

Chapter XXIII

The Rendezvous



D'ARTAGNAN ran home immediately, and although it was three o'clock in the morning and he had some of the worst quarters of Paris to traverse, he met with no misadventure. Everyone knows that drunkards and lovers have a protecting deity.

He found the door of his passage open, sprang up the stairs and knocked softly in a manner agreed upon between him and his lackey. Planchet¹, whom he had sent home two hours before from the Hôtel de Ville, telling him to sit up for him, opened the door for him.

'Has anyone brought a letter for me?' asked d'Artagnan, eagerly.

'No one has *brought* a letter, monsieur,' replied Planchet; 'but one has come of itself.'

'What do you mean, blockhead?'

'I mean to say that when I came in, although I had the key of your apartment in my pocket, and that key had never quit me, I found a letter on the green table cover in your bedroom.'

'And where is that letter?'

'I left it where I found it, monsieur. It is not natural for letters to enter people's houses in this manner. If the window had been open or even ajar, I should think nothing of it; but, no—all was hermetically sealed. Beware, monsieur; there is certainly some magic underneath.'

Meanwhile, the young man had darted in to his chamber, and opened the letter. It was from Mme. Bonacieux, and was expressed in these terms:

¹The reader may ask, 'How came Planchet here?' when he was left 'stiff as a rush' in London. In the intervening time Buckingham perhaps sent him to Paris, as he did the horses.

'There are many thanks to be offered to you, and to be transmitted to you. Be this evening about ten o'clock at St. Cloud, in front of the pavilion which stands at the corner of the house of M. d'Estrees.—C.B.'

While reading this letter, d'Artagnan felt his heart dilated and compressed by that delicious spasm which tortures and caresses the hearts of lovers.

It was the first billet he had received; it was the first rendezvous that had been granted him. His heart, swelled by the intoxication of joy, felt ready to dissolve away at the very gate of that terrestrial paradise called Love!

'Well, monsieur,' said Planchet, who had observed his master grow red and pale successively, 'did I not guess truly? Is it not some bad affair?'

'You are mistaken, Planchet,' replied d'Artagnan; 'and as a proof, there is a crown to drink my health.'

'I am much obliged to Monsieur for the crown he has given me, and I promise him to follow his instructions exactly; but it is not the less true that letters which come in this way into shut-up houses—'

'Fall from heaven, my friend, fall from heaven.'

'Then Monsieur is satisfied?' asked Planchet.

'My dear Planchet, I am the happiest of men!'

'And I may profit by Monsieur's happiness, and go to bed?'

'Yes, go.'

'May the blessings of heaven fall upon Monsieur! But it is not the less true that that letter—'

And Planchet retired, shaking his head with an air of doubt, which the liberality of d'Artagnan had not entirely effaced.

Left alone, d'Artagnan read and reread his billet. Then he kissed and re-kissed twenty times the lines traced by the hand of his beautiful mistress. At length he went to bed, fell asleep, and had golden dreams.

At seven o'clock in the morning he arose and called Planchet, who at the second summons opened the door, his countenance not yet quite freed from the anxiety of the preceding night.

'Planchet,' said d'Artagnan, 'I am going out for all day, perhaps. You are, therefore, your own master till seven o'clock in the evening; but at seven o'clock you must hold yourself in readiness with two horses.'

'There!' said Planchet. 'We are going again, it appears, to have our hides pierced in all sorts of ways.'

D'Artagnan placed the ring on his finger, and again waited; it was evident that all was not yet over. After the reward of his devotion, that of his love was to come. Besides, although the ballet was danced, the evening had scarcely begun. Supper was to be served at three, and the clock of St. Jean had struck three quarters past two.

The sound of voices diminished by degrees in the adjoining chamber. The company was then heard departing; then the door of the closet in which d'Artagnan was, was opened, and Mme. Bonacieux entered.

'You at last?' cried d'Artagnan.

'Silence!' said the young woman, placing her hand upon his lips, 'silence, and go the same way you came!'

'But where and when shall I see you again?' cried d'Artagnan.

'A note which you will find at home will tell you. Begone, begone!'

At these words she opened the door of the corridor, and pushed d'Artagnan out of the room. D'Artagnan obeyed like a child, without the least resistance or objection, which proved that he was really in love.

to stop the young woman, seize her and gaze upon her, were it only for a minute; but quick as a bird she glided between his hands, and when he wished to speak to her, her finger placed upon her mouth, with a little imperative gesture full of grace, reminded him that he was under the command of a power which he must blindly obey, and which forbade him even to make the slightest complaint. At length, after winding about for a minute or two, Mme. Bonacieux opened the door of a closet, which was entirely dark, and led d'Aragnan into it. There she made a fresh sign of silence, and opened a second door concealed by tapestry. The opening of this door disclosed a brilliant light, and she disappeared.

D'Aragnan remained for a moment motionless, asking himself where he could be; but soon a ray of light which penetrated through the chamber, together with the warm and perfumed air which reached him from the same aperture, the conversation of two of three ladies in language at once respectful and refined, and the word 'Majesty' several times repeated, indicated clearly that he was in a closet attached to the queen's apartment. The young man waited in comparative darkness and listened.

The queen appeared cheerful and happy, which seemed to astonish the persons who surrounded her and who were accustomed to see her almost always sad and full of care. The queen attributed this joyous feeling to the beauty of the fête, to the pleasure she had experienced in the ballet; and as it is not permissible to contradict a queen, whether she smile or weep, everybody expatiated on the gallantry of the aldermen of the city of Paris.

Although d'Aragnan did not at all know the queen, he soon distinguished her voice from the others, at first by a slightly foreign accent, and next by that tone of domination naturally impressed upon all royal words. He heard her approach and withdraw from the partially open door; and twice or three times he even saw the shadow of a person intercept the light.

At length a hand and an arm, surpassingly beautiful in their form and whiteness, glided through the tapestry. D'Aragnan at once comprehended that this was his recompense. He cast himself on his knees, seized the hand, and touched it respectfully with his lips. Then the hand was withdrawn, leaving in his an object which he perceived to be a ring. The door immediately closed, and d'Aragnan found himself again in complete obscurity.

'You will take your musketeer and your pistols.'

'There, now! Didn't I say so?' cried Planchet. 'I was sure of it—the cursed letter!'

'Don't be afraid, you idiot; there is nothing in hand but a party of pleasure.'

'Ah, like the charming journey the other day, when it rained bullets and produced a crop of steel traps!'

'Well, if you are really afraid, Monsieur Planchet,' resumed d'Aragnan, 'I will go without you. I prefer travelling alone to having a companion who entertains the least fear.'

'Monsieur does me wrong,' said Planchet; 'I thought he had seen me at work.'

'Yes, but I thought perhaps you had worn out all your courage the first time.'

'Monsieur shall see that upon occasion I have some left; only I beg Monsieur not to be too prodigal of it if he wishes it to last long.'

'Do you believe you have still a certain amount of it to expend this evening?'

'I hope so, monsieur.'

'Well, then, I count on you.'

'At the appointed hour I shall be ready; only I believed that Monsieur had but one horse in the Guard stables.'

'Perhaps there is but one at this moment; but by this evening there will be four.'

'It appears that our journey was a remounting journey, then?'

'Exactly so,' said d'Aragnan; and nodding to Planchet, he went out.

M. Bonacieux was at his door. D'Aragnan's intention was to go out without speaking to the worthy mercer; but the latter made so polite and friendly a salutation that his tenant felt obliged, not only to stop, but to enter into conversation with him.

Besides, how is it possible to avoid a little condescension toward a husband whose pretty wife has appointed a meeting with you that same evening at St. Cloud, opposite D'Estrées's pavilion? D'Aragnan approached him with the most amiable air he could assume.

The conversation naturally fell upon the incarceration of the poor man. M. Bonacieux, who was ignorant that d'Aragnan had overheard his conversation with the stranger of Meung, related to his young tenant the persecutions of

that monster, M. de L'affemas, whom he never ceased to designate, during his account, by the title of the 'cardinal's executioner,' and expatriated at great length upon the Bastille, the bolts, the wickets, the dungeons, the gratings, the instruments of torture.

D'Arragnan listened to him with exemplary complaisance, and when he had finished said, 'And Madame Bonacieux, do you know who carried her off?—For I do not forget that I owe to that unpleasant circumstance the good fortune of having made your acquaintance.'

'Ah!' said Bonacieux, 'they took good care not to tell me that; and my wife, on her part, has sworn to me by all that's sacred that she does not know. But you,' continued M. Bonacieux, in a tone of perfect good fellowship, 'what has become of you all these days? I have not seen you nor your friends, and I don't think you could gather all that dust that I saw Planchet brush off your boots yesterday from the pavement of Paris.'

'You are right, my dear Monsieur Bonacieux, my friends and I have been on a little journey.'

'Far from here?'

'Oh, Lord, no! About forty leagues only. We went to take Monsieur Athos to the waters of Forges, where my friends still remain.'

'And you have returned, have you not?' replied M. Bonacieux, giving to his countenance a most sly air. 'A handsome young fellow like you does not obtain long leaves of absence from his mistress; and we were impatiently waited for at Paris, were we not?'

'My faith!' said the young man, laughing, 'I confess it, and so much more the readily, my dear Bonacieux, as I see there is no concealing anything from you. Yes, I was expected, and very impatiently, I acknowledge.'

A slight shade passed over the brow of Bonacieux, but so slight that d'Arragnan did not perceive it.

'And we are going to be recompensed for our diligence?' continued the mercer, with a trifling alteration in his voice—so trifling, indeed, that d'Arragnan did not perceive it any more than he had the momentary shade which, an instant before, had darkened the countenance of the worthy man.

'Ah, may you be a true prophet!' said d'Arragnan, laughing.

'No; what I say,' replied Bonacieux, 'is only that I may know whether I am delaying you.'

'How, sire?' cried the young queen, affecting surprise, 'you are giving me, then, two more: I shall have fourteen.'

In fact the king counted them, and the twelve studs were all on her Majesty's shoulder.

The king called the cardinal.

'What does this mean, Monsieur Cardinal?' asked the king in a severe tone.

'This means, sire,' replied the cardinal, 'that I was desirous of presenting her Majesty with these two studs, and that not daring to offer them myself, I adopted this means of inducing her to accept them.'

'And I am the more grateful to your Eminence,' replied Anne of Austria, with a smile that proved she was not the dupe of this ingenious gallantry, 'from being certain that these two studs alone have cost you as much as all the others cost his Majesty.'

Then saluting the king and the cardinal, the queen resumed her way to the chamber in which she had dressed, and where she was to take off her costume.

The attention which we have been obliged to give, during the commencement of the chapter, to the illustrious personages we have introduced into it, has diverted us for an instant from him to whom Anne of Austria owed the extraordinary triumph she had obtained over the cardinal; and who, founded, unknown, lost in the crowd gathered at one of the doors, looked on at this scene, comprehensible only to four persons—the king, the queen, his Eminence, and himself.

The queen had just regained her chamber, and d'Arragnan was about to retire, when he felt his shoulder lightly touched. He turned and saw a young woman, who made him a sign to follow her. The face of this young woman was covered with a black velvet mask; but notwithstanding this precaution, which was in fact taken rather against others than against him, he at once recognized his usual guide, the light and intelligent Mme. Bonacieux.

On the evening before, they had scarcely seen each other for a moment at the apartment of the Swiss guard, Germain, whither d'Arragnan had sent for her. The haste which the young woman was in to convey to the queen the excellent news of the happy return of her messenger prevented the two lovers from exchanging more than a few words. D'Arragnan therefore followed Mme. Bonacieux moved by a double sentiment—love and curiosity. All the way, and in proportion as the corridors became more deserted, d'Arragnan wished

the costume that best became the king. So dressed, he really appeared the first gentleman of his kingdom.

The cardinal drew near to the king, and placed in his hand a small casket. The king opened it, and found in it two diamond studs.

‘What does this mean?’ demanded he of the cardinal.

‘Nothing,’ replied the latter; ‘only, if the queen has the studs, which I very much doubt, count them, sire, and if you only find ten, ask her Majesty who can have stolen from her the two studs that are here.’

The king looked at the cardinal as if to interrogate him; but he had not time to address any question to him—a cry of admiration burst from every mouth. If the king appeared to be the first gentleman of his kingdom, the queen was without doubt the most beautiful woman in France.

It is true that the habit of a huntress became her admirably. She wore a beaver hat with blue feathers, a surtout of gray-pearl velvet, fastened with diamond clasps, and a petticoat of blue satin, embroidered with silver. On her left shoulder sparkled the diamond studs, on a bow of the same colour as the plumes and the petticoat.

The king trembled with joy and the cardinal with vexation; although, distant as they were from the queen, they could not count the studs. The queen had them. The only question was, had she ten or twelve?

At that moment the violins sounded the signal for the ballet. The king advanced toward Madame the President, with whom he was to dance, and his Highness Monsieur with the queen. They took their places, and the ballet began.

The king danced facing the queen, and every time he passed by her, he devoured with his eyes those studs of which he could not ascertain the number. A cold sweat covered the brow of the cardinal.

The ballet lasted an hour, and had sixteen *entrées*. The ballet ended amid the applause of the whole assemblée, and everyone reconducted his lady to her place, but the king took advantage of the privilege he had of leaving his lady, to advance eagerly toward the queen.

‘I thank you, madame,’ said he, ‘for the deference you have shown to my wishes, but I think you want two of the studs, and I bring them back to you.’ With these words he held out to the queen the two studs the cardinal had given him.

‘Why that question, my dear host?’ asked d’Arragnan. ‘Do you intend to sit up for me?’

‘No; but since my arrest and the robbery that was committed in my house, I am alarmed every time I hear a door open, particularly in the night. What the deuce can you expect? I am no swordsman.’

‘Well, don’t be alarmed if I return at one, two or three o’clock in the morning; indeed, do not be alarmed if I do not come at all.’

This time Bonacieux became so pale that d’Arragnan could not help perceiving it, and asked him what was the matter.

‘Nothing,’ replied Bonacieux, ‘nothing. Since my misfortunes I have been subject to faintnesses, which seize me all at once, and I have just felt a cold shiver. Pay no attention to it; you have nothing to occupy yourself with but being happy.’

‘Then I have full occupation, for I am so.’

‘Not yet; wait a little! This evening, you said.’

‘Well, this evening will come, thank God! And perhaps you look for it with as much impatience as I do; perhaps this evening Madame Bonacieux will visit the conjugal domicile.’

‘Madame Bonacieux is not at liberty this evening,’ replied the husband, seriously; ‘she is detained at the Louvre this evening by her duties.’

‘So much the worse for you, my dear host, so much the worse! When I am happy, I wish all the world to be so; but it appears that is not possible.’

The young man departed, laughing at the joke, which he thought he alone could comprehend.

‘Amuse yourself well!’ replied Bonacieux, in a sepulchral tone.

But d’Arragnan was too far off to hear him; and if he had heard him in the disposition of mind he then enjoyed, he certainly would not have remarked it.

He took his way toward the hôtel of M. de Tréville; his visit of the day before, it is to be remembered, had been very short and very little explicative.

He found Tréville in a joyful mood. He had thought the king and queen charming at the ball. It is true the cardinal had been particularly ill-tempered. He had retired at one o’clock under the pretense of being indisposed. As to their Majesties, they did not return to the Louvre till six o’clock in the morning.

‘Now,’ said Tréville, lowering his voice, and looking into every corner of the apartment to see if they were alone, ‘now let us talk about yourself, my

young friend, for it is evident that your happy return has something to do with the joy of the king, the triumph of the queen, and the humiliation of his Eminence. You must look out for yourself.'

'What have I to fear,' replied d'Arragnan, 'as long as I shall have the luck to enjoy the favour of their Majesties?'

'Everything, believe me. The cardinal is not the man to forget a mystification until he has settled account with the mystifier; and the mystifier appears to me to have the air of being a certain young Gascon of my acquaintance.'

'Do you believe that the cardinal is as well posted as yourself, and knows that I have been to London?'

'The devil! You have been to London! Was it from London you brought that beautiful diamond that glitters on your finger? Beware, my dear d'Arragnan! A present from an enemy is not a good thing. Are there not some Latin verses upon that subject? Stop!'

'Yes, doubtless,' replied d'Arragnan, who had never been able to cram the first rudiments of that language into his head, and who had by his ignorance driven his master to despair, 'yes, doubtless there is one.'

'There certainly is one,' said M. de Tréville, who had a tincture of literature, 'and Monsieur de Benserade was quoting it to me the other day. Stop a minute—ah, this is it: "Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes," which means, "Beware of the enemy who makes you presents."'

'This diamond does not come from an enemy, monsieur,' replied d'Arragnan, 'it comes from the queen.'

'From the queen! Oh, oh!' said M. de Tréville. 'Why, it is indeed a true royal jewel, which is worth a thousand pistoles if it is worth a denier. By whom did the queen send you this jewel?'

'She gave it to me herself.'

'Where?'

'In the room adjoining the chamber in which she changed her toilet.'

'How?'

'Giving me her hand to kiss.'

'You have kissed the queen's hand?' said M. de Tréville, looking earnestly at d'Arragnan.

'Her Majesty did me the honour to grant me that favour.'

'And that in the presence of witnesses! Imprudent, thrice imprudent!'

At the moment she entered, the curtain of a small gallery which to that time had been closed, was drawn, and the pale face of the cardinal appeared, he being dressed as a Spanish cavalier. His eyes were fixed upon those of the queen, and a smile of terrible joy passed over his lips; the queen did not wear her diamond studs.

The queen remained for a short time to receive the compliments of the city dignitaries and to reply to the salutations of the ladies. All at once the king appeared with the cardinal at one of the doors of the hall. The cardinal was speaking to him in a low voice, and the king was very pale.

The king made his way through the crowd without a mask, and the ribbons of his doublet scarcely tied. He went straight to the queen, and in an altered voice said, 'Why, madame, have you not thought proper to wear your diamond studs, when you know it would give me so much gratification?'

The queen cast a glance around her, and saw the cardinal behind, with a diabolical smile on his countenance.

'Sire,' replied the queen, with a faltering voice, 'because, in the midst of such a crowd as this, I feared some accident might happen to them.'

'And you were wrong, madame. If I made you that present it was that you might adorn yourself therewith. I tell you that you were wrong.'

The voice of the king was tremulous with anger. Everybody looked and listened with astonishment, comprehending nothing of what passed.

'Sire,' said the queen, 'I can send for them to the Louvre, where they are, and thus your Majesty's wishes will be complied with.'

'Do so, madame, do so, and that at once; for within an hour the ballet will commence.'

The queen bent in token of submission, and followed the ladies who were to conduct her to her room. On his part the king returned to his apartment.

There was a moment of trouble and confusion in the assembly. Everybody had remarked that something had passed between the king and queen; but both of them had spoken so low that everybody, out of respect, withdrew several steps, so that nobody had heard anything. The violins began to sound with all their might, but nobody listened to them.

The king came out first from his room. He was in a most elegant hunting costume; and Monsieur and the other nobles were dressed like him. This was

At six in the evening the guests began to come. As fast as they entered, they were placed in the grand saloon, on the platforms prepared for them.

At nine o'clock Madame la Première Présidente arrived. As next to the queen, she was the most considerable personage of the fête, she was received by the city officials, and placed in a box opposite to that which the queen was to occupy.

At ten o'clock, the king's collation, consisting of preserves and other delicacies, was prepared in the little room on the side of the church of St. Jean, in front of the silver buffet of the city, which was guarded by four archers.

At midnight great cries and loud acclamations were heard. It was the king, who was passing through the streets which led from the Louvre to the Hôtel de Ville, and which were all illuminated with coloured lanterns.

Immediately the aldermen, clothed in their cloth robes and preceded by six sergeants, each holding a *flambeau* in his hand, went to attend upon the king, whom they met on the steps, where the provost of the merchants made him the speech of welcome—a compliment to which his Majesty replied with an apology for coming so late, laying the blame upon the cardinal, who had detained him till eleven o'clock, talking of affairs of state.

His Majesty, in full dress, was accompanied by his royal Highness, M. le Comte de Soissons, by the Grand Prior, by the Duc de Longueville, by the Duc d'Eubœuf, by the Comte d'Harcourt, by the Comte de la Roche-Guyon, by M. de Liancourt, by M. de Baradas, by the Comte de Camail, and by the Chevalier de Souveray. Everybody noticed that the king looked dull and preoccupied.

A private room had been prepared for the king and another for Monsieur. In each of these closets were placed masquerade dresses. The same had been done for the queen and Madame the President. The nobles and ladies of their Majesties' suites were to dress, two by two, in chambers prepared for the purpose. Before entering his closet the king desired to be informed the moment the cardinal arrived.

Half an hour after the entrance of the king, fresh acclamations were heard; these announced the arrival of the queen. The aldermen did as they had done before, and preceded by their sergeants, advanced to receive their illustrious guest. The queen entered the great hall; and it was remarked that, like the king, she looked dull and even weary.

'No, monsieur, be satisfied; nobody saw her,' replied d'Aragnan, and he related to M. de Tréville how the affair came to pass.

'Oh, the women, the women!' cried the old soldier. 'I know them by their romantic imagination. Everything that savours of mystery charms them. So you have seen the arm, that was all. You would meet the queen, and she would not know who you are?'

'No; but thanks to this diamond,' replied the young man.

'Listen,' said M. de Tréville; 'shall I give you counsel, good counsel, the counsel of a friend?'

'You will do me honour, monsieur,' said d'Aragnan.

'Well, then, off to the nearest goldsmith's, and sell that diamond for the highest price you can get from him. However much of a Jew he may be, he will give you at least eight hundred pistoles. Pistoles have no name, young man, and that ring has a terrible one, which may betray him who wears it.'

'Sell this ring, a ring which comes from my sovereign? Never!' said d'Aragnan.

'Then, at least turn the gem inside, you silly fellow; for everybody must be aware that a cadet from Gascony does not find such stones in his mother's jewel case.'

'You think, then, I have something to dread?' asked d'Aragnan.

'I mean to say, young man, that he who sleeps over a mine the match of which is already lighted, may consider himself in safety in comparison with you.'

'The devil!' said d'Aragnan, whom the positive tone of M. de Tréville began to disquiet, 'the devil! What must I do?'

'Above all things be always on your guard. The cardinal has a tenacious memory and a long arm; you may depend upon it, he will repay you by some ill turn.'

'But of what sort?'

'Eh! How can I tell? Has he not all the tricks of a demon at his command? The least that can be expected is that you will be arrested.'

'What! Will they dare to arrest a man in his Majesty's service?'

'*Pardieu!* They did not scruple much in the case of Athos. At all events, young man, rely upon one who has been thirty years at court. Do not lull yourself in security, or you will be lost; but, on the contrary—and it is I who

say it—see enemies in all directions. If anyone seeks a quarrel with you, shun it, were it with a child of ten years old. If you are attacked by day or by night, fight, but retreat, without shame; if you cross a bridge, feel every plank of it with your foot, lest one should give way beneath you; if you pass before a house which is being built, look up, for fear a stone should fall upon your head; if you stay out late, be always followed by your lackey, and let your lackey be armed—if, by the by, you can be sure of your lackey. Mistrust everybody, your friend, your brother, your mistress—your mistress above all.’

D’Aragnan blushed.

‘My mistress above all,’ repeated he, mechanically; ‘and why her rather than another?’

‘Because a mistress is one of the cardinal’s favourite means; he has not one that is more expeditious. A woman will sell you for ten pistoles, witness Delilah. You are acquainted with the Scriptures?’

D’Aragnan thought of the appointment Mme. Bonacieux had made with him for that very evening; but we are bound to say, to the credit of our hero, that the bad opinion entertained by M. de Tréville of women in general, did not inspire him with the least suspicion of his pretty hostess.

‘But, *à propos*,’ resumed M. de Tréville, ‘what has become of your three companions?’

‘I was about to ask you if you had heard any news of them?’

‘None, monsieur.’

‘Well, I left them on my road—Porthos at Chantilly, with a duel on his hands; Aramis at Crèvecœur, with a ball in his shoulder; and Athos at Amiens, detained by an accusation of coining.’

‘See there, now!’ said M. de Tréville; ‘and how the devil did you escape?’

‘By a miracle, monsieur, I must acknowledge, with a sword thrust in my breast, and by nailing the Comte de Wardes on the byroad to Calais, like a butterfly on a tapestry.’

‘There again! De Wardes, one of the cardinal’s men, a cousin of Rochefort! Stop, my friend, I have an idea.’

‘Speak, monsieur.’

‘In your place, I would do one thing.’

‘What?’

Chapter XXII

The Ballet of La Merlaison



ON the morrow, nothing was talked of in Paris but the ball which the aldermen of the city were to give to the king and queen, and in which their Majesties were to dance the famous La Merlaison—the favourite ballet of the king.

Eight days had been occupied in preparations at the Hôtel de Ville for this important evening. The city carpenters had erected scaffolds upon which the invited ladies were to be placed; the city grocer had ornamented the chambers with two hundred *flambeaux* of white wax, a piece of luxury unheard of at that period; and twenty violins were ordered, and the price for them fixed at double the usual rate, upon condition, said the report, that they should be played all night.

At ten o’clock in the morning the Sieur de la Coste, ensign in the king’s Guards, followed by two officers and several archers of that body, came to the city registrar, named Clement, and demanded of him all the keys of the rooms and offices of the hôtel. These keys were given up to him instantly. Each of them had a ticket attached to it, by which it might be recognized; and from that moment the Sieur de la Coste was charged with the care of all the doors and all the avenues.

At eleven o’clock came in his turn Duhallier, captain of the Guards, bringing with him fifty archers, who were distributed immediately through the Hôtel de Ville, at the doors assigned them.

At three o’clock came two companies of the Guards, one French, the other Swiss. The company of French guards was composed of half of M. Duhallier’s men and half of M. Dessessart’s men.