what I am suffering? My husband a fugitive, my brother proscribed, my house in flames—all that in a night, and then that terrible scene with you and the Chevalier!'

Maurice listened with delight, since such mingled emotions might well have sufficed to reduce Geneviève to her present state of grief.

'So you have come, and you will leave me no more!'

Geneviève started.

'Where could I have gone?' she answered, with some bitterness. 'Have I any refuge, any protector other than he who sets a price on his protection? Oh! Maurice, I rushed wildly across the Pont Neuf, and stopping to watch the dark waters dashing against the arches, was fascinated by them. There, I said to myself, is a refuge, unhappy woman; there is complete rest and oblivion.'

'Geneviève, Geneviève!' cried Maurice; 'you said that? So you do not love me?'

'I said that and I came,' answered Geneviève, in a low voice.

Maurice fell at her feet.

'Geneviève, weep no more, console yourself for all your misfortunes, since you love me. Geneviève, for Heaven's sake, say it was not the violence of my threaten that forced you to come. Say that, though you had not seen me this evening, you would have
come, finding yourself alone, without a shelter! And, Geneviève, I release you from the promise by force and violence.'

Geneviève looked at him with an expression of boundless gratitude.

'Oh, God! I thank Thee, he is kind and generous!' she sighed.

'Listen, Geneviève; God whom we have driven from our churches, but cannot drive from our hearts, where He has put love—God has led you to me, Geneviève; He has placed you in my arms. In short, God rewards us for all the suffering we have endured, and for the strength we have displayed in endeavouring to suppress our love, which seemed to us wrong, as though a feeling so pure and holy could be a crime. So weep no more, Geneviève, and give me your hand. Do you wish to be in a brother's house? do you wish that brother to kiss the hem of your gown and then to leave you without turning round? If so, speak one word or make a sign, and I will retire, leaving you alone in perfect security. But, Geneviève, my adored, I would ask you to remember that I almost died of love for you, that for this love which you can make a curse or a blessing, I have betrayed my friends and have become odious even in my own eyes. Think of the happiness the future may hold in store for us! Oh! Geneviève, you can, if you will, make me so happy that I shall regret nothing! Smile on me, my Geneviève, lean toward one who loves you with all the strength of his soul; Geneviève, my love, my life, do not send me away.'

Geneviève's heart filled at these sweet words. She was worn out with suffering, almost too exhausted to weep. Maurice took her in his arms, and her head sank on his shoulder, but at the same time a little sob escaped her.

'You are still weeping, Geneviève,' he said, with deep sadness. 'Reassure yourself. I shall never force your
love. Never shall my lips be sullied with a kiss poisoned by a single tear of regret.' Unclasping her arms, he turned slowly away.

Immediately, by a sort of reaction, Geneviève threw her trembling arms round his neck and pressed her wet, cold cheek against his burning one, murmuring, 'Oh! do not leave me, Maurice, for you are all I have in the world!'
CHAPTER XXXIV

NEXT DAY

A bright sun, peeping through the window-blinds, gilded the leaves of three rose bushes set in frames on Maurice's window. The scent of the flowers filled the little dining-room where, at a table set simply but elegantly, Geneviève and Maurice had just seated themselves. The door was closed, for everything they needed was within reach. In the adjoining room the servant was occupied in his various duties. Geneviève, letting the fruit she was holding drop carelessly on her plate, smiled dreamily while her large eyes had a melancholy expression; thus she sat, silent, motionless, languid, but happy in the atmosphere of love as the beautiful flowers were in the sunshine.

Soon her eyes fell on Maurice; he was gazing at her and dreaming happily. Placing her soft, white arm on his shoulder, she leaned her head against it in perfect confidence. Maurice bent to kiss her upturned face. They remained absorbed by this unaccustomed happiness, till the sharp sound of the bell caused them to move away from each other. The servant entered, shutting the door behind him with an air of mystery.

'It is Citizen Lorin,' he announced.

'Ah, dear Lorin! I will beg him to excuse me just now.'

Geneviève stopped him. 'Send away your friend, Maurice! One who has helped, consoled, supported you? No, I do not wish to drive such a friend from your home or your heart; ask him to enter, Maurice.'

'What, you allow it?'

'I wish it.'
'Oh! you do not find my love sufficient, and you wish me to idolise you?' cried Maurice, delighted at this consideration. Lorin entered, looking very handsome in his attire of 'demi-Muscadin.' At sight of Geneviève he looked surprised, but immediately bowed respectfully.

'Come, Lorin, let me introduce you to madame. You are dethroned, Lorin, and madame is placed on your former pedestal. I would have sacrificed my life for you; for her, as you are aware, I have given my honour.'

'Madame,' said Lorin, with a seriousness which in him betrayed deep emotion, 'I shall rival you in my love for Maurice, so that he may not entirely cease to love me.'

'Will you not sit down, monsieur?' Geneviève asked, smiling.

'Yes, sit down,' echoed Maurice, who appeared to be at the very height of human happiness.

'So, you no longer wish to die? You no longer wish to be killed?'

'Ah! what was that?' Geneviève asked.

'What a changeable being man is! Philosophers are certainly justified in calling him fickle! Here is a person—you would scarcely credit it, madame—who wished to throw himself in the water last night, declaring there was no happiness left for him in this world. I find him this morning, bright, merry, with a smile on his lips, happiness reflected in his face, sitting at a well-furnished table. True, he is not eating; but that is no proof of his unhappiness.'

'Then he wished to kill himself!'

'Yes, and to do numerous other things, about which I may tell you later. Meanwhile I am ravenous; it is all Maurice's fault, for he compelled me to traverse the whole Saint-Jacques quarter last night. Kindly let me begin, as I perceive neither of you has touched anything.'
‘Tiens! he is quite right! let us breakfast. I have eaten nothing, nor have you, Geneviève,’ cried Maurice, with childish joy. He glanced at Lorin as he said this name, but the latter remained imperturbable.

‘Ah! so you guessed who it was!’

‘Parbleu!’ replied Lorin, cutting a large slice of ham.

‘I, too, am hungry,’ said Geneviève, holding out her plate.

‘Lorin, I was ill last night,’ Maurice observed.

‘You were more than ill, you were mad.’

‘Well! it must be you who are out of sorts this morning; you have not composed a single quatrain.’

‘I have one on my lips this very moment, but I wish to speak of something serious.’

‘What has happened?’ Maurice asked anxiously.

‘I have been warned for duty at the Conciergerie shortly.’

‘At the Conciergerie! near the Queen?’ asked Geneviève.

‘Near the Queen! I believe so, madame.’

Geneviève turned pale; Maurice frowned and signed to Lorin. The latter cut another slice of ham twice as big as the first. The Queen had, indeed, been removed to the Conciergerie, whither we shall proceed to follow her.
CHAPTER XXXV

THE CONCIERGERIE

At the corner of the Port au Change and the Quai aux Fleurs stand the ruins of the old palace of St Louis, known as the Palace, just as Rome is known as the City, though the only kings now dwelling there are notaries, judges, and litigants. Big and gloomy is this court of justice, and much more likely to invest the rude goddess with fear than with love. Here, confined within a narrow space, are on view all the paraphernalia and signs of human vengeance—the rooms where the accused are guarded, the halls where they are tried, the dungeons in which they are confined when convicted, and, at the gate, the little place where they are branded with the mark of infamy. A hundred and fifty paces from the first is that other and greater place where they are executed—that is to say, La Grève, where the finishing touches are applied to those upon whom The Palace has first tried its hand. Justice, apparently, has everything in her power.

A collection of buildings, leaning against one another, dejected, gray, pierced with tiny grated windows, whose gaping arches resemble those other gratings lining the Quai des Lunettes—such is the Conciergerie. Within this prison are dungeons wet with the black slime of the Seine, and mysterious exits which, in former days, bore to the river those victims whose secret disappearance was a matter of vital importance to the authorities. In 1793, the Conciergerie, that tireless purveyor for the scaffold, was glutted with prisoners, who, at any moment, might be condemned to death. The old prison of St Louis was, in sober
truth, the Inn of Death. Under the arches of the gates hung at night—evil-boding sign of this place of horrors—a red lantern.

On the evening of the day when Maurice, Lorin, and Geneviève breakfasted together, a dull, rumbling sound shook the stones of the Quai and rattled the windows of the prison. The rumbling ceased at the gate with the pointed arch. Several gendarmes hammered upon the gate with the hilts of their swords. It opened, the carriage entered the courtyard, and when the hinges grated behind it, and the bolts had been shot, a woman got out. In a moment, the gaping wicket swallowed her up. Three or four curious heads, thrust forward into the light thrown by the torches, in the hope of obtaining a glimpse of the prisoner, were visible for a second or two in the half-shade, and immediately afterwards were plunged into darkness. Then some vulgar pleasantries and adieux passed between those who were going away and those whom they heard without seeing.

The lady thus brought hither remained with the gendarmes within the first wicket. Although perceiving that they must open a second wicket, she forgot that, in order to pass through, it is necessary to raise the feet well, and, at the same time, bend the head; for often the floor rises and the roof falls. The prisoner, in spite of her long sojourn within their walls, was, as yet, unacquainted with prison architecture, and, omitting to bend her head, struck it violently against an iron bar.

'Have you hurt yourself, citizeness?' one of the gendarmes asked.

'Not at all,' she replied calmly, and proceeded without a single moan, though above her eyebrow was visible the mark, almost bleeding, left by the blow of the iron bar.

Soon they came within sight of the porter’s chair, which to prisoners is more sacred than the king’s
throne to his courtiers; for the prison porter is the dispenser of favours, and to a prisoner every favour is important. Frequently the least kindness will change his gray sky into the bright sunshine of summer.

The porter, Richard, thoroughly convinced of his importance, was seated in his chair, and he did not take the trouble even to rise when the rattle of the gratings and the rumbling of the carriage announced the arrival of a new guest. He took some snuff, stared at the prisoner, opened a fat register, and hunted for a pen in a little black, wooden inkstand, in which the ink, hardened round the edge, had left a little muddy humidity.

'Citizen Concierge,' exclaimed the commander of the escort, 'make the entry, and be quick about it, for the Commune is in a mighty hurry for our return.'

'That won't take long,' replied the porter, dropping into his inkstand the dregs of the wine from the bottom of his glass; 'one's hand gets used to this sort of thing, thank goodness. Your name, citizeness?'

Dipping his pen in the ink, he prepared to write details of the new-comer upon a page already seven-eighths full. Standing behind his chair, his wife, a kindly enough looking soul, gazed with respectful astonishment upon this lady whom her husband was questioning, and whose appearance denoted sadness, nobility, and pride.

'Marie Antoinette Jeanne Josèphe de Lorraine,' answered the prisoner, 'Archduchess of Austria and Queen of France.'

'Queen of France?' repeated the astonished porter, raising himself on the arm of his chair.

'Queen of France,' repeated the prisoner, in the same tone.

'Otherwise called the Widow Capet,' interrupted the commander of the escort.

'Under which of these two names must I enter her?' the porter asked.
‘Which you like, so long as you are quick about it,’ the officer replied.

The porter sank back into his chair and, with trembling hand, wrote in his register the name and title given him by the prisoner—inscriptions in reddish-coloured ink, legible in the register even at the present day.

Madame Richard remained behind her husband’s chair, but now her hands were clasped in pity for the prisoner.

‘Your age?’ the porter continued.

‘Thirty-seven years, nine months,’ answered the Queen.

Richard wrote again, taking down a description of the prisoner, and ending with the usual formulas and private notes.

‘Good,’ he remarked; ‘it is finished.’

‘Where shall we convey the prisoner?’ asked the officer.

Richard took a second helping of snuff, and looked at his wife.

‘We were not warned of this,’ she said, ‘so that we have made no arrangements.’

‘Make a search,’ the officer suggested.

‘There is the Council Chamber,’ answered the woman.

‘Hem! it is very big,’ murmured Richard.

‘All the better! The larger it is the more easily we can post our sentries.’

‘Yes, the Council Chamber would be suitable,’ rejoined Richard; ‘but at this moment it cannot be used, since it contains no bed.’

‘True,’ assented his wife; ‘I had not thought of that.’

‘Bah!’ grunted one of the gendarmes, ‘you can put a bed thereto-morrow—and to-morrow will soon be here.’

‘As to that, the citizeness can pass the night in our room, can she not?’ asked Madame Richard.

‘And what about us,’ her spouse demanded.
'There is no occasion to go to bed. As the gendarme truly says, a night soon passes.'

'Very well then,' said Richard, 'take the citizeness to my room.'

'And in the meantime, you will prepare our receipt, will you not?'

'You shall have it when you come back.'

Madame Richard, holding a candle, went on in front. Marie Antoinette followed without a word, calm and pale as always. Two warders to whom Madame Richard made a sign fell in behind. The Queen was shown into a bedroom, and Madame Richard hastened to procure white sheets for the bed. Presently the warders took up a position outside the door, which was shut and double-locked, and Marie Antoinette was then left alone. How she passed that night no one ever knew, for her thoughts were fixed, not upon earth, but upon God.

In the morning the Queen was transferred to the Council Chamber, a long rectangular room opening into a corridor of the Conciergerie. Its size had been lessened by a partition reaching nearly to the ceiling and dividing the chamber into two compartments, one for the use of the men on guard and the other for the Queen. A window, grated by thick bars lighted each of the compartments. A folding-screen in the middle of the partition served the purpose of a door, and separated the Queen from her guards. The room itself was brick-tiled, and the walls had formerly been ornamented by a frame of gilding, from which even now hung tatters of paper embellished with the fleur-de-lis. The sole articles of furniture in this royal prison were a bed facing the window and a chair placed so that the light would fall upon it.

The Queen, on entering, asked for her books and her sewing, and was given the Révolutions d'Angleterre, which she had begun in the Temple, the Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis, and her embroidery.
On their part, the gendarmes established themselves in the next apartment. History has preserved their names. She has a habit of doing this with the humblest people whom fate brings into contact with great catastrophes, and on whom falls a portion of the light shed by the thunderbolt as it smashes the thrones of kings or even the kings themselves. Duchesne and Gilbert, they were called. The Commune had appointed these two, well known as good patriots, to remain at their post in the little room until Marie Antoinette's trial. By this means it was hoped to avoid those irregularities which were almost inevitable when guards were changed several times a day; but at the same time it threw a heavy responsibility upon the two gendarmes.

From that very day the conversation of her guards (all of whose words reached her ears, since there was no reason why they should lower their voices) revealed to the Queen the plans which her enemies had adopted. She felt at once glad and restless; on the one hand, she was persuaded that these men, thus selected, must be very trustworthy; on the other, she felt convinced that her friends would find more opportunities of bribing two known warders who remained in one place than a hundred strangers, chosen by chance, coming unexpectedly and staying for only a few hours.

The first night, before retiring, one of the gendarmes, according to his habit, began to smoke. The fumes of the tobacco penetrating through the partition reached the unhappy Queen, causing her actual physical pain. However, calling to her aid her indomitable pride, she uttered not a single complaint.

During her sad vigil in the dead stillness of the night, she fancied she heard a kind of moaning from without —sorrowful, melancholy, and imbued with something evil and piercing, like the noise of the wind in an empty corridor, when the tempest gives life to the passions of
the elements by borrowing the semblance of a human voice. Soon she recognised in this persistent crying, which, at first, had made her tremble, the howling of a dog upon the Quai. Then she remembered poor Black, whom she had forgotten when dragged from the Temple, but whose voice she now recognised. In truth, the poor animal, puzzled and alarmed, had descended the stairs, unseen, behind his mistress, followed her carriage to the gates of the Conciergerie, and had only just escaped being cut in two by the double-leafed iron door that swung to behind her. The faithful creature, however, soon returned, and endeavoured to attract her attention by howling, waiting expectantly ten feet from the sentry for an answer.

The Queen's only response was a sigh, which reached the ears of her guards. As it was the only sound she uttered, her guardians, after a brief wait, reassured themselves and dropped again into slumber.

In the morning, at daybreak, the Queen rose and dressed. Seated by the grated window, through which the light, broken by the bars, fell in bluish rays upon her thin hands, she appeared to be reading; but in reality her thoughts were far distant from the book. The gendarme Gilbert opened the folding-screen and gazed at her in silence. Marie Antoinette heard the sound, as the screen in folding rubbed against the floor, but she did not raise her head. She was in such a position that the gendarme could see her head bathed in the morning light. Gilbert signed to his comrade to come and look with him through the opening. Duchesne approached.

'See,' said Gilbert, in a whisper, 'see how pale she is; she is afraid! Her red eyes show plainly enough that she is in pain. One might almost imagine that she had been weeping.'

'You know well that Widow Capet never weeps; she is far too proud for that,' Duchesne replied.
'Well, then, she must be ill,' said Gilbert; and raising his voice, he asked, 'Are you ill, Citizeness Capet?'

Slowly the Queen raised her eyes and fixed them questioningly upon the two gendarmes.

'Are you speaking to me, messieurs?' she asked, very sweetly, believing she detected a shade of interest in the voice of the gendarme who had spoken.

'Yes, citizeness, to you,' replied Gilbert; 'we wish to know if you are unwell.'

'Why unwell?'

'Because your eyes are red.'

'And at the same time you are pale,' added Duchesne.

'Thanks, messieurs. I certainly am not unwell, but I suffered much during the night.'

'Ah, yes, from your sorrows.'

'No, messieurs; as my sorrows never alter, and as religion has taught me to lay them at the foot of the cross, they do not trouble me one day more than another. No; I am unwell because I did not sleep soundly last night.'

'Ah, I see; the new lodging and the change of bed,' said Duchesne.

'And it certainly is not too fine an apartment,' Gilbert added.

'It is not that either, messieurs,' the Queen replied, shaking her head. 'It makes no difference to me whether my dwelling is pretty or sordid.'

'What is it, then?'

'What is it?'

'Yes.'

'Pardon me for mentioning it to you; but I have been badly upset by the smell of the tobacco which monsieur smokes and which he is puffing out at this very moment.'

As a matter of fact, Gilbert was smoking; it was his usual occupation.

'Ah, mon Dieu!' he exclaimed, much troubled by the gracious manner in which the Queen had addressed
him. 'Is that it? Why did you not mention it, citizeness?'

'Because I believed I had no right to interfere with your habits, monsieur.'

'Ah, well! you will not be troubled by that any more, by me at least,' said Gilbert, throwing down his pipe, which broke in pieces on the floor. 'I shall smoke no more.' And he departed, leading his companion with him, and putting the folding-screen in its place.

'Very probably they will behead her; that's the State's business, not mine. But where is the sense in making the poor thing suffer? We are soldiers and not butchers, like Simon.'

'My friend, what you have done just now is a little aristocratic,' observed Duchesne, nodding his head.

'How do you mean, aristocratic? Come, now, let us hear your meaning of the term.'

'Everything that harasses the State and affords pleasure to its enemies I call aristocratic.'

'So that, according to you,' said Gilbert, 'I am harassing the State because I won't keep on smothering Widow Capet with tobacco fumes. Now listen,' continued the honest fellow, 'I recollect well enough my oath to the Fatherland, and the instructions of the brigadier. Why, bless you, I have the instructions by heart—"Not to let the prisoner escape; to let no one near her; to intercept all correspondence she may make up, and to die at my post." That's what I have promised, and I shall keep my oath. Long live the State!'

'I spoke like that, not because I distrust you. Quite the contrary. But it worries me to see you compromising yourself.'

'Hush! There is some one coming!'

Not a word of this conversation had been lost by the Queen, though it had been carried on in whispers. The long captivity had sharpened her powers of hearing. The noise that had attracted the attention
of the gendarmes was made by several people who were approaching the gate.

Directly it opened two municipal officers entered, followed by the concierge and some warders.

‘Well,’ they asked, ‘the prisoner?’

‘She is there,’ answered the gendarmes.

‘How is she lodged?’

‘Come and see.’ And Gilbert began to move the screen.

‘What do you seek?’ the Queen asked.

‘It is a visit from the Commune, Citizeness Capet.’

‘This man is good,’ Marie Antoinette concluded, ‘and if my friends are very keen on——’

‘Stand back! that is all right,’ exclaimed the municipal officers, brushing past Gilbert and entering the Queen’s presence; ‘there is no need for so much ceremony.’

The royal prisoner made not the slightest sign of raising her head, and one would have imagined from her impassiveness that she had neither seen nor heard those who were approaching, and that she believed herself to be alone.

The delegates from the Commune observed carefully all the details of the room, tapped the woodwork, the bed, the bars of the window which opened on to the women’s court, and, after having recommended the gendarmes to exercise the utmost vigilance, departed without saying a word to Marie Antoinette, and without her having given the slightest indication that she was aware of their visit.
CHAPTER XXXVI

LA SALLE DES PAS-PERDUS

Towards the close of the day on which we saw the Municipal Guards make such a careful inspection of the Queen’s prison, a man was walking up and down the great hall called philosophically ‘La Salle de Pas-Perdus.’ He was clad in a gray blouse, and wore on the top of his thick, black hair a woollen ‘bonnet,’ such as only the most extreme patriots donned. He seemed to be attentively regarding all who came and went in this hall where people dispute for their lives with the executioners and with Citizen Fouquier-Tinville, the indefatigable purveyor.

The man whose portrait we have sketched had adopted a most sensible attitude. Society was at this period divided into two classes—the sheep and the wolves; one section naturally was dreaded by the other, since one preyed upon the other. Our fierce-looking promenader was of small stature; in one black, dirty hand he brandished a cudgel known as a ‘constitution.’ True, the hand which swung this club would have seemed small to any one scrutinising him as closely as he was scanning others; but no one would have dared to interfere in any way with such a formidable person.

Indeed the man with the cudgel seriously alarmed a group of clerks busied in discussing political affairs, which were then going from bad to worse, or progressing well, according as one regarded them from a Conservative or Revolutionary standpoint. These worthy scribes furtively eyed the patriot’s long black beard, his greenish eyes surmounted by shaggy eyebrows,
and trembled when in the course of his long walk he approached them. This terror sprang from the fact that when they approached him or even looked too keenly at him, he let his weighty club drop on the flagstone with a sound sometimes dull and muffled, sometimes loud and ringing. But it was not only the clerks who were afraid; the various persons who entered the Salle des Pas-Perdus either by the main door or by the narrow passages, passed on their way hurriedly when they caught sight of this fierce patriot. He continued, however, walking from one end of the hall to the other, every now and then finding some pretext for bringing his cudgel sharply down on the flags.

Had the clerks been less timid, or the promenaders more keen-sighted, they would have noticed that, whimsical, like all eccentric people, he cherished a preference for certain flagstones, selecting those which gave forth a louder sound than the others. Finally, he devoted his attention to the centre flags alone; occasionally he even stopped in order to measure a distance with his eyes. But soon, recollecting himself, his expression, for a moment joyful, again became savage.

Just then a second patriot (for at this period one's clothes betrayed one's political opinions) entered by the gallery door, and apparently not being under any apprehension of danger, also began to walk up and down. As a natural result, the two met in the middle of the hall. The second man, attired like the first in woollen 'bonnet' and gray blouse, also grasped a cudgel, and had, moreover, a large sword dangling at his side. His face was mean, spiteful, and vindictive, and displayed a certain amount of low cunning. Though these two men advocated the same political doctrines, the bystanders appeared profoundly interested in watching the result of their meeting. Their expectation of anything extraordinary was not at
first fulfilled, for the two patriots merely glanced at one another, and if the smaller paled slightly, the involuntary movement of his lips showed that disgust, not fear, occasioned his emotion.

On their second encounter, however, the first patriot's expression became less severe, and something approaching a smile flitted across his lips. He turned slightly to the left, and the two met in the centre of the hall.

'Ah, _pardieu_! it is Citizen Simon!'

'It is indeed! What do you wish with Citizen Simon? and, in the first place, who are you?'

'Is it possible you do not remember me!'

'It is certain, and for the very good reason that I have never seen you before.'

'Come, now! Can you not recognise the man who had the honour of carrying the head of La Lamballe?' These words were shot out with intense fury by the blouse-clad patriot. Simon started.

'You?' he gasped.

'Yes, does it surprise you? Ah! citizen, I thought you had a keener eye for the friends of our country! You pain me.'

'It was a fine action, citizen, and I regret that my memory is so treacherous.'

'Naturally being little Capet's keeper, you are more in the public eye, and one is compelled both to recognise and to esteem you.'

'My thanks, citizen!'

'There is no need of thanks. ... So, you are taking a walk?'

'I am waiting for some one. And you?'

'I, too.'

'What is your name? I will mention you in the club.'

'I am called Théodore.'

'And your second name?'

'That is all; is that not sufficient?'

'Oh, certainly! And for whom are you waiting, Citizen Théodore?'
A friend to whom I wish to make a pretty little denunciation.'

'Indeed! Tell me about it.'

'It concerns a gang of aristocrats.'

'And their names?'

'I can reveal them only to my friend.'

'You are making a mistake; here is a person coming who knows the whole procedure sufficiently well to arrange the business immediately.'

'Fouquier-Tinville!' exclaimed the stranger.

'Himself, my friend.'

'Well, it is all right.'

' Eh! Yes, it is all right. Good-morning, Citizen Fouquier.'

Fouquier-Tinville, pale, calm, opening wide as usual his black eyes sunk under bushy eyebrows, had just emerged from a side door, his register in his hand, his roll of papers under his arm.

'Good-morning, Simon; anything new?'

'First of all, a denunciation by Citizen Théodore, who carried the head of La Lamballe. I present him to you.'

Fouquier bent his intelligent gaze on the stranger, who, in spite of his self-control, seemed disturbed by the examination.

'Théodore, who is this Théodore!' asked Fouquier.

'I am he,' replied the man in the blouse.

'And you carried La Lamballe's head?' asked the public accuser, with a most pronounced accent of doubt.

'Yes, in Rue Saint-Antoine.'

'Indeed! I know some one else who claims that honour.'

'There are many, but as they all want something, and I wish nothing, I trust to be given the preference.'

This remark made Simon laugh, while Fouquier looked more assured.

'You are right,' he observed, 'and even if you are
not the man you might have been. Leave us now I beg you, Simon has something of importance to communicate.'

Théodore withdrew, apparently undisturbed by the public accuser's frankness.

'One moment,' Simon exclaimed, 'do not dismiss him just yet; first hear his denunciation.'

'Ah! a denunciation?' remarked Fouquier-Tinville, in careless tones.

'Yes, quite a number of people are concerned,' added Simon.

'Speak, what is it about?'

'It concerns Citizen Maison-Rouge and a few of his friends.'

Fouquier stepped back a few paces, while Simon raised his arms in the air.

'Truly?' both asked together.

'The absolute truth; do you wish to capture them?'

'Immediately; where are they?'

'I met the Chevalier in the Rue de la Grande-Truanderie.'

'You are mistaken; he is not in Paris,' Fouquier answered.

'I repeat that I saw both him and his friends.'

'Impossible; a hundred men are searching for him, and he is not the man to put his head under the guillotine.'

'It was he, a tall dark man, with the strength of three, and shaggy as a bear.'

Fouquier shrugged his shoulders disdainfully.

'Wrong again,' he exclaimed; 'Maison-Rouge is small, thin, and without a hair on his face.'

Théodore let his arms fall with an air of consternation.

'Never mind, the good intention is counted as a deed. Now, Simon, about ourselves; make haste, for I am wanted at the registry, the tumbrils will be passing directly.'

'There is nothing new; the child is well.'
Théodore turned aside as if unwilling to listen, but he could still hear the conversation.

'I will withdraw, if I trouble you,' he said.

'Farewell,' Simon answered.

'Good-morning,' said Fouquier.

'Tell your friend you made a mistake,' Simon added.

'Good, I will wait for him,' Théodore answered, withdrawing to some distance, and leaning on his cudgel.

'Ah! the little one keeps well; but what of his morals?' asked Fouquier.

'I am moulding him as I choose.'

'Then he speaks?'

'When I wish it.'

'You believe he will give evidence at Antoinette's trial?'

'There is no room for doubt. I am sure of it.'

Théodore leaned against a pillar, keeping his eyes fixed on the entrances; his glance seemed vague, but it was evident that he was hearing if not seeing.

'Consider well, and don't lead the Commission into committing a blunder. You are sure Capet will speak?'

'He will say all I wish.'

'He has told you what we are going to ask him?'

'He has told me.'

'What you are promising, Citizen Simon, is of extreme importance. The child's confession will be fatal for the mother.'

'I am aware of that, pardieu! One would say you considered me quite senseless, citizen, you repeat the same thing so often. Now, listen to this comparison; when I put leather into water, does it become supple?'

'I know nothing of that.'

'Well, it does. Now, little Capet becomes in my hands as supple as the softest leather. I have my own methods of treating him.'

'So be it. Is this all you wished to say?'
'All—No, I was forgetting; here is a denunciation.'
'Still more? You give me plenty to do!'
The country must be served,' answered Simon, handing a dirty piece of paper to Fouquier.
'Still that Citizen Lorin; surely your hatred of this man must be very strong!'
'I find him constantly setting the law at defiance. Last night he called, 'Adieu, Madame,' to a woman nodding to him from a window. To-morrow, I hope to denounce another suspect—this Maurice, who was on duty at the Temple at the affair of the red carnation.'
'How precise you are!' said Fouquier, smiling, and turning his back on him with a haste which was not flattering to the shoemaker.
'What do you want me to be? People have been guillotined for less.'
'Patience, one cannot do everything at once,' replied Fouquier calmly, as he left the hall. Simon glancing round for Citizen Théodore discovered that he had gone. Hardly had he passed through the west door than Théodore re-appeared again with one of the clerks.
'When are the iron doors shut?' Théodore asked
'At five o'clock.'
'What takes place after that?'
'Nothing; the hall is empty till next day.'
'Are there no inspections, no visits?'
'No, monsieur, our offices are locked up.'
At the word 'monsieur' Théodore frowned and glanced nervously around him.
'Are the crowbar and pistols in the office?' he asked.
'Yes, under the carpet.'
'Return to our house. By the way, show me the room where the window has no iron bars and looks into a courtyard near the Place Dauphine.'
'It is to the left, between the pillars, under the lantern.'
'Good. Go and hold the horses at the appointed place!'

'Oh! good luck, monsieur, good luck! Rely on me!'

'Here is our opportunity—no one is looking—open the door.'

'I have done so, monsieur: I shall pray for you!'

'It is not me you should pray for! Farewell!'

The Citizen Théodore, after a careful scrutiny, slipped so quickly under the low roof of the little office that he disappeared like the shadow of the departing clerk. Removing the key from the lock and placing a roll of papers under his arm, the worthy clerk left the hall along with a few employees who swarmed out on the stroke of five like so many belated bees.
CHAPTER XXXVII

CITIZEN THÉODORE

Night had shrouded in her gray veil the vast hall which by day re-echoed with the invective of lawyers and the pleading accents of their clients. The only sound heard in the darkness was the scurrying of rats as they explored the clerks' offices, gnawing at the wood and nibbling the papers. Occasionally, too, a carriage rumbled past outside, and vague noises as of rattling keys ascended from underground; but this only served to make the silence greater, as the sight of some distant light renders the immediate darkness more dense. It needed a bold man to venture at that hour into the vast hall of the Palais, whose outer walls were still stained with the blood of the September victims; down whose staircases had passed on one day twenty-five people condemned to death, and whose floor was separated by a few feet only from the dungeons strewn with whitened bones.

Nevertheless, in the midst of this darkness and this almost solemn silence, a faint creaking was heard; one of the office doors turned on its hinges, and a black shadow emerged cautiously. The zealous patriot, who was addressed in private as 'Monsieur,' but who in public assumed the name 'Théodore,' stepped lightly over the uneven flagstones. In his right hand he held a heavy iron crow-bar, and with his left fixed a double-barrelled pistol in his belt.

'I counted twelve slabs altogether,' he murmured; 'let me see, here is the end of the first one.' Counting all the time, he tapped the joining between the stones. 'Have I measured correctly?' he murmured, 'shall
I be strong enough and will she have sufficient courage? Yes, for she is supremely brave. Mon Dieu!—when I can take her hand, when I can say: “Madame, you are saved!”

He stopped, overcome by emotion.

‘Rash, mad plan!’ he resumed, ‘that will be the cry of the others who rest comfortably in bed, or perhaps prowl round the Conciergerie disguised as lackeys; but they have not my inducement to risk everything on the venture. They desire to save the Queen; I desire first and foremost to save the woman. Let me consider how things are likely to work out. To raise the flagstone is nothing; to leave it raised is dangerous, since a watchman may come round. But that never happens. No one has any suspicion, for I am without accomplices, and it will not take long to traverse the dark passage. In three minutes I shall be underneath her room; five minutes more and I shall have raised the hearth stone. The noise will disturb her, but she is too brave to be alarmed! rather she will understand that a deliverer is near. She is guarded by two men; they, no doubt, will rush in—— Well, after all,’ continued the patriot with a gloomy smile, glancing at his weapons, ‘two shots with this pistol, or two blows of this crow-bar. Poor wretches! Oh! many others, not more guilty, have perished. Now!’ The Citizen Théodore boldly inserted his crow-bar between the two flags.

At the same moment a bright gleam of light fell on the stones, and a noise that re-echoed through the vault, caused the conspirator to turn round. With one bound, he sought refuge in the little office. Voices, faint in the distance and instinctively sunk to a low pitch, reached Théodore’s ear. Stooping down and peeping through a chink of the door, he saw a man in military uniform, whose sword, clanking on the flagstones, caused the disturbing noise. A moment later he perceived a man in pistachio-coloured coat, holding
a rule in his hand and rolls of paper under his arm; next a third man in a coarse vest of rateen and a fur cap; finally a fourth, wearing clogs and a blouse. The great door, creaking on its hinges, swung back on the iron chain which kept it open by day. The four men entered.

'A visit of inspection,' murmured Théodore. 'Thank God they have come now; ten minutes later and I should have been lost.' With keen attention, he gazed at the four men, recognising three of them. The foremost, in a General's uniform, was Santerre; the man in the rateen vest and fur cap was Richard; the one in sabots and blouse was probably the door-keeper. Théodore failed to recognise the man in the pistachio-coloured coat, who held a rule in his hand and papers under his arm. Who was he? More curious still, what could the General of the Commune, the Governor of the Conciergerie, a door-keeper, and this stranger be doing at ten o'clock in the Salle des Pas-Perdus.

Citizen Théodore leaned on one knee, with one hand holding his pistol, fully loaded, and with the other arranging his 'bonnet' over his hair, which had become much too disorderly to appear natural. Thus far the visitors had kept silence, or at least their words had not reached his ears in any definite form. But when they were ten feet away from his hiding-place he heard Santerre exclaim distinctly,—

'Now we are in the Salle des Pas-Perdus. It is for you to guide us, Citizen Architect, and I trust you will not find that your great discovery is a hoax. The Revolution has already done full justice to these stupid stories, and now we believe in underground passages as much as we do in ghosts. What do you say, Citizen Richard?'

'I have never asserted the existence of a tunnel under the Conciergerie,' answered the latter; 'and Gracchus here who is thoroughly acquainted with the
place, for he has been a turnkey for ten years, has never heard of such a passage as Citizen Giraud mentions; still his knowledge of these matters should be greater than ours, since as city architect it is his business.'

Théodore trembled from head to foot.
‘Fortunately, the hall is so large that they will look for two days at least before finding what they seek,’ he murmured.

But the architect, opening his roll of parchment, and putting on his spectacles, knelt down in front of a plan which he examined in the fitful glare of the lantern carried by Gracchus.
‘I am afraid Citizen Giraud has been dreaming,’ Santerre remarked jeeringly.
‘You will see, Citizen General, you will see if I am a dreamer; wait, only wait.’
‘We are waiting.’
‘Good,’ said the architect, calmly continuing his calculations. ‘Twelve and four make sixteen and eight twenty-four; divided by six gives four. A half is still left us; there, I decide, is the exact spot, and if I am even a foot out, call me a simpleton.’

The architect spoke with such assurance that Théodore with difficulty suppressed a groan of despair. Santerre examined the plan with a sort of reverence; it was plain that he admired it simply because it was beyond his comprehension.

‘Follow my explanations carefully.’
‘Where can I follow?’ asked Santerre.
‘On this chart I have made, pardieu! Do you understand? Thirteen feet from the wall is a movable stone I have marked A. Do you see it?’
‘Certainly I see an A; do you think I cannot read?’
‘Under this stone is a staircase which I have marked B.’

‘B,’ repeated Santerre; ‘I see the B but not the stair,’ and the General laughed loudly at his joke.
'From the last step of the stair, count fifty steps of three feet long, and then looking upwards you will find yourself at the record-office where this underground passage finishes, passing under the Queen's dungeon.'

'The Widow Capet's, you mean, Citizen Giraud,' retorted Santerre, knitting his brows.

'Yes, Widow Capet's.'

'You said the Queen's, you know.'

'Merely from habit.'

'You say we shall stop under the record-office?' asked Richard.

'Not only that, but I can tell you the precise spot; under the stove.'

'Ah! that is curious; every time I drop a log of wood in that spot the flags seem to give out a hollow sound,' remarked Gracchus.

'Truly, Citizen Architect, if what you are describing turns out to be correct, I will admit that geometry is a fine thing.'

'Admit it then, Citizen Santerre, for I am about to lead you to the place shown by letter A.'

Citizen Théodore dug his nails into his flesh.

'When I see it I shall be convinced; I am like Saint Thomas.'

'Ah! you say Saint Thomas?'

'Faith, yes, as you said the Queen, from habit simply; but no one will accuse me of conspiring in favour of Saint Thomas.'

'Nor myself in favour of the Queen,' replied the architect, as carefully counting the inches on his rule, and calculating all the distances, he struck on a flagstone. This was precisely the same stone which had attracted Citizen Théodore.

'It is here, Citizen General,' the architect announced.

'You think so, Citizen Giraud.'

The man in the side office so far forgot himself as to strike his side violently with his closed fist, and this time he could not suppress a groan.
I am sure of it,' resumed Giraud; 'and your survey, along with my report, will prove to the Convention that I did not err. Yes, Citizen General, this stone opens on an underground tunnel leading to the record-office, and passing below Widow Capet's cell. Let us raise this stone and descend. I will prove conclusively that two men, or one even, could spirit her away in a night, without any one being the wiser.'

A murmur of fear ran through the group, falling on the ears of Citizen Théodore, who seemed changed into a statue.

'That is the risk we were running. Now we can fix an iron gate in the passage, dividing it in two before it reaches Widow Capet's cell, and the country is saved,' resumed Giraud.

'Oh! Citizen Giraud, that is a splendid idea.' cried Santerre.

'The plague take you, you fool!' growled Théodore, growing angrier than ever.

'Now, raise the stone,' the architect ordered Gracchus, who carried a crow-bar, in addition to his lantern. Citizen Gracchus bent to his task, and in a moment the flag was raised. Then the gaping vault with the staircase was revealed, and a smell of musty air floated upwards.

'One more attempt frustrated!' murmured the Citizen Théodore. 'Heaven cannot mean her to escape; her cause is surely accursed!'
CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CITIZEN GRACCHUS

For a moment the three men stood motionless at the opening of the tunnel, whilst the turnkey flashed his lantern into the depths in a futile endeavour to lighten up the gloom. The architect appeared to tower triumphantly above his companions by reason of his superior ability.

'Well?' he remarked at length.

'Faith, yes! that is the tunnel, sure enough,' answered Santerre; 'it only remains now to ascertain where it leads.'

'Yes, we have still to discover that,' Richard remarked.

'Descend, then, and you will learn for yourselves whether I have spoken the truth.'

'There is a much easier way of finding out than by going down there,' the jailer declared. 'We will return with you and the General to the Conciergerie. There, you can raise the stone under the stove, and we shall see.'

'An excellent suggestion,' said Santerre, 'let us put it into action immediately.'

'There is need of caution,' the architect said; 'if the stone is left raised, it may put awkward ideas into some one's head.'

'Who on earth is likely to come here at this hour?' inquired Santerre.

'Pouf, the hall is absolutely deserted! However, we will leave Gracchus behind to mount guard. Stay here, Citizen Gracchus, and we will rejoin you from the other end of the passage,' Richard ordered.
'Very good,' Gracchus replied.
'Are you armed?'
'I have my sword and this crow-bar, Citizen General.'
'Admirable! keep a sharp watch. In ten minutes we shall be with you.'

The three, after shutting the main door, retired by the Gallery des Merciers, to enter by the private door of the Conciergerie. The turnkey followed them with his eyes till they disappeared from sight and listened to their voices till these became inaudible; then, all being still, he put his lantern on the ground, and sitting down with his legs dangling over the vault, began dreaming. Turnkeys, too, have their dreams; only one does not usually trouble to learn of what stuff they are made. Suddenly, when he was most absorbed in his reverie, Gracchus felt a hand touch his shoulder. Turning round, he perceived a strange, weird figure; he was on the point of crying out in alarm, but immediately a pistol was placed at his forehead. His tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, his arms fell limply at his sides, his eyes assumed a most beseeching expression.

'Not one word or you are a dead man,' his captor exclaimed.
'What is it you wish, monsieur?' stammered the turnkey.

Even in 1793 people forgot at intervals to address one another as 'tu' and 'citoyen.'
'I wish to descend into the vault,' answered Citizen Théodore.
'Why?'
'What does that matter to you?'

The turnkey regarded with astonishment the person who made such a strange, unusual request. Yet, in his gaze, Théodore imagined he detected a gleam of intelligence. Lowering the pistol, he asked,—
'Will you refuse to make a fortune?'
'I do not know; no one has ever shown me how to make one.'
'Then I suggest it to you."
'You offer to make my fortune?'
'Yes.'
'What do you call a fortune?'
'Fifty thousand francs in gold, for instance; money is scarce, and to-day fifty thousand francs equal a million. Well, I offer you fifty thousand francs.'
'To let you in there?'
'Yes; on condition that you accompany me and assist in what I am going to do.'
'But what can you do? In five minutes the tunnel will be filled with soldiers who will seize you.'
Citizen Théodore was profoundly impressed with the seriousness of this statement.
'Can you prevent their coming down?'
'I have no means of stopping them; I know of none, and it is utterly useless trying to find any.'
The turnkey was evidently racking his brains in the endeavour to formulate some plan, for it would put fifty thousand francs into his pocket.
'Would it be possible to descend to-morrow?'
Citizen Théodore asked.
'I know of nothing to prevent it, but by that time there will be an iron gate stretching across the tunnel. For greater security, too, and in order to make the obstacle insurmountable, the gate will be of solid metal, without a single opening.'
'Then we must discover some other method.'
'Yes, certainly, we must discover other means. Let us put on our considering caps,' repeated the turnkey.
From the 'we' employed by Gracchus it is easy to perceive that an agreement had already been arrived at between himself and Citizen Théodore.
'What concerns me,' Théodore remarked. 'What are your duties in the Conciergerie?'
'I am a turnkey.'
'Which means?'
'I open and shut the doors.'
'You sleep there?'
'Yes, monsieur.'
'You have your meals there?'
'Not always. I am off duty.'
'And then?'
'I take my recreation sometimes.'
'In what way?'
'I pay my court to the landlady of Puits-de-Noé Inn; she has agreed to marry me as soon as I have got together twelve hundred francs.'
'Where is this inn?'
'Near Rue de la Vieille-Draperie.'
'Very good.'
'Hush, monsieur!' Théodore listened attentively. 'Ah! ah!' he exclaimed.
'Do you hear?'
'Yes, steps.'
'They are returning. You will notice that we should have had very little time.'
The 'we' became more and more emphatic. 'That is true. You are a brave fellow, Citizen, and it seems to me that fate has specially singled you out.'
'For what?'
'To amass a big fortune some day.'
'May God grant it!'
'You believe, then, in God?'
'Sometimes! To-day, for instance——.'
'Well?'
'I would willingly believe in Him.'
'Follow your wishes then,' said Citizen Théodore, slipping ten louis into the turnkey's hand.
'Diable!' cried the latter, gazing at the gold by the light of his lantern. 'So this is a serious matter?'
'Decidedly; as serious as anything can be.'
'What am I to do?'
'Meet me to-morrow at the Puits-de-Noé, and I will give you full instructions. What is your name?'
'Gracchus.'
'Well, Citizen Gracchus, before to-morrow, get Governor Richard to dismiss you.'
'Dismiss me! But my situation?'
'Do you intend to remain a turnkey when you become the possessor of fifty thousand francs?'
'No; but, as a poor man and a turnkey, I run no risk of being guillotined.'
'No risk?'
'Well, scarcely any; on the other hand, when I am free and rich——'
'You will hide your money and pay court to a "tricoteuse," instead of to the landlady of the Puits-de-Noé.'
'There is something in that.'
'To-morrow at the inn.'
'At what time?'
'At six o'clock in the evening.'
'Good! now be off quickly, here they are! Quick, they must not catch you here.'
'To-morrow, then,' repeated Théodore, disappearing. It was fortunate he did so; the footsteps and voices approached nearer. The light of the lanterns could already be perceived shining in the darkness of the tunnel. Théodore, running rapidly to the door which the clerk had pointed out, prised open the lock, reached the window, and, opening it, dropped down into the street. Before finally letting himself go, he heard Gracchus put a question to Richard, and the latter reply,—
'The Citizen Architect was perfectly correct; the tunnel passes beneath Widow Capet's cell, and, but for his foresight, might have proved a source of danger.'
'I quite believe it!' said Gracchus, feeling he uttered a solemn truth.
Santerre appeared at the top of the staircase.

'What about your workmen, Citizen Architect?' he asked Giraud.

'Before to-morrow morning they will come and the grating will be placed in position,' answered a voice which seemed to rise from the bowels of the earth.

'And you will certainly have saved the country!' Santerre declared in half-mocking, half-serious tones.

'You little imagine how true that is, Citizen General, muttered Gracchus.
CHAPTER XXXIX

THE ROYAL CHILD

Meanwhile, as was apparent from a preceding chapter, the question of the Queen's trial was already being discussed. It appeared extremely probable that, by the sacrifice of this illustrious head, the popular clamour, which had been manifested so long and so noisily, would be at length appeased. Means were not wanting to bring this head to the guillotine; yet Fouquier-Tinville, that deadly sleuth-hound, was resolved not to neglect the evidence which Simon had promised to procure for him. On the day succeeding that which had witnessed their meeting in the Salle des Pas-Perdus, the sound of arms again startled the exalted prisoners still confined in the Temple, namely Madame Elisabeth, Madame Royale, and the child who, though addressed from infancy as 'Your Royal Highness,' was now spoken of as 'Little Louis Capet.'

General Henriot, with his tricolor plume and his great sword, and followed by several National Guards, entered on horseback into the keep where the royal child languished. Alongside the General walked an ill-favoured clerk carrying an ink-horn, a roll of parchment, and an unusually long pen. Behind the scribe came the public accuser. We have already made his acquaintance, and we shall meet again with this dry, yellow, cold-looking man, the glance of whose bloodshot eye caused even the fierce Santerre in all his war array to tremble. Some National Guards and a lieutenant completed the procession. Simon smiled hypocritically as, with bearskin cap and
shoemaker's stirrup in hand, he walked in advance to show the way.

Finally they reached a rather gloomy room, spacious and bare, in a corner of which the young Louis sat perfectly motionless on his bed. When we saw the poor child fleeing before Simon's brutal rage, he still retained a small amount of vitality and was able to protest against the cobbler's harsh treatment. He fled, he cried and wept, showing that he felt afraid; being afraid he suffered, which meant that he still hoped. To-day both fear and hope had vanished; no doubt his sufferings remained, but the child martyr, punished in such a cruel and brutal fashion for the fault of his ancestors, concealed his torments under the veil of complete insensibility. He did not even raise his head when the commissioners approached him. Without any preliminaries they took up their positions, the public accuser placing himself at the head of the bed, Simon at the foot, the clerk near the window, the National Guards and their lieutenant a little in the shadow to one side.

Those who regarded the wretched prisoner with any degree of interest, or even with mere curiosity, noticed the child's pallor, his swollen body, and the curved appearance of his legs, the joints of which had begun to swell.

'This child is very ill,' observed the lieutenant, with an air of assurance which caused Fouquier-Tinville to turn round. Little Capet, raising his eyes, searched in the shadow for the one who had spoken. He recognised him as the same young man who on a previous occasion in the Temple courtyard had prevented Simon from beating him. A mild, intelligent gleam shone in the child's dark blue eyes, but no other sign of animation escaped him.

'Aah! aah! it is you, Citizen Lorin,' grumbled Simon, thus calling Fouquier-Tinville's attention to Maurice's friend.
‘Myself, Citizen Simon,’ replied Lorin, with imper- turbable calm. Though prepared to face danger, Lorin had no desire to rush vainly into it, so, profiting by this interruption, he saluted Fouquier-Tinville, who politely returned the greeting.

‘You remarked, I believe, citizen, that the child is ill; are you a doctor?’ asked the public accuser.

‘I have studied medicine, though I have not actually qualified.’

‘Well, what does your knowledge show you in this case?’

‘Do you mean what are the symptoms which lead me to believe that the child is ill?’

‘Precisely.’

‘The symptoms are patent to any one. I find his cheeks and eyes puffed up, his hands white and ema- ciated, his knees swollen; his pulse, I am certain, marks at least from eighty-five to ninety beats a minute.’

The child appeared insensible to this enumeration of his sufferings.

‘To what, think you, would the science of medicine attribute the cause of the prisoner’s condition!’

Lorin murmured a couplet under his breath; aloud he replied: ‘My faith, citizen, I am not sufficiently acquainted with little Capet’s constitution to give you a definite answer.’

‘Yet, there must be some reason.’

Simon, listening carefully, laughed silently to see his enemy on the verge of committing himself.

‘For one thing, I imagine that he does not take enough exercise,’ Lorin continued.

‘I should think not, the little wretch! he refuses even to walk,’ Simon interrupted brutally.

The child remained unmoved by the shoemaker’s abuse. Fouquier-Tinville, rising, whispered in Lorin’s ear. So quietly did the public accuser speak that only Lorin himself heard the terrible word poison.
'Oh! do you believe that, citizen! It is a serious accusation against a mother,' Lorin exclaimed.

'In any case we shall soon learn the truth, for Simon, who declares that he himself has been told, has promised to make little Capet confess.'

'It is no business of mine, of course, but I do not believe it.'

'It is what Simon has reported,' replied the impassive Fouquier.

'I have no doubt that Simon asserted it; some men would not shrink from any accusation, even an impossible one. But do you not consider, you an intelligent and upright man, a strong man, that in trying to trap a child into condemning his own mother, you are almost insulting humanity itself in the person of this child?'

The accuser displayed no indignation, but producing a note from his pocket, showed it to Lorin.

'The Convention commands me to put the question, and I obey their instructions,' he said; 'other matters do not concern me.'

'That is right enough, but——'

'Besides, Simon's is not the only denunciation upon which we are acting; see, there is a public accusation,' continued Fouquier-Tinville, handing Lorin a second paper.

'It is written, it is even printed, I grant you,' said Lorin; 'but, in spite of that, until I hear it from the child's own mouth voluntarily, freely, without any threats——well!'

'Well?'

'Well, in spite of everything, I should doubt its truth, even as you yourself doubt it.'

Simon waited impatiently for the result of this conversation. The poor wretch was not aware what influence may be exercised over an intelligent man by a single glance from a bystander. It has either a sympathetic attraction for him or it produces a
feeling of sudden hatred. Now it is a force that repels, again one that draws forth the man's secret thoughts and reveals his actual personality to the other. Fouquier-Tinville, swayed by the power of Lorin's glance, really desired to excuse himself to this fair-minded observer.

'We will begin the examination,' he exclaimed; 'registrar, have your pen in readiness.'

The clerk had just written out the introductory part of the report, and was waiting, as Simon, Henriot, and the rest were, until the conversation between Fouquier-Tinville and Lorin should end. The child alone appeared oblivious to this scene in which he was the principal actor, and had again assumed the dull expression which had been for a moment replaced by a gleam of the keenest intelligence.

'Silence!' exclaimed Henriot, 'Citizen Fouquier-Tinville is going to interrogate the child.'

'Capet, do you know what has become of your mother?' the accuser asked.

Little Louis's face changed from a marble colour to a burning red, but he made no reply.

'Do you hear me, Capet?' The same silence.

'Oh! he hears quite well,' observed Simon; 'but he is like the monkeys, he refuses to answer, in case he should be taken for a man and forced to work.'

'Answer, Capet; it is the Commissioner of the Convention who puts the question, and you must obey.'

The child paled, but preserved silence. Simon made an angry gesture; in brutal, stupid natures, anger becomes a sort of intoxication accompanied by all the horrible symptoms of drunkenness.

'Will you answer, wolf's cub?' he cried, shaking his fist at him.

'Be quiet, Simon, you have not permission to speak,' said Fouquier-Tinville.
This phrase, which he so often employed at the Revolutionary Tribunal, slipped out involuntarily.

‘Do you hear, Simon, you have not permission to speak? that is the second time you have been told so in my presence. On a previous occasion, during your accusation of the girl Tison, who went to the guillotine, you received a similar rebuke.’

Simon kept silence.

‘Did your mother care for you, Capet?’ asked Fouquier.

The boy remained mute.

‘People say she did not,’ continued the accuser, ‘that she wished you to die.’

A slight smile flitted across the child’s lips.

‘It is annoying, Simon, that little Capet, such a chatterbox when with one person, becomes dumb in public,’ remarked Lorin.

‘Oh! if we were alone!’ Simon exclaimed.

‘Yes, if only you were alone, but unfortunately for you, we are here. If you were alone, worthy Simon, brave patriot, how you would beat the poor child, eh! But, now, you shameless bully, you dare not! Before honest people who remember that the ancients, whom we try to imitate, respected weakness, you dare not. Your courage is like water!’

‘Oh!’ muttered Simon, gnashing his teeth with rage.

‘Capet, did you confide any secrets to Simon?’ was Fouquier's next question.

The child assumed an expression of irony, impossible to describe.

‘About your mother!’ A look of contempt flashed from the child’s eyes.

‘Answer yes or no,’ cried Henriot.

‘Answer, yes!’ screamed Simon, shaking his strap at the child, who trembled, but made no effort to avoid the blow. The bystanders uttered a cry of horror. Lorin did more; rushing forward, he caught Simon’s wrist before he could strike.
'Let me go, will you!' roared Simon, purple with rage.

'Come, there is no harm in answering my question, Capet. It may be useful to your mother,' said Fouquier-Tinville.

The young prisoner started at the idea that he could be useful to his mother.

'She loved me devotedly, monsieur,' he said.

'And I repeat, little serpent, you told me——.'

'You must have been dreaming,' interrupted Lorin calmly, 'you surely have a nightmare often, Simon.'

'Lorin, Lorin!' muttered Simon.

'Yes, Lorin. There is no way of beating Lorin; he belabours others when they are unruly. You cannot denounce him, for he stayed your arm in the presence of General Henriot and Citizen Fouquier-Tinville who approve the deed, and they are not indifferent patriots! There is no way of getting him guillotined like Héloïse Tison; it is very annoying, it is very exasperating, but it is a fact, my poor Simon!'

'Later! later!' exclaimed the shoemaker, grinning like a hyena.

'Just so, but I hope by the help of the Supreme Being!—ah! you expected me to say by God's help! but I hope by the help of the Supreme Being and my sword to have spitted you before then; now stand aside, Simon, you prevent me from seeing.'

'Villain.'

'Be quiet, you prevent me from hearing,' added Lorin, crushing Simon with his glance. Simon clenched his fists, but, as Lorin had pointed out, he could do nothing more.

'Now he has begun to speak, he will doubtless go on,' observed Henriot; 'please continue, Citizen Fouquier.'

'Will you answer now?'

The child relapsed into silence.
This boy’s obstinacy is strange,’ observed Henriot, disturbed in spite of himself at this wholly royal firmness.

‘He has been badly instructed,’ Lorin remarked.
‘By whom?’
‘By his guardian.’
‘You are accusing me! You are denouncing me!’ cried Simon. ‘Ah! it is a strange thing.’

‘Let us win him by gentleness,’ said Fouquier, approaching the child, who appeared perfectly insensible to their presence.

‘Come, my child,’ he continued, ‘answer the National Commission; do not make your situation worse by refusing to give useful information. You have only to repeat what you told to the Citizen Simon.’

Louis’s eyes travelling round the company, fell on Simon with a look of hatred, but he still made no answer.

‘Are you unhappy?’ resumed the accuser; ‘are you badly lodged, badly fed, or ill-treated! Would you like more liberty, another prison, another guardian? Would you like a horse to ride on? would you like the company of children of your own age?’

Louis maintained the deep silence he had only broken to defend his mother. The Commission were quite at a loss, so astonished did they feel. Such firmness and intelligence were almost incredible in a child.

‘Oh! these kings, what a race! they are like tigers, they are wicked from their earliest years,’ said Henriot, in low tones.

‘How can we frame the report?’ the perplexed registrar asked.

‘Leave that to Simon,’ replied the facetious Lorin; ‘there is nothing to write, so he will manage that splendidly.’

Simon shook his fist at his implacable enemy, who began to laugh.
'You won't laugh like that the day you sneeze in the sack,' cried Simon, in a mad frenzy.

'I do not know whether I shall precede or follow you in the little ceremony you threaten me with, but I am very sure that many will laugh when your turn comes. Man, how ugly you will look that day, Simon! You will be absolutely hideous,' said Lorin, retreating behind the Commission with an outburst of laughter.

The Commission, having finished their business, withdrew. As to the child, once released from his questioners, he began to hum a melancholy little ditty which had been a favourite of his father's.
CHAPTER XL

THE BOUQUET OF VIOLETS

Peace, as might easily have been foreseen, could not dwell long in the household which sheltered Geneviève and Maurice. When wind and thunder are unloosed by the tempest, the pigeon's nest is shaken along with the tree that conceals it. Freed from one fear, Geneviève became obsessed by another; no longer feeling anxious about Maison-Rouge, she simply trembled for Maurice. She knew her husband well enough to understand that from the moment he disappeared he was safe. And assured of his safety she began to fear for her own. Though not daring to confide her griefs to any one, she could not prevent them from showing themselves clearly in her red eyes and pale lips.

One day Maurice entered softly, and Geneviève, plunged in thought, did not hear him. Stopping on the threshold, he saw her sitting motionless, with fixed eyes, her arms lying limply on her knees, and her head sunk upon her breast. For a moment he gazed at her with the most intense sadness, for in that glance he had been able to read her inmost thoughts.

Advancing a step towards her he exclaimed, 'Your love for France is dead, Geneviève; you breathe even its very air with aversion.'

'Alas,' she answered with a profound sigh, 'you are right.'

'Yet it is a beautiful country,' he returned, 'and its life to-day is full of interest. The incessant activity displayed in the Tribune and the clubs, the plots and counter-plots of opposing conspirators, lend an additional pleasure to the hours spent at home. One loves
"Dictate it then," she said taking a pen.
with ardour to-day, fearing that on the morrow love will be impossible, since on the morrow one may have ceased to exist.'

'What an ungrateful country to serve,' Geneviève said.

'How so?'

'Why, are not even you more than half-suspected to-day—you who have done so much for the liberty of the state?'

'But you, dear Geneviève,' said Maurice, with a look of intense love; 'you who are an enemy to that liberty, and have fought so stoutly against it, sleep in peace and safety under the roof of a Republican. So you see there are compensations.'

'Yes,' said Geneviève, 'yes; but that will not last long, since injustice cannot endure.'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean that I, an aristocrat, who dream of the defeat of your party and the ruin of your ideals, who, even in your house, am conspiring to restore the ancient régime, and whom, if discovered, you will condemn to death and to shame—at least, if you act loyally by your opinions, that I will no longer remain here the evil genius of the house. I will not drag you to the scaffold.'

'And where will you go, Geneviève?'

'Where will I go? Some day when you have gone out, I shall denounce myself without saying whence I come.'

'Oh,' cried Maurice, struck to the heart, 'ingratitude already!'

'No,' she answered, throwing her arms around his neck; 'no my friend, not ingratitude, but the most devoted love. I did not wish my brother to be captured and slain as a rebel: I have no desire to see my lover executed as a traitor.'

'You won't do such a desperate thing, Geneviève,' I cried Maurice.
‘As surely as God is in heaven,’ she answered. ‘Besides to be afraid is nothing, but I am remorseful.’
She hung her head as though the weight of remorse was too heavy to be borne.
‘Oh, Geneviève!’
‘You understand my meaning perfectly well, Maurice,’ she continued, for remorse stings you also. . . . We were both aware that I was not free to come to you.’
‘Don’t!’ groaned Maurice.
His brow was wrinkled with care and his eyes shone with stern resolution.
‘I will prove to you, Geneviève,’ he cried, ‘that I love you as never man loved. I will show you that no sacrifice is too great for my devotion. You hate France. Well, let it be so. We will leave France.’
Geneviève clasped her hands and gazed at her lover with enthusiastic admiration.
‘You are not deceiving me, Maurice,’ she exclaimed hesitatingly.
‘When did I ever deceive you? Is it to-day, when I am courting dishonour to gain you?’
Geneviève kissed him passionately, and remained clinging to his neck.
‘Yes, you are right, Maurice,’ she cried; ‘it was I who deceived myself. In proof of this, not a trace of my remorse remains. Perhaps I also am sinking into dishonour, but at least you understand that I love you too much to harbour any other feeling than the fear of losing you. Let us go far away, my dearest, let us go where no one can spoil our lives.’
Maurice felt almost transported in an ecstasy of joy.
‘But how to flee?’ Geneviève continued, trembling at the terrible prospects. ‘We cannot escape easily to-day from the daggers of the assassins of September 2, nor from the axes of the butchers of January 21.’
‘Geneviève,’ exclaimed Maurice, ‘God protects us. Listen. A good action I meant doing in connection
with this same September 2, of which you speak, is going to bring its reward to-day. I wished to save a poor priest who was an old schoolfellow of mine. I went to Danton, and at his request the Committee of Public Safety signed a passport for the poor fellow and his sister. This passport Danton handed to me; but the unfortunate priest instead of coming to my house, as I had advised, joined the Carmelites. He is dead.'

'And the passport,' queried Geneviève.

'I have always retained it. To-day it is worth a million of money; it is worth more than that, Geneviève; it is worth life and happiness.'

'Blessed be God,' she exclaimed fervently.

'Now, my fortune, as you know, consists of an estate ruled by an old family servant, a sound patriot, a loyal soul in whom we must confide. He will send the rents wherever I direct. On our journey to Boulogne, we shall pass his house.'

'Where does he live, then?'

'Near Abbeville.'

'When shall we start, Maurice?'

'In an hour.'

'No one must know we are going!'

'No one shall know it. I will run across to Lorin, who has a carriage but no horse, whilst I have a horse but no carriage. We will start as soon as I return. Remain here and get everything ready for the journey. We shall not need much luggage; what we leave behind we can renew in England. I will send Scévola on an errand which will take him some distance away. To-night Lorin will explain our departure, and by that time we shall be well out of reach.'

'Suppose they stop us on the road?'

'We have our passport, have we not? We are going to Hubert's—that is the name of the intendant. Hubert is a member of the municipality of Abbeville. From Abbeville to Boulogne he will accompany us as an escort and safeguard. Then I shall persuade the
committee to give me a commission for Abbeville—no; that won't do! No deceit, eh, Geneviève? Let us gain our happiness at the risk of our lives.'

'Yes, yes, dear one, and we shall succeed. But how you are perfumed this morning, dear,' she said, hiding her face in Maurice's breast.

'Quite true; I bought a bunch of violets for you as I passed the Palais-Egalité. But when I came in and saw you so sad I could think of nothing but to find out the reason.'

'Oh, give them to me!'

Geneviève inhaled the odour of the bouquet with that kind of fanaticism which highly-strung natures nearly always evince for perfumes. Suddenly her eyes filled with tears.

'What is the matter?' Maurice asked.

'Poor Héloïse!' Geneviève murmured.

'Ah, yes,' said Maurice, with a sigh. 'But think of ourselves, my dear, and let us leave the dead, no matter which side they supported, to sleep in the quiet grave their devotion dug for them. Adieu. I am going.'

'Come back quickly!'

'In less than half an hour I shall be here.'

'But if Lorin is not at home?'

'It does not matter, his servant knows me. Can I not take what pleases me in his absence as readily as if he were present?'

'Very good!'

'And now, Geneviève, get everything ready, but limit yourself as I advised to what is strictly necessary. We must not give our journey the appearance of flight.'

'Be easy on that point.'

The young man turned towards the door.

'Maurice,' said Geneviève.

He turned and saw her standing with arms outstretched towards him.

'Àu revoir! àu revoir! my love,' said he, 'and good courage. In half an hour I shall be back.'
Geneviève remained alone, charged, as we have seen, with the preparations for departure. These preparations she hurried through in a kind of fever. So long as she remained in France she felt herself doubly guilty. Once out of the country, once settled in a foreign land, she imagined that her crime (one less her own than due to fate) would be lighter. She even dared to hope that, when in exile, she would end by forgetting the existence of any man but Maurice. They would flee to England: that was understood. There they would have a little house, a small cottage, standing alone, and hidden from all eyes. Then they would assume fresh names, and would also hire two servants ignorant of their past. Fortunately both Maurice and Geneviève spoke English.

Neither felt any regrets at leaving France, for if one's native land is not a mother who is always regretted, she is a mere step-mother.

Geneviève began to arrange all the things necessary for their journey, or rather, their flight. She found unspeakable pleasure in distinguishing from the others those articles for which Maurice had shown a preference: the coat which set off his figure to the best advantage, the scarf which went best with his complexion, the books whose pages he had most frequently read. By this time she had chosen what was necessary; and dresses, linen, and books covered the chairs, the couches, and the piano.

Suddenly she heard the key turn in the lock.

'Good!' she cried, 'Scévola has come in. Surely Maurice cannot have met him?' And she continued her labours.

As the drawing-room doors were open her ear caught the sound of a confused noise in the hall. In her hand she held carefully a roll of music, and was looking for some string with which to fasten it.

'Scévola!' she called out.
A step which had been approaching came to a halt in the adjoining apartment.

'Scévola!' repeated Geneviève, 'come in, please!

'It is I!' said a voice.

At the sound Geneviève turning quickly uttered a cry of fear.

'My husband!' she exclaimed.

'Even so,' Dixmer replied calmly.

Geneviève was on a chair, her arms raised towards a cupboard in which she was searching for something. She felt her head swim; throwing out her arms she let them drop limply by her side, praying that the earth would open and engulf her.

Raising her in his arms, Dixmer carried her to a couch.

'Well, what is the matter, my dear? And what is wrong that my presence produces such a disagreeable effect upon you?' he asked.

'I am dying,' stammered Geneviève, turning away and placing both hands before her eyes that she might not see this terrible apparition.

'Good,' said Dixmer, 'so you already thought me dead? And you feel as if you are in the presence of a ghost?'

Geneviève glanced around with a frightened air, and, seeing the portrait of Maurice she slipped from the couch and fell on her knees, as if to implore assistance from this insensible and helpless image with its constant smile. She understood too well all the menaces concealed by her husband under his appearance of studied calm.

'Yes, my dear child,' the tanner continued, 'it is really I. Perhaps you thought me far from Paris. Dear me, no! I waited here. The day after my hurried departure I returned, and found in place of our house a very fine heap of cinders. I asked about you, but no one had seen you. I set myself to search, and after considerable trouble have found you. I did not really believe you were here, but being a little suspicious
I came, as you see. After all, the main thing is that we are both here. How is Maurice? Upon my word I am sure you must have suffered terribly—such a true-blue Royalist as you are—to have been compelled to live under the same roof with this Republican fanatic.'

'O God, O God! have pity on me,' moaned Geneviève.

'What really comforts me, my dear,' Dixmer continued, looking round at her, 'is that you have been well lodged here and that you do not appear to have suffered from the proscription. As for me, since the burning of our house and the ruin of our fortunes, I have had adventures enough and to spare, living in the recesses of cellars, in the holds of ships, sometimes even in the sewers that fall into the Seine.'

'Monsieur!' said Geneviève.

'Again, you have the most beautiful fruits, whilst I was often obliged to do without dessert, not having been able to obtain even dinner.'

With a sob, Geneviève hid her face in her hands.

'Not,' continued Dixmer, 'that I am in need of money. Thank God, I carried away with me thirty thousand francs in gold, which to-day are worth five hundred thousand francs. But the idea of a charcoal burner, a fisherman, or a rag picker drawing golden louis out of his pocket to pay for a morsel of cheese or for a sausage! And, by God, madame, I have tried all three disguises. To-day, for greater security, I am got up as a fervent patriot. Bah! a hunted man does not get through Paris so easily as a young and pretty woman, and besides, I had not the good fortune to be acquainted with an ardent Republican who would hide me from all eyes.'

'Monsieur, monsieur,' cried Geneviève, 'have pity on me. Don't you see that I am in agony?'

'Yes—of unrest; I understand that well enough. You have been restless because of me; but take comfort, I am here. I have come back, and we shall never more be parted.'
'Oh! you are going to kill me,' cried Geneviève. Dixmer glanced at her with a frightful smile. 'Kill an innocent woman! Oh! madame, how can you say that. The profound sorrow caused by my absence must have broken your spirit.'

'Monsieur,' exclaimed Geneviève, 'on my knees I beg you to kill me rather than torment me by your cruel jests. No; I am not innocent. Yes; I am guilty and deserve to die. Kill me, monsieur, kill me . . .'

'You admit that you deserve death?'

'Yes, yes.'

'And that, in order to expiate this crime, whatever it may be, of which you accuse yourself, you will submit to death without complaint?'

'Strike monsieur, I shall not utter a single cry, and, instead of cursing the hand that strikes me, I shall bless it.'

'No, madame, I have no wish to strike you. However, it is quite probable that you will die. Only, your death, instead of being, as you fear, ignominious, will equal in glory the finest of deaths. Thank me, madame, that, in punishing you, I shall make you immortal.'

'What will you do, monsieur?'

'You will move towards the goal whither we were tending when we were interrupted. You and I will know that you are dying to expiate your guilt. Everyone else will regard you as a martyr.'

'Oh! God! you will drive me mad if you speak like that. Where are you taking me? Where are you dragging me?'

'To death, probably.'

'Let me say a prayer, then.'

'Your prayer?'

'Yes.'

'To whom?'

'It concerns you but little. From the moment you
kill me, I have paid my debt, and, if I have paid, I owe you nothing.'

'True,' said Dixmer, retiring to the other room. 'I will wait for you.' And he went out of the drawing-room.

Geneviève fell on her knees before the portrait, pressing her hands upon her almost bursting heart.

'Maurice,' she cried in a low voice, 'pardon me. For myself I scarcely expected happiness, but I hoped to make you happy. Maurice, you have lived in your love for me; pardon me your death, my well-beloved!'

Cutting a ringlet from her long hair, she fastened it to the bunch of violets and laid them at the foot of the portrait, which, insensible painting as it was, yet seemed capable of assuming an expression of grief. At least it appeared so to Geneviève, as she gazed at it through her tears.

'Are you ready, madame?' Dixmer asked.

'So soon!' murmured Geneviève.

'Well, take your time, madame, take your time,' replied Dixmer; 'I am not in the least hurry. Besides, Maurice will soon be back, and I shall be charmed to thank him for the hospitality he has shown you.'

Terror seized Geneviève at the thought of such a terrible meeting. Suddenly she rose.

'It is over, monsieur,' she said; 'I am ready.'

Dixmer went first. The trembling Geneviève followed, her eyes half closed, her head turned to the rear. Entering a carriage which was waiting at the door, they drove off.

As Geneviève had said—it was over.
CHAPTER XLI.

THE PUI TS-DE-NOÉ TAVERN

The man, clad in a blouse, whom we saw pacing up and down the Salle des Pas-Perdus, whom we heard exchanging a few words with the turnkey, left alone at the door of the underground passage while the architect Giraud, General Henriot, and Father Richard were exploring; the furious patriot, with his bear-skin cap and bristling moustache, who represented himself to Simon as the man who had carried Princesse de Lamballe’s head, was sitting about seven o’clock on the day following that eventful evening in the Puits-de-Noé Tavern, at the corner of Rue de la Vieille-Draperie. He had ensconced himself at one end of the black, smoky parlour, and was presumably making a meal of some fish, cooked with rancid butter.

The room in which he supped was almost empty; all but two or three of the habitual customers had departed; but although most of the tables were now unoccupied, yet the red or violet stains on the cloths testified that a goodly number of customers had recently used the apartments. Finally the last of the laggards disappeared, leaving the patriot alone. With a truly aristocratic gesture he pushed aside the coarse fare which a moment before he had to all appearance been consuming with relish, and proceeded, with a very different expression of countenance, to eat a cake of chocolate. As he did so he cast frequent and anxious glances at the glass door, screened by a red and white checked curtain. Sometimes he even paused in his frugal meal to listen attentively—to the intense bewilderment of the hostess, who, seated behind the counter, close to
the door at which her customer gazed, might without much vanity consider herself the cause of his distraction.

At last the outer door bell rang in a peculiar fashion, causing our hero to start; drawing the plate of fish toward him he managed, unseen by the hostess, to throw half the contents to a dog, which had been gazing at him with famished eyes, and the remainder he cast to a no less ravenous cat. The curtained door next opened, admitting a man, dressed almost similarly to the patriot, except for the hairy cap, which he had replaced by a ‘bonnet rouge.’ A huge bunch of keys hung from his belt, in company with a large infantry sword with copper guard. ‘My soup! my chop!’ cried the new-comer, entering the parlour and merely nodding to the proprietrix without removing his ‘bonnet rouge.’ Then, with a wearied sigh, he stationed himself at a table adjoining that at which Théodore had been ostensibly supping. It was plain that the hostess held her latest customer in high esteem, for with a gracious smile she rose herself to execute his orders. The two men turned their backs on one another, one glancing idly into the street, the other straight before him. Not a word was exchanged between them till the landlady had disappeared.

As soon as the door closed, and the patriot perceived by means of a glass placed in front of him that the room was perfectly empty, he remarked without turning round, ‘Good-evening.’

‘Good-evening, monsieur,’ the other answered.

‘Well, where do we stand?’ in a tone of studied indifference.

‘It is all settled. As we arranged, I had an interview with Father Richard, told him about my increasing deafness and weak heart, and ended by fainting away.’

‘Very good; and then?’
'Father Richard summoned his wife, who brought me round by rubbing my forehead with vinegar.'

'Good! afterwards?'

'Afterwards, as it was arranged, I hinted that the fainting fits were produced by the lack of sufficient fresh air, and that the work at the Conciergerie, where we have now four hundred prisoners to guard, was slowly killing me.'

'What did they say?'

'Mother Richard pitied me.'

'And Father Richard?'

'He showed me the door.'

'But that is not sufficient for our purpose.'

'Wait a bit; Mother Richard, who is a kindly soul, told her husband he had no compassion, for I was the father of a family.'

'What was his answer to that?'

'He admitted she was right, but added that the first condition a turnkey must obey was to remain in the prison to which he was attached, that the Republic was in deadly earnest, and cut off the heads of those who fainted in the performance of their duties.'

'Diable!' exclaimed the other.

'He was quite right, too, for since the Austrian has been imprisoned there the place has become a hot-bed of suspicion; one cannot trust one's own father.'

The listener put down his plate for the dog to lick; 'Finish your story,' he ordered, without turning round.

'Finally, monsieur, I began to groan as though terribly ill, begged to be taken to the infirmary, and assured him my children would die of hunger if my wages were withheld.'

'And what did Father Richard say?'

'That a turnkey had no business to have any children.'

'But Mother Richard, I suppose, supported you?'

'Bravely! she gave her husband a stinging lecture, declaring vigorously that he was an unnatural being,
and Father Richard ended by saying: 'Well, Citizen Gracchus, make a bargain with one of your friends to give you a share of the wages, bring him to me as a substitute, and I promise to have him accepted. Whereupon I came away saying, "Very good, Father Richard, I will look for some one."

'And providentially you have found some one, my worthy fellow!'

At this moment the landlady entered with the soup and chop for Citizen Gracchus. This interruption did not suit either Gracchus or the patriot, who had evidently more business to discuss.

'Citizenship,' said the turnkey, 'Father Richard has given me a small present, so to-day I can afford pork cutlets and a bottle of Burgundy wine; send your servant to the pork-butcher's for the first, and fetch me the other from the cellar.'

The landlady immediately obeyed, despatching the servant to procure the cutlets, whilst she herself departed on a visit to the cellar.

'Capital, you are a smart fellow.'

'So smart that, in spite of your fair words and fine promises, I have a shrewd guess as to what this business means for us. Have you any idea of what it means?'

'Yes, I know perfectly well.'

'It is our heads we are risking.'

'Do not worry about mine.'

'No. I confess it is not yours which causes me most uneasiness.'

'It is your own?'

'Decidedly.'

'But if I estimate it at twice its actual value . . . .' 'Ah! monsieur, a head is an extremely valuable article.'

'I cannot say that yours is of great value.'

'How! mine is not?'

'Not at this moment, at all events.'
'What do you mean?'
'I mean that at present your head is not worth a groat! Suppose I happen to be an agent of the Committee of Public Safety, you will be guillotined to-morrow.'

The turnkey swung round with such an abrupt movement, that the dog barked at him fiercely. He was pale as death.

'Do not turn round, and don't lose your nerve,' exclaimed the other; 'but finish your supper quietly. I am not an agent of the police, my friend. Get me installed at the Conciergerie in your place, let me have possession of your keys, and to-morrow I will hand over fifty thousand francs.'

'Which is true, at least?'

'Oh! you have a splendid surety in my head.'

The turnkey pondered for a few seconds.

'You need not try to hatch out any mischief,' exclaimed the patriot, who could see his companion's face in the glass; 'if you denounce me, that is simply your duty, and the Republic will pay you nothing for it; on the other hand, since it is not the custom to do anything for nothing in this world, I shall give you fifty thousand francs in return for your assistance.'

'Oh! I understand perfectly well that it is to my advantage to accept your offer; but I fear the consequences.'

'The consequences! What have you to fear? You know I am not likely to denounce you.'

'Certainly not.'

'The day after I am installed you can pay a visit to the Conciergerie, and I will hand you over twenty-five rolls of paper, each containing two thousand francs. These twenty-five rolls can be placed in your pocket quite easily and without attracting attention. Along with the money I will give you a passport by means of which you can leave France without trouble;
wherever you may go, you will be, if not rich, at least, independent.'

'Well, it is agreed, monsieur, come what may. I am only a poor fellow, and take no part in politics. France has always managed well without me and will not collapse altogether even though I leave her. If you are making use of me in order to commit a crime it will be all the worse for you.'

'In any case, I very much doubt if I can do anything worse than the frightful deeds that are being done at the present day.'

'Monsieur will excuse me from passing judgment upon the politics of the National Convention.'

'You are decidedly an excellent fellow, with a fair amount of philosophy and carelessness. Now, when can you introduce me to Father Richard?'

'To-night, if you wish it.'

'Yes, by all means. Who am I impersonating?'

'My cousin Mardoche.'

'Mardoche be it; I like the name. What trade do I follow?'

'Breeches-maker.'

'From breeches-maker to tanner is but a step.'

'Are you a tanner?'

'I could be one.'

'That is true.'

'At what hour can you introduce me?'

'In half an hour, if you wish it.'

'At nine o'clock then.'

'When shall I have the money?'

'To-morrow.'

'You must be enormously rich?'

'I am comfortably off.'

'A ci-devant, is it not so?'

'What does it matter to you?'

'To have money and to spend it in order to run the risk of being guillotined; verily the ci-devant must be very stupid.'
'What would you have? the sans-culottes have so much intelligence that none is left for any one else.'
'Hush! here comes my wine.'
'This evening, then, opposite the Conciergerie.'
'Yes.'
The patriot, paying his score, left the inn. At the door he began calling out loudly: 'Hurry, then, citizeness, with the cutlets! my cousin Gracchus is starving.'
'That kind Mardoche!' observed the turnkey, sipping the Burgundy which the landlady, with many a tender glance, poured out for him.
CHAPTER XLII

THE REGISTRAR OF THE WAR OFFICE

Théodore took his departure from the inn, but instead of leaving the neighbourhood, he took up a position where through the smoky panes he could observe the turnkey and discover whether he was in secret communication with the agents of the Republican police, a force greatly dreaded for its power and its secrecy. At this period one half of society played the spy on the other half, not so much for the greater glory of the Government, as for the greater security of their own lives. What the onlooker almost seemed to expect, however, did not happen; shortly before nine o’clock the turnkey rising, saluted the landlady familiarly, and departed. Théodore, at the appointed time, rejoined him on the Quai de la Conciergerie, and both entered the prison. The bargain was concluded that same night, Father Richard finally accepting the turnkey Mardoche as a substitute for Citizen Gracchus.

Two hours previously to this business being successfully carried through, a scene occurred in another part of the prison which, though apparently uninteresting, was none the less of immense importance for the principal characters in our story. The registrar of the Conciergerie, fatigued with his day’s work, was folding up his papers preparatory to departing, when a man was ushered into his office by Mother Richard.

‘Citizen Registrar,’ she said, ‘here is Citizen Durand from the War Office, who is sent by the Citizen Minister to insert some military entries in the jail-book.’

‘Ah! citizen, you have come rather late; I was just going off,’ the registrar remarked.
'Excuse me, my dear colleague,' the other observed, 'but we have so much business on hand that our out-door errands can be done only in our so-called leisure hours, the time in fact utilised by others for eating and sleeping.'

'In that case one must not grumble with you, my dear colleague; but pray hurry, for, as you observe, it is supper-time, and I am hungry. Have you brought the letters of instruction?'

'Here they are,' the registrar from the War Office answered, showing a portfolio which his colleague, in spite of his impatience to be off, examined with scrupulous attention.

'Oh! that is all correct,' observed Richard's wife, 'my husband has already passed them.'

'No matter, no matter,' said the registrar, continuing his examination.

The Citizen Durand waited patiently, like one fully prepared for these formalities to be gone through.

'That is all right, and now you may begin whenever you choose. Have you many entries to make?'

'A hundred.'

'That will occupy you several days then?'

'Yes, my dear colleague, indeed I wish to set up a little establishment within your quarters, always by your leave, of course.'

'What do you mean by that?'

'I will explain as you come home to supper with me; you said you were hungry.'

'And I still say so.'

'Well, you will see my wife, who is a splendid cook; you will also make my acquaintance, and I am a pleasant companion.'

'Faith, so I should imagine; still, my dear colleague——'

'Oh! pray accept without ceremony the oysters I shall buy at the Place du Châtelet, a roast fowl, and some small etceteras in which my wife excels.'
‘You overwhelm me, my dear colleague,’ declared the registrar of the Conciergerie, tickled by this bill-of-fare, which to one paid by the Revolutionary Tribunal, at the rate of two francs a day, was a banquet for the immortals.

‘Then you accept my invitation?’
‘I accept it.’
‘In that case the work can wait till to-morrow; let us go for to-night.’
‘Yes, let us go.’
‘Are you coming now?’
‘In a moment; wait until I warn the gendarmes who guard the Austrian.’

‘Why is that necessary?’
‘Because after I leave there should be no one in the office, so that any noise will arouse their suspicions.’
‘Ah! very good; indeed it is an excellent precaution.’
‘You admit the necessity for it?’
‘Certainly. Go.’

The registrar knocked at the iron door, which was opened by one of the gendarmes, who asked, ‘Who is there?’

‘It is I, the registrar; I am going now. Good-night, Citizen Gilbert.’

‘Good-night, Citizen Registrar.’ The door was shut again. The registrar from the War Office had paid minute attention to this scene, and while the door of the Queen’s prison remained open had rapidly glanced over the outer apartment. Observing Duchesne, the other gendarme, sitting at the table, he felt convinced that the Queen had only two guards. Needless to say, when the registrar of the Conciergerie turned round, his colleague had assumed an air of the most stolid indifference. As they left the Conciergerie two men were entering; they were Citizen Gracchus and his cousin Mardoche. On perceiving each other, Mardoche and the registrar of the War Office, apparently
moved by the same sentiment, drew their caps down over their eyes.

‘Who are these men?’ Durand asked.

‘I only know one; a turnkey called Gracchus.’

‘Ah!’ remarked the other, with affected indifference; ‘so the turnkeys leave the Conciergerie?’

‘They have their day off duty.’

Nothing further passed, and the two men proceeded on their way by the Pont-au-Change. At the corner of the Place du Châtelet, Citizen Durand, in accordance with his promise, bought a basketful of oysters, after which they resumed their walk by the Quai de Grèves. The registrar’s dwelling was a very simple one, consisting of three small apartments on the Place de Grève, in a building possessing no porter. Each tenant had a key for the door in the passage, and an arrangement had been come to that a person forgetting his key should announce his arrival by knocking, once, twice, or three times according to the story he inhabited. Citizen Durand, however, had his key with him, so there was no occasion to knock.

The registrar of the Palais was already prepossessed in favour of his friend’s wife. She was, indeed, a charming woman, an expression of profound sadness rendering her face attractive at the very first glance. Sadness is most assuredly an added charm in a pretty woman, and wins all men, even registrars; for, whatever one says, registrars are men too, and no one with any feeling dislikes to console a pretty woman in distress, or as Citizen Dorat observed, ‘caused the pale white roses of her cheeks to glow with a ruddier hue.’ The two registrars ate with excellent appetite; Madame Durand, however, ate nothing. The conversation was animated, turning on numerous subjects. Citizen Durand asked with a curiosity somewhat exceptional in these days of daily dramas, as to the usual routine of the Palais, the days when trials were held, the means employed to keep guard. The registrar of the
Palais, delighted to have such an attentive listener, replied willingly, describing the characters of the jailers, of Fouquier-Tinville and of Sanson, the chief actor in that tragedy which was daily enacted on the Place de la Révolution.

Then, addressing his host, he asked for some information about his special department.

'Oh!' observed Durand, 'I am of far less importance than yourself and am not therefore so conversant with the details of my business; I am, indeed, rather secretary to the registrar than the actual holder of the office. Doing the work of the registrar-in-chief, I have but an obscure and difficult post, while more distinguished people reap the benefit. Such is ever the way with Government offices, even Revolutionary ones. Heaven and earth may change one day, but such offices will not alter.'

'I must see if anything can be done to help you, citizen,' said the visitor, delighted with his host's good wine, and fascinated by the beautiful eyes of Madame Durand.

'Oh! many thanks,' replied Durand; 'any change of scene or occupation is grateful to a poor worker. I am more afraid of seeing my work finished at the Conciergerie than of having it prolonged, so if I might bring Madame Durand, who would be lonely here, every evening to the office——'

'There is really nothing to prevent you,' said the registrar of the Palais, enchanted at the agreeable distraction thus promised him.

'She can dictate the entries to me,' continued Citizen Durand; 'and occasionally, provided tonight's supper is to your taste, you must come again.'

'Yes, but not too often; I should be well scolded were I to return later than usual, to a certain little house in Rue du Petit Musc,' the registrar said fatuously.
'That will do splendidly, will it not, my dear friend?' said Durand, addressing his wife.

'Let it be as you wish,' answered the latter, still very pale and very sad.

Eleven o'clock struck; it was time to retire. Getting up the visitor bade farewell to his new friends, expressing his great pleasure at having made their acquaintance. Citizen Durand escorted his guest to the landing; then re-entering the room, 'Come, Geneviève, go to bed,' he said. Without answering, the young woman rose, and, taking a lamp, passed into the apartment on the right. Durand, or Dixmer rather, watched her go, stood for a moment, after she left, with a thoughtful, gloomy expression; then he too withdrew to his room, situated on the opposite side of the landing.
CHAPTER XLIII

THE TWO NOTES

From that time the War Office registrar worked busily every night in his colleague's office; Madame Durand made the entries in registers specially prepared, while Durand copied them with extreme care and accuracy. Without appearing to notice anything, he yet examined everything. He had observed that each evening at nine o'clock Richard or his wife deposited a basket of provisions at the door. As soon as the registrar had observed, 'I am going, citizen,' the gendarme Gilbert or Duchesne, picking up the basket, carried it to Marie Antoinette. On the three consecutive evenings that Durand had stayed later at his task, the basket had been left longer in its place, since the gendarme only picked it up when opening the door to say 'Good-night.' A quarter of an hour after taking in the basket, one of the gendarmes laid down in the same place the empty one used the day before.

On the fourth evening, being the beginning of October, after the registrar had gone, Durand (or Dixmer), left alone with his wife, laid down his pen and glanced around him; then, listening with as much attention as if his life depended on it, he rose quickly, ran quietly towards the wicket-gate, and raising the napkin covering the basket, slipped a small silver purse into the new bread. Then, pale and trembling with the emotion that even the most self-controlled person feels in accomplishing a momentous act for which he has been long preparing and waiting, he returned to his place, pressing one hand upon his brow, the other on his heart. Geneviève watched his
movements without speaking. Since her husband had discovered her in Maurice's house, she had, on every occasion, waited for him to speak first. This time, however, she broke silence:—

'Is it arranged for to-night?' she asked.

'No, for to-morrow,' Dixmer answered.

After listening a little while longer, and having taken a further careful glance round, he rose, closed the registers, and knocked at the wicket-gate.

'Eh? what is it?' Gilbert asked.

'I am going, citizen.'

'Very well; good-night,' answered the gendarme from within the cell.

'Good-night, Citizen Gilbert.'

Hearing the creaking of bolts Durand knew the gendarme was about to open the door. He left his office, and in the corridor leading from Father Richard's apartments to the courtyard, he brushed against a turnkey in a hairy cap, brandishing a heavy bunch of keys. A sudden fear seized him. This man, rough like most of his colleagues, might stop him, scrutinise him, possibly recognise him. He pulled his hat over his eyes, while Geneviève concealed her face in her black mantle. The surmise was wrong, however, 'Ah! excuse me!' was all the turnkey said, as if he had been the offender. Dixmer started at the sound of this gentle, cultured voice. The turnkey was doubtless in a hurry, for, slipping along the corridor, he opened the door of Father Richard's room, and disappeared. Dixmer hurried on, leading Geneviève.

'It is strange,' he remarked, when the door closed behind them and the cool air had calmed his burning brow.

'Oh! yes, very strange,' Geneviève murmured.

Formerly, when they were on terms of intimacy, the two would have discussed the cause of their astonishment. But Dixmer kept his fantastic idea to himself, striving to imagine it was but a hallucination,
whilst Geneviève, in crossing the Pont au Change, merely glanced back at the gloomy Palais where some one resembling the ghost of a lost friend had newly awakened many sweet yet painful memories. Both reached La Grève without exchanging a word.

Meanwhile Gilbert had carried in the basket of provisions intended for the Queen, and containing fruit, a cold chicken, a bottle of white wine, a carafe of water, and the half of a two pound loaf. Raising the napkin, and noticing that these things were arranged as Mother Richard usually placed them, he pushed aside the screen, and announced in loud tones, 'Citizeness, here is your supper.' On breaking the bread, and feeling some cold object touch her fingers, Marie Antoinette realised that something unusual had happened. She glanced around hastily, but the gendarme had already withdrawn. For a moment she remained motionless, listening to the footsteps, until feeling sure the jailer had sat down beside his companion, she drew the purse from the loaf. It contained a note, and unfolding it she read as follows:—

'Madame, be ready to-morrow at this hour; a woman will come to your Majesty's cell, with whom you will exchange clothes. When you have dressed in hers you will leave the Conciergerie on the arm of one of your most devoted servants. Do not be alarmed by any noise you hear in the outer apartment; do not be stopped by cries or groans. Think only of dressing in the clothes of the woman who is to take your Majesty's place.'

'Devotion!' murmured the Queen; 'thanks be to God! I am not, as my enemies assert, an object of hatred to all.' Re-reading the note, the second paragraph struck her attention. 'Do not be stopped by cries or groans,' she repeated. 'Oh! that means they
will attack my guardians, poor men! and they have been so attentive; oh! never, never!

She tore off the blank part of the paper, having neither pen nor pencil to answer her chivalrous and devoted, though unknown friend, pricked out with a pin the following words: 'I cannot and ought not to accept the sacrifice of any person's life in exchange for my own. M. A.' She then placed the paper in the purse which she concealed in the remainder of the loaf. This operation was hardly finished, ten o'clock was striking, and the Queen stood with the bread in her hand sadly counting the hours, when, at a window looking into the women's yard, she heard a sharp sound as of a diamond grating on glass. This was followed by a slight shaking of the pane, repeated several times, and intentionally drowned by a man's cough. Next a small ball of paper was slipped in at the corner of the pane, and fell to the floor. Then the Queen heard the sound of keys in a bunch jingling and rattling on one another, while footsteps died away in the distance.

The Queen understood that the pane had been broken at the corner, where the man who was walking away had thrown a paper, no doubt a note. This note lay on the floor. The Queen glanced at it, listening to hear if one of the gendarmes was approaching; but they were only talking in low tones, as they usually did, having made a tacit agreement not to disturb her. Rising quietly, and holding her breath, the Queen advanced to pick up the paper. A small hard object slipped out of it, falling with a metallic sound on the stones. It was a file, extremely fine, rather an ornament than a tool, but of steel so sharp that even her weak, unskilled hand could cut through the thickest iron bar with it in a quarter of an hour. 'Madame,' the note ran, 'at half-past nine to-morrow a man will come and engage your jailers in conversation at the window looking into the women's yard. Meanwhile, your
Majesty must saw through the third bar of your window, going from left to right. Cut in a slanting direction; a quarter of an hour ought to suffice for the task. Afterwards be prepared to escape by the window. This advice is sent by one of your most faithful subjects, who has devoted his life to your Majesty and who will be happy to sacrifice it in your service.‘Can this be a trap?’ murmured the Queen. ‘No, for I seem to recognise this writing; surely it is that of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge. Ah! God may intend me to escape.’Falling on her knees, the Queen sought refuge in prayer, that crowning consolation for a prisoner’s heart.
CHAPTER XLIV

DIXMER'S PREPARATIONS

The next day dawned at last. The Queen, restless and excited, had slept scarcely at all; her disordered vision saw nothing but rivers of blood, her ears were for ever assailed by threatening and discordant cries. The file was in her hand as she slept. Part of the day she spent in prayer. Her guardians were accustomed to seeing her praying, so this increased devotion aroused no comment. From time to time she drew out the file from her bosom, mentally contrasting the slight instrument with the strong iron bars. The latter, fortunately, were fixed to the window only at the lower end; the upper part fitted into a bar running cross-wise. When once the lower end was sawn through, the bar could be lifted out.

These obstacles, however, did not cause the Queen to hesitate in the least. She realised that the plan was perfectly practicable, but this very assurance was saddened by the certainty that her escape could not be effected but by the shedding of blood. For it was essential that her friends should kill her guardians in order to reach her, and this she could not on any account sanction; these poor men were the first who had shown her the slightest compassion. On the other hand, she reflected that beyond these bars which she was instructed to saw, past the corpses of these two men, was life, liberty, possibly revenge; three things which appealed to her with such irresistible force that she earnestly begged pardon from God for desiring them so ardently.

It was perfectly obvious that her guardians entertained no suspicions, and if the supposed plot were
merely a cunning trap on the part of her enemies she felt certain that the scheme had not been confided to them. These simple men must have revealed their thoughts to one keen to discern evil intentions. The Queen, therefore, abandoned the idea of a snare being laid for her by her inveterate enemies, but as her fears of personal indignity diminished, so the apprehension of bloodshed spilled on her account became all the greater.

‘Strange destiny and wonderful spectacle!’ she murmured; ‘two conspiracies to save one unhappy queen, or unhappy woman rather, who has done nothing to encourage the conspirators. These two plots are arranged for the same moment. Who knows? they are perhaps but one. It is possibly a two-fold conspiracy leading to one result. It is in my power to save my life! But a poor woman must be sacrificed in my stead! And two men must be killed that this woman may sacrifice herself! God and future generations would never pardon me. It is impossible! impossible!’

Then there came into her mind instances of lofty devotion on the part of servants for their masters, in which were exemplified the old traditional ideas of the master’s right in the lives of his dependants—ideas, alas, which had almost vanished with the dying monarchy.

‘Anne of Austria would have accepted,’ she said to herself; ‘she regarded the safety of a royal person as supreme. Anne of Austria was of my race, nearly in the same position as myself. What madness to have come to France to pursue the same career as Anne of Austria! Yet I did not come of my own will, for two kings said: ‘It is essential that two royal children, who have never seen each other, who do not and per-chance will never love one another, should meet at the marriage-altar in order that they may die on the same scaffold together. Then, will not my death
entail my poor child's as well? my child who is regarded by our few remaining friends as the rightful King of France! When my son is dead like his father, will not their spirits smile pityingly on me who, in order that a few drops of common blood might be spared, stained with my own the tottering throne of Saint Louis?'

In such an agony of doubt and fear, an agony which increased unceasingly, did the Queen spend the time until the approach of evening. Several times she examined the countenances of her jailers, but never had they seemed calmer. Never, too, had the petty attentions of these coarse but kind-hearted men struck her more. When darkness fell, when the footsteps of guards, the sound of arms and the howling of dogs again awakened echoes in the vaults, when the great prison was enfolded in all its gloom and hopelessness, Marie Antoinette, overcome by weakness, rose in terror.

'Oh! I will fly,' she said; 'yes, yes, I will fly. When the man comes, when he speaks, I will cut through the bar; I will do as God and my rescuers bid me. It is a duty I owe to my children for they will not be executed, or, if they should, and I am free, oh! then at least—'

She could not finish, her eyes closed, her voice failed her. It was a fearful dream which assailed the unhappy Queen, alone in a cell, barred and bolted. But soon, in the dream, bolts and bars disappeared from sight; she saw herself in the midst of a stern, pitiless army of soldiers, ordering flame and sword to do their work of destruction; she was avenging herself on a nation which, after all, was not her own. Meanwhile Gilbert and Duchesne were quietly talking as they prepared their evening meal. Meanwhile, too, Dixmer and Geneviève were entering the Conciergerie, and taking their places in the registrar's office. An hour afterwards the registrar of the Palais, having finished his day's
work, left them alone. As soon as the door closed on his colleague, Dixmer hastened toward the empty basket placed at the door. Seizing the piece of bread, he broke it open and found the silver purse. The Queen's note was inside; he read it, paling as he did so. As Geneviève was watching him, he tore the note into a thousand pieces which he threw into a stove.

'It is all right,' he observed, 'everything is arranged.' Then turning to Geneviève, 'Come,' he said.

'I?'

'Yes, I must speak very quietly.' Geneviève, cold as marble, approached with an air of resignation. 'The hour has arrived, madame; listen to me.' 'Yes, monsieur.' 'You prefer to die a death which will assist your cause, a death for which a whole party will bless you, a whole people pity you, to an ignominious death which will satisfy only a personal vengeance?'

'Yes, monsieur.'

'I could have slain you when I discovered you in your lover's house, but a man who, like myself, has devoted his life to an honourable and sacred task, ought to make even his own misfortunes serve this cause; that is how I have acted, or rather, how I intend to act. I refused, as you are aware, the pleasure of demanding justice. I also spared your lover.'

A faint but terrible smile flitted across Geneviève's discoloured lips.

'But, as regards him, you, knowing my character, will understand that I waited only to find some better plan.'

'Monsieur, I am ready; why all this preliminary?' said Geneviève.

'You are ready?'

'Yes, you are killing me. I am ready, I am waiting.'

Dixmer, looking at Geneviève, could not help starting; she was sublime at that moment—her love shone round her like a resplendent halo.
‘I will resume,’ continued Dixmer; ‘I have informed the Queen and she is ready. She will most probably raise some objections, but you will compel her.’

‘Very good, monsieur; give your orders, I will obey them.’

‘Presently I will knock at the door; Gilbert will open it; with this dagger’—Dixmer unbuttoning his coat, half unsheathed a double-bladed dagger—‘I shall stab him.’

Geneviève shuddered. Dixmer signed to her to listen.

‘When I strike,’ he resumed, ‘you must rush into the inner apartment, where the Queen is. There is no door between as you are aware, only a partition. You will then change clothes with the Queen while I kill the other soldier. Then, taking the Queen’s arm, I shall pass out with her.’

‘Very good,’ observed Geneviève coldly.

‘Do you understand? You are seen here every night, enveloped in the black taffetas cloak. Give this cloak to Her Majesty, arranging it about her as you usually wear it yourself.’

‘I shall follow your instructions implicitly, monsieur.’

‘Now, I have only to pardon and to thank you, madame.’

Geneviève shook her head, smiling coldly.

‘I require neither your pardon nor your thanks; monsieur,’ she said; ‘what I do, or rather what I am about to do, would atone for a crime, and I have only been guilty of weakness. Yet, if you recall your conduct, monsieur, you will recognise that you almost forced me to this step. I strove to keep away from him, you drove me into his arms; you are then, instigator, judge, and avenger. It is I who have to pardon you, for causing my death, and I do pardon you. It is I who ought to thank you, monsieur, for depriving me of life, for, separated from the only man I love, life to me has become unendurable, more
"You are the Chevalier de Maison Rouge!"
especially since the day you so rudely broke all the bonds which bound me to him.'

Dixmer dug his nails into his flesh; he endeavoured to answer, but his voice failed him. He paced up and down the office.

'But time is passing,' he said at length; 'every minute is precious. Come, madame, are you ready?'

'I have already informed you, monsieur, I am waiting!' answered Geneviève, with the calmness of a martyr. Gathering up his papers, Dixmer looked to see that all the doors were securely closed so that no one could enter, then he prepared to repeat his instructions.

'It is useless, monsieur, I know perfectly well what I am to do,' Geneviève answered.

'Then, farewell,' he said, holding out his hand, as though, in this supreme moment, all bitterness should be forgotten, and only the grandeur of the situation and the sublimity of the sacrifice considered.

Geneviève, shuddering, touched with the tips of her fingers, her husband's hand.

'Place yourself near me, madame, and pass, as soon as I have struck Gilbert,' he ordered.

'I am ready.'

Then Dixmer, grasping in his right hand, the large dagger, knocked on the door with his left.
While the scene described in the preceding chapter was being enacted at the gate of the office overlooking the Queen’s prison, or rather overlooking the room occupied by the two gendarmes, other events were proceeding on the opposite side, that is, in the women’s court.

A man appeared so suddenly that he gave the impression of a stone statue which had detached itself from the wall. Followed by two dogs, and humming the ‘Ça ira,’ a very popular song of the time, he had struck and scraped the fine bars closing the Queen’s window, with the bunch of keys he carried. At first the Queen was afraid. Then, recognising the noise as a signal, she opened the window quietly, and set to work with a hand much more skilled than might have been believed. More than once in the locksmith’s shop, where her royal spouse frequently amused himself, she had handled with her slight fingers instruments similar to those upon which now hung all her chances of safety.

Directly the man with the bunch of keys heard the Queen’s window open, he began to knock at that of the gendarmes.

‘Oh,’ said Gilbert, looking across the tiled floor, ‘it’s Citizen Mardoche.’

‘The very man,’ replied the gate-keeper. ‘You seem to be keeping a pretty sharp look-out.’

‘Force of habit, Monsieur Key-carrier. I don’t think you’ll catch us napping often.’

‘Ah!’ said Mardoche, ‘but to-night vigilance is more necessary than ever.’

‘Rubbish!’ said Duchesne, who came up at the moment.
'No. It is quite true!'  
'What is wrong, then?'  
'Open the window and I will tell you.'  
'Open it,' said Duchesne.  

Gilbert opened the window and shook hands with the key-carrier, who had purposely struck up a friendship with the two gendarmes.  

'What is wrong, Citizen Mardoche?' repeated Gilbert.  
'Well, the Meeting of the Convention was a little heated. Did you know that?'  
'No. What happened?'  
'Oh, it was said at the beginning that Citizen Hébert has discovered something.'  

'What?'  
'That the conspirators, whom everybody believed dead, are alive, and very much alive at that!'  
'Oh, yes,' said Gilbert; 'Delessart and Thierry. I heard of that, the knaves are in England.'  

'And the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?' asked the warder, raising his voice in such a manner that the Queen must hear it.  

'What! Is he in England, too?'  
'Not at all; he is in France,' Mardoche continued, keeping his voice at the same pitch.  

'Has he come back?'  
'He never went away.'  
'Well, he certainly has plenty of assurance!' exclaimed Duchesne.  

'That's as may be.'  
'Surely they will try to arrest him.'  
'Oh, yes, they are going to try; but, easy as it may seem, they find it a hard enough job.'  

At this moment the Queen's file grated so loudly on the bars that the warder feared the noise must be heard, in spite of the efforts he was making to conceal it. He crushed his heel upon the paw of one of the dogs, which immediately gave a howl of pain.  

'Oh, poor brute,' Gilbert exclaimed.
'Tut,' replied the warder, 'he should have seen the sabot coming his way. Be quiet, Girondin, be quiet.'
'So your dog is called Girondin, Citizen Mardoche.'
'Yes, that is the name I have given him.'
'But go on with your story,' began Duchesne, who a prisoner himself, took all a prisoner's interest in news; 'go on with what you were telling us.'
'Oh, yes, I was just saying that Citizen Hébert—there's a patriot for you—I was just saying that Citizen Hébert had the intention of bringing the Austrian to the Temple.'
'Why?'
'Because he pretends that she has been removed from the Temple only to be under the more immediate supervision of the Commune of Paris.'
'Ah! And now tell us about the attempts of this wonderful Maison-Rouge,' said Gilbert. 'It seems to me that some underhand influence is at work.'
'Exactly what Citizen Santerre told him. But Hébert declared that from the moment danger is forestalled it no longer exists; that in the Temple they can guard Marie Antoinette with half the precautions needed here; that, in short, the Temple is a much stronger place than the Conciergerie.'
'Faith, I wish they would take her back to the Temple.'
'I quite understand. You are tired of guarding her here.'
'Not that, but she makes me sad.'
Maison-Rouge coughed violently. The file made much more noise now that it was biting deeper into the iron bar.
'What have they decided upon?' asked Duchesne, as soon as the warder's fit of coughing was over.
'That she shall remain here; but that her trial shall take place immediately.'
'Ah! poor woman!' said Gilbert.
Duchesne, whose ear was much keener than that of
his colleague, or whose attention was not so much absorbed by Mardoche’s tale, bent to listen at the side of the apartment on the left.

The warder noticed the movement.

‘So you will see, Citizen Duchesne,’ he continued rapidly, ‘the attempts of the conspirators will become more desperate when they know how little time remains to carry out their designs. The guards at the prisons will be doubled since it is a question of nothing less than a rising in the Conciergerie. Believe me the conspirators will slay mercilessly till they reach the Queen, till they come to the Widow Capet’s room.’

‘Bah? How will they get in?’

‘Disguised as good patriots, they will pretend to inaugurate another Second of September, rascals that they are; and once the prison doors are open—well, we shall know what to expect!’

A moment’s silence ensued as the gendarmes looked at him in stupefaction. The file continued to bite into the iron, and the warder heard the sound with a mixture of joy and terror. Nine o’clock struck. At the same moment a knock sounded at the door of the office, but the two gendarmes, in their pre-occupation, made not the slightest response.

‘Well, we shall see, we shall see,’ Gilbert remarked slowly.

‘And, if need be,’ added Duchesne, ‘we shall die at our post like good Republicans.’

‘She ought to have nearly finished,’ the warder reflected, as he wiped the perspiration from his damp brow.

‘And on your part,’ said Gilbert, ‘I suppose you will stand in with us; for if their plot succeeds they won’t spare you any more than us.’

‘Trust me,’ said the warder; ‘I pass my nights in making the rounds, and I am simply tired out. You others can, at least, relieve each other and can manage to sleep one night out of two.’

At this moment a second knock came to the door of
the office. Mardoche shook; every interruption, be it ever so small, might imperil the success of his project. ‘What is that?’ he asked, as if in spite of himself. ‘Nothing at all,’ replied Gilbert; ‘it is the Minister of War’s clerk who is going away, and is giving me warning.’

‘Oh, that is all right, then,’ remarked the warder. But the clerk continued his knocking. ‘All right, all right!’ cried Gilbert, without leaving the window. ‘Good-night! adieu!’

‘He seems to be speaking to us,’ said Duchesne, returning from his place beside the door. ‘Hadn’t you better answer him?’

Then they heard the clerk’s voice. ‘Come along, citizen gendarme,’ he was saying, ‘come along. I want to speak with you for a minute.’

This voice, stamped with an emotion which disguised its usual accent, reached the ears of the warder, who fancied he recognised it. ‘What do you want, Citizen Durant?’ asked Gilbert. ‘To tell you something.’ ‘Well, you can tell me to-morrow.’ ‘No; this evening. I must speak to you now.’ ‘Oh, oh,’ murmured the warder, ‘what is going on? That is Dixmer’s voice!’

Vibrating with a foreboding of evil, this voice imparted something funereal to the long-drawn-out echoes of the gloomy corridor. Duchesne returned. ‘Since he is so keen upon it I suppose I must go,’ said Gilbert, moving towards the door.

The warder made the most of this moment during which the attention of the two gendarmes was taken up by this unforeseen incident. He ran across to the Queen’s window. ‘Is it done?’ ‘More than half.’ ‘Oh, my God! make haste, make haste!’ he murmured.
'Ah, Citizen Mardoche,' said Duchesne, 'where are you?'
'I’m here,' cried the warder, returning quickly to the window of the first room.

At the same moment, and just as he reached the spot, there rang through the prison a terrible cry, then an oath, then the rattle of a sabre as it leaped from the metal scabbard.

'Ah, scoundrel! ah, brigand!' exclaimed Gilbert; and the noise of a struggle was heard in the corridor. At that very moment the door opened, showing to the warder’s eyes two shadows filling the gateway, and giving passage to a woman, who, pushing back Duchesne, threw herself into the Queen’s room. Duchesne, taking no notice of the woman, hastened to his comrade’s assistance. The warder rushed to the other window, and at the Queen’s feet saw the woman praying the prisoner to change clothes with her.

He gazed with burning eyes, endeavouring to make sure of her identity; for he thought he had already recognised her. He uttered a cry of grief.

'Geneviève! Geneviève!' he exclaimed.

The Queen had dropped the file, and appeared utterly crushed. Here was still another attempt which had ended in failure.

With both hands the warder seized the half-filed iron bar, and shook it with all his might. But the bite of the file had not been sufficiently deep, and the bar withstood all his efforts. During this time, Dixmer was attempting to drive Gilbert back into the prison, and was on the point of entering with him, when Duchesne, throwing his weight upon the door, succeeded in repulsing him. But he could not shut it, for Dixmer, driven desperate, had placed his arm between the door and the wall. His hand held a dagger, which, blunted by the copper buckle of the sword-belt, had slipped along the gendarme’s breast, cutting his coat and tearing his flesh. The two men encouraged each other, united
their forces, and at the same time shouted for help. Dixmer felt that his arm was on the point of breaking. Placing his shoulder to the door he gave a violent push, and was able to withdraw his injured arm. The door closed with a bang; Duchesne shot the bolts, while Gilbert turned the key.

A rapid step was heard in the corridor, then all was quiet. The two gendarmes looked at each other, and began to search all around them. They heard the noise made by the pretended warder as he tried to break the bar. Gilbert, running to the Queen’s apartment, found Geneviève on her knees begging the Queen to change dresses with her. Seizing his musket, Duchesne ran to the window. There he saw a man hanging on to the bar, and wrenching it in an agony of rage, as he tried in vain to climb.

The gendarme took aim. The young man saw the barrel of the weapon pointed towards him.

‘Yes,’ he cried, ‘shoot. Kill me! Kill me!’ and sublime in his despair, he threw out his breast to defy the bullet.

‘Chevalier,’ cried the Queen, ‘I beg you. Do not throw away your life.’

At the sound of Marie Antoinette’s voice, Maison-Rouge fell on his knees. The shot sped; but the movement saved him, the ball passing over his head.

Geneviève, believing him slain, fell unconscious upon the floor.

When the smoke had passed away, no one was in the women’s court. Ten minutes later, thirty soldiers, led by two commissaries, searched every corner of the Conciergerie. They found no one. The clerk had passed calm and smiling before the arm-chair of Father Richard. As to the warder, he ran out crying,—

‘To arms! To arms!’

The sentry would have kept him back with his bayonet, but the dogs leaped at his throat. Only Geneviève was arrested, questioned, and imprisoned.
CHAPTER XLVI

THE INVESTIGATIONS

We cannot any longer neglect one of the principal characters in this story, who suffered more keenly and more acutely than any one whilst the events recorded in the preceding chapter were happening. The sun shone brightly in Rue de la Monnaie, the old women gossipped at their doors as merrily as if no gloomy shadow had brooded during the past ten months over the city, when Maurice returned with the carriage he had promised to procure. Leaving the horse in charge of a shoeblack near Saint-Eustache, he bounded with joyful heart up the steps. Love possesses wonderfully vivifying powers, kindling to emotion hearts hitherto quite insensible; it peoples the desert, it conjures up to one's eye the image of the loved one; influenced by its appeal the lover views the entire creation through a roseate mist of hope and happiness. Though an expansive emotion, it is at the same time selfish, blinding the eyes of the lover to all but the loved one. Maurice was oblivious of the presence of these gossipping women, nor did he hear their remarks. All he perceived was Geneviève busied with preparations for a journey, which would assure them lasting happiness; he heard only Geneviève absently singing her usual song, which echoed so sweetly in his ears that he fancied he heard the different modulations of her voice mingled with the sound of closing locks.

Maurice stopped on the landing; the door was ajar, and since it was always kept shut, he felt surprised. He looked all around to see whether Geneviève were in the corridor, but she was not there. Entering, he
examined the ante-room, dining-room, and drawing-room, he visited the bedroom; but all were deserted. He called, but no one answered. The servant had gone on an errand, as we know; Maurice reflected that, in his absence, Geneviève, needing cord to fasten her trunks or some provisions for the journey, might have gone out to purchase them. This appeared to him very rash; but, although feeling vaguely uneasy, he had no suspicion of the real catastrophe. Meanwhile he paced to and fro, occasionally leaning out of the window, through which the moisture-laden air entered in gusts. Soon a step was audible on the stair; he listened, but it was not Geneviève. Nevertheless he ran out on the landing and, leaning over the railing, saw his servant mounting the steps with that unconcern habitual to his class. 'Scévola!' he cried. The servant looked up. 'Ah! it is you, citizen!' 'Yes, it is I; but where is the citizeness?' 'The citizeness?' repeated Scévola in surprise. 'Yes. Did you see her downstairs?' 'No.' 'Then go down again, and question the porter and the neighbours.' 'I will go at once,' answered Scévola, turning back. 'Quicker, then! quicker!' cried Maurice. 'Can you not see I am dying with impatience?' Maurice waited on the stair for a few minutes, then, as Scévola did not return, he entered his room, to watch once more from the window. He saw Scévola enter two or three shops and leave them without learning anything. Terribly impatient, he called out to him, and the servant, raising his head, saw his master at the window. Maurice beckoned to him to come up. 'It is impossible she should have gone out,' he reflected, and began calling again: 'Geneviève! Geneviève!' All was silent. The deserted room seemed no longer to possess even an echo. Scévola reappeared. 'The porter is the only one who has seen her.'
'The porter saw her, you say? How?'
'He saw her leaving the house.'
'She did go out, then?'
'So it appears.'
'Alone? Geneviève would never go alone.'
'She was not alone, citizen; a man was with her.'
'What! a man?'
'So the porter asserts, at least.'
'Go and fetch him; I must find out who this man is.'
Scévola walked towards the door, but suddenly turned round.
'Wait a moment,' he said, apparently reflecting.
'What do you mean? Speak, for I am nearly out of patience.'
'The citizeness has perhaps gone with the man who ran after me.'
'A man ran after you?'
'Yes.'
'Why?'
'To ask me, on your behalf, for the key.'
'What key, wretched man? Speak, for Heaven's sake!'
'The key of your rooms.'
'You gave the key of my rooms to a stranger?' cried Maurice, seizing his servant by the collar.
'But he was not a stranger, monsieur! He was a friend of yours.'
'Ah! yes, a friend of mine. Good, it is Lorin, no doubt. That is it, she has gone with Lorin,' exclaimed Maurice, smiling and wiping his heated brow.
'No, no, monsieur, it was not he. Pardieu! I think I should know M. Lorin well.'
'Who was it, then?'
'You know very well, citizen, the man who came one day—'
'What day?'
'The day you were so miserable. He took you out and you returned home happy.'
Scévola, smart and alert, had observed all these things.

Maurice glanced at him wildly, shuddered all over, and after a long silence cried, 'Dixmèr?'

'Ma foi, yes, I believe that is the name, citizen.'

Maurice staggered feebly, and sank into an arm-chair.

A mist swam before his eyes. 'Oh! my God!' he groaned. Opening his eyes again, he noticed the bunch of violets, forgotten or left by Geneviève. Rushing towards them, he caught them up and kissed them. Then realising the significance of their position he murmured, 'There is no longer any doubt: these violets—are to say farewell!' Turning round, he noticed for the first time that the trunk was half filled, and that the rest of the linen lay on the floor or in the opened wardrobe. It had doubtless slipped from Geneviève's hands at Dixmer's entrance. Now all was clear. The scene rose up vividly before his eyes, the awful scene which had occurred in the room that had witnessed so much happiness. Maurice, until this moment, had felt broken and crushed with anxiety. The awaking was fearful, his rage terrible. Closing the window, he took two pistols, loaded for the journey, from his desk, and, after making sure that the tinder was all right, put the weapons in his pocket. Then he slipped two packets of louis into his purse, and picked up his sword.

'Scévola,' he exclaimed, 'I believe you are devoted to me; you have served my father and myself for fifteen years.'

'Yes, citizen,' answered the servant, terrified at the deathly pallor and nervous trembling so unusual in his master, who was justly considered the bravest and strongest of men; 'yes, what are your orders?'

'Listen! if the lady who stayed here——' Maurice stopped; his voice trembled in pronouncing these words so that he could not continue. 'If she returns,' he resumed, after a few moments, 'fasten the door
behind her; station yourself on the stair with this musket, and for your very life permit no one to enter. If the door is forced, defend it. Strike! kill! Fear nothing, Scévola, I assume full responsibility for everything.'

The young man's voice, his confident tones, roused Scévola.

'I will not only kill, but be killed for the sake of the citizeness,' he exclaimed.

'Thanks; now, listen. This room is hateful to me, and I have no desire to return here till I have found her. Should she escape and return here, place at your window the Japanese vase filled with the marguerites of which she was so fond. During the day, that is. At night, place a lantern. Each time I pass the end of the street, I shall look up; as long as I see neither vase nor lantern, I shall continue my search.'

'Oh! monsieur, be careful! be careful!'

Maurice returned no answer; leaving the room, he ran down stairs and proceeded without pause to Lorin's apartments. It would be difficult to describe that worthy poet's amazement and rage on learning the news.

'You do not know where she is?' he repeated unceasingly.

'Lost, disappeared!' replied Maurice in a fit of despair; 'he has killed her, Lorin, he has killed her!'

'No, my dear friend, no, my good Maurice, he has not killed her; one does not murder a woman of Geneviève's type deliberately; no, he would have killed her at once, had he intended to, and left her corpse at your house, in token of revenge. No, don't you see, he has fled with her, overjoyed at recapturing his treasure.'

'You don't know him, Lorin, you can't understand him; you haven't detected the sinister expression of his face.'

'I am sure you are mistaken; he has always appeared
to me a good-natured fellow. But when he is arrested as a traitor she will be with him, and they will be sent to the guillotine together. Ah! that is where I see the real danger.'

These words increased Maurice's excitement.

'I must find her again! I will find her or die!' he exclaimed.

'Oh! it is a certainty that we shall discover her,' Lorin asserted; 'only, calm yourself. Come, my good Maurice, believe me, searching is merely wasted energy unless one reasons first, and that is impossible in your disturbed state.'

'Farewell, Lorin, farewell.'

'What do you mean to do?'

'I am going away.'

'You are leaving me? Why?

'Because this is my business; because I alone should risk my life to save Geneviève's.'

'You wish to die!' 

'I shall brave all; I shall go to the President of the Vigilance Committee, to Hébert, to Danton, to Robespierre; I will make a full confession, but they must restore her to me.'

'Very good,' said Lorin, as he rose, buckled his belt tighter, put on his soldier's hat, and, like Maurice, placed two loaded pistols in his pockets. 'Let us go,' he added simply.

'But you are running into danger!' cried Maurice. 'Well, what of that?'

'Where shall we begin our search?' asked Maurice.

'Let us look first in the old neighbourhood; you know where I mean? Rue Vieille Saint-Jacques; then we can hunt up Maison-Rouge, for where he is, Dixmer will doubtless be found. Next we must examine the houses near the Vieille Corderie. You are aware there is some talk of transferring Antoinette to the Temple? Believe me, men like these will not easily relinquish the hope of rescuing her.'
'Yes, indeed, you are right. But, do you think Maison-Rouge is in Paris?'
'Dixmer certainly is.'
'True, true; they will be together,' and Maurice began to show a little reason.

The two friends began their investigations immediately, but all in vain. Paris is vast, and contains dark places of concealment where secrets entrusted to her by guilty or unhappy people remain effectively hidden. A hundred times Lorin and Maurice crossed the Place de Grève, a hundred times they passed the little house where Geneviève had lived, guarded ceaselessly by Dixmer, as in former years victims destined for sacrifice were guarded by the priests.

Geneviève, knowing herself doomed, accepted the inevitable, and wished, like all noble souls, to die without an outcry; moreover she feared, less on Dixmer’s account than for the Queen’s cause, the publicity which Maurice would assuredly have given to his vengeance. She therefore remained silent, as though death had already sealed her lips.

Maurice, however, without informing Lorin, had appealed to the members of the terrible Committee of Public Safety; Lorin, without telling Maurice, had done exactly the same thing. That very day a red cross was marked beside their names by Fouquier-Tinville, and the word ‘Suspects’ united them in a dread embrace.
CHAPTER XLVII

THE SENTENCE

On the 23rd day of the month of the Year II of the French Republic, according to the description then in vogue, corresponding to the 14th October, 1793, old style, a curious crowd had filled since early morning the galleries of the hall in which the meetings of the Tribunal were held. The corridors of the Palais, the passages of the Conciergerie swarmed with eager, impatient spectators, and waves of sound and emotion spread from one group to another. In spite of the curiosity with which all were animated, perhaps even by reason of it, each wave of this human sea, surging between two barriers, one pushing it forward, the other driving it back, amid this ceaseless ebb and flow, each maintained practically its original position. But the more favoured ones understood that they must pay for their advantages; accordingly they reported to their less fortunately placed fellows all they saw and heard, and these in turn related it to the others.

Near the Tribunal door, however, a closely packed group of men were roughly struggling for ten inches of space, either lengthwise which would be sufficient for them to see, between two shoulders, a corner of the hall and the faces of the judges, or in height by which they could see, above an obstructing head, the entire hall and the face of the accused person. Unfortunately this narrow passage leading out of a corridor into the hall was almost entirely filled by a broad-shouldered man, who, with arms akimbo, stayed the swaying crowd, ready to flow into the hall if this living
rampart gave way. This man who stood immovable at the entrance to the Tribunal was young and handsome; at each rough onset of the crowd, he shook his long thick hair like a mane, whilst his eyes flashed sternly and boldly. When he had succeeded, by gesture and glance, in driving back the crowd, he once more became motionless. A hundred times had the solid mass endeavoured to overthrow him, for it was impossible to see beyond him; but, as we have said, no rock could have been more immovable.

Nevertheless, on the other edge of this human sea, in the midst of this jostling crowd, another man had forced a passage for himself with an almost fierce persistence. Nothing had stopped his steady progress, neither the blows of those behind, the curses of those he crushed in passing, nor the cries of women, for many women were present in the throng. To blows he had responded with blows, to curses by a look which made the bravest quail, to cries by an impassiveness, resembling contempt. At last he arrived behind the young man who blocked the entrance to the hall, and amid the general expectancy—for every one wished to see what happened when two such fierce antagonists met—he employed his particular method of passing, which was to place his elbows like wedges between two spectators and with his whole body to force aside all opposing objects. He was a small slight man, with pale face and a fragile appearance, but his keen eyes betokened strong force of will. Directly his elbow touched the young man in front, the latter turning in amazement at this attack, raised his hand threateningly. The two, thus brought face to face, uttered a faint ejaculation. They had recognised one another.

'Ah! Citizen Maurice,' begged the second comer with indescribable sadness, 'let me pass; let me see, I beseech you! you may kill me afterwards!'

Maurice felt a thrill of compassion and admiration
for this ceaseless devotion, this indomitable resolution.

‘You!’ he exclaimed; ‘you here, rash man!’

‘Yes, I am here! but I am exhausted. Oh! mon Dieu! she speaks! let me see her! let me hear her!’

Maurice, falling back, permitted the young man to pass. Nothing now obstructed the view of the one who had endured so many blows and rebuffs to reach this position. This scene, with the noise it occasioned, awakened the curiosity of the judges; the accused, too, glanced in this direction. She then saw and recognised the Chevalier, standing in the first row. A slight tremor shook the Queen, as she sat in the iron chair. The cross-examination conducted by President Harmand, elucidated by Fouquier-Tinville, and discussed by Chauveau-Lagarde, the Queen’s advocate, lasted as long as the strength of the judges and the accused permitted. All this time Maurice remained motionless at his post, while fresh crowds came and went in the hall and corridors. The Chevalier leaned against a pillar, almost as pale as the stucco composing it. Night had come; a few candles placed on the jurymen’s table, some lamps smoking throughout the hall, cast a sinister light on the noble face of the woman who had looked so beautiful at the fêtes in Versailles, where all was brilliantly illuminated. She sat there alone, replying briefly and scornfully to the President’s questions, occasionally bending forward to whisper in her advocate’s ear.

Her white polished brow was as haughty as ever; she wore the black striped dress in which she had dressed ever since the King’s death.

The judges rose to retire for deliberation; the sitting was over.

‘Have I been too haughty, monsieur?’ asked the Queen of Chauveau-Lagarde.
'Ah! Madame, you always act well, when you act like yourself,' he replied.

'See how proud she is!' cried a woman in the audience, as though answering the Queen's question. The Queen turned in the direction of the voice.

'Yes, I say you are proud, Antoinette, and your pride has proved your ruin,' the woman repeated.

Turning to the woman who had thus spoken, the Chevalier said softly, 'She was a queen.'

'Come,' whispered Maurice, 'be brave, and do not risk your life.'

'Oh! Monsieur Maurice, you are a man, and are aware that you talk to a man. Tell me, do you think they will condemn her?'

'I do not think, I am sure of it.'

'Oh! a woman!' cried Maison-Rouge, with a sob.

'No, a queen, as you yourself said.'

The Chevalier seized Maurice by the wrist, and with almost incredible force compelled him to lean towards him. It was now half-past three in the morning; the building was becoming deserted. Here and there lights had been extinguished, leaving portions of the hall in darkness. One of the darkest parts was the corner where the Chevalier and Maurice found themselves.

'What brought you here, monsieur? What do you, who are not an unfeeling monster, wish to do here?' the Chevalier asked.

'Alas! I have come to discover the whereabouts of an unfortunate woman.'

'Yes, yes, she who was driven by her husband into the Queen's cell! She who was arrested before my eyes?'

'Geneviève?'

'Yes, Geneviève.'

'So, Geneviève is a prisoner, sacrificed by her husband, killed by Dixmer? Oh! I understand all now. Chevalier, tell me what has occurred, tell me
where she is and where I can find her. Chevalier, do you hear, this woman is dearer than life to me?'

'Well, I have seen her; I was present when they arrested her. I too had gone to rescue the Queen! but our two plots, which we had not been able to discuss together, instead of helping, destroyed one another.'

'And you did not even save her, your sister, Geneviève?'

'How could I? An iron grating separated us. Ah! had you been there, uniting your strength to mine, the accursed bar would have yielded, and we could have saved both.'

'Geneviève! Geneviève!' sighed Maurice. Then, looking with an indescribable expression of anger at Maison-Rouge he asked, 'And Dixmer, what happened to him?'

'I do not know. He escaped in one direction, I in another.'

'Oh! if I ever encounter him—' muttered Maurice between set teeth.

'Yes, I understand. But Geneviève's position is not yet dangerous, whilst the Queen— Oh! Maurice, you are kind-hearted, you have friends, influence. Oh! I pray you, as people pray to God, help me to save the Queen.'

'Do you realise what you are saying?'

'Maurice, Geneviève is appealing to you with my voice.'

'Oh! do not mention that name, monsieur. Perhaps you too, like Dixmer, helped to sacrifice her.'

'Monsieur,' answered the Chevalier proudly, 'when I espouse a cause, I act so that no one but myself is sacrificed for it.'

Maurice was just about to reply when the door of the room where the conclave was sitting opened. ' Silence, monsieur, silence! here are the judges returning,' the Chevalier whispered. Maurice felt his hand tremble as he laid it on his arm.
'Oh! my heart will fail me,' murmured Maison-Rouge.

'Courage and restrain yourself, or you are lost,' his companion urged.

The judges were entering, news of their arrival spread through the corridors. The crowds flocked back into the hall; the lights appeared suddenly to become brighter, as if in preparation for this solemn moment. The Queen had been brought back; she stood erect, haughty, motionless, her eyes fixed, her lips closely set. The sentence condemning her to death was read. She listened without paling, nor did her face betray the slightest sign of emotion. Turning towards the Chevalier, she gave him a long, eloquent glance, as though to thank this man whom she had always regarded as a pillar of devotion; then, leaning on the arm of the officer of gendarmerie, she left the Tribunal, calm and dignified. Maurice breathed a long sigh.

'Thank God!' he said, 'nothing in her declaration has compromised Geneviève, so there is still hope.'

'Thank God!' murmured the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, 'all is over and the struggle is finished. I had no strength to go any farther.'

'Be brave, monsieur!' whispered Maurice.

'I shall be, monsieur,' he answered.

After shaking hands, the two left by different doors. The Queen was conducted to the Conciergerie; four o'clock was striking on the prison clock as she entered. At the end of the Pont-Neuf Maurice found his way barred by Lorin's two arms.

'Halt, you cannot pass!' he said.

'Why then?'

'Where are you going, in the first place?'

'Home. I can return now, for I know what become of her.'

'So much the better; still I say you will not return.'

'And the reason?'
'Because the gendarmes came two hours ago, to arrest you.'

'Ah! well, that is an additional reason why I should return.'

'Are you mad? and Geneviève?'

'True. Where must we go?'

'To my rooms, pardieu!'

'But I am bringing you to ruin.'

'The more reason we should go, then. Come,' said Lorin, dragging Maurice with him.
CHAPTER XLVIII

PRIEST AND EXECUTIONER

Immediately after the trial the Queen had been conveyed to the Conciergerie. On reaching her room in the Conciergerie the Queen took her scissors and cut off her long and beautiful hair—grown more beautiful in the absence of powder, which had been abolished a year before. She enclosed the hair in a paper, on which she wrote: *To be divided between my son and my daughter.* Then she sat, or rather fell upon a chair, and utterly broken down by fatigue—the trial had lasted eighteen hours—she slept.

At seven o'clock the noise of the folding-screen being moved woke her up with a start. She turned and saw a man quite unknown to her.

'What do you wish?' she asked.

The stranger approached, and, bowing as politely as though she had not been the Queen, replied, 'I am Sanson.'

The Queen shuddered slightly and rose. That name alone explained more than a long discourse.

'You come very early, monsieur,' she said. 'Could you not wait a little while?'

'No, madame,' he replied, 'I was ordered to come,' and he made a step towards the Queen. Everything in the man and in the movement was expressive and terrible.

'Ah, I understand,' said the prisoner; 'you have come to cut off my hair?'

'It has to be done, madame,' the executioner answered.

'I am aware of that, monsieur, and I desired to save you the trouble. My hair lies on the table.'
Sanson followed the direction of the Queen's hand. 'Only,' she continued, 'I should like it given to my children.'

'Madame,' replied Sanson, 'I have nothing to do with that.'

'However, I thought——'

'Nothing comes to me, except the spoils of—persons . . . their clothes, their jewels, and whatever else they may formally present to me. Otherwise, everything goes to the Salpêtrière, and belongs to the poor of the hospitals. An edict of the Committee of Public Safety has settled things in this manner.'

'But, surely, monsieur, I can count upon my hair being given to my children.'

Sanson remained silent.

'I will do my best toward it,' Gilbert interposed.

The prisoner looked at the gendarme with the most grateful recognition.

'Now,' said Sanson, 'I came to cut off your hair, but since the business is done, I can, if you wish it, leave you for a moment, alone.'

'I thank you, monsieur,' the Queen answered, 'for I have need to collect my thoughts and to pray.'

The Queen immediately found herself alone, since Gilbert had only looked in to reply to the Queen's pathetic appeal. While she knelt upon a chair which, being lower than the others, served her as a prie-Dieu, a scene not less terrible than that which we have just recounted was passing in the parsonage of the little church of Saint-Landry, in the city.

The curé of this parish was just getting up. His old servant was preparing his modest breakfast, when suddenly there came a violent knocking at the door of the parsonage. Even in our days an unexpected visit to the house of a priest always announces an event of some importance—a baptism, a marriage, or a confession; but at this time the visit of a stranger portended something more serious. The priest at
this period had, in point of fact, ceased to be God’s proxy, and was compelled to give an account of his deeds to man.

The Abbé Girard, however, was among those who should have had little to fear, for he had sworn to be true to the Constitution. To him, conscience and upright life had appealed much more strongly than did self-esteem and religious spirit. Certainly the Abbé admitted the possibility of progress in government and detested the abuses committed in the name of Divine power. Whilst still worshipping God, he had accepted the brotherhood of the Republican régime.

‘See who is knocking so violently at the door at this early hour of the morning,’ he said to Dame Jacinthe; ‘and if by chance the business is not pressing, say that I am summoned this morning to the Conciergerie, where I am going immediately.’

Dame Jacinthe had formerly been called Madelaine, but she had accepted the name of a flower in exchange for her own, just as the Abbé Girard had accepted the title of citizen in place of that of curé.

At her master’s request, Dame Jacinthe hurried down the steps of the little garden, into which the gate opened. She drew the bolts, and a young man, very pale and very agitated, but of frank, pleasant aspect, presented himself.

‘The Abbé Girard—is he at home?’ he asked.

Jacinthe considered the disordered dress, long beard, and nervous trembling of the new-comer. Everything appeared of ill omen.

‘Citizen,’ she declared, ‘no abbé lives here.’

‘Pardon, madame,’ the stranger replied, ‘I mean the officiating minister of Saint-Landry.’

In spite of her patriotism, Jacinthe was struck by the word madame, which had been refused to an Empress. However, she answered,—

‘You cannot see him, citizen; he is at prayers.’

‘In that case, I will wait,’ he replied.
'But,' said Jacinthe, 'your waiting will be useless, citizen, for he has been summoned urgently to the Conciergerie, and is just about to set out.'

The persistence of the stranger was having its effect upon Jacinthe. Her original feeling of apprehension returned, and she determined he should not see the abbé. The young man, on hearing her word, became frightfully pale, or, rather, from being pale, he turned livid.

'So it is true,' he muttered. Then in a louder voice he said, 'That, madame, is the very matter about which I wish to see Citizen Girard.'

Saying this, he entered, gently, it is true, but with firmness, pushed home the bolts of the gate, and despite the protests and even threats of Dame Jacinthe, entered the house and proceeded to the abbé's room. The abbé, as he caught sight of him, uttered an exclamation of surprise.

'Pardon me, Monsieur le Curé,' his visitor began presently; 'I wish to discuss a very serious matter with you. May we be alone?'

The old priest knew by experience how deep grief manifests itself, and in the forlorn appearance of his unexpected visitor he read an infinity of passion, while the feverish voice gave ample evidence of the deepest emotion.

'Leave us, Dame Jacinthe,' he commanded.

The eyes of the young man impatiently followed the domestic, who, accustomed to know her master's business, hesitated to retire. When at length she had shut the door the unknown burst out,—

'Monsieur le Curé, you are going to ask me first of all who I am. I will tell you. I am a proscribed man, one condemned to death. I am the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge.'

The abbé gave a little jump in his great arm-chair.

'Oh, fear nothing,' the Chevalier replied in answer to this movement; 'no one, I believe, saw me enter,
but any one who may have done so would not recognise me; I have changed so much within the last two months.'

'But, citizen, what do you want?' the curé asked.

'You are going to the Conciergerie, this morning, are you not?'

'Yes, I have received orders to that effect.'

'Do you know why?'

'Probably to attend a sick person or a dying man, or one condemned to death.'

'That is it; you have said it; yes, it is a person condemned to die, to whom you are called to minister.'

The old priest gazed with astonishment at the Chevalier.

'But are you aware who the person is?' Maison-Rouge queried.

'No; I do not know.'

'Well, this person is—the Queen!'

'The Queen! Oh, my God, the Queen!' the abbé cried, in a grief-stricken voice.

'Yes, monsieur, the Queen! I determined to ascertain what priest they intended to send her. I learned that it was you, and hastened here as quickly as possible.'

'What do you wish me to do?' the priest asked, terrified at the Chevalier's excited speech.

'I wish—I know not what, monsieur. I come to implore you, to beg you, to pray you.'

'To do what?'

'To let me enter with you, that I may be near Her Majesty.'

'That would be mere folly,' cried the abbé; 'you would bring us both to the scaffold.'

'Have no fear.'

'The poor woman is condemned, and that ends the matter.'

'I know. It is not to attempt a rescue that I wish
to see her; it is—— But listen to me, father; you are not listening to me.'

'I am not listening because you are asking me to do impossibilities, and are behaving as if you were out of your mind,' the old man replied. 'Besides, you frighten me.'

'You may reassure yourself, father,' his visitor said, trying to calm himself; 'believe me, father, I am in full possession of my senses. The Queen is lost. Granted. But I want to throw myself at her feet only for a moment. That will save my life. Unless I see her I shall kill myself, and since you know the cause of my despair, you will have slain both body and soul.'

'Think for a moment, my son. You are asking the sacrifice of my life. Old as I am, my existence is still necessary to many unfortunates, and, besides, to seek death before its time is suicide.'

'Do not refuse, me, father,' the young man answered. 'Listen; you need an acolyte—take me with you.'

The priest endeavoured to recover his firmness, which was beginning to fail.

'No,' he said; 'no. That would make me false to my duties. I have accepted the Constitution and have sworn to it on soul and conscience and from the bottom of my heart. The woman condemned is a guilty Queen. I will accept death, if it will be of use to my neighbour; but I will not be false to my duty.'

'But,' the Chevalier cried, 'when I tell you, when I repeat to you, when I swear to you that I do not wish to save the Queen. Stop; upon this Gospel, nay, upon this crucifix, I swear that I am not going to the Conciergerie to prevent her death.'

'Then what do you want?' the old man asked, moved by the young man's evident despair.

'Listen,' said the Chevalier, whose whole soul seemed to seek a passage from his lips, 'she was my benefactress. She has some friendliness towards me, and
I am sure that to see me in her last moments will afford her some consolation.'

'Is that all you desire?' the priest asked, moved beyond measure by the pitiful tones.

'Absolutely everything.'

'You are not concocting some plot for her rescue?'

'No. I am a Christian, father, and if there is in my heart the shade of a lie, if I am working in any way whatever toward a rescue, may God punish me with eternal damnation.'

'No, no; I can promise nothing,' cried the curé, to whose mind recurred the great and numerous dangers of such an imprudent action.

'Listen, father,' continued the Chevalier, 'I have spoken to you as a dutiful son. Towards you I have nothing but loving and Christian feelings; not a bitter word, not a single threat has come from my mouth, no matter how my head burns, no matter how fever boils in my blood and despair wrings my heart, no matter how I am armed. You see I have a dagger.'

The young man drew out a thin and shining blade which threw a livid reflection upon his trembling hand.

The curé drew back quickly.

'Have no fear,' said Maison-Rouge, with a sad smile, 'others, knowing you to be faithful to your word, would have exacted a promise from you by threats. But I begged you, and still do beg you, with clasped hands and my brow to the floor; let me see her but for a single moment. 'Look; here is a warrant.'

Taking a note from his pocket, he presented it to the Abbé Girard, who unfolded it and read these words:—

'I, René, Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, declare, before God and on my honour, that I, by threat of death, compelled the worthy curé of Saint-Landry to bring me to the Conciergerie, in spite of his refusals and
strong opposition. In evidence of the good faith of this, I subscribe myself,

'Maison-Rouge.'

'Very good,' said the priest; 'but swear to me still further that you will be prudent. It is not enough that my life should be safe. I am answerable also for yours.'

'Oh, do not think of that,' said the Chevalier; 'you consent?'

'I must, since you are so determined. Wait below for me, and when she passes the grating you will see—'

The Chevalier seized the old man's hand and kissed it with the ardour and respect with which he would have kissed the crucifix.

'Oh,' murmured the Chevalier, 'she will, at least, die as a Queen, and the hand of the executioner shall never touch her.'
CHAPTER XLIX

THE CART

On obtaining the necessary permission from the curé of Saint-Landry, Maison-Rouge rushing into a small room which he concluded was used as a dressing-room, quickly shaved off his beard and moustache. For the first time he became aware of the ghastly pallor of his skin. He returned to the next room, outwardly calm; moreover, he had apparently completely forgotten that, in spite of the lack of beard and moustache, he might be recognised at the Conciégerie. Following the abbé, who had already been sent for, with that boldness which disarms all suspicions, he entered through the iron gateway leading at that time into the courtyard of the Palais. He was dressed like Abbé Girard, in a black coat, priestly vestments having been abolished. In the registry office they met over fifty people, employees, deputies, or commissioners, waiting, either under orders or simply from curiosity, to see the Queen pass. The Chevalier's heart beat so violently when he arrived outside the door of the cell that he could not hear the words exchanged by the abbé, the gendarmes, and the porter. A man holding a pair of scissors and a piece of cloth, newly cut, brushed against him on the threshold, and Maison-Rouge recognised the executioner.

'What do you want here, citizen?' Sanson asked.

The Chevalier endeavoured to repress the shudder which ran through his veins.

'I? You see, Citizen Sanson, I accompany the curé of Saint-Landry,' he answered.
'Ah! very good,' replied the executioner, turning aside to issue some orders to his assistant. Maison-Rouge meanwhile passed through the office into the apartment occupied by the two gendarmes.

These worthy men were completely overcome; proud and dignified as was her demeanour with others, the condemned woman had ever been kind and gentle with them; they seemed rather her servants than her jailers. From his position the Chevalier was unable to see the Queen, as the partition was closed. It had been opened to admit the curé, but closed immediately afterwards, and when the Chevalier entered a conversation had already begun.

'Monsieur,' the Queen was saying in penetrating, proud tones, 'since you have taken an oath of allegiance to the Republic, by whose will I am to die, I can have no confidence in you. We do not worship the same God!'

'Madame,' answered Girard, much affected by this scornful confession of faith, 'a Christian about to die should die without any feelings of hatred in her heart, and she ought not to repulse her God, in whatever form He is presented to her.'

Maison-Rouge advanced a step to open the partition, hoping that, when the Queen saw him and knew why he had come, she would address the curé differently; but the two gendarmes made a movement.

'But, since I am the acolyte to the curé——'

'Since she has refused to hear the curé she does not need his acolyte,' answered Duchesne.

'But perhaps she will accept his services,' said the Chevalier, raising his voice; 'it is impossible for her to refuse them.'

Marie Antoinette, however, was too engrossed in stating her feelings to hear or recognise the Chevalier's voice.

'Go, monsieur, and leave me,' she continued, still addressing Girard; 'since we are living in France at the'
present day in a state of liberty, I claim the liberty of dying as I choose.'

Girard attempted to argue with her.

'Leave me, monsieur; I ask you to leave me,' she ordered.

The priest tried once more to speak.

'I really wish you to go,' the Queen said, with a gesture such as Marie Thérèse might have employed. Girard left her. Maison-Rouge tried to attract her attention through the screen, but the prisoner had her back turned to him. The executioner's assistant, with ropes in his hand, met the curé as he departed. The two gendarmes pushed the Chevalier to the door before he had time, amazed, dazed, and utterly despairing as he was, to utter a cry or do anything to effect his purpose. He soon found himself with Girard in the corridor, and presently in the registry office, where the news of the Queen's refusal was already known, and her Austrian pride was being rudely denounced by some and secretly admired by others.

'Go,' said Richard to the abbé; 'return home since she repulses you, and let her die as she chooses.'

'She is quite right, do you know; I would do the same,' said Richard's wife.

'You would be wrong, then, citizeness,' the abbé observed.

'Be quiet, woman; is this any of your business?' muttered the warder, scowling at his wife. 'Go, Monsieur l'Abbé, go home.'

'No, I shall accompany her, whatever her wishes may be; one word even may recall her to her senses; besides, the Commune has entrusted me with a duty—and I must obey the Commune.'

'So be it; but dismiss your assistant,' ordered the officer in command of the forces. He had formerly been an actor of the Comédie-Française, and was named Grammont. The Chevalier's eyes flashed ominously; instinctively his hand went to his vest,
where Girard knew a dagger was concealed. The latter stopped him with a look of entreaty. 'Spare my life,' he whispered; 'you see that your hopes have vanished; do not lose your life with her; I will speak about you on the way, and tell her what you risked in order to see her for the last time.'

This assurance calmed the young man's passion, and, moreover, now that the natural reaction had set in, his whole frame had become strangely weak. This man of heroic will-power, of marvellous strength, seemed to have lost confidence; he was now in a state of indecision, crushed, vanquished, and dazed. To an onlooker he had the appearance of a dying man.

'Yes,' he said, 'it must be so; the cross for Christ, the scaffold for her. Gods and kings drink deeply of the cup which men give them.'

With this feeling of resignation in his mind the young man permitted himself to be conducted to the outer door, making no more resistance than Ophelia when the waves carried her down the stream. Nevertheless he could not altogether suppress an involuntary groan.

At the doors of the Conciergerie surged a formidable crowd, a crowd altogether beyond the reach of imagination, conceivable only by those who saw it. Impatience dominated all other passions, though all found violent expression, so that from the formidable and prolonged outcry one would have imagined the entire population of Paris had gathered in the neighbourhood of the Palais de Justice. In front of this crowd a whole army was drawn up, thoroughly armed and prepared to keep order, thus enabling those assembled to view the mournful spectacle in safety. An attempt to force a passage through this solid rampart would have been futile, and every moment the news of the condemnation was bringing fresh patriots from the outlying quarters in ever-swelling numbers.

Maison-Rouge, driven out of the Conciergerie, found himself among the first rank of the soldiers, who asked
him what he was doing there. He told them he was
the Abbé Girard's vicar, but though acting as his curé
the Queen had refused his services in that capacity.
The soldiers at this pushed him back to the front row
of spectators. There he was forced to repeat the
information with which he had supplied the troops.
Then cries and questions were heard: 'He comes
from her—he has seen her—what did she say? What
is she doing? Is she as proud as ever? Is she crushed?
Does she weep?' The Chevalier replied to all these
questions in a mild, sweet voice; it seemed as though
he were making one last effort before his life ended.
His answers were the plain, simple truth, but into his
statement he wove a eulogy of Marie Antoinette's
firmness, and what he said, with the simplicity and
ingenuousness of a preacher, filled many hearts with
remorse. When he spoke of the little Dauphin and
Madame Royale, of this Queen without a throne, this
wife bereft of husband, this mother robbed of her
children, this woman alone and abandoned, friendless
in the midst of executioners, more than one face ex-
pressed sadness, and many a burning tear filled eyes
which previously had glared with hatred.

As eleven o'clock struck on the clock of the Palais,
all sounds were hushed. A hundred thousand people
counted each stroke of the hour. The last stroke died
away, a loud noise arose from behind the gates, whilst
a cart, advancing from the Quai aux Fleurs, drove
through the ranks of the people and stopped at the
foot of the steps. Presently the Queen appeared at the
top of the long staircase. The crowd gazed with
varying emotions upon her; animation seemed sus-
pended. Her hair was cut short. It had grown white
during her imprisonment, and this silvery shade threw
into delicate relief a strange pallor, which at this
supreme moment endowed the daughter of the Cæsars
with an almost angelic beauty. She was clad in a
white robe; her hands were tied behind her back.
As she thus came into sight, with Abbé Girard on her right hand and on her left the executioner, both clad in black, a murmur ran through the crowd, which God alone, who reads the most secret feelings of all hearts, could truly comprehend. A man passed between the executioner and Marie Antoinette. It was Grammont, pointing out to her the shameful car. The Queen instinctively recoiled.

'Mount,' said Grammont. Every one heard the command, for all murmurs had died away. The Queen flushed to the very roots of her hair, but immediately afterwards her face assumed a deathly pallor. Her blanched lips moved. 'Why a cart for me, when the King drove in his carriage to the scaffold?' she asked.

Abbé Girard whispered to her, no doubt endeavouring to quell this last outburst of royal pride. The Queen ceased talking, and staggered forward. Sanson extended his arms to support her, but she recovered and moved on alone. As she descended the stairs an assistant fastened a wooden step behind the cart. The Queen mounted, the abbé followed. Sanson instructed them both to sit down. As the cart drove off, the crowd surged to and fro, and the soldiers, vaguely alarmed, exerted all their strength in order to drive the people back. Consequently a space was left clear between the cart and the front ranks. Suddenly from this open space a mournful howling arose. The Queen, rising to her feet, gazed all around, and at last noticed her dog, which, since it had not been allowed into the Conciergerie with her, she had not seen for two months. In spite of cries and blows, it was now advancing towards the cart, but as the Queen looked, poor Black, thin, emaciated, woe-begone, disappeared beneath the horses' feet.

The Queen followed it with her eyes. Speech was futile, since her voice would be lost amid the noise; she could not point, as her hands were tied. In any case,
she would doubtless have appealed in vain. A moment later she caught sight of it once more in the arms of a pale young man who stood on a cannon overlooking the crowd. An indescribably exalted look made him appear taller as, after gazing at the Queen, he pointed toward heaven. Marie Antoinette too glanced upwards and smiled sweetly. The Chevalier de Maison-Rouge groaned as though her smile hurt him, and, as the cart turned round by the Pont au Change, he disappeared amongst the spectators.
CHAPTER L

THE SCAFFOLD

On the Place de la Révolution, their backs against a lamp-post, stood two men. They were waiting with a crowd, one part of which had been borne to the Place du Palais, another to the Place de la Révolution, the rest of it being spread out, noisy and jostling, over the whole length of road separating the two places. They were waiting the arrival of the Queen at the guillotine, which, discoloured by rain and blistered by the sun, soiled by the hand of the executioner, and stained—oh, horrible!—by the contact of its victims, dominated with evil pride all adjacent objects, as a queen her people. The two men, with linked arms, pale lips, and frowning brows, speaking in low, jerky tones, were Lorin and Maurice.

Hidden amidst the spectators, and yet so situated as to arouse every one’s envy, they continued in a low voice their conversation, whilst the mob, like a living sea, flowed from the Pont au Change to the Pont de la Révolution. The idea of the scaffold dominating everything had struck both of them.

‘Look,’ said Maurice, ‘how the hideous monster raises its red arms; would one not imagine that it calls us?’

‘Ah! by my faith,’ said Lorin, ‘I vow I am not of that poetic school which sees everything red. I view things through rose-coloured spectacles, and, even at the foot of this hideous machine, can both sing and hope. *Dum spiro spero.*’

‘You hope! When they are killing women?’

‘Ah! Maurice, son of the Revolution, do not deny your mother. Ah! Maurice, remain a good and loyal
patriot. Maurice, she who is going to die is not a woman like other women—she is the evil genius of France.

‘Oh, it is not she, whom I regret! It is not she for whom I weep,’

‘Yes, I understand. It is Geneviève.

‘Ah!’ exclaimed Maurice, ‘that is the thought which drives me mad. Geneviève is in the hands of Hébert and Fouquier-Tinville, those providers for the guillotine; in the hands of the men who have sent here poor Héloïse, and are sending here the proud Marie Antoinette.’

‘That is precisely where my hope lies,’ Lorin remarked. ‘When the people’s wrath has made a huge meal of two tyrants, it will be more than satisfied for some time at least, just as the boa needs three months to digest what it has devoured. During that time there will be no sacrifice, and, as the prophets on the faubourgs declare, the people instead of demanding another meal will be nauseated by a mouthful.’

‘Lorin, Lorin,’ replied Maurice, ‘I am more practical than you, and what I tell you in a whisper I am prepared to say aloud. Lorin, I hate the new queen who will succeed the Austrian whom they are about to destroy. A terrible queen she will be, whose purple is made from the daily flow of blood, and whose chief minister is Sanson.’

‘Bah! we shall escape!’

‘I scarcely think so,’ his companion replied, shaking his head; ‘you see that to avoid being arrested at home, we have no other resource than to remain in the street.’

‘Bah!’ said Lorin, once more; ‘we can leave Paris; nothing can hinder us. Do not let us lose confidence. My uncle waits for us at Saint-Omer; money, passport—nothing is wanting. No gendarme would arrest us. What do you think of it? We remain here because we wish to.’
'No, my most excellent friend; what you say is not right. You know, devoted as you are, you remain because I wish to wait.'

'And you wish it that you may recover Geneviève. Well, what is more simple, more just, or more natural? You believe she is in prison. That is very probable. You desire to watch over her; that can be done only in Paris.'

Maurice heaved a sigh; it was evident that his thoughts were wandering.

'You recollect the execution of Louis XVI.?' he said. 'I see myself even now, pale with emotion and pride. I was a leader of this crowd in the folds of which I am hiding to-day. I was greater at the foot of the scaffold than ever was the King who mounted on it. What a change, Lorin! And to think that nine months have sufficed to bring about this terrible reaction!'

'Nine months of love, Maurice! O Love, Troy fell through you!' Maurice sighed; his errant thoughts took another direction and gazed upon another horizon.

'Poor Maison-Rouge,' he murmured; 'it is a sad day for him.'

'Alas!' said Lorin, 'would you like to know what is the saddest thing I see in revolutions, Maurice?'

'Yes.'

'It is that often one has for enemies those whom they would like as friends, and for friends those whom——'

'I have difficulty in believing one thing,' interrupted Maurice.

'What?'

'That he will not try some plan, madly useless, to save the Queen.'

'One man stronger than a hundred thousand?'

'That is what I said; madly useless. For my part, I know that to save Geneviève——'

Lorin frowned
‘I tell you again, Maurice,’ he replied, ‘I tell you again that you are going astray. Even if you fail to save Geneviève you will not become a bad citizen. But enough on that subject, Maurice; they are listening to us. Look, all necks are craning, and here is Citizen Sanson’s valet raising the basket and looking afar off. The Austrian is at hand.’

In truth, as if to accompany the movement of the crowd which Lorin had remarked upon, a groaning long sustained and increasing in volume was heard. It was like a squall which, beginning with a hiss, ends in a scream. Maurice, raising his tall figure by means of the arms of the lamp-post, looked towards the Rue Saint-Honoré.

‘Yes,’ he said, with a shiver, ‘she is there!’

Then there came into view another object almost as hideous as the guillotine itself—the cart. Right and left flashed the arms of the escort, and before it Grammont answered the cries of some fanatics by flourishes of his sabre. But as the cart advanced the cries became suddenly still under the calm, cold look of the condemned woman. Never did countenance impose respect with more energy; never had Marie Antoinette been greater or more regal. Her pride and her courage terrified her attendants. Indifferent to the exhortations of the Abbé Girard, who, against her wishes, had accompanied her, the Queen glanced neither to right nor left. The thoughts rushing through her brain were as unfathomable as her countenance. The jerky movements of the cart only served to show, by their very violence, the unbending rigidity of her demeanour. One might have said it was a marble statue being conveyed along the road; only the royal statue had bright eyes and her hair was moved by the wind.

A silence like that of the desert fell suddenly upon the three hundred thousand spectators of this scene. Soon, from the post where Maurice and Lorin had
established themselves, the creaking of the cart and the snorting of the troopers' horses could be heard.

The cart stopped at the foot of the scaffold.

The Queen, absorbed in her own reflections, roused herself and understood. She turned her haughty countenance upon the crowd, and the same pale young man whom she had observed standing upright on a cannon now appeared standing on a post. He sent to her the same respectful salute which he had already given at the moment of her departure from the Conciergerie; then in a second he had leaped to the ground. Several people saw him, and, as he was dressed in black, rumour had it that a priest had waited for Marie Antoinette to grant her absolution at the moment she should mount the scaffold. For the rest, no one disturbed the Chevalier; in supreme moments certain things exact supreme respect.

The Queen descended cautiously the three steps of the cart. She was supported by Sanson, who, at the last moment, while carrying out his duties, showed towards her the greatest respect.

As she passed on her way to the steps of the scaffold some horses reared, some foot-guards and soldiers for a moment became unsteady. Then something like a shadow glided under the scaffold, but calm was restored almost in an instant. No one wished to leave his place at this solemn moment, no one desired to lose the slightest detail of the great drama which was on the point of accomplishment. All eyes were fixed on the Queen as she went to her death.

Marie Antoinette was already on the platform of the scaffold. The priest continued talking to her; one assistant pushed her gently from behind; another untied the fichu which covered her shoulders. The Queen felt this infamous hand touch her neck. Making a sudden movement, she trod on the foot of Sanson, who, without her knowledge, was engaged in fastening her to the fatal plank. Sanson drew back his foot.
'Excuse me, monsieur,' the Queen said; 'it was an accident.'

These were the last words spoken by the daughter of the Cæsars, the Queen of France, the widow of Louis XVI.

The quarter past twelve sounded from the clock at the Tuileries, and at the same moment Marie Antoinette passed into eternity.

A terrible cry—containing within itself all manner of suffering, joy, astonishment, grief, hope, triumph, expiation—covered an exclamation feeble and sorrowful which, at the same time, came from under the scaffold. Feeble as it was, however, the gendarmes heard it, and took several steps forward. The crowd, not so thickly pressed together, spread like a flood when the dyke is removed, broke through the line of soldiers, scattered the guards, and in its eagerness began to push against the foot of the scaffold, which was shaken by the heavy pressure.

But the gendarmes sought something else—the shadow which had passed their lines and glided under the scaffold. Two of them returned holding by the neck a young man whose hand pressed on his heart a handkerchief stained with blood. He was followed by a little spaniel which howled sorrowfully.

'Death to the aristocrat! death to the aristocrat!' cried the mob; 'he has dipped his handkerchief in the blood of the Austrian. Death to him!'

'Oh, my God!' exclaimed Maurice, 'don't you recognise him? don't you see who it is?'

'Death to the Royalist,' rose the cry again; 'take away the handkerchief he wants as a relic. Arrest him! Arrest him!'

A proud smile played on the prisoner's lips. He undid his shirt, uncovered his breast, and let his handkerchief fall.

'Messieurs,' said he, 'this blood is not that of the Queen but my own. Let me die in peace.'
And a deep, gaping, shining wound appeared on his left breast.
The crowd uttered a cry and fell back.
Then the dying man sank slowly, and fell upon his knees, regarding the scaffold as a martyr looks at the altar.
‘Maison-Rouge!’ murmured Lorin in Maurice’s ear.
‘Adieu’ sighed the young man, lowering his head with a divine smile, ‘adieu; or, rather, au revoir!’
And he expired in the midst of the stupefied guards.
‘One can still do that, Lorin,’ said Maurice, ‘before becoming a bad citizen.’
The little dog turned towards the corpse, afraid and whining.
‘Hallo! it is Black,’ exclaimed a man who held a great stick in his hand; ‘it’s Black; come here then, old fellow!’
The dog advanced towards the man who had called it; but hardly had it come within reach of his arm when he raised the stick and smashed the poor animal’s head, bursting into a laugh at the same time.
‘The wretch,’ cried Maurice.
‘Silence!’ murmured Lorin, stopping him; ‘silence, or we are lost. It is Simon.’
CHAPTER LI

A DOMICILIARY VISIT

Lorin and Maurice had returned to the former's rooms. Maurice, in order not to compromise his friend too openly, had adopted the custom of leaving the house in the morning and only going back at night. Mingling with the spectators, he watched the prisoners being transferred to the Conciergerie, and was daily looking for Geneviève, as he could not discover in which prison she had been confined. Since his visit to Fouquier-Tinville, Lorin had impressed on him the fact that the first open step taken would be fatal, and he would lose his own life without affording the smallest assistance to Geneviève; Maurice, who would gladly have sacrificed his freedom in order to be with Geneviève, became prudent at the fear of losing her for ever. Each morning, therefore, he went from Carmes to Port-Libre, from the Madelonnettes to Siant-Lazare, from La Force to the Luxembourg, stationing himself opposite the prisons as the carts came out bearing the accused to the Revolutionary Tribunal. After scrutinising the victims, he would hasten on to another prison. However, he soon comprehended that the vigilance of ten men would scarcely suffice to watch carefully the thirty-three prisons which Paris possessed at that period; he contented himself with visiting the Tribunal itself, there to await Geneviève's appearance.

He already began to despair. Indeed, what hope could remain to a condemned person after being sentenced? Sometimes the Tribunal, opening for the day's duties at ten o'clock, had condemned twenty o-


thirty people to death by four o'clock; the one first sentenced still enjoyed six hours of life; but the last, condemned at a quarter to four, died at half-past four. In resigning himself to the thought of such a fate for Geneviève, he felt he had ceased to struggle against fate. Had he been forewarned that Geneviève would be imprisoned, how he would have tricked this blind justice! how easily, how quickly he would have snatched her from danger! Never had escapes been more easy to effect; it is true that never had they been less frequent. The members of the nobility, once arrested, installed themselves in prison as in a castle, making comfortable preparations for death. To escape was to avoid the consequences of the duel; even women blushed for liberty acquired at such a price. But Maurice would not have shown these scruples! To kill a few dogs, to corrupt a turnkey, what could be simpler! Geneviève was not one of those illustrious persons who attracted universal attention. She would not dishonour her name by flying, and besides—what though she did dishonour it?

Ah, how bitterly he thought upon the gardens of Port-Libre, so easy to scale; the rooms at the Madelonnettes, through which an entrance to the street could conveniently be made; the low walls of the Luxembourg, the gloomy corridors of the Carmes, into which a determined man could enter by the mere smashing of a window! But was Geneviève in any of these prisons? Torn by doubt, worn out by anxiety, Maurice heaped imprecations upon Dixmer; he uttered threats against him, and by continual brooding augmented his hatred of this man, whose cowardly revenge was cunningly disguised as an act of devotion to the royal cause. 'I shall find him as well,' Maurice reflected; 'for if he wishes to save her, he will make an appearance; if to ruin her, he will come to insult her. I shall
find him, the scoundrel, and may Heaven help him!"

On the morning of the day whose events we are about to relate, Maurice had left the house to take up his usual place at the Revolutionary Tribunal. Lorin, who still slept, was awakened by a loud noise at his door, a mingling of women's voices and the rattling of muskets. He glanced around him in the furtive manner of a man taken by surprise, to reassure himself that nothing compromising was lying in sight. Four Sectionaries, two gendarmes, and a commissary entered his room together. This visit was so significant that Lorin hastened to dress.

'You have come to arrest me?' he exclaimed.

'Yes, Citizen Lorin.'

'Why?'

'Because you are suspected of treason.'

'Ah! true.' The commissary noted down a few words at the end of the warrant of arrest.

'Where is your friend?' he next inquired.

'Which friend?'

'Citizen Maurice Lindey.'

'In his own house, probably.'

'No, he is living here.'

'You are quite mistaken! Make a thorough search, and if you find him——'

'Here is the denunciation which is clear enough,' interrupted the commissary, presenting to Lorin a piece of paper which contained a statement in abominable handwriting and somewhat puzzling spelling. The declaration asserted that each morning Citizen Lindey was observed leaving the house of Citizen Lorin, a 'suspect' ordered for arrest. This was signed 'Simon.'

'Ah! the cobbler will lose his custom, when he tries to exercise two trades at once. What! spy and boot-mender! He is a regular Cæsar. this M. Simon!' said Lorin, bursting out laughing.
'Citizen Maurice! where is Citizen Maurice? We order you to surrender him,' the commissary exclaimed.

'But I tell you he is not here!'

The commissary passed into the next room, then mounted into a little loft where Lorin's servant lodged. Next he examined a room on the lower story, but found no trace of Maurice anywhere. On the dining-room table, however, a recently written letter attracted the commissary's attention. It was one which Maurice that morning, before going out, and not wishing to disturb his friend, had left. 'I am going to the Tribunal,' the letter ran; 'lunch without me, for it will be evening before I return.'

'Citizens,' observed Lorin, 'eager as I am to obey your orders, I cannot, as you will readily agree, come as I am. Kindly permit my valet to dress me.'

'Aristocrat!' muttered a voice; 'he needs to be helped to put on his clothes.'

'Mon Dieu, yes! I resemble Citizen Dagobert in that respect. Observe, I did not say king.'

'Dress if you must, but be quick,' the commissary ordered.

The servant came downstairs to assist his master. Lorin did not really need his help, but he wished him to hear all that passed in order that he might repeat it to Maurice.

'Now, gentlemen—excuse me, citizens—now, citizens, I am ready to follow. But please allow me to take the last volume of Lettres d'Emile, by M. Demoustier, which has recently been published. I have not read it yet, and it will relieve the monotony of my captivity.'

'Your captivity?' said Simon, suddenly appearing in the rôle of a municipal and followed by four Sectionaries; 'your captivity will not last long; you are to appear at the trial of the woman who attempted to rescue the Austrian. She is being tried to-day; you will be tried to-morrow, after giving evidence.'
'Shoemaker, you are disposing of your soles too quickly,' said Lorin gravely. 

'What a fine cut that will be from the paring-knife!' answered Simon, with a terrible leer; 'you shall see, my fine Grenadier, you shall see.'

Lorin shrugged his shoulders. 'Well, are we going? I am waiting,' he said. As they turned to descend the stairs, Lorin gave Simon such a violent kick as to send him sprawling, howling with rage, to the bottom of the steep, slippery steps. The Sectionaries could not help laughing. Lorin put his hands into his pockets.

'In the exercise of my duties, too!' cried Simon, livid in his anger.

'Parbleu! are we not all engaged in doing our duties?' answered Lorin.

The commissary, placing him in a cab, drove off to the Palais de Justice.
CHAPTER LII

LORIN

If the reader will kindly follow us once more to the Revolutionary Tribunal, we shall see Maurice at his accustomed post, only he now appears paler and more agitated than on previous occasions. As we enter this gloomy building, whither we are driven by the course of events rather than by our own inclination, we find the jury engaged in deliberating on a case just heard. Two accused, who have already, in a spirit of insolent raillery against their judges, made their preparations for the guillotine, are conversing with their lawyers, whose vague statements are very similar to those used by a doctor who has lost hope of his patient's recovery. That day the occupants of the galleries had assembled in a wild, uncontrolled mood, distinctly calculated to influence the severity of the jury. Directly supervised by the 'tricoteuses' and people of the faubourgs, the jurymen behaved with even undue harshness, as actors perform with extra zeal before an audience whom they know to be hostile.

As a consequence, since ten o'clock that morning, five accused had been condemned by this same jury, grown deaf to all appeal. The two sitting now on the bench of the accused awaited the moment when the decisive 'yes' or 'no' would restore them to liberty, or consign them to death. The mob, rendered absolutely ferocious by their daily attendance at this tragic spectacle, and regarding it as their favourite pastime, were discussing the accused with the greatest freedom and levity.
'Look! look! how pale the tall one is! he might be dead already!' cried a tricoteuse, who had stuck in her hair a great tricolor cockade which she wore instead of a bonnet. The prisoner smiled disdainfully at the speaker.

'What did you say? He is laughing,' protested the woman's neighbour.

'Yes, but it is on the wrong side of his mouth.'

One of the crowd consulted his watch. 'What time is it?' asked his companion.

'Ten minutes to one; this has lasted three-quarters of an hour.'

'Exactly as things are done at Domfront, unlucky town; you arrive at midday, and are executed at one o'clock.'

'And the little one!' cried another bystander; 'do look at him! how ugly he will look when his head falls in the sack!'

'Bah! the thing is over so quickly, you have no time to see it.'

'Tiens, then we must ask Sanson to give us his head; we have a right to see it.'

'See what a fine blue coat he wears; it is a good thing for the poor when well dressed people suffer.'

As the Queen had been informed, the poor people fell heirs to the clothes of each victim; these spoils were taken to La Salpêtrière immediately after the execution, and there distributed to the needy. The Queen's possessions had been sent to the same place.

Maurice heard all this murmur of conversation without paying any heed to it; each one was occupied with his own all-absorbing thoughts at this moment. For some days his heart seemed to have been beating only at intervals; at times a sudden gleam of hope, a sudden fear seemed to stop his very breathing, and these perpetual shocks had reduced him to a state of apathy. The jury returned, and, according to general expectation,
condemned both the accused to death. They were led out, walking with a firm step; every one faced death bravely at this period. The usher’s voice was heard, solemn and sinister: ‘The citizen public accuser against the Citizeness Geneviève Dixmer.’ Maurice shuddered violently, while beads of perspiration stood on his face. Through the little door by which the accused entered, Geneviève appeared. She was dressed in white; her hair was arranged with charming coquetishness, being curled and dressed artistically, instead of cut short, as so many of the female prisoners wore theirs. Doubtless to the last the unfortunate Geneviève wished to create a favourable impression on the spectators.

Maurice, at sight of her, felt that all the self-control he had struggled so hard to obtain was deserting him; yet he had been expecting this blow to fall sooner or later! For a fortnight he had not missed attending one sitting of the Tribunal, and thrice already he had heard the public accuser pronounce Geneviève’s name. There exist depths of feeling, however, which cannot be sounded. The appearance of this woman, so lovely, pale, and ingenuous, created a sensation. Some cried out in anger—for that period produced people who detested superiority of any kind, of beauty or wealth, of genius or of birth—others expressed admiration, a few pity. It was clear Geneviève recognised one voice amid the general outburst, for she turned in Maurice’s direction, while the president read the papers relating to the accused, glancing sideways at her as he did so. She recognised Maurice immediately, though his face was entirely hidden by the wide-brimmed hat which he wore, and, turning with a sweet smile and still more engaging gestures, she wafted him a kiss, pressing her trembling fingers to her lips, and putting her whole soul into this message which one alone in all that vast throng might claim.

A murmur of interest ran through the hall.
Geneviève, hearing her name called, turned toward her judges, but in the very act her eyes dilated as they fixed themselves upon a certain spot with an indescribable expression of terror. In vain Maurice stood on tip-toe; he perceived nothing, and then something more important claimed his attention. Fouquier-Tinville began to read the accusation. This stated that Geneviève Dixmer was the wife of a desperate conspirator, suspected of having been an accomplice of the ex-Chevalier de Maison-Rouge in his various attempts to rescue the Queen. She had also been caught in the act of kneeling at the Queen's feet, begging her to exchange clothes and offering to die in her stead. This stupid fanaticism would, no doubt, win the eulogiums of the Anti-Revolutionaries; but, at the present day, the act continued, all citizens owed their existence to the nation, and it thus became a double act of treason to sacrifice that life to the nation's enemies.

Asked whether this statement sworn to by the gendarmes Duchesne and Gilbert was correct, the accused answered simply, 'Yes.'

'Tell us your plans,' the president continued, 'and what you hoped for.' Geneviève smiled.

'A woman may entertain hopes,' she replied; 'but she cannot form a plan such as that of which I am the victim.'

'How came you to be there?'

'Because I was not a free agent; I was forced to obey orders.'

'Who forced you?' demanded the public accuser.

'Those who threatened me with death, if I refused to obey,' she answered, as her gaze travelled once more to some object invisible to Maurice.

'But, to escape from this threatened death, you risked a certain death! You must have known that.'

'When I yielded, the dagger was already at my heart,
whereas the guillotine was far distant; I gave way in order to save my life for a time.'

'Why did you not call for help? Any honest citizen would have defended you.'

'Alas! monsieur,' answered Geneviève, in such sad, sweet tones that Maurice felt his heart overflow; 'alas! there was no one near me.'

At these words a murmur of pity ran through the hall among those who had been at first merely curious and then interested. Many lowered their heads, some to hide their tears, others to weep more freely. Only then did Maurice perceive, on his left hand, one head held erect, one countenance still impassive. It was Dixmer, standing, grim and unmoved, his gaze never wandering from Geneviève and the jury. The blood rushed to the young man's temples; rage caused his whole frame to contract, while wild thoughts of revenge surged through his mind. He gazed at Dixmer, throwing such hatred into his look that the latter, as though drawn in spite of himself, glanced towards his enemy. The two glances met, crossing like swords.

'Tell us the names of those who incited you?' continued the president.

'There was only one, monsieur.'

'Who?'

'My husband.'

'Do you know where he is?'

'Yes.'

'Tell us where he is hiding.'

'He has been shameless, but I will not be cowardly; it is not my duty to betray him; it is yours to discover him.'

Maurice glanced at Dixmer, who remained motionless. The idea of denouncing him occurred to the young man, but he restrained himself. 'It is not thus he must die,' he thought.

'So you refuse to aid us in our search?'
‘I cannot do so, without making myself as contemptible in the eyes of others, as he is in mine,’ Geneviève replied.

‘Are there any witnesses?’ the president demanded.

‘There is one,’ the usher answered.

‘Call the witness.’

‘Maximilien-Jean Lorin!’ called the usher.

‘Lorin!’ gasped Maurice. ‘Oh! mon Dieu! what has happened?’

Lorin had been arrested, but Maurice was naturally ignorant of the circumstance.

‘Lorin!’ murmured Geneviève, gazing round with anxious sadness.

‘Why does the witness not answer to his name?’ the president asked.

‘Citizen President, the witness has been arrested at his house on a recent denunciation, and will appear shortly,’ announced Fouquier-Tinville.

Maurice started.

‘There is a second witness still more important, but we have been unable to find him,’ continued Fouquier.

Dixmer turned with a smile to Maurice; possibly the same idea came into his head, as had occurred to his enemy. Geneviève, paling, sank back with a groan. At that moment Lorin entered, accompanied by two gendarmes. Through the same door appeared Simon, who sat down near the bar, with the air of a regular frequenter.

‘Your Christian name and surname?’ the president asked.

‘Maximilien-Jean Lorin.’

‘Your profession?’

‘A free man.’

‘You won’t be one long,’ growled Simon, shaking his fist at him.

‘Are you related to the accused?’
'No; but I have the honour to be one of her friends.'

'Were you aware of her plot to rescue the Queen?'

'How could I be aware of that?'

'She might have informed you.'

'Me, a member of the Section des Thermopyles? Surely not!'

'You have been seen in her company, however.'

'I may have been seen often in her company.'

'I knew her to be an aristocrat?'

'I knew her to be the wife of a tannery manager.'

'Her husband did not really carry on the trade he professed.'

'Ah! as to that, I am ignorant; her husband is not a friend of mine.'

'Tell us what you do know about this husband.'

'Oh! most willingly! he is an infamous wretch—'

'Monsieur Lorin, have mercy!' pleaded Geneviève; but Lorin continued calmly. 'He has sacrificed this poor woman before you, not even to his political opinions, but to his personal hatred. I consider him almost as degraded as Simon.'

Dixmer became livid; Simon endeavoured to speak, but with a gesture the president commanded silence.

'You seem acquainted with the whole story, Citizen Lorin; relate it to us,' said Fouquier.

'Excuse me, Citizen Fouquier,' replied Lorin, rising; 'I have told all I know,' and, bowing, he resumed his seat.

'Citizen Lorin, it is your duty to enlighten the court,' continued the accuser.

'Let it be enlightened by what I have already said. As for this unhappy woman, I repeat, she has but obeyed under force. Ah! only look at her; does she appear a conspirator? She was compelled to play the part she did, that is the whole affair.'
You believe that?
I am sure of it.
'In the name of the law, I insist that the witness Lorin be tried before this court, as an accomplice of this woman,' said Fouquier. Maurice groaned.
Lorin, without answering, leaped over the railing to sit beside Geneviève, and taking her hand kissed it respectfully, saying with a coolness which amazed the assembly, 'Good-morning, citizeness. How are you?'
Then he sat down in the dock.
CHAPTER LIII

ACCORDING TO PRECEDENT

The whole of this scene passed before Maurice's eyes like a dissolving view. He still grasped the hilt of his sabre; indeed, he had never released his hold. One by one he witnessed his friends fall as into a gulf from which no victim ever returned. The figure of the gulf was so striking that he asked himself why he, the companion of these unfortunates, stood on the verge of the precipice, without in the least succumbing to the giddiness which would sweep him away with them.

While climbing over the railing, Lorin had seen the gloomy figure of Dixmer.

When, as we have seen, he was placed near Geneviève, she bent towards his ear.

'Mon Dieu!' she exclaimed, 'do you know that Maurice is there?'

'Where?'

'Don't look round just now, If you do, he is lost.'

'All right. Be quite easy!'

'Behind us, near the door. What grief it will cause him if we are condemned.'

Lorin regarded the speaker with tender compassion.

'Condemned we shall be!' he said; 'I beg you to entertain no doubt about that. The reaction would be too cruel should you be imprudent enough to hope.'

'My poor friend, who will remain alone on earth!' Geneviève ejaculated.

Lorin turned toward Maurice, and Geneviève, unable to resist her feelings, cast a rapid glance at him. Maurice's eyes were fixed upon her, and when
he saw her look round, he placed his hand on his heart.

'There is one way of saving you,' said Lorin.

'A certain one?'

'Oh, as to that I’ll answer for it.'

'If you could save me, Lorin, how I should bless you!'

'But this way——' he began.

Geneviève read hesitation in his eyes.

'You have seen him then?' she asked.

'Yes; I have seen him. Would you be saved? He would take your place in the iron chair, and you would be free.'

Doubtless Dixmer guessed from Lorin's looks what they were discussing, for he turned pale. Soon, however, he reassumed his habitual gloomy calm and his hateful smile.

'That cannot be,' replied Geneviève; 'I cannot hate him any more!'

'You mean that he is aware of your generous mind and your bravery.'

'Doubtless, for he is sure of himself, of me, of us all.'

'Geneviève, Geneviève, I am not noble, like you. Let me drag him in and let him perish.'

'No, Lorin, I beg of you; let us have nothing in common with this man, not even death. I feel that I should be unfaithful to Maurice, were I to die with Dixmer.'

'But you would not die.'

'Would you have me live through his death?'

'Ah!' said Lorin, 'how right Maurice was to love you! You are an angel, and the home of angels is heaven. Poor Maurice! Poor Maurice!'

Simon, who could not hear their words, was noting with the utmost eagerness all the changes that passed over their faces.

'Citizen Gendarme,' said he, 'stop these conspirators
from continuing their plots against the Republic, even in the Revolutionary Tribunal.'

'You know well, Citizen Simon,' replied the gendarme, 'that they cannot conspire here, or that, if they do, it is not for long. They are merely talking, and, since the law does not forbid talking in the cart, why should it do so in the Tribunal?'

The gendarme was Gilbert, who, recognising the prisoner he had made in the Queen's room, showed, with his characteristic directness, the interest he could not refrain from giving to courage and devotion.

The president consulted his assessors, and upon the invitation of Fouquier-Tinville, began his examination.

'Of what nature,' he queried of Lorin, 'were your relations with the Citizeness Dixmer?'

'Of what nature, Citizen President? The purest friendship.'

'And how did Citizen Dixmer look upon his wife's intrigue with a pretended Republican?' asked the president.

'As to that, I am unable to gratify you, as I never knew Citizen Dixmer, and had no desire to become acquainted with him.'

'But,' replied Fouquier-Tinville, 'you did not explain that your friend Citizen Maurice Lindley was the knot which bound the "pure friendship" existing between yourself and the other accused?'

'If I did not explain,' Lorin answered, 'it was because I judged it wrong to explain, and you yourself should follow my example.'

'The jury will appreciate the fact of this singular alliance of two Republicans with an aristocrat,' Fouquier-Tinville commented, 'especially since this aristocrat was at that very moment engaged in the blackest conspiracy ever aimed against the nation's happiness.'
'How should I have any knowledge of this plot, Citizen Accuser?' asked Lorin, disgusted rather than frightened by the brutality of the argument.

'You knew this woman, you were her friend, yet you were ignorant of her actions? Is it then possible, as you have admitted it to be, that she has committed some one or other of the actions laid to her charge?'

'No, Citizen President, she has not committed "some one or other of the actions laid to her charge,"' Lorin replied, retaining the words employed by the president, 'since we have both told you, and I now repeat it, that she was forced into such action by her husband.'

'How came it that you did not know the husband,' asked Fouquier-Tinville, 'since husband and wife were both in the plot?'

Lorin had only to explain Dixmer's first disappearance; he had only to mention the intrigue between Maurice and Geneviève, and the husband's ingenious scheme to obtain revenge, in order to clear up the whole matter and free himself from all suspicion of complicity in the plot. But to do this, he must betray the secret of his two friends and cause Geneviève to blush before five hundred people. Lorin shook his head as if saying no to himself.

'Well?' asked the president, 'what is your answer to the Citizen Accuser?'

'That his logic is quite crushing,' replied Lorin, 'and that he has convinced me of one thing of which previously I had not the slightest knowledge.'

'And what is that?'

'That I am, it appears, one of the most terrible conspirators the world has seen!'

This declaration caused general laughter. The very jury could not restrain themselves, so ludicrous was the young man's pronunciation of the words. Fouquier felt the sting of the jest. But as, in his tireless perseverance, he had come to know the secrets of the
accused as well as he knew the accused themselves, he was unable to withhold from Lorin a feeling of admiration and pity.

‘Come now,’ he said, ‘speak, Citizen Lorin, defend yourself. The Tribunal will hear you, for it knows your past history—that of a brave Republican.’

Simon was eager to speak, but the president signed to him to be silent.

‘Speak, Citizen Lorin,’ said he once more, ‘we are listening.’

Lorin shook his head.

‘Silence is avowal,’ the president added.

‘Not so,’ replied Lorin, ‘silence is silence and—nothing more.’

‘Once more,’ urged Fouquier-Tinville, ‘will you speak?’

Lorin turned towards the body of the court to question Maurice’s eyes. Maurice gave no answering signal, and Lorin remained silent. He had condemned himself. What followed happened very quickly. Fouquier resumed his accusation, the president once more began to question, the jury voted and brought in a verdict of ‘guilty’ against Lorin and Geneviève.

The president condemned them both to death. Two o’clock was striking, and the president occupied exactly the same time to pronounce the sentence as the great clock of the Palais took to chime the hour. Maurice heard the two sounds confusedly; when the double vibration of voice and bell had ceased his strength was exhausted. The gendarmes led away Geneviève and Lorin, who offered his arm to the lady.

They saluted Maurice in very different fashions. Lorin smiled; Geneviève, pale and half fainting, threw towards him a last kiss from fingers wet with her tears. She had preserved the hope of life till the very last moment, and she was weeping, not for her life but for her love which would be extinguished with her life.

Maurice, half-dazed, did not reply to these adieux
of his friends. He rose pale and bewildered from the bench on which he had sunk. His friends had disappeared. One thing alone he felt alive within him—the deadly hate which gnawed at his very heart.

Throwing a last glance around, he recognised Dixmer, who, departing with the other spectators, was bending to pass through the arched door leading to the passage. With quick decision, Maurice sprang from bench to bench and reached the same door. Dixmer was already clear of it and was descending into the dark passage. Maurice followed. The very moment when Dixmer placed his foot upon the floor of the great hall Maurice touched him on the shoulder.
CHAPTER LIV

THE DUEL

At this period a touch on the shoulder was impressive and significant. Dixmer, turning round, recognised Maurice.

'Ah! good-day, Citizen Republican!' he said, with an entire absence of emotion except an almost imperceptible trembling which he controlled with a slight effort.

'Good-day, Citizen Coward,' Maurice replied; 'you were waiting for me, were you not?'

'That means I am not waiting for you now—which is false,' retorted Dixmer.

'How so?'

'Because I was too early for you.'

'I have come too early for you, assassin!' Maurice broke in. His eyes flashed like lightning, and his voice, or, rather, the awful murmur he employed was evidence of the frightful storm of rage surging through his frame as he regarded his enemy.

'Do not set me on fire with your eyes, citizen,' replied Dixmer. 'We shall be recognised and followed.'

'Yes! and you are afraid of being arrested, aren't you? You are afraid of the same scaffold to which you have sent others. If they arrest us, so much the better; for to-day national justice has let one guilty person at least slip through the meshes of her net.'

'Just as she has omitted one name upon her roll of honour—since yours has disappeared from it.'

'We will talk of that later, I trust. But you waited for revenge, a wretched revenge, revenge on a woman.'
Since you were so keen about meeting me, why did you not wait at my house the day you stole Geneviève from me?'

'I was under the impression that you were the first thief.'

'I want none of your wit, monsieur; I desire no words of yours, for I am well aware that you are stronger in deeds than in words—witness the day you tried to have me assassinated. Your true nature showed itself then, did it not?'

'And I have often reproached myself with not having listened to it,' replied the other quietly.

'Well,' said Maurice, striking his sabre, 'I give you your chance of revenge.'

'To-morrow, if you like. Not to-day.'

'Why to-morrow?'

'Or to-night.'

'Why not immediately?'

'Because I have business at five o'clock.'

'Some other wretched plan,' sneered Maurice; 'still another trap.'

'Ah! now, Monsieur Maurice,' Dixmer replied, 'truly you are not particularly wide awake. What! For six months I permitted you to make love to my wife; for six months I respected your meetings, and allowed your smiles. Never had man so little of the tiger in him as I have.'

'Which all means that you thought I might be useful, that you could bend me to your purposes.'

'To be sure!' replied Dixmer, with the utmost calmness. Keeping himself well under control, he was driving Maurice into a frenzy of passion. 'To be sure! You would have betrayed your Republic for a look from my wife. You would have dishonoured yourselves, you by your treason and she by her infidelity. But I was wise and played a hero’s part. I waited and I triumphed.'

'Horrible,' Maurice cried.
'Is it not? You appreciate your conduct at its proper value. It is horrible! It is infamous!'

'You deceive yourself, monsieur; the conduct I call horrible and infamous is that of the man to whom was confided the honour of a woman, who swore to guard that honour, to keep it pure and unstained, and who, instead of keeping his oath, made her beauty a shameful bait to capture an impressionable heart. Above all things, monsieur, your most sacred duty was to protect this woman, instead of which you sold her!'

'I am going to explain what I have done, monsieur,' answered Dixmer. 'It was necessary to save my friend, who, with me, bore the burden of a sacred cause. Just as I sacrificed my goods to this cause, so I have sacrificed my honour. As to myself, I am completely forgotten, completely effaced. My own concerns were the last things I thought of. Now, I have no friend: he is dead. I have no Queen: she died on the scaffold. Now, ah, now, my thoughts are bent on my vengeance.'

'Say, on your assassination.'

'In striking at an unfaithful wife, one does not murder, one punishes.'

'Her unfaithfulness was the inevitable outcome of your own conduct.'

'Do you think so?' asked Dixmer, with a gloomy smile. 'Question your conscience.'

'He who punishes strikes in the open. But you! you do not punish, since, while placing her head on the guillotine, you kept yourself carefully hidden.'

'Flee? Hide? What makes you think that, poor fool as you are?' asked Dixmer. 'Did I hide when I assisted at her condemnation? Did I flee when I went into the Salle des Morts to throw her a last farewell?'

'You went to see her? You went to bid her a last adieu?' cried Maurice.

'Of a truth you are no expert in vengeance, Citizen
Maurice,' Dixmer said, with a shrug of his shoulders.

'You would be content to let events take their own course. You would say, for example, "This woman having deserved death, from the moment I condemn her to death, we are quits." No, no, Citizen Maurice, my idea is far better than that. I have discovered a method of returning upon this woman all the ill she has done me. She loves you, and is going to die far from you; she hates me, yet she will be forced to see me often enough. Look,' he added, holding up a pocket-book, 'do you see this? It contains a pass signed by the registrar of the Palais. With this card I can obtain access to condemned prisoners. Well, I shall visit Geneviève and cry "unfaithful" in her ear. I shall see her hair cropped by the hand of the hangman, and as the locks of hair fall, she will hear my voice repeating "unfaithful." I shall accompany her to the cart, and as she places her foot on the scaffold the last word she will hear will be "unfaithful."'

'Do not be too sure! her strength will not stand all these cowardly tricks, and she will denounce you!'

'No,' Dixmer asserted, 'she hates me too much for that. Had she intended to denounce me she would have seized the opportunity which your friend pointed out: Since she would not denounce me to save her life, she will not do it in order to die with me. She is perfectly aware that then I should accompany her, not merely to the foot of the steps of the Palais, but to the very scaffold itself. Instead of leaving her at the stool, I should mount into the cart, and should repeat all along the road the terrible word "unfaithful"; that, upon the scaffold I should repeat it continuously, and when she passed into eternity the accusation would pass with her.'

In his wrath and hate Dixmer was frightful. He had seized Maurice by the hand, which he shook with extraordinary force. Upon Maurice, however, the
terrible recital had precisely the opposite effect. The more frantic Dixmer grew, the calmer did Maurice become.

‘Listen,’ he said to Dixmer, ‘listen; one thing is lacking from your scheme of vengeance.’

‘What is that?’

‘The power of saying “On going out from the trial I met her lover and killed him.”’

‘On the contrary, I am better pleased to remember that you live and that for the remainder of your life you will never forget the sight of her death.’

‘You will kill me, however,’ said Maurice; ‘or, rather,’ he added, looking around him and finding himself master of the situation, ‘I shall kill you.’

And, pale with emotion, half mad with anger, and feeling his strength doubled because of the restraint he had put on himself in order to hear Dixmer unfold to the very end his fearful design, he seized him by the throat and dragged him towards a stair that led to the bank of the river.

At the touch of Maurice’s hand, Dixmer, in his turn, felt his hatred surge over him like a flood.

‘Good,’ he exclaimed, ‘you do not need to use force. I will go.’

‘Come then; you are armed.’

‘I follow.’

‘No; go before. But I warn you that, at the least sign, at the least gesture, I will split your head with my sabre.’

‘Oh, you know well enough I am not afraid,’ Dixmer answered, with a smile rendered frightful by the paleness of his lips.

‘Afraid of my sabre? No. But afraid of my vengeance? Yes. However, now that we are face to face, you can bid farewell to fear.’

They had now reached the water’s edge, and even if any one had noticed them, no attempt at interference would have been sufficiently prompt to prevent
the tragedy. For the rest, devouring wrath possessed both combatants.

They had descended the little staircase that led to the courtyard of the Palais. It was almost deserted; for the trials were not yet over, and the waiting crowd thronged the corridors and courts. Dixmer prepared to kill Maurice as eagerly as Maurice prepared to kill him. They disappeared under one of those arches which led from the dungeons of the Conciergerie to the river, offensive sewers to-day, but formerly blood-stained streams which more than once carried dead bodies far from the oubliettes.

Maurice placed himself between Dixmer and the water.

'I am quite certain I shall kill you, Maurice,' Dixmer said; 'you tremble so.'

'On the contrary,' replied Maurice, grasping his sabre, and carefully cutting off all retreat; 'on the contrary, I shall kill you, and having killed you, will take from your pocket-book the pass signed by the registrar of the Palais. Oh yes! you have buttoned your coat very carefully; but my sword would open it even were it made of triple brass like the breastplates of old.'

'This paper,' shouted Dixmer, 'you will take it?'

'Yes,' said Maurice, 'it is I who will make use of this paper. It is I who, with it, will visit Geneviève, who will seat myself in the cart, who will murmur in her ear so long as she is alive, "I love you! I love you!"'

Dixmer moved his left hand as if to seize the document with his right and throw it into the river. But quick as lightning, and descending like an axe, Maurice's sword fell upon this hand and cut it almost off at the wrist. The wounded man uttered a cry, and shaking his mutilated hand, threw himself on guard.

Then began in this obscure, dark archway a terrible combat. The two men, confined in a space so narrow
that the sword-strokes could hardly miss their aim, slipped about on the wet surface, keeping their footing by the aid of the walls of the arch.

The impatience of the combatants was too great to permit of their fencing with coolness. Dixmer, feeling his strength ebbing away with the loss of blood from his wounded hand, attacked so furiously that Maurice was forced to step back. In doing this, his left foot slipped, and in a moment his enemy's sword was at his breast. But quick as thought, and kneeling though he was, Maurice, with his left hand grasping Dixmer's wrist, twisted the weapon round in such a manner that his opponent, unable to draw back or even to moderate his pace, spitted himself on his own weapon. A terrible imprecation rang out; then two bodies rolled from the arch. Maurice rose covered with blood—but the blood of his enemy. He drew out the sword, and, with the withdrawal, there seemed to pass away the faint convulsive signs of life which still quivered in Dixmer's frame. Having satisfied himself that Dixmer was dead, he bent toward the body, opened his victim's coat, took the pocket-book, and went off.

It was obvious, however, that he could not take four steps in the street without being stopped; he was covered with blood. Approaching the water's edge he washed his hands and his dress. Then he rapidly remounted the stair, throwing, at the same time, a last glance at the archway. A red thread was oozing out and trickling to the river. On arriving at the Palais, he opened the pocket-book and took out the pass signed by the registrar.

'Thank God!' he murmured.

Quickly he mounted the steps leading to the Salle des Morts. Three o'clock was chiming.
CHAPTER LV

LA SALLE DES MORTS

We recall the fact that the registrar of the Palais had permitted Dixmer free access to his registers, and had established with him friendly relations, which the presence of Madame Dixmer had rendered very pleasant. This man, as may be easily imagined, was reduced to a frightful state of terror by the revelation of Dixmer's plot, for, if he were arraigned as an accomplice of his false colleague, he would certainly suffer death in company with Geneviève. Fouquier-Tinville summoned him into his presence. We can understand what difficulty the unhappy man encountered in establishing his innocence in the eyes of the public accuser; but he finally succeeded—thanks to Geneviève's solemn declaration that he was entirely ignorant of her husband's plans; thanks, also, to Dixmer's flight, but most of all to the attitude of Fouquier-Tinville, who desired to preserve the blameless reputation of his administration.

'Citizen,' the registrar begged on his knees, 'pardon me; I did not know I was deceived.'

'Citizen,' the public accuser answered, 'a servant of the nation who permits himself to be deceived in these days deserves to be guillotined.'

'But one may be stupid, citizen,' urged the registrar, who was longing to address Fouquier-Tinville as monseigneur.

'Stupid or not, no one should allow his zeal for the Republic to slumber. The geese of the Capitol were only stupid animals, yet their watchfulness saved Rome.'
The registrar had no answer to such an argument; he groaned and waited.

'I pardon you,' continued Fouquier. 'I shall even defend you, as it is not my wish that any of my employees should incur even suspicion; but remember, should this matter ever be heard of again, you will be instantly dismissed.'

We scarcely need describe the eagerness with which the registrar searched the newspapers, which are always willing to record what they know, and sometimes also what they do not know, even though the information may cause ten men to lose their lives. He sought Dixmer that he might induce him to keep silent, but as Dixmer had very naturally changed his abode, he could not find him. Geneviève was placed in the dock, but she had previously stated that her husband had no accomplice. How he had mutely thanked the unhappy woman as he watched her on the way to the Tribunal. After she had gone, and he had withdrawn for a moment into his office in search of some papers for Fouquier-Tinville, he suddenly perceived Dixmer approaching him, with calm, unruffled air. This apparition convulsed him with terror.

'Oh!' he ejaculated, as though he had seen a ghost.

'Do you not recognise me?' Dixmer asked tranquilly.

'Yes. You are the Citizen Durand, or Dixmer, rather.'

'That is correct.'

'But you are dead, citizen?'

'Not yet, as you perceive.'

'I mean they are about to arrest you.'

'Who can arrest me? No one knows me.'

'But I know you, and need speak only one word to have you guillotined.'

'I need speak only two to have you guillotined with me.'

'It is a terrible statement you make!'

'No, it is only logical.'
'What is your business? Speak! hurry, for the less we are seen together the less danger we both run.'
'Do you think my wife will be condemned?'
'I am very much afraid so, poor woman!'
'I am anxious to see her for the last time to say "Good-bye."'
'Where?'
'In the Salle des Morts.'
'You would dare to go there!'
'Why not?'
'Oh!' cried the registrar, as if the bare thought made his flesh creep.
'There must be some means of entering?' Dixmer continued.
'Of entering the Salle des Morts? Doubtless there is.'
'What is it?'
'To procure a card.'
'Where can one procure these cards?' The registrar paled in an alarming fashion.
'Where are these cards obtained, do you ask?' he stammered.
'I ask where they may be obtained; the question is quite clear, I imagine.'
'They are obtained—here.'
'Ah! really; and who usually signs them?'
'The registrar.'
'The registrar; that is yourself.'
'Certainly it is myself.'
'Ah! how lucky that is! You will sign a card for me,' Dixmer exclaimed, sitting down. The registrar started.
'You ask me for my head, citizen!' he protested.
'Ah! no! I ask you for a card, nothing more.'
'I will have you arrested, miserable man!' cried the registrar, summoning all his strength.
'Do so; but I shall instantly denounce you as my accomplice, and, instead of letting me enter the famous hall alone, you will accompany me.'
The registrar became pale. 'Ah! villain!' he cried.
'There is no question of villainy; I wish to speak to my wife, and therefore ask for a card to take me into her presence,' Dixmer replied.

'Is it absolutely necessary that you should speak to her?'

'It would appear so, since I risk my life for the purpose.'

This seemed to the registrar very plausible, and Dixmer observed that he was wavering.

'Come! be reassured, no one shall learn anything about it,' he said. 'Surely such cases have occurred before.'

'It is a rare thing. There is no great demand. But let us arrange the affair in some other manner.'

'If it is possible, I am agreeable.'

'It is perfectly easy. Enter through the condemned door; no card is needed to enter there. When you have spoken to your wife, summon me, and I will let you out.'

'Excellent!' remarked Dixmer; 'but unfortunately there is a story current in the town.'

'What story?'

'About a poor hunchback who mistook his way and, under the impression that he was going to the archives, entered the room of which we are speaking. Only, as he had gone in by the prisoners' door, instead of by the principal entrance, and had no card to show his identity, they refused to let him leave, declaring that, having entered by the same door as the condemned, he, too, must be condemned. In vain he protested, cursed, and called out; no one believed his protestations, no one came to his assistance, nobody allowed him out. In spite of vows and cries and denials, the executioner, cutting off his hair first, next cut off his head. Is the story true, Citizen Registrar? You ought to know better than any one.'

'Alas! yes, it is true!' the registrar admitted, trembling all over.
'Well, you must confess that with such an example, I should be mad to act in a similar way.'

'But I shall be there, I say!'

'What if you are called away, if you are busied elsewhere, or forget?' Dixmer pitilessly laid stress on this last work. 'If you forget I am there?'

'But since I pass you my word——'

'No; besides, that would compromise you; you might be noticed talking to me. In short, that does not please me at all. I should prefer a card.'

'It is impossible.'

'Then, dear friend, I must denounce you, and we shall make a little journey together to the Place de la Révolution.'

The registrar, terrified, dazed and half-dead with fright, signed a passport for one citizen. Dixmer, hurriedly seizing it, went off to take up his position in the judgment-hall. The rest is known to us. The registrar, dreading to be accused of conspiracy, sat down near Fouquier-Tinville, leaving his office in charge of his head clerk.

At ten minutes past three, Maurice, provided with the card, traversing a line of turnkeys and gendarmes, reached the fatal door without difficulty. This term, however, is not nearly applicable, since there were in actual fact two doors, the principal one used by visitors who possessed tickets, and the other, through which entered those who never left the chamber except in order to walk to the scaffold. The room into which Maurice had penetrated was divided into two parts. In one half were installed the clerks whose duty it was to enrol the name of each arrival; in the other, furnished merely with a few wooden benches, were placed the prisoners awaiting trial and those already condemned, the two practically amounting to the same thing. The room was gloomy, and lit only by a window in the partition dividing it from the registry office. A woman, clad in white, leaned half
fainting against the wall in one corner. A man stood facing her, his arms crossed, shaking his head occasionally and hesitating to speak, lest he should restore her to the consciousness she appeared mercifully to have lost.

Around them the other condemned moved in confusion, sobbing or singing patriotic hymns. Some paced up and down, endeavouring to escape from their gloomy thoughts. It was indeed Death's ante-room, and the furniture well justified this title. There were coffins filled with straw mutely calling on the living, and intended for temporary resting-places, tombs to receive the dead for a season. A large wardrobe stood opposite the window. A prisoner who had opened it out of curiosity drew back, horror-struck.

The blood-stained garments of those who had suffered on the previous day were hanging in it, and here and there long tresses of hair were suspended. These articles were the perquisites of the executioner, who sold them to relatives, when he was not ordered to burn them. Maurice had no sooner opened the door, with beating heart, than he took in the whole miserable picture. Advancing three steps into the hall he fell at the feet of Geneviève, who uttered a cry which he checked, almost before it left her lips. Lorin, weeping, clasped his friend in his arms; it was the first time he had shed tears. Strange fact! all these unhappy beings who were to die together scarcely paid any attention to the touching sight presented by their fellow-sufferers. Each was too absorbed by his own affliction to notice the emotions of others. The three friends remained united in a silent embrace, fond and almost joyful. Lorin was the first to detach himself from the group.

'So you, too, are condemned?' he asked.

'Yes,' answered the latter.

'Oh! what happiness!' murmured Geneviève.

The joy of those who have but one hour to live cannot last even for that time. Maurice, having gazed on
Geneviève, with all the deep love which filled his heart, after thanking her for her words, so selfish yet so tender, turned to Lorin.

‘Now,’ said he, taking Geneviève’s hands in his, ‘let us talk.’

‘Ah! yes, let us talk,’ answered Lorin, ‘if we have time. What is it you wish to say to me?’

‘You were arrested on my account, condemned on hers, having committed no crime; as Geneviève and I are paying our debt, it is not fitting that you too should pay.’

‘I fail to understand.’

‘Lorin, you are free.’

‘Free, I? You are mad!’

‘No, I am not mad; you are free, I repeat. Look, here is a passport. You will be asked who you are; reply that you are employed in the registrar’s office at the Carmelite prison, and, while visiting the registrar at the Palais, out of curiosity you asked him for a passport to see the condemned. Having satisfied your curiosity, you are leaving.’

‘It is a joke, is it not?’

‘Nothing of the kind, dear friend, here is the card; take advantage of it. You are not in love, so there is no necessity for you to die in order that you may spend a few minutes more with your loved one and be with her through the whole of eternity.’

‘Well! Maurice, if it is possible to leave here, as I should never have imagined, why not endeavour to save madame first? As for yourself, we can see about that later.’

‘Impossible,’ Maurice answered with a fearful sinking at his heart; ‘you notice it says on this card a “citizen,” not “citizensess,” besides, Geneviève would not go and leave me here, or live knowing I was to die.’

‘Well, if she will not, do you imagine I shall? In that case you believe I have less courage than a woman?’
‘No, my friend, I admit you are, on the contrary, the bravest of men; but nothing can excuse your obstinacy in such a matter. Come, Lorin, profit by the opportunity, and give us the supreme joy of knowing you are free and happy.’

‘Happy! are you joking?’ Lorin exclaimed. ‘Happy without you? Eh! what the deuce shall I do in this world without you, in Paris, with all my life changed? Never to see you again, never to plague you with my rhymes? Ah! pardieu! no!’

‘Lorin, my friend!’

‘Precisely; it is because I am your friend that I persist; were I a prisoner, as I am, I would raze the walls to the ground in the effort to reach you; but to save myself alone, to go forth into the streets, with remorse torturing me, with a reproachful cry sounding continually in my ears, “Maurice! Geneviève!” to pass through certain districts, in front of certain houses where I used to meet you, but now shall see only your shadows; to end in detesting that dear Paris which I love so well, ah! faith no! I think they did right to proscribe kings, if only on account of King Dagobert.’

‘What has King Dagobert to do with it?’

‘Did that terrible tyrant not say to the great Eloi, “There is no company so good but that one must leave it”? Well, I am a Republican! and I say, “Nothing should induce one to part from good company, even the guillotine”; I am very comfortable here and mean to remain.’

‘My poor friend! my poor friend!’ exclaimed Maurice.

Geneviève could not speak, but her eyes filled with tears as she gazed at Lorin.

‘You regret the loss of your life?’ Lorin asked Maurice.

‘Yes, for her sake!’

‘I regret for no one’s sake, not even for the sake of
the Goddess Reason, whom (I had forgotten to relate this) I have treated very badly lately, so will not even trouble to console herself as the other Arthémise did. I shall meet death calmly therefore, and even cheerfully; I shall amuse all the rascals that run after the cart; I will compose a pretty little quatrain for M. Sanson and then bid farewell to the company—that is to say—wait though.’ Lorin stopped. ‘Ah! yes, after all, I will go out. I knew very well I loved no one outside, but I forgot that I hated some one; look at your watch, Maurice; what is the time?’

‘Half-past three.’

‘I shall have time, mordieu!’

‘Certainly; there are still nine prisoners to be tried, so the sitting will not finish before five o’clock; we have nearly two hours left.’

‘That will be sufficient; give me your card and lend me twenty sous.’

‘Oh! mon Dieu! what are you going to do?’ murmured Geneviève.

Maurice grasped his hand; for him the main thing was that Lorin should go.

‘I have a plan,’ said Lorin. Maurice handed his purse to his friend. ‘Now, the card, for the love of God! I mean the Eternal Being.’ Maurice handed him the card. Lorin kissed Geneviève’s hand and, profiting by the entrance of a fresh batch of condemned, leaped over the wooden benches, and presented himself at the principal door.

‘Eh! here is a prisoner trying to escape, it would seem,’ a gendarme remarked.

Lorin, drawing himself up, presented his card.

‘Citizen Gendarme,’ he said, ‘learn to know people better.’

The gendarme recognised the registrar’s signature, but he belonged to that class of functionaries who are lacking in confidence. Just at that moment the registrar came from the Tribunal, trembling with the
fear which had been his companion ever since he had rashly signed his name.

'Citizen Registrar, here is a paper, by the help of which a man wishes to leave the Salle des Morts; is it valid, this paper?'

The registrar blanched with terror, and being convinced that he would encounter the dreaded vision of Dixmer, should he turn round, he seized the card, hastily answering, 'Yes, yes; it is my signature.'

'Then, if it is your signature, give me back the card,' said Lorin.

'No, not at all! these cards can only be used once,' replied the registrar, tearing it into a thousand pieces.

Lorin stood for a moment undecided. 'Ah! so much the worse, but, before all, I must kill him,' he decided, rushing from the registry office.

Maurice had followed Lorin's movements with an emotion easily understood; as soon as he had disappeared he cried out to Geneviève, almost in joy, 'He is saved! they have destroyed the card, so he cannot return; besides, the Tribunal will soon have finished its sittings; at five o'clock we shall be no longer alive—if he returns then.'

Geneviève sighed deeply and shuddered.

'Oh! clasp me in your arms, and do not let us separate,' she said; 'why is it not possible, mon Dieu! for one blow to kill us both, for then we might breathe our last breath together!'

Then, retiring to the farthest corner of the dark hall, Geneviève sat down beside Maurice, clasping her arms round his neck; thus united they remained oblivious to all sound and thought, oblivious even in their exquisite love, to the shadow of death which hovered so near them.
CHAPTER LVI

WHY LORIN HAD GONE OUT

Suddenly a loud noise was heard; several gendarmes entered by the door at the lower end, followed by Sanson and his assistants, bearing coils of rope.

'Oh! my dear love, the fatal moment has arrived; I feel my courage failing,' murmured Geneviève.

'There you are wrong,' exclaimed Lorin, and in his hearty voice he recited a newly composed verse extolling death as the true liberty.

'Lorin!' cried Maurice, in despairing tones.

'You think my verses bad? I quite agree with you, for since yesterday I have scarcely been able to get a decent rhyme.'

'Ah! that is not the question. You have returned, unhappy man! you have returned!'

'According to agreement, I believe? Listen, for my information will interest madame as well.'

'Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!'

'Let me speak without interruption, or I shall not have time. I went out to buy a knife in Rue de la Barillerie.'

'What did you wish to do with a knife?'

'I meant to kill the worthy M. Dixmer.'

Geneviève shuddered.

'Ahh! I understand,' said Maurice.

'I bought it. This is how I put the matter to myself, and you will perceive what a logical brain your friend possesses. I begin to think I ought to have been a mathematician instead of a poet. Unfortunately it is too late now. However, this is how I argued; follow my reasoning: "M. Dixmer is responsible for his
wife's sentence; he attended her trial and he will not deprive himself of the pleasure of seeing her on the way to the scaffold, more especially as we accompany her. He will be almost certainly in the front row of the spectators; I shall steal close to him and, with a 'Good-day, Citizen Dixmer,' I shall plunge my knife into his heart!'

'Lorin!' cried Geneviève. 'Reassure yourself, dear friend, Providence had settled the affair in its own way. Just imagine that the spectators, instead of standing opposite the Palais as usual, were crowding pell-mell to the quay. "Hallo!" I said to myself, "most likely some dog is drowning. Why was Dixmer not in its place?" A drowning dog is always a distraction. Approaching the parapet, I observed a crowd of people lining the bank, and raising their arms in the air. They were stooping to look at something lying on the ground, and uttered ejaculations enough to make the Seine overflow. I drew nearer—This something—guess what it was—'

'It was Dixmer,' exclaimed Maurice, in gloomy tones. 'Yes. How came you to guess that? Yes, Dixmer, our dear friend, had committed suicide; no doubt he killed himself in expiation of his crimes.'

'Ah!' said Maurice, smiling in sinister fashion, 'so you came to that conclusion?'

Geneviève dropped her head on her hands; she had not strength to bear up under such varying emotions. 'Yes, especially as his sword covered with blood lay beside him. Of course, he may have been killed in a duel, but—'

Maurice, profiting by Geneviève's weakness, silently opened his coat, displaying to Lorin his vest and shirt stained with blood. 'Ah! that is another matter,' observed Lorin, shaking hands with Maurice. 'Now,' he whispered in his ear, 'I avoided a search
by declaring that I belonged to M. Sanson's company. So I still have the knife, if the prospect of the guillotine is repellent to you.'

Maurice seized the weapon joyfully. 'No, she would suffer too much,' he said, returning the knife to Lorin.

'You are right,' the latter agreed; 'long live the invention of M. Guillotin! What is this invention after all? A fillip on the neck as Danton has said. What is a fillip!' and Lorin threw his knife into the midst of a group of the condemned. One of them, seizing it, plunged it into his breast and fell dead. At the same moment, Geneviève raised her head with a cry; Sanson had placed his hand on her shoulder.
CHAPTER LVII

LONG LIVE SIMON

Geneviève's exclamation told Maurice that the crisis had arrived. Love can exalt the soul to a heroic height; it can, contrary to natural instinct, cause a human being to seek death; but it cannot quell the apprehension of grief. It was clear that Geneviève was accepting death with religious patience, now that Maurice would die with her. But resignation did not exclude suffering. To go out of this world is not merely to fall into that abyss we call the Unknown, but to suffer in anticipation.

Maurice gazed on the scene in the midst of which he found himself. In the middle of the room a corpse, from the breast of which a gendarme had drawn the knife lest it should be used by others in the same manner. Round him were men mute with despair, paying little attention to him, writing with pencil in pocket-books, or shaking hands with one another; some were ceaselessly repeating a dear name or gazing with tears upon a portrait, a ring, or a lock of hair; others again were uttering deep curses against tyranny—a word constantly misused by all parties in turn, sometimes even by tyrants themselves.

In the midst moved Sanson, weighed down, less by his fifty-four years than by the burden of his ghastly occupation. He was as gentle and consoling as his business permitted, giving here good advice, there encouragement, and employing Christian sentiments to reply to despair as well as to bravado.

'Citizeness,' he said to Geneviève, 'you must remove your fichu, please, and lift your hair higher or have it cut.'
Geneviève began to tremble.

'Come, little one, be brave!' said Lorin, in a low voice.

'May I place madame's hair higher?' Maurice asked.

'Oh, yes!' cried Geneviève; 'yes, I pray you, Monsieur Sanson!'

'Very well,' he answered, turning his head.

Maurice undid his cravat, warm from contact with his neck. Geneviève kissed it, and placing herself on her knees offered him her charming head, more beautiful in her sorrow than it had ever appeared in her joy. When Maurice had finished the melancholy business his hands trembled so much, and his face expressed such grief that Geneviève cried,—

'Oh, Maurice, I am brave!'

Sanson returned.

'Have I not courage, monsieur,' she asked.

'Certainly, madame,' answered the executioner, in a voice full of emotion, 'and true courage at that.'

During this time the first assistant had gone through the list sent by Fouquier-Tinville.

'Fourteen,' he said.

Sanson counted the prisoners.

'Fifteen, including the dead man,' said he. 'What has gone wrong?'

Lorin and Geneviève, struck by the same thought, counted after Sanson.

'You say there are fifteen prisoners and there should be only fourteen?' she asked.

'Yes; Citizen Fouquier-Tinville must have made a mistake.'

'Oh, Maurice, you did not tell me the truth,' said Geneviève; 'you were not condemned to death!'

'Why should I wait till to-morrow, when you are dying to-day?' he replied.

'My dear one,' she answered, smiling, 'you give me confidence. I see now that it is easy to die.'

'Lorin,' said Maurice, 'Lorin, for the last time—
no one here recognises you—say you came to bid me adieu—that you were shut up by mistake. Call the gendarme who saw you go out. I will be the true prisoner; it is I who ought to die. But you, dear friend, give us joy, we beg of you, by living to guard our memories. There is time still, Lorin. Go, we beg you!

Geneviève clasped her hands in entreaty. Lorin took them in his, and kissed them.

‘I say no, and I mean no,’ he replied, in a strong voice. ‘Speak to me no more on the matter, or I shall believe I am hurting you!’

‘Fourteen!’ repeated Sanson, ‘and there are fifteen!’

Then raising his voice he asked, ‘Does any one make complaint? Has any one been brought here in error?’

Some lips, perhaps, opened at this question, but they closed without a single word. Those who might have lied were ashamed to do so, and those who would not lie held their peace.

A silence which lasted for several minutes ensued whilst the assistants proceeded with their mournful work.

‘Citizens, we are ready.’ It was Sanson’s voice, deep and solemn. A few sobs and groans answered in reply.

‘Well,’ said Lorin, ‘so be it. Let us die for our country. ’Tis the finest of deaths. So it is—when one dies for one’s country. But certainly I begin to fancy there is no pleasure in dying for those who watch us die. My faith, Maurice! I am of your opinion—I am beginning to be disgusted with the Republic.’

‘The roll-call,’ exclaimed an official at the gate.

Several gendarmes entering the room stood between the prisoners and the outside world, as if to prevent them returning there.

The roll was called.

When the name of the man who had killed himself
with Lorin's knife was called, Maurice answered, and it was assumed that the deceased was the extra prisoner. They carried him to the door. Had he been identified or recognised as having been condemned, dead though he was, he would have been guillotined with the others. His companions were pushed towards the gate, and, as each one passed the wicket, his hands were bound behind his back. Not a word had passed between these unfortunates for the past ten minutes—the executioners alone spoke and moved about.

Maurice, Geneviève, and Lorin, no longer able to hold each other's hands, pressed against each other, that they might not be separated. Then the prisoners were driven from the Conciergerie into the court. There the spectacle was appalling. Several half-fainted when they beheld the carts, but the warders assisted them into the vehicles. Behind the doors which were still closed they heard the confused murmur of the crowd, and guessed from the noise that it was a large one.

Geneviève entered the cart bravely enough, Maurice steadying her with his elbow and climbing in quickly behind her. Lorin was in no hurry. He chose his place, and sat down on Maurice's left. The doors opened, and in the front rank of the crowd stood Simon. The two friends recognised him, as he did them. Simon mounted upon a post near which the three vehicles must pass.

The first cart rolled out; it was that containing the three friends.

'Ah, good-day, my fine grenadier!' Simon exclaimed; 'you are going to test my little knife, are you not?'

'Yes,' replied Lorin, 'and I shall try not to notch it too much, so that, when the time arrives, it will be able to cut your leather.'

The two other carts followed. A terrific tempest of shouts, bravos, groans, curses was hurled at the condemned people.
'Be brave, Geneviève, be brave!' murmured Maurice.

'Oh,' she answered, 'I have no feeling of regret at leaving life, since I am dying with you. But I do regret that my hands are not free, so that I might at least hold you in my arms.'

'Lorin,' said Maurice, 'in my waistcoat pocket you will find a knife.'

'Oh, mordieu,' Lorin exclaimed, 'how that knife raises my spirits. I felt terribly humiliated at being carried to death tied up like a calf.'

Maurice lowered his pocket to the level of his friend's hands. Lorin took out the knife, and, between them, they opened it. Then Maurice, holding it between his teeth, cut the cords which bound Lorin's hands, and Lorin being free, at once performed the same service for Maurice.

'Make haste,' he said, 'Geneviève is fainting.'

To cut the bonds, Maurice had turned away for a moment, and, as if all her strength had vanished, she closed her eyes and let her head fall on her breast.

'Geneviève,' cried Maurice, 'Geneviève, open your eyes again, sweetheart; we have not much longer to see in this world.'

'The cords are hurting me,' she murmured.

Maurice untied them.

Soon she opened her eyes and stood up, with a pride that made her ravishingly beautiful. Twining one arm round that of Maurice, she seized with her other hand the hand of Lorin, and all three, standing upright in the cart, cast to the heavens gestures eloquent of their gratitude at being free to support one another. At their feet lay two other victims half stupefied by the anticipated pangs of death.

The mob, which had insulted them when they were seated, held its peace when it saw them stand upright.

They saw the scaffold—that is, Maurice and Lorin
saw it, but not Geneviève, who perceived nothing but her lover.

The cart stopped.

'I love you!' said Maurice to Geneviève, 'I love you!'

'The woman first! The woman first!' screamed a thousand voices.

'Thanks, dear people,' said Maurice, 'who, after this, will say you are cruel?'

He took Geneviève in his arms, and lips pressed to lips, he bore her to Sanson.

'Courage!' cried Lorin, 'courage!'

'I have! I have!' Geneviève answered; 'I am not afraid!'

'I love you!' murmured Maurice; 'I love you!'

They were no longer victims about to die: they were friends going to death as to a fête.

'Adieu!' cried Geneviève to Lorin.

'Àu revoir!' he answered.

Geneviève disappeared under the fatal bridge.

'We are coming,' said Lorin.

'We are coming,' said Maurice.

'Listen! She calls!'

And in truth Geneviève uttered a last cry—'Come!'

A loud noise was heard among the crowd. The beautiful and gracious head had fallen.

Maurice stepped forward.

'It is just,' said Lorin; 'we are doing the thing logically. Do you hear me, Maurice?'

'Yes.'

'She loved you and they killed her first; you were not condemned, so you die second; as for me, I have done nothing, and so being the worst criminal of the three, I go last. Everything, you observe, is explained by the aid of logic. My faith, Citizen Sanson, I promised you a quatrain, but you must content yourself with a phrase.'

'I loved you,' murmured Maurice, as he lay bound
to the fatal plank, and smiling at the head of his sweetheart, 'I loved—'

The knife cut the sentence in two.

'My turn!' cried Lorin, bounding on to the scaffold, 'and quickly; for truth to tell my head is going. Citizen Sanson, I am leaving you bankrupt of two verses, but I offer you a jest in their place.'

Sanson bound him in his turn.

'Sir,' said Lorin, 'it is the fashion to cry 'Long live something or other!' when one dies. Formerly they cried 'Long live the King!' but there is no longer a King. Then they cried 'Long live liberty!' but there is no longer any liberty. My faith! I will say 'Long live Simon, who has united us all three!'

And the head of the noble young man fell beside those of Maurice and Geneviève.
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