

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FATHER D'AIGRIGNY'S SECRETARY.

Hardly had the magistrate and Dr. Baleinier disappeared, than Mdlle. de Cardoville, whose countenance was beaming with joy, exclaimed, as she looked at Rodin with a mixture of respect and gratitude, "At length, thanks to you, sir, I am free—free! Oh, I had never before felt how much happiness, expansion, delight, there is in that adorable word—liberty!"

Her bosom rose and fell, her rosy nostrils dilated, her vermilion lips were half open, as if she again inhaled with rapture pure and vivifying air.

"I have been only a few days in this horrible place," she resumed, "but I have suffered enough from my captivity to make me resolve never to let a year pass without restoring to liberty some poor prisoners for debt. This vow no doubt appears to belong to the Middle Ages," added she, with a smile; "but I would fain borrow a little from that noble epoch something more than its old windows and furniture. So, doubly thanks, sir—for I take you as a partner in that project of deliverance, which has just (you see) unfolded itself in the midst of the happiness I owe to you, and by which you seem so much affected. Oh! let my joy speak my gratitude, and pay you for your generous aid!" exclaimed the young girl, with enthusiasm.

Mdlle. de Cardoville had truly remarked a complete transfiguration in the countenance of Rodin. This man, lately so harsh, severe, inflexible, with regard to Dr. Baleinier, appeared now under the influence of the mildest and most tender sentiments. His little, half-veiled eyes were fixed upon Adrienne with an expression of ineffable interest. Then, as if he wished to tear himself from these impressions, he said, speaking to himself, "Come, come, no weakness. Time is too precious; my mission is not fulfilled. My dear young lady," added he, addressing himself to Adrienne, "believe what I say—we will talk hereafter of gratitude—but we have now to talk of the present so important for you and your family. Do you know what is taking place?"

Adrienne looked at the Jesuit with surprise, and said: "What is taking place, sir?"

"Do you know the real motive of your imprisonment in this house? Do you know what influenced the Princess de Saint-Dizer and Abbe d'Aigrigny?"

At the sound of those detested names, Mdlle. de Cardoville's face, now so full of happiness, became suddenly sad, and she answered with bitterness: "It is hatred, sir, that no doubt animated Madame de Saint-Dizer against me."

"Yes, hatred; and, moreover, the desire to rob you with impunity of an immense fortune."

"Me, sir! how?"

"You must be ignorant, my dear young lady, of the interest you had to be in the Rue Saint-Francois on the 13th February, for an inheritance?"

"I was ignorant, sir, of the date and details; but I knew by some family papers, and thanks to an extraordinary circumstance, that one of our ancestors—"

"Had left an enormous sum to be divided between his descendants! is it not so?"—"Yes, sir."

"But what unfortunately you did not know, my dear young lady, was that the heirs were all bound to be present at a certain hour on the 13th of February. This day and hour once past, the absent would forfeit their claim. Do you now understand why you have been imprisoned here, my dear young lady?"

"Yes, yes; I understand it," cried Mdlle. de Cardoville; "cupidity was added to the hatred which my aunt felt for me. All is explained. Marshal Simon's daughters, having the same right as I had, have, like me, been imprisoned."

"And yet," cried Rodin, "you and they were not the only victims."

"Who, then, are the others, sir?"—"A young East Indian."

"Prince Djalma?" said Adrienne, hastily.

"For the same reason he has been nearly poisoned with a narcotic."

"Great God!" cried the young girl, clasping her hands in horror. "It is fearful. That young prince, who was said to have so noble and generous a character! But I sent to Cardoville Castle—"

"A confidential person, to fetch the prince to Paris—I know it, my dear young lady; but, by means of a trick, your friend was got out of the way, and the young Oriental delivered to his enemies."

"And where is he now?"

"I have only vague information on the subject. I know that he is in Paris, and do not despair of finding him. I shall pursue my researches with an almost paternal ardor, for we cannot too much love the rare qualities of that poor king's son. What a heart, my dear young lady! what a heart! Oh, it is a heart of gold, pure and bright as the gold of his country!"

"We must find the prince, sir," said Adrienne with emotion; "let me entreat you to neglect nothing for that end. He is my relation—alone here—without support—without assistance."

"Certainly," replied Rodin, with commiseration. "Poor boy!—for he is almost a boy—eighteen or nineteen years of age—thrown into the heart of Paris, of this hell—with his fresh, ardent, half-savage passions—with his simplicity and confidence—to what perils may he not be exposed?"

"Well, we must first find him, sir," said Adrienne, hastily; "and then we will save him from these dangers. Before I was confined here, I learned his arrival in France, and sent a confidential person to offer him the services of an unknown friend. I now see that this mad idea, with which I have been so much reproached, was a very sensible one. I am more convinced of it than ever. The prince belongs to my family, and I owe him a generous hospitality. I had destined for him the lodge I occupied at my aunt's."

"And you, my dear young lady?"

"To-day, I shall remove to a house, which I had prepared sometime ago, with the determination of quitting Madame de Saint-Dizer, and living alone as I pleased. Then, sir, as you seem bent upon being the good genius of our family, be as generous with regard to Prince Djalma, as you have been to me and Marshal Simon's daughters. I entreat you to discover the hiding-place of this poor king's son, as you call him; keep my secret for me, and conduct him to the house offered by the unknown friend. Let him not disquiet himself about anything; all his wants shall be provided for; he shall live—like a prince."

"Yes; he will indeed live like a prince, thanks to your royal munificence. But never was such kind interest better deserved. It is enough to see (as I have seen) his fine, melancholy countenance—"

"You have seen him then, sir?" said Adrienne interrupting Rodin.

"Yes, my dear young lady; I was with him for about two hours. It was quite enough to judge of him. His charming features are the mirror of his soul."

"And where did you see him, sir?"

"At your old Chateau de Cardoville, my dear young lady, near which he had been shipwrecked in a storm, and whither I had gone to—"

Rodin hesitated for a moment, and then, as if yielding to the frankness of his disposition, added: "Whither I had gone to commit a bad action—a shameful, miserable action, I must confess!"

"You, sir?—at Cardoville House—to commit a bad action?" cried Adrienne, much surprised.

"Alas! yes, my dear young lady," answered Rodin with simplicity. "In one word, I had orders from Abbe d'Aigrigny, to place your former bailiff in the alternative either of losing his situation or lending himself to mean action—something, in fact, that resembled spying and calumny; but the honest, worthy man refused."

"Why, who are you, sir?" said Mdlle. de Cardoville, more and more astonished.

"I am Rodin, lately secretary of the Abbe d'Aigrigny—a person of very little importance, as you see."

It is impossible to describe the accent, at once humble and ingenuous, of the Jesuit, as he pronounced these words, which he accompanied with a respectful bow. On this revelation, Mdlle. de Cardoville drew back abruptly. We have said that Adrienne had sometimes heard talk of Rodin, the humble secretary of the Abbe d'Aigrigny, as a sort of obedient and passive machine. That was not all; the bailiff of Cardoville Manor, writing to Adrienne on the subject of Prince Djalma, had complained of the perfidious and dishonest propositions of Rodin. She felt, therefore, a vague suspicion, when she heard that her liberator was the man who had played so odious a part. Yet this unfavorable feeling was balanced by the sense of what she owed to Rodin, and by his frank denunciation of Abbe d'Aigrigny before the magistrate. And then the Jesuit, by his own confession, had anticipated, as it were, the reproaches that might have been addressed to him. Still, it was with a kind of cold reserve that Mdlle. de Cardoville resumed this dialogue; which she had commenced with as much frankness as warmth and sympathy.

Rodin perceived the impression he had made. He expected it. He was not the least disconcerted when Mdlle. de Cardoville said to him, as she fixed upon him a piercing glance, "Ah! you are M. Rodin—secretary to the Abbe d'Aigrigny?"

"Say ex-secretary, if you please, my dear young lady," answered the Jesuit; "for you see clearly that I can never again enter the house of the Abbe d'Aigrigny. I have made of him an implacable enemy, and I am now without em-

(Continued on page 5.)

FEN POINTERS.

BY H. W. BOWMAN.

Papal pills are sugar coated.
Credulity is the basis of Rome's religion.
Get a papist to thinking and the priest will curse you.
The priest's blindest eye is on the side where the most money comes from.
A Bible is the most hurtful book a papist can read—if we judge from Rome's past acts.
No man can walk with civilization and stay in the woods of papal superstition.
Rome wears a religious cloak, yet has a cold heart.
A confessional box is the tomb of self-respect.
Wearing a cross does not cure crossness.
Hatred is nursed by papal prejudice.
The brighter history shines the darker Rome's record.
It is hard to convince a papist who lets the priest do his thinking.
To know that popery is a curse makes a man want to rid the earth of it.
Keeping knowledge in the hands of the priest starves the minds of the people.

You can never tell what a papist will do out of a church by his looks of devotion within.
Rome has trouble with the man who does his own thinking.
Popery throws the most mud at the whitest garments.
The priest does an evil day's work when he gets a child to go to the parochial school.
Every dollar in Rome's possession is stamped with fraud.
No man's influence is so small but what he could make it tell against Rome.
When Rome gives money she always puts a chain of power on it.
Truth is always ready to go to war; error will run at the first opportunity.
Every fact is an antidote for some foolish fancy.
Fighting truth is an old trick of popery; and it has become an adept at it.
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