

## Chapter XXVIII. Smuggling.

Two days after the events we have just related, and while General Monk was expected every minute in the camp to which he did not return, a little Dutch felucca, manned by eleven men, cast anchor upon the coast of Scheveningen, nearly within cannon-shot of the port. It was night, the darkness was great, the tide rose in the darkness; it was a capital time to land passengers and merchandise.

The road of Scheveningen forms a vast crescent; it is not very deep and not very safe; therefore, nothing is seen stationed there but large Flemish hoys, or some of those Dutch barks which fishermen draw up on the sand on rollers, as the ancients did, according to Virgil. When the tide is rising, and advancing on land, it is not prudent to bring the vessels too close in shore, for, if the wind is fresh, the prows are buried in the sand; and the sand of that coast is spongy; it receives easily, but does not yield so well. It was on this account, no doubt, that a boat was detached from the bark, as soon as the latter had cast anchor, and came with eight sailors, amidst whom was to be seen an object of an oblong form, a sort of large pannier or bale.

The shore was deserted; the few fishermen inhabiting the down were gone to bed. The only sentinel that guarded the coast (a coast very badly guarded, seeing that a landing from large ships was impossible), without having been able to follow the example of the fishermen, who were gone to bed, imitated them so far, that he slept at the back of his watch-box as soundly as they slept in their beds. The only noise to be heard, then, was the whistling of the night breeze among the bushes and the brambles of the downs. But the people who were approaching were doubtless mistrustful people, for this real silence and apparent solitude did not satisfy them. Their boat, therefore, scarcely as visible as a dark speck upon the ocean, gilded along noiselessly, avoiding the use of their oars for fear of being heard, and gained the nearest land.

Scarcely had it touched the ground when a single man jumped out of the boat, after having given a brief order, in a manner which denoted the habit of commanding. In consequence of this order, several muskets immediately glittered in the feeble light reflected from that mirror of the heavens, the sea; and the oblong bale of which we spoke, containing no doubt some contraband object, was transported to land, with infinite precautions. Immediately after that, the man who had landed first, set off at a rapid pace diagonally towards the village of Scheveningen, directing his course to the nearest point of the wood. When there, he sought for that house already described as the temporary residence--and a very humble residence--of him who was styled by courtesy king of England.

All were asleep there, as everywhere else, only a large dog, of the race of those which the fishermen of Scheveningen harness to little carts to carry fish to the Hague, began to bark formidably as soon as the stranger's steps were audible beneath the windows. But the watchfulness, instead of alarming the newly-landed man, appeared, on the contrary, to give him great joy, for his voice might perhaps have proved insufficient to rouse the people of the house, whilst, with an auxiliary of that sort, his voice became almost useless. The stranger waited, then, till these reiterated and sonorous barkings should, according to all probability, have produced their effect, and then he ventured a summons. On hearing his voice, the dog began to roar with such violence that another voice was soon heard from the interior, quieting the dog. With that the dog was quieted.

"What do you want?" asked that voice, at the same time weak, broken, and civil.

"I want his majesty King Charles II., king of England," said the stranger.

"What do you want with him?"

"I want to speak with him."

"Who are you?"

"Ah! Mordieux! you ask too much; I don't like talking through doors."

"Only tell me your name."

"I don't like to declare my name in the open air, either; besides, you may be sure I shall not eat your dog, and I hope to God he will be as reserved with respect to me."

"You bring news, perhaps, monsieur, do you not?" replied the voice, patient and querulous as that of an old man.

"I will answer for it, I bring you news you little expect. Open the door, then, if you please, hein!"

"Monsieur," persisted the old man, "do you believe, upon your soul and conscience, that your news is worth waking the king?"

"For God's sake, my dear monsieur, draw your bolts; you will not be sorry, I swear, for the trouble it will give you. I am worth my weight in gold, parole d'honneur!"

"Monsieur, I cannot open the door till you have told me your name."

"Must I, then?"

"It is by the order of my master, monsieur."

"Well, my name is--but, I warn you, my name will tell you absolutely nothing."

"Never mind, tell it, notwithstanding."

"Well, I am the Chevalier d'Artagnan."

The voice uttered an exclamation.

"Oh! good heavens!" said a voice on the other side of the door.

"Monsieur d'Artagnan. What happiness! I could not help thinking I knew that voice."

"Humph!" said D'Artagnan. "My voice is known here! That's flattering."

"Oh! yes, we know it," said the old man, drawing the bolts; "and here is the proof." And at these words he let in D'Artagnan, who, by the light of the lantern he carried in his hand, recognized his obstinate interlocutor.

"Ah! Mordieux!" cried he: "why, it is Parry! I ought to have known that."

"Parry, yes, my dear Monsieur d'Artagnan, it is I. What joy to see you once again!"

"You are right there, what joy!" said D'Artagnan, pressing the old man's hand. "There, now you'll go and inform the king, will you not?"

"But the king is asleep, my dear monsieur."

"Mordieux! then wake him. He won't scold you for having disturbed him, I will promise you."

"You come on the part of the count, do you not?"

"The Comte de la Fere?"

"From Athos?"

"Ma foi! no; I come on my own part. Come, Parry, quick! The king--I want the king."

Parry did not think it his duty to resist any longer; he knew D'Artagnan

of old; he knew that, although a Gascon, his words never promised more than they could stand to. He crossed a court and a little garden, appeased the dog, that seemed most anxious to taste of the musketeer's flesh, and went to knock at the window of a chamber forming the ground-floor of a little pavilion. Immediately a little dog inhabiting that chamber replied to the great dog inhabiting the court.

"Poor king!" said D'Artagnan to himself, "these are his body-guards. It is true he is not the worse guarded on that account."

"What is wanted with me?" asked the king, from the back of the chamber.

"Sire, it is M. le Chevalier d'Artagnan, who brings you some news."

A noise was immediately heard in the chamber, a door was opened, and a flood of light inundated the corridor and the garden. The king was working by the light of a lamp. Papers were lying about upon his desk, and he had commenced the first copy of a letter which showed, by the numerous erasures, the trouble he had had in writing it.

"Come in, monsieur le chevalier," said he, turning around. Then perceiving the fisherman, "What do you mean, Parry? Where is M. le Chevalier d'Artagnan?" asked Charles.

"He is before you, sire," said M. d'Artagnan.

"What, in that costume?"

"Yes; look at me, sire; do you not remember having seen me at Blois, in the ante-chamber of King Louis XIV.?"

"Yes, monsieur, and I remember I was much pleased with you."

D'Artagnan bowed. "It was my duty to behave as I did, the moment I knew that I had the honor of being near your majesty."

"You bring me news, do you say?"

"Yes, sire."

"From the king of France?"

"Ma foi! no, sire," replied D'Artagnan. "Your majesty must have seen yonder that the king of France is only occupied with his own majesty."

Charles raised his eyes towards heaven.

"No, sire, no," continued D'Artagnan. "I bring news entirely composed of personal facts. Nevertheless, I hope that your majesty will listen to

the facts and news with some favor."

"Speak, monsieur."

"If I am not mistaken, sire, your majesty spoke a great deal at Blois, of the embarrassed state in which the affairs of England are."

Charles colored. "Monsieur," said he, "it was to the king of France I related--"

"Oh! your majesty is mistaken," said the musketeer, coolly; "I know how to speak to kings in misfortune. It is only when they are in misfortune that they speak to me; once fortunate, they look upon me no more. I have, then, for your majesty, not only the greatest respect, but, still more, the most absolute devotion; and that, believe me, with me, sire, means something. Now, hearing your majesty complain of fate, I found that you were noble and generous, and bore misfortune well."

"In truth!" said Charles, much astonished, "I do not know which I ought to prefer, your freedoms or your respects."

"You will choose presently, sire," said D'Artagnan. "Then your majesty complained to your brother, Louis XIV., of the difficulty you experienced in returning to England and regaining your throne for want of men and money."

Charles allowed a movement of impatience to escape him.

"And the principal object your majesty found in your way," continued D'Artagnan, "was a certain general commanding the armies of the parliament, and who was playing yonder the part of another Cromwell. Did not your majesty say so?"

"Yes; but I repeat to you, monsieur, those words were for the king's ears alone."

"And you will see, sire, that it is very fortunate that they fell into those of his lieutenant of musketeers. That man so troublesome to your majesty was one General Monk, I believe; did I not hear his name correctly, sire?"

"Yes, monsieur, but once more, to what purpose are all these questions."

"Oh! I know very well, sire, that etiquette will not allow kings to be questioned. I hope, however, presently you will pardon my want of etiquette. Your majesty added that, notwithstanding, if you could see him, confer with him, and meet him face to face, you would triumph, either by force or persuasion, over that obstacle--the only serious one, the only insurmountable one, the only real one you met with on your

road."

"All that is true, monsieur: my destiny, my future, my obscurity, or my glory depend upon that man; but what do you draw from that?"

"One thing alone, that if this General Monk is troublesome to the point your majesty describes, it would be expedient to get rid of him or make an ally of him."

"Monsieur, a king who has neither army nor money, as you have heard my conversation with my brother Louis, has no means of acting against a man like Monk."

"Yes, sire, that was your opinion, I know very well: but, fortunately for you, it was not mine."

"What do you mean by that?"

"That, without an army and without a million, I have done--I, myself--what your majesty thought could alone be done with an army and a million."

"How! What do you say? What have you done?"

"What have I done? Eh! well, sire, I went yonder to take this man who is so troublesome to your majesty."

"In England?"

"Exactly, sire."

"You went to take Monk in England?"

"Should I by chance have done wrong, sire?"

"In truth, you are mad, monsieur!"

"Not the least in the world, sire."

"You have taken Monk?"

"Yes, sire."

"Where?"

"In the midst of his camp."

The king trembled with impatience.

"And having taken him on the causeway of Newcastle, I bring him to your majesty," said D'Artagnan, simply.

"You bring him to me!" cried the king, almost indignant at what he considered a mystification.

"Yes, sire," replied D'Artagnan, in the same tone, "I bring him to you; he is down below yonder, in a large chest pierced with holes, so as to allow him to breathe."

"Good God!"

"Oh! don't be uneasy, sire, we have taken the greatest possible care of him. He comes in good state, and in perfect condition. Would your majesty please to see him, to talk with him, or to have him thrown into the sea?"

"Oh, heavens!" repeated Charles, "oh, heavens! do you speak the truth, monsieur? Are you not insulting me with some unworthy joke? You have accomplished this unheard-of act of audacity and genius--impossible!"

"Will your majesty permit me to open the window?" said D'Artagnan, opening it.

The king had not time to reply yes or no. D'Artagnan gave a shrill and prolonged whistle, which he repeated three times through the silence of the night.

"There!" said he, "he will be brought to your majesty."