

## Chapter 3

### THE EXAMINATION.

The process of examination consisted in comparing the half card with another half in the possession of the officer.

The Gascon with the bare head advanced first.

"Your name?" said De Loignac.

"It is on the card."

"Never mind; tell it to me."

"Well, I am called Perducas de Pincornay."

Then, throwing his eyes on the card. M. de Loignac read. "Perducas de Pincornay, 26 October, 1585, at noon precisely. Porte St. Antoine."

"Very good; it is all right," said he, "enter. Now for you," said he to the second.

The man with the cuirass advanced.

"Your card?" said De Loignac.

"What! M. de Loignac, do you not know the son of your old friend, whom you have danced twenty times on your knee?"--"No."

"I am Pertinax de Montcrabeau," replied the young man, with astonishment. "Do you not know me now?"

"When I am on service, I know no one. Your card, monsieur?"

He held it out. "All right! pass," said De Loignac.

The third now approached, whose card was demanded in the same terms. The man plunged his hand into a little goatskin pouch which he wore, but in vain; he was so embarrassed by the child in his arms, that he could not find it.

"What the devil are you doing with that child?" asked De Loignac.

"He is my son, monsieur."

"Well; put your son down. You are married, then?"---"Yes, monsieur."

"At twenty?"

"They marry young among us; you ought to know that, M. de Loignac, who were married at eighteen."

"Oh!" thought De Loignac, "here is another who knows me."

"And why should he not be married?" cried the woman advancing. "Yes, monsieur, he is married, and here are two other children who call him father, besides this great lad behind. Advance, Militor, and bow to M. de Loignac."

A lad of sixteen, vigorous and agile, with an incipient mustache, stepped forward.

"They are my wife's sons, monsieur."

"In Heaven's name, your card!" cried De Loignac.

"Lardille!" cried the Gascon to his wife, "come and help me."

Lardille searched the pouch and pockets of her husband, but uselessly.

"We must have lost it!" she cried.

"Then I arrest you."

The man turned pale, but said, "I am Eustache de Miradoux, and M. de St. Maline is my patron."

"Oh!" said De Loignac, a little mollified at this name, "well, search again."

They turned to their pockets again, and began to re-examine them.

"Why, what do I see there, on the sleeve of that blockhead?" said De Loignac.

"Yes, yes!" cried the father. "I remember, now, Lardille sewed it on."

"That you might carry something, I suppose, you great lazy fellow."

The card was looked at and found all right, and the family passed on in the same order as before.

The fourth man advanced and gave his name as Chalabre. It was found correct, and he also entered.

Then came M. de Carmainges. He got off his horse and presented his card, while the page hid his face by pretending to adjust the saddle.

"The page belongs to you?" asked De Loignac.

"You see, he is attending to my horse."

"Pass, then."

"Quick, my master," said the page.

Behind these men the door was closed, much to the discontent of the crowd. Robert Briquet, meanwhile, had drawn near to the porter's lodge, which had two windows, one looking toward Paris and the other into the country. From this post he saw a man, who, coming from Paris at full gallop, entered the lodge and said, "Here I am, M. de Loignac."

"Good. Where do you come from?"

"From the Porte St. Victor."

"Your number?"--"Five."

"The cards?"

"Here they are."

De Loignac took them, examined them, and wrote on a slate the number five. The messenger left, and two others appeared, almost immediately. One came from the Porte Bourdelle, and brought the number four, the other from the Porte du Temple, and announced six. Then came four others. The first from the Porte St. Denis, with the number five; the next from the Porte St. Jacques, with the number three; the third from the Porte St. Honore, with the number eight; and the fourth from the Porte Montmartre, with the number four. Lastly came a messenger, from the Porte Bussy, who announced four. De Loignac wrote all these down, added them to those who had entered the Porte St. Antoine, and found the total number to be forty-five.

"Good!" said he. "Now open the gates, and all may enter."

The gates were thrown open, and then horses, mules, and carts, men, women, and children, pressed into Paris, at the risk of suffocating each other, and in a quarter of an hour all the crowd had vanished.

Robert Briquet remained until the last. "I have seen enough," said he: "would it be very advantageous to me to see M. Salcede torn in four pieces? No, pardieu! Besides, I have renounced politics; I will go and dine."