defend you, with servants who will watch over you, and then I shall no longer fear for your days, and I shall be happy in seeing you.'

'Oh, is this true what you say?'

'Yes.'

'Oh, then, some pledge of your indulgence, some object which came from you, and may remind me that I have not been dreaming; something you have worn, and that I may wear in my turn—a ring, a necklace, a chain.'

'Will you depart—will you depart, if I give you that you demand?'

'Yes.'

'This very instant?'

'Yes.'

'You will leave France, you will return to England?'

'I will, I swear to you.'

'Wait, then, wait.'

Anne of Austria re-entered her apartment, and came out again almost immediately, holding a rosewood casket in her hand, with her cipher encrusted with gold.

'Here, my Lord, here,' said she, 'keep this in memory of me.'

Buckingham took the casket, and fell a second time on his knees.

'You have promised me to go,' said the queen.

'And I keep my word. Your hand, madame, your hand, and I depart!'

Anne of Austria stretched forth her hand, closing her eyes, and leaning with the other upon Estafania, for she felt that her strength was about to fail her.

Buckingham pressed his lips passionately to that beautiful hand, and then rising, said, 'Within six months, if I am not dead, I shall have seen you again, madame—even if I have to overturn the world.' And faithful to the promise he had made, he rushed out of the apartment.

In the corridor he met Mme. Bonacieux, who waited for him, and who, with the same precautions and the same good luck, conducted him out of the Louvre.

Chapter XIII

Monsieur Bonacieux

THERE was in all this, as may have been observed, one personage concerned, of whom, notwithstanding his precarious position, we have appeared to take but very little notice. This personage was M. Bonacieux, the respectable martyr of the political and amorous intrigues which entangled themselves so nicely together at this gallant and chivalric period.

Fortunately, the reader may remember, or may not remember—fortunately we have promised not to lose sight of him.

The officers who arrested him conducted him straight to the Bastille, where he passed trembling before a party of soldiers who were loading their muskets. Thence, introduced into a half-subterranean gallery, he became, on the part of those who had brought him, the object of the grossest insults and the harshest treatment. The officers perceived that they had not to deal with a gentleman, and they treated him like a very peasant.

At the end of half an hour or thereabouts, a clerk came to put an end to his tortures, but not to his anxiety, by giving the order to conduct M. Bonacieux to the Chamber of Examination. Ordinarily, prisoners were interrogated in their cells; but they did not do so with M. Bonacieux.

Two guards attended the mercer who made him traverse a court and enter a corridor in which were three sentinels, opened a door and pushed him unceremoniously into a low room, where the only furniture was a table, a chair, and a commissary. The commissary was seated in the chair, and was writing at the table.

The two guards led the prisoner toward the table, and upon a sign from the commissary drew back so far as to be unable to hear anything.

The commissary, who had till this time held his head down over his papers, looked up to see what sort of person he had to do with. This commissary was a man of very repulsive mien, with a pointed nose, with yellow and salient cheek bones, with eyes small but keen and penetrating, and an expression of countenance resembling at once the polecat and the fox. His head, supported by a long and flexible neck, issued from his large black robe, balancing itself with a motion very much like that of the tortoise thrusting his head out of his shell. He began by asking M. Bonacieux his name, age, condition, and abode.

The accused replied that his name was Jacques Michel Bonacieux, that he was fifty-one years old, a retired mercer, and lived Rue des Fossoyeurs, No. 14.

The commissary then, instead of continuing to interrogate him, made him a long speech upon the danger there is for an obscure citizen to meddle with public matters. He complicated this exordium by an exposition in which he painted the power and the deeds of the cardinal, that incomparable minister, that conqueror of past ministers, that example for ministers to come—deeds and power which none could thwart with impunity.

After this second part of his discourse, fixing his hawk's eye upon poor Bonacieux, he bade him reflect upon the gravity of his situation.

The reflections of the mercer were already made; he cursed the instant when M. Laporte formed the idea of marrying him to his goddaughter, and particularly the moment when that goddaughter had been received as Lady of the Linen to her Majesty.

At bottom the character of M. Bonacieux was one of profound selfishness mixed with sordid avarice, the whole seasoned with extreme cowardice. The love with which his young wife had inspired him was a secondary sentiment, and was not strong enough to contend with the primitive feelings we have just enumerated. Bonacieux indeed reflected on what had just been said to him.

'But, Monsieur Commissary,' said he, calmly, 'believe that I know and appreciate, more than anybody, the merit of the incomparable eminence by whom we have the honour to be governed.'

'Silence, silence!' cried the duke. 'If I am happy in an error, do not have the cruelty to lift me from it. You have told me yourself, madame, that I have been drawn into a snare; I, perhaps, may leave my life in it—for, although it may be strange, I have for some time had a presentiment that I should shortly die.' And the duke smiled, with a smile at once sad and charming.

'Oh, my God!' cried Anne of Austria, with an accent of terror which proved how much greater an interest she took in the duke than she ventured to tell.

'I do not tell you this, madame, to terrify you; no, it is even ridiculous for me to name it to you, and, believe me, I take no heed of such dreams. But the words you have just spoken, the hope you have almost given me, will have richly paid all—were it my life.'

'Oh, but I,' said Anne, 'I also, duke, have had presentiments; I also have had dreams. I dreamed that I saw you lying bleeding, wounded.'

'In the left side, was it not, and with a knife?' interrupted Buckingham.

'Yes, it was so, my Lord, it was so—in the left side, and with a knife. Who can possibly have told you I had had that dream? I have imparted it to no one but my God, and that in my prayers.'

'I ask for no more. You love me, madame; it is enough.'

'I love you, I?'

'Yes, yes. Would God send the same dreams to you as to me if you did not love me? Should we have the same presentiments if our existences did not touch at the heart? You love me, my beautiful queen, and you will weep for me?'

'Oh, my God, my God!' cried Anne of Austria, 'this is more than I can bear. In the name of heaven, Duke, leave me, go! I do not know whether I love you or love you not; but what I know is that I will not be perjured. Take pity on me, then, and go! Oh, if you are struck in France, if you die in France, if I could imagine that your love for me was the cause of your death, I could not console myself; I should run mad. Depart then, depart, I implore you!'

'Oh, how beautiful you are thus! Oh, how I love you!' said Buckingham.

'Go, go, I implore you, and return hereafter! Come back as ambassador, come back as minister, come back surrounded with guards who will

and favour to see you but for a second. I did not even touch your hand, and you pardoned me on seeing me so submissive and so repentant.'

'Yes, but calumny seized upon all those follies in which I took no part, as you well know, my Lord. The king, excited by the cardinal, made a terrible clamour. Madame de Vernet was driven from me, Putange was exiled, Madame de Chevreuse fell into disgrace, and when you wished to come back as ambassador to France, the king himself—remember, my lord—the king himself opposed it.'

'Yes, and France is about to pay for her king's refusal with a war. I am not allowed to see you, madame, but you shall every day hear of me. What object, think you, have this expedition to Ré and this league with the Protestants of La Rochelle which I am projecting? The pleasure of seeing you. I have no hope of penetrating, sword in hand, to Paris, I know that well. But this war may bring round a peace; this peace will require a negotiator; that negotiator will be me. They will not dare to refuse me then; and I will return to Paris, and will see you again, and will be happy for an instant. Thousands of men, it is true, will have to pay for my happiness with their lives; but what is that to me, provided I see you again! All this is perhaps folly—perhaps insanity; but tell me what woman has a lover more truly in love; what queen a servant more ardent?'

'My Lord, my Lord, you invoke in your defence things which accuse you more strongly. All these proofs of love which you would give me are almost crimes.'

'Because you do not love me, madame! If you loved me, you would view all this otherwise. If you loved me, oh, if you loved me, that would be too great happiness, and I should run mad. Ah, Madame de Chevreuse was less cruel than you. Holland loved her, and she responded to his love.'

'Madame de Chevreuse was not queen,' murmured Anne of Austria, overcome, in spite of herself, by the expression of so profound a passion.

'You would love me, then, if you were not queen! Madame, say that you would love me then! I can believe that it is the dignity of your rank alone which makes you cruel to me; I can believe that, had you been Madame de Chevreuse, poor Buckingham might have hoped. Thanks for those sweet words! Oh, my beautiful sovereign, a hundred times, thanks!'

'Oh, my Lord! You have ill understood, wrongly interpreted; I did not mean to say— '

'Indeed?' asked the commissary, with an air of doubt. 'If that is really so, how came you in the Bastille?'

'How I came there, or rather why I am there,' replied Bonacieux, 'that is entirely impossible for me to tell you, because I don't know myself; but to a certainty it is not for having, knowingly at least, disobliged Monsieur the Cardinal.'

'You must, nevertheless, have committed a crime, since you are here and are accused of high treason.'

'Of high treason!' cried Bonacieux, terrified; 'of high treason! How is it possible for a poor mercer, who detests Huguenots and who abhors Spaniards, to be accused of high treason? Consider, monsieur, the thing is absolutely impossible.'

'Monsieur Bonacieux,' said the commissary, looking at the accused as if his little eyes had the faculty of reading to the very depths of hearts, 'you have a wife?'

'Yes, monsieur,' replied the mercer, in a tremble, feeling that it was at this point affairs were likely to become perplexing; 'that is to say, I *had* one.'

'What, you "*had* one"? What have you done with her, then, if you have her no longer?'

'They have abducted her, monsieur.'

'They have abducted her? Ah!'

Bonacieux inferred from this 'Ah' that the affair grew more and more intricate.

'They have abducted her,' added the commissary; 'and do you know the man who has committed this deed?'

'I think I know him.'

'Who is he?'

'Remember that I affirm nothing, Monsieur the Commissary, and that I only suspect.'

'Whom do you suspect? Come, answer freely.'

M. Bonacieux was in the greatest perplexity possible. Had he better deny everything or tell everything? By denying all, it might be suspected that he must know too much to avow; by confessing all he might prove his good will. He decided, then, to tell all.

'I suspect,' said he, 'a tall, dark man, of lofty carriage, who has the air of a great lord. He has followed us several times, as I think, when I have waited for my wife at the wicket of the Louvre to escort her home.'

The commissary now appeared to experience a little uneasiness.

'And his name?' said he.

'Oh, as to his name, I know nothing about it; but if I were ever to meet him, I should recognize him in an instant, I will answer for it, were he among a thousand persons.'

The face of the commissary grew still darker.

'You should recognize him among a thousand, say you?' continued he.

'That is to say,' cried Bonacieux, who saw he had taken a false step, 'that is to say— '

'You have answered that you should recognize him,' said the commissary. 'That is all very well, and enough for today; before we proceed further, someone must be informed that you know the ravisher of your wife.'

'But I have not told you that I know him!' cried Bonacieux, in despair. 'I told you, on the contrary— '

'Take away the prisoner,' said the commissary to the two guards.

'Where must we place him?' demanded the chief.

'In a dungeon.'

'Which?'

'Good Lord! In the first one handy, provided it is safe,' said the commissary, with an indifference which penetrated poor Bonacieux with horror.

'Alas, alas!' said he to himself, 'misfortune is over my head; my wife must have committed some frightful crime. They believe me her accomplice, and will punish me with her. She must have spoken; she must have confessed everything—a woman is so weak! A dungeon! The first he comes to! That's it! A night is soon passed; and tomorrow to the wheel, to the gallows! Oh, my God, my God, have pity on me!'

Without listening the least in the world to the lamentations of M. Bonacieux—lamentations to which, besides, they must have been pretty well accustomed—the two guards took the prisoner each by an arm, and led him away, while the commissary wrote a letter in haste and dispatched it by an officer in waiting.

'And upon what then must I live? I have nothing but memory. It is my happiness, my treasure, my hope. Every time I see you is a fresh diamond which I enclose in the casket of my heart. This is the fourth which you have let fall and I have picked up; for in three years, madame, I have only seen you four times—the first, which I have described to you; the second, at the mansion of Madame de Chevreuse; the third, in the gardens of Amiens.'

'Duke,' said the queen, blushing, 'never speak of that evening.'

'Oh, let us speak of it; on the contrary, let us speak of it! That is the most happy and brilliant evening of my life! You remember what a beautiful night it was? How soft and perfumed was the air; how lovely the blue heavens and star-enamelled sky! Ah, then, madame, I was able for one instant to be alone with you. Then you were about to tell me all—the isolation of your life, the griefs of your heart. You leaned upon my arm—upon this, madame! I felt, in bending my head toward you, your beautiful hair touch my cheek; and every time that it touched me I trembled from head to foot. Oh, Queen! Queen! You do not know what felicity from heaven, what joys from paradise, are comprised in a moment like that. Take my wealth, my fortune, my glory, all the days I have to live, for such an instant, for a night like that. For that night, madame, that night you loved me, I will swear it.'

'My Lord, yes; it is possible that the influence of the place, the charm of the beautiful evening, the fascination of your look—the thousand circumstances, in short, which sometimes unite to destroy a woman—were grouped around me on that fatal evening; but, my Lord, you saw the queen come to the aid of the woman who faltered. At the first word you dared to utter, at the first freedom to which I had to reply, I called for help.'

'Yes, yes, that is true. And any other love but mine would have sunk beneath this ordeal; but my love came out from it more ardent and more eternal. You believed that you would fly from me by returning to Paris; you believed that I would not dare to quit the treasure over which my master had charged me to watch. What to me were all the treasures in the world, or all the kings of the earth! Eight days after, I was back again, madame. That time you had nothing to say to me; I had risked my life

'Yes, yes, madame! Yes, your Majesty!' cried the duke. 'I know that I must have been mad, senseless, to believe that snow would become animated or marble warm; but what then! They who love believe easily in love. Besides, I have lost nothing by this journey because I see you.'

'Yes,' replied Anne, 'but you know why and how I see you; because, insensible to all my sufferings, you persist in remaining in a city where, by remaining, you run the risk of your life, and make me run the risk of my honour. I see you to tell you that everything separates us—the depths of the sea, the enmity of kingdoms, the sanctity of vows. It is sacrilege to struggle against so many things, my Lord. In short, I see you to tell you that we must never see each other again.'

'Speak on, madame, speak on, Queen,' said Buckingham; 'the sweetness of your voice covers the harshness of your words. You talk of sacrilege! Why, the sacrilege is the separation of two hearts formed by God for each other.'

'My Lord,' cried the queen, 'you forget that I have never said that I love you.'

'But you have never told me that you did not love me; and truly, to speak such words to me would be, on the part of your Majesty, too great an ingratitude. For tell me, where can you find a love like mine—a love which neither time, nor absence, nor despair can extinguish, a love which contents itself with a lost ribbon, a stray look, or a chance word? It is now three years, madame, since I saw you for the first time, and during those three years I have loved you thus. Shall I tell you each ornament of your toilet? Mark! I see you now. You were seated upon cushions in the Spanish fashion; you wore a robe of green satin embroidered with gold and silver, hanging sleeves knotted upon your beautiful arms—those lovely arms—with large diamonds. You wore a close ruff, a small cap upon your head of the same colour as your robe, and in that cap a heron's feather. Hold! Hold! I shut my eyes, and I can see you as you then were; I open them again, and I see what you are now—a hundred times more beautiful!'

'What folly,' murmured Anne of Austria, who had not the courage to find fault with the duke for having so well preserved her portrait in his heart, 'what folly to feed a useless passion with such remembrances!'

Bonacieux could not close his eyes; not because his dungeon was so very disagreeable, but because his uneasiness was so great. He sat all night on his stool, starting at the least noise; and when the first rays of the sun penetrated into his chamber, the dawn itself appeared to him to have taken funereal tints.

All at once he heard his bolts drawn, and made a terrified bound. He believed they were come to conduct him to the scaffold; so that when he saw merely and simply, instead of the executioner he expected, only his commissary of the preceding evening, attended by his clerk, he was ready to embrace them both.

'Your affair has become more complicated since yesterday evening, my good man, and I advise you to tell the whole truth; for your repentance alone can remove the anger of the cardinal.'

'Why, I am ready to tell everything,' cried Bonacieux, 'at least, all that I know. Interrogate me, I entreat you!'

'Where is your wife, in the first place?'

'Why, did not I tell you she had been stolen from me?'

'Yes, but yesterday at five o'clock in the afternoon, thanks to you, she escaped.'

'My wife escaped!' cried Bonacieux. 'Oh, unfortunate creature! Monsieur, if she has escaped, it is not my fault, I swear.'

'What business had you, then, to go into the chamber of Monsieur d'Artagnan, your neighbour, with whom you had a long conference during the day?'

'Ah, yes, Monsieur Commissary; yes, that is true, and I confess that I was in the wrong. I did go to Monsieur d'Artagnan's.'

'What was the aim of that visit?'

'To beg him to assist me in finding my wife. I believed I had a right to endeavour to find her. I was deceived, as it appears, and I ask your pardon.'

'And what did Monsieur d'Artagnan reply?'

'Monsieur d'Artagnan promised me his assistance; but I soon found out that he was betraying me.'

'You impose upon justice. Monsieur d'Artagnan made a compact with you; and in virtue of that compact put to flight the police who had arrested your wife, and has placed her beyond reach.'

'M. d'Artagnan has abducted my wife! Come now, what are you telling me?'

'Fortunately, Monsieur d'Artagnan is in our hands, and you shall be confronted with him.'

'By my faith, I ask no better,' cried Bonacieux; 'I shall not be sorry to see the face of an acquaintance.'

'Bring in the Monsieur d'Artagnan,' said the commissary to the guards. The two guards led in Athos.

'Monsieur d'Artagnan,' said the commissary, addressing Athos, 'declare all that passed yesterday between you and Monsieur.'

'But,' cried Bonacieux, 'this is not Monsieur d'Artagnan whom you show me.'

'What! Not Monsieur d'Artagnan?' exclaimed the commissary.

'Not the least in the world,' replied Bonacieux.

'What is this gentleman's name?' asked the commissary.

'I cannot tell you; I don't know him.'

'How! You don't know him?'

'No.'

'Did you never see him?'

'Yes, I have seen him, but I don't know what he calls himself.'

'Your name?' replied the commissary.

'Athos,' replied the Musketeer.

'But that is not a man's name; that is the name of a mountain,' cried the poor questioner, who began to lose his head.

'That is my name,' said Athos, quietly.

'But you said that your name was d'Artagnan.'

'Who, I?'

'Yes, you.'

'Somebody said to me, "You are Monsieur d'Artagnan?" I answered, "You think so?" My guards exclaimed that they were sure of it. I did not wish to contradict them; besides, I might be deceived.'

'Monsieur, you insult the majesty of justice.'

'Not at all,' said Athos, calmly.

'You are Monsieur d'Artagnan.'

'You see, monsieur, that you say it again.'

George Villiers placed himself before the glass, as we have said, restored the undulations to his beautiful hair, which the weight of his hat had disordered, twisted his moustache, and, his heart swelling with joy, happy and proud at being near the moment he had so long sighed for, he smiled upon himself with pride and hope.

At this moment a door concealed in the tapestry opened, and a woman appeared. Buckingham saw this apparition in the glass; he uttered a cry. It was the queen!

Anne of Austria was then twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age; that is to say, she was in the full splendour of her beauty.

Her carriage was that of a queen or a goddess; her eyes, which cast the brilliancy of emeralds, were perfectly beautiful, and yet were at the same time full of sweetness and majesty.

Her mouth was small and rosy; and although her underlip, like that of all princes of the House of Austria, protruded slightly beyond the other, it was eminently lovely in its smile, but as profoundly disdainful in its contempt.

Her skin was admired for its velvety softness; her hands and arms were of surpassing beauty, all the poets of the time singing them as incomparable.

Lastly, her hair, which, from being light in her youth, had become chestnut, and which she wore curled very plainly, and with much powder, admirably set off her face, in which the most rigid critic could only have desired a little less rouge, and the most fastidious sculptor a little more fineness in the nose.

Buckingham remained for a moment dazzled. Never had Anne of Austria appeared to him so beautiful, amid balls, fêtes, or carousals, as she appeared to him at this moment, dressed in a simple robe of white satin, and accompanied by Doña Estafania—the only one of her Spanish women who had not been driven from her by the jealousy of the king or by the persecutions of Richelieu.

Anne of Austria took two steps forward. Buckingham threw himself at her feet, and before the queen could prevent him, kissed the hem of her robe.

'Duke, you already know that it is not I who caused you to be written to.'

will come.' She then went out by the same door, which she locked, so that the duke found himself literally a prisoner.

Nevertheless, isolated as he was, we must say that the Duke of Buckingham did not experience an instant of fear. One of the salient points of his character was the search for adventures and a love of romance. Brave, rash, and enterprising, this was not the first time he had risked his life in such attempts. He had learned that the pretended message from Anne of Austria, upon the faith of which he had come to Paris, was a snare; but instead of regaining England, he had, abusing the position in which he had been placed, declared to the queen that he would not depart without seeing her. The queen had at first positively refused; but at length became afraid that the duke, if exasperated, would commit some folly. She had already decided upon seeing him and urging his immediate departure, when, on the very evening of coming to this decision, Mme. Bonacieux, who was charged with going to fetch the duke and conducting him to the Louvre, was abducted. For two days no one knew what had become of her, and everything remained in suspense; but once free, and placed in communication with Laporte, matters resumed their course, and she accomplished the perilous enterprise which, but for her arrest, would have been executed three days earlier.

Buckingham, left alone, walked toward a mirror. His Musketeer's uniform became him marvellously.

At thirty-five, which was then his age, he passed, with just title, for the handsomest gentleman and the most elegant cavalier of France or England.

The favourite of two kings, immensely rich, all-powerful in a kingdom which he disordered at his fancy and calmed again at his caprice, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, had lived one of those fabulous existences which survive, in the course of centuries, to astonish posterity.

Sure of himself, convinced of his own power, certain that the laws which rule other men could not reach him, he went straight to the object he aimed at, even were this object so elevated and so dazzling that it would have been madness for any other even to have contemplated it. It was thus he had succeeded in approaching several times the beautiful and proud Anne of Austria, and in making himself loved by dazzling her.

'But I tell you, Monsieur Commissary,' cried Bonacieux, in his turn, 'there is not the least doubt about the matter. Monsieur d'Artagnan is my tenant, although he does not pay me my rent—and even better on that account ought I to know him. Monsieur d'Artagnan is a young man, scarcely nineteen or twenty, and this gentleman must be thirty at least. Monsieur d'Artagnan is in Monsieur Dessessart's Guards, and this gentleman is in the company of Monsieur de Tréville's Musketeers. Look at his uniform, Monsieur Commissary, look at his uniform!'

'That's true,' murmured the commissary; '*pardieu*, that's true.'

At this moment the door was opened quickly, and a messenger, introduced by one of the gatekeepers of the Bastille, gave a letter to the commissary.

'Oh, unhappy woman!' cried the commissary.

'How? What do you say? Of whom do you speak? It is not of my wife, I hope!'

'On the contrary, it is of her. Yours is a pretty business.'

'But,' said the agitated mercer, 'do me the pleasure, monsieur, to tell me how my own proper affair can become worse by anything my wife does while I am in prison?'

'Because that which she does is part of a plan concerted between you—of an infernal plan.'

'I swear to you, Monsieur Commissary, that you are in the profoundest error, that I know nothing in the world about what my wife had to do, that I am entirely a stranger to what she has done; and that if she has committed any follies, I renounce her, I abjure her, I curse her!'

'Bah!' said Athos to the commissary, 'if you have no more need of me, send me somewhere. Your Monsieur Bonacieux is very tiresome.'

The commissary designated by the same gesture Athos and Bonacieux, 'Let them be guarded more closely than ever.'

'And yet,' said Athos, with his habitual calmness, 'if it be Monsieur d'Artagnan who is concerned in this matter, I do not perceive how I can take his place.'

'Do as I bade you,' cried the commissary, 'and preserve absolute secrecy. You understand!'

Athos shrugged his shoulders, and followed his guards silently, while M. Bonacieux uttered lamentations enough to break the heart of a tiger.

They locked the mercer in the same dungeon where he had passed the night, and left him to himself during the day. Bonacieux wept all day, like a true mercer, not being at all a military man, as he himself informed us. In the evening, about nine o'clock, at the moment he had made up his mind to go to bed, he heard steps in his corridor. These steps drew near to his dungeon, the door was thrown open, and the guards appeared.

'Follow me,' said an officer, who came up behind the guards.

'Follow you!' cried Bonacieux, 'follow you at this hour! Where, my God?'

'Where we have orders to lead you.'

'But that is not an answer.'

'It is, nevertheless, the only one we can give.'

'Ah, my God, my God!' murmured the poor mercer, 'now, indeed, I am lost!' And he followed the guards who came for him, mechanically and without resistance.

He passed along the same corridor as before, crossed one court, then a second side of a building; at length, at the gate of the entrance court he found a carriage surrounded by four guards on horseback. They made him enter this carriage, the officer placed himself by his side, the door was locked, and they were left in a rolling prison. The carriage was put in motion as slowly as a funeral car. Through the closely fastened windows the prisoner could perceive the houses and the pavement, that was all; but, true Parisian as he was, Bonacieux could recognize every street by the milestones, the signs, and the lamps. At the moment of arriving at St. Paul—the spot where such as were condemned at the Bastille were executed—he was near fainting and crossed himself twice. He thought the carriage was about to stop there. The carriage, however, passed on.

Farther on, a still greater terror seized him on passing by the cemetery of St. Jean, where state criminals were buried. One thing, however, reassured him; he remembered that before they were buried their heads were generally cut off, and he felt that his head was still on his shoulders. But when he saw the carriage take the way to La Grêve, when he perceived the pointed roof of the Hôtel de Ville, and the carriage passed under the arcade, he believed it was over with him. He wished to confess to the officer, and upon his refusal, uttered such pitiable cries that the officer

Chapter XII

George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham

Mme. Bonacieux and the duke entered the Louvre without difficulty. Mme. Bonacieux was known to belong to the queen; the duke wore the uniform of the Musketeers of M. de Tréville, who, as we have said, were that evening on guard. Besides, Germain was in the interests of the queen; and if anything should happen, Mme. Bonacieux would be accused of having introduced her lover into the Louvre, that was all. She took the risk upon herself. Her reputation would be lost, it is true; but of what value in the world was the reputation of the little wife of a mercer?

Once within the interior of the court, the duke and the young woman followed the wall for the space of about twenty-five steps. This space passed, Mme. Bonacieux pushed a little servants' door, open by day but generally closed at night. The door yielded. Both entered, and found themselves in darkness; but Mme. Bonacieux was acquainted with all the turnings and windings of this part of the Louvre, appropriated for the people of the household. She closed the door after her, took the duke by the hand, and after a few experimental steps, grasped a balustrade, put her foot upon the bottom step, and began to ascend the staircase. The duke counted two stories. She then turned to the right, followed the course of a long corridor, descended a flight, went a few steps farther, introduced a key into a lock, opened a door, and pushed the duke into an apartment lighted only by a lamp, saying, 'Remain here, my Lord Duke; someone