

Chapter 49. Misfortune refreshes the Memory.

Anne of Austria returned to her oratory, furious.

"What!" she cried, wringing her beautiful hands, "What! the people have seen Monsieur de Conde, a prince of the blood royal, arrested by my mother-in-law, Maria de Medicis; they saw my mother-in-law, their former regent, expelled by the cardinal; they saw Monsieur de Vendome, that is to say, the son of Henry IV., a prisoner at Vincennes; and whilst these great personages were imprisoned, insulted and threatened, they said nothing; and now for a Broussel--good God! what, then, is to become of royalty?"

The queen unconsciously touched here upon the exciting question. The people had made no demonstration for the princes, but they had risen for Broussel; they were taking the part of a plebeian and in defending Broussel they instinctively felt they were defending themselves.

During this time Mazarin walked up and down the study, glancing from time to time at his beautiful Venetian mirror, starred in every direction. "Ah!" he said, "it is sad, I know well, to be forced to yield thus; but, pshaw! we shall have our revenge. What matters it about Broussel--it is a name, not a thing."

Mazarin, clever politician as he was, was for once mistaken; Broussel

was a thing, not a name.

The next morning, therefore, when Broussel made his entrance into Paris in a large carriage, having his son Louvieres at his side and Friquet behind the vehicle, the people threw themselves in his way and cries of "Long live Broussel!" "Long live our father!" resounded from all parts and was death to Mazarin's ears; and the cardinal's spies brought bad news from every direction, which greatly agitated the minister, but was calmly received by the queen. The latter seemed to be maturing in her mind some great stroke, a fact which increased the uneasiness of the cardinal, who knew the proud princess and dreaded much the determination of Anne of Austria.

The coadjutor returned to parliament more a monarch than king, queen, and cardinal, all three together. By his advice a decree from parliament summoned the citizens to lay down their arms and demolish the barricades. They now knew that it required but one hour to take up arms again and one night to reconstruct the barricades.

Rochefort had returned to the Chevalier d'Humieres his fifty horsemen, less two, missing at roll call. But the chevalier was himself at heart a Frondist and would hear nothing said of compensation.

The mendicant had gone to his old place on the steps of Saint Eustache and was again distributing holy water with one hand and asking alms with the other. No one could suspect that those two hands had been engaged with others in drawing out from the social edifice the keystone of royalty.

Louvieres was proud and satisfied; he had taken revenge on Mazarin and had aided in his father's deliverance from prison. His name had been mentioned as a name of terror at the Palais Royal. Laughingly he said to the councillor, restored to his family:

"Do you think, father, that if now I should ask for a company the queen would give it to me?"

D'Artagnan profited by this interval of calm to send away Raoul, whom he had great difficulty in keeping shut up during the riot, and who wished positively to strike a blow for one party or the other. Raoul had offered some opposition at first; but D'Artagnan made use of the Comte de la Fere's name, and after paying a visit to Madame de Chevreuse, Raoul started to rejoin the army.

Rochefort alone was dissatisfied with the termination of affairs. He had written to the Duc de Beaufort to come and the duke was about to arrive, and he would find Paris tranquil. He went to the coadjutor to consult with him whether it would not be better to send word to the duke to stop on the road, but Gondy reflected for a moment, and then said:

"Let him continue his journey."

"All is not then over?" asked Rochefort.

"My dear count, we have only just begun."

"What induces you to think so?"

"The knowledge that I have of the queen's heart; she will not rest contented beaten."

"Is she, then, preparing for a stroke?"

"I hope so."

"Come, let us see what you know."

"I know that she has written to the prince to return in haste from the army."

"Ah! ha!" said Rochefort, "you are right. We must let Monsieur de Beaufort come."

In fact, the evening after this conversation the report was circulated that the Prince de Conde had arrived. It was a very simple, natural circumstance and yet it created a profound sensation. It was said that Madame de Longueville, for whom the prince had more than a brother's affection and in whom he had confided, had been indiscreet. His confidence had unveiled the sinister project of the queen.

Even on the night of the prince's return, some citizens, bolder than the rest, such as the sheriffs, captains and the quartermaster, went from house to house among their friends, saying:

"Why do we not take the king and place him in the Hotel de Ville? It is a shame to leave him to be educated by our enemies, who will give him evil counsel; whereas, brought up by the coadjutor, for instance, he would imbibe national principles and love his people."

That night the question was secretly agitated and on the morrow the gray and black cloaks, the patrols of armed shop-people, and the bands of mendicants reappeared.

The queen had passed the night in lonely conference with the prince, who had entered the oratory at midnight and did not leave till five o'clock in the morning.

At five o'clock Anne went to the cardinal's room. If she had not yet taken any repose, he at least was already up. Six days had already passed out of the ten he had asked from Mordaunt; he was therefore occupied in revising his reply to Cromwell, when some one knocked gently at the door of communication with the queen's apartments. Anne of Austria alone was permitted to enter by that door. The cardinal therefore rose to open it.

The queen was in a morning gown, but it became her still; for, like Diana of Poitiers and Ninon, Anne of Austria enjoyed the privilege of remaining ever beautiful; nevertheless, this morning she looked handsomer than usual, for her eyes had all the sparkle inward satisfaction adds to expression.

"What is the matter, madame?" said Mazarin, uneasily. "You seem secretly

elated."

"Yes, Giulio," she said, "proud and happy; for I have found the means of strangling this hydra."

"You are a great politician, my queen," said Mazarin; "let us hear the means." And he hid what he had written by sliding the letter under a folio of blank paper.

"You know," said the queen, "that they want to take the king away from me?"

"Alas! yes, and to hang me."

"They shall not have the king."

"Nor hang me."

"Listen. I want to carry off my son from them, with yourself. I wish that this event, which on the day it is known will completely change the aspect of affairs, should be accomplished without the knowledge of any others but yourself, myself, and a third person."

"And who is this third person?"

"Monsieur le Prince."

"He has come, then, as they told me?"

"Last evening."

"And you have seen him?"

"He has just left me."

"And will he aid this project?"

"The plan is his own."

"And Paris?"

"He will starve it out and force it to surrender at discretion."

"The plan is not wanting in grandeur; I see but one impediment."

"What is it?"

"Impossibility."

"A senseless word. Nothing is impossible."

"On paper."

"In execution. We have money?"

"A little," said Mazarin, trembling, lest Anne should ask to draw upon

his purse.

"Troops?"

"Five or six thousand men."

"Courage?"

"Plenty."

"Then the thing is easy. Oh! do think of it, Giulio! Paris, this odious Paris, waking up one morning without queen or king, surrounded, besieged, famished--having for its sole resource its stupid parliament and their coadjutor with crooked limbs!"

"Charming! charming!" said Mazarin. "I can imagine the effect, I do not see the means."

"I will find the means myself."

"You are aware it will be war, civil war, furious, devouring, implacable?"

"Oh! yes, yes, war," said Anne of Austria. "Yes, I will reduce this rebellious city to ashes. I will extinguish the fire with blood! I will perpetuate the crime and punishment by making a frightful example. Paris!; I--I detest, I loathe it!"



"Very fine, Anne. You are now sanguinary; but take care. We are not in the time of Malatesta and Castruccio Castracani. You will get yourself decapitated, my beautiful queen, and that would be a pity."

"You laugh."

"Faintly. It is dangerous to go to war with a nation. Look at your brother monarch, Charles I. He is badly off, very badly."

"We are in France, and I am Spanish."

"So much the worse; I had much rather you were French and myself also; they would hate us both less."

"Nevertheless, you consent?"

"Yes, if the thing be possible."

"It is; it is I who tell you so; make preparations for departure."

"I! I am always prepared to go, only, as you know, I never do go, and perhaps shall go this time as little as before."

"In short, if I go, will you go too?"

"I will try."

"You torment me, Giulio, with your fears; and what are you afraid of,

then?"

"Of many things."

"What are they?"

Mazarin's face, smiling as it was, became clouded.

"Anne," said he, "you are but a woman and as a woman you may insult men at your ease, knowing that you can do it with impunity. You accuse me of fear; I have not so much as you have, since I do not fly as you do. Against whom do they cry out? is it against you or against myself? Whom would they hang, yourself or me? Well, I can weather the storm--I, whom, notwithstanding, you tax with fear--not with bravado, that is not my way; but I am firm. Imitate me. Make less hubbub and think more deeply. You cry very loud, you end by doing nothing; you talk of flying----"

Mazarin shrugged his shoulders and taking the queen's hand led her to the window.

"Look!" he said.

"Well?" said the queen, blinded by her obstinacy.

"Well, what do you see from this window? If I am not mistaken those are citizens, helmeted and mailed, armed with good muskets, as in the time of the League, and whose eyes are so intently fixed on this window that they will see you if you raise that curtain much; and now come to

the other side--what do you see? Creatures of the people, armed with halberds, guarding your doors. You will see the same at every opening from this palace to which I should lead you. Your doors are guarded, the airholes of your cellars are guarded, and I could say to you, as that good La Ramee said to me of the Duc de Beaufort, you must be either bird or mouse to get out."

"He did get out, nevertheless."

"Do you think of escaping in the same way?"

"I am a prisoner, then?"

"Parbleu!" said Mazarin, "I have been proving it to you this last hour."

And he quietly resumed his dispatch at the place where he had been interrupted.

Anne, trembling with anger and scarlet with humiliation, left the room, shutting the door violently after her. Mazarin did not even turn around. When once more in her own apartment Anne fell into a chair and wept; then suddenly struck with an idea:

"I am saved!" she exclaimed, rising; "oh, yes! yes! I know a man who will find the means of taking me from Paris, a man I have too long forgotten." Then falling into a reverie, she added, however, with an expression of joy, "Ungrateful woman that I am, for twenty years I have forgotten this man, whom I ought to have made a marechal of France. My

mother-in-law expended gold, caresses, dignities on Concini, who ruined her; the king made Vitry marechal of France for an assassination: while I have left in obscurity, in poverty, the noble D'Artagnan, who saved me!"

And running to a table, on which were paper, pens and ink, she hastily began to write.