

the gloomy silence of the crowd. 'This is the signal for his freedom,' said the stranger. 'It will fall back on the head of his murderers,' answered I; 'half a crime in a case like this is but weakness.'

"A moment's stillness followed. Something heavy fell on the scaffold. This sound went through my heart.

"I inquired of a gendarme the cause of this sound. 'The axe has fallen,' said he. 'The king is not saved then?' 'He is dead.' 'He is dead!'

"For ten times at least I repeated the words 'He is dead.'

"For a few moments I remained unconscious. Without knowing by whom, I was carried along by a crowd, and found myself on the *Quai des Théatines*, but could say nothing, except 'He is dead.'

"Entirely bewildered, I went home, but a good hour elapsed before I fully recovered my senses."\*

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE EXECUTION OF THE QUEEN.

THE king's execution was the signal-fire which announced to the horrified world the beginning of the reign of terror, and told Europe that in France the throne had been torn down, and in its stead the guillotine erected. Yes, the guillotine alone now ruled over France; the days of moderation, of the Girondists, had passed away; the terrorists, named also men of the Mountain, on account of the high seats they occupied in the Convention, had seized the reins of power, and now controlled the course of events.

Everywhere, in every province, in every city, the blood-

\* See "Edinburgh Quarterly Review," 1830.

red standard of the revolution was lifted up; might had become law; death was the rule, and in lieu of the boasted liberty of conscience was tyranny. Who dared think otherwise than the terrorists, who presumed to doubt the measures of the Convention, was a criminal who, in the name of the one and indivisible republic, was to be punished with death; whose head must fall, for he had cherished thoughts which agreed not with the schemes of the revolutionists.

How in these days of agitation and anguish Josephine rejoiced at her good fortune, that she had not to tremble for her husband's life; that she was away from the crater of the revolution which raged in Paris, and daily claimed so many victims!

Alexandre de Beauharnais was still with the army. He had risen from rank to rank; and when, in May, General Custine was deposed by the Committee of Public Safety from the command of the Northern army, Alexandre de Beauharnais, who was then chief of the general's staff of this army, was appointed in his place as commanding general of the Army of the Rhine; and the important work now to be achieved was to debar the besieging Prussians and Austrians from recapturing Mayence. The Committee of Public Safety had dismissed General Custine from his post, because he had not pressed on with sufficient speed to the rescue of Mayence, according to the judgment of these new rulers of France, who wanted from Paris to decide all military matters, and who demanded victories whilst too often refusing the means necessary for victory.

General de Beauharnais was to turn to good what General Custine, according to the opinion of these gentlemen of the Convention, had failed to do. This was an important and highly significant order, and to leave it unfulfilled was to excite the anger of the Committee of Safety; it was simply to deserve death.

General de Beauharnais knew this well, but he shrank

not back from the weighty and dangerous situation in which he was placed. To his country belonged his life, all his energies; and it was to him of equal importance whether his head fell on the battle-field or on the scaffold; in either case it would fall for his country; he would do his duty, and his country might be satisfied with him.

In this enthusiastic love for country, De Beauharnais accepted cheerfully the offered command of the Army of the Rhine as general-in-chief, and he prepared himself to march to the rescue of besieged Mayence.

Whilst General de Beauharnais was on the French frontier, Josephine trembled with anxious misgivings. The new dignity of her husband filled her with fear, for she multiplied the dangers which surrounded him and his family, for now the eyes of the terrorists were fixed on him. An unfortunate move, an unsuccessful war operation, could excite the wrath of these men of power, and send Beauharnais to the guillotine. It was well known that he belonged not to the Mountain party, but to the moderate republicans, to the Girondists; and as the Girondists were now incarcerated, as the Committee of Safety had brought accusations against them, and declared them guilty of treason toward France, it was also easy, if it pleased the terrorists, to find a flaw in the character of General Beauharnais, and to bring accusations against him as had been done against the Girondists.

Such were Josephine's fears, which made her tremble for her husband, for her children. She wished at least to secure these from the impending danger, and to save and shield them from the guillotine. Her friend, the Princess von Hohenzollern, was on the eve of leaving for England with her brother the Prince von Salm, and Josephine was anxious to seize this opportunity to save her children. She brought Eugene and Hortense to the princess, who was now waiting in St. Martin, in the vicinity of St. Pol, in the

county of Artois, expecting a favorable moment for departure; for already was the emigration watched, already it was considered a crime to leave France. With bitter tears of grief, and yet glad to know her children safe, Josephine bade farewell to her little ones, and then returned to Paris, so as to excite no suspicion through her absence. But no sooner had General Beauharnais heard of Josephine's plan to send her children from the country, than in utmost speed he dispatched to his wife a courier bearing a letter in which he decidedly opposed the departure of the children, for by this emigration his own position would be imperilled and his character made suspicious.

Josephine sighed, and, with tears in her eyes, submitted to her husband's will; she sent a faithful messenger to St. Martin to bring back Eugene and Hortense. But the Princess von Hohenzollern would not trust the children to any one; she had sworn to her friend Josephine to watch over them, never to let them go out of her sight, and she wished to keep her oath until such time as she could restore the children to their mother. She therefore returned herself to Paris, to bring back Eugene and Hortense to Josephine; and this journey, so short and so insignificant in itself, was nevertheless the occasion that the Princess von Hohenzollern remained in France; that her brother, the Prince von Salm, should mount the scaffold! The favorable moment for emigration was lost through this delay; the journey to Paris had attracted the eyes of the authorities to the doings of the princess and of her brother, the contemplated journey to England was discovered, and the incarceration of the Prince von Salm and of his sister was the natural consequence. A few months after, the prince paid with his life the contemplated attempt to migrate; his sister, the Princess von Hohenzollern, was saved from the guillotine through accident.

Meanwhile, Josephine had at least her children safely

returned, and, in the quietude and solitude of Fontainebleau, she awaited with beating heart the future developments of events; she saw increase every day the dangers which threatened her, her family, and, above all things, her husband.

Mayence was still besieged by the Austrian and Prussian forces. General Beauharnais had not completed the organization of his army so as to press onward to the rescue of the besieged, whose perils increased every day. But whilst, in unwearied activity, he urged on the preliminary operations, a courier arrived, who brought to the general his appointment to the office of minister of war, and required his immediate presence in Paris, there to assume his new dignity.

Alexandre de Beauharnais had the courage to answer with a declination the office. He entreated the Convention to make another choice, for he considered himself more competent to serve his country against the coalition of tyrants, among his companions-in-arms, than to be minister of war amid revolution's storms.

The Convention pardoned his refusal for the sake of the patriotic sentiments which he had expressed. But this refusal was to have, not only for the general, but also for all the aristocracy of France, the most fatal results. Some of the most fanatical members of the Mountain party ever considered as an audacious resistance to the commands of the Convention this refusal of Alexandre de Beauharnais, to accept the office which the highest powers of the land offered him.

It was a nobleman, an aristocrat, who had dared oppose the democratic Convention, and hence the welcome pretext was found to begin the long-wished-for conflict against the aristocrats. One of the deputies of the Mountain made the motion to remove from all public offices, from the army, from the cabinet, all noblemen. Another accused General de Beauharnais, as well as all officers from amongst the no-

bility, of moderate tendencies, and requested at the same time that a list of all officers from the nobility, and now in the army, should be laid before the Convention.

But on this very day a letter from the general reached the Convention. In this letter he expressed the hope of a speedy rescue of Mayence; he announced that he had completed the organization of his forces and all his preparations, and that soon from the camps of Vicembourg and Lauterburg he would advance against Mayence.

This letter was received by the Convention with loud acclamations, and so took possession of all minds that they passed over the motion of hostility against the nobility, to the order of the day.

Had General de Beauharnais accomplished his purpose—had he succeeded in relieving the garrison besieged in Mayence, now sorely pressed, and in delivering them, this horrible decree which caused so much blood to flow, this decree against the nobility, would never have appeared, and France would have been spared many scenes of cruelty and horror.

Beauharnais hoped still to effect the rescue. Trusty messengers from Mayence had brought him the news that the garrison held on courageously and bravely, and that they could hold their ground a few days longer. Dispatch was therefore necessary; and if in a few days they could be re-enforced, then they would be saved, provided the other generals should advance with their troops in time to attack the Austrian and Prussian forces lying round about Mayence. The French had already succeeded in obtaining some advantages over the enemy; and General de Beauharnais could triumphantly announce to the Convention that, on the 22d of July, a warm encounter with the Prussians had taken place at St. Anna's chapel, and that he had forced the Prussians to a retreat with considerable loss.

The Convention received this news with jubilant shouts,

and already trusted in the sure triumph of the French armies against the united forces of Prussia and Austria. If in these days of joyous excitement some one had dared renew the motion to dismiss Beauharnais from his command because he was a nobleman, the mover would undoubtedly have been considered an enemy of his country.

How much attention in these happy days was paid to the general's wife—how busy were even the most fanatical republicans, the dreaded ones of the Mountain, to flatter her, to give expression to their enthusiastic praises of the general who was preparing for the arms of the republic so glorious a triumph!

Josephine now came every day to be present in the gallery at the sessions of the Convention, and her gracious countenance radiated a cheerful smile when the minister of war communicated to the Assembly the newly-arrived dispatches which announced fresh advantages or closer approaches of General Beauharnais. By degrees a new confidence filled the heart of Josephine, and the gloomy forebodings, which so long had tormented her, began to fade away.

In the session of the 28th of July, Barrere, with a grave, solemn countenance, mounted the tribune and with a loud, sad voice announced to the Convention, in the name of the Committee of Safety, that a courier had just arrived bringing the news that, on the 23d of July, Mayence, in virtue of an unjust capitulation, had fallen.

A loud, piercing shriek, which issued from the gallery, broke the silence with which the Assembly had received this news. It was Josephine who had uttered this cry—Josephine who was carried away fainting from the hall. She awoke from her long swoon only to shed a torrent of tears, to press her children to her heart, as if desirous to screen them from the perils of death, which now, said her own forebodings, were pressing on from all sides.

Josephine was not deceived: this calamitous news, all at once, changed the whole aspect of affairs, gave to the Convention and to the republic another attitude, and threw its dark shadows over the unfortunate general who had undertaken to save Mayence, and had not been able to fulfil his word.

Surely this was not his fault, for General Dubayet had capitulated before it had been possible for Beauharnais to accomplish the rescue. No one therefore ventured to accuse him, but undeserved misfortune always remains a misfortune in the eyes of those who had counted upon success; and the Convention could never forgive the generals from whom they had expected so much, and who had not met these expectations.

These generals had all been men of the aristocracy. As there was no reason to accuse them on account of their unsuccessful military operations, it was necessary to attack them with other weapons, and seek a spot where they could be wounded. This spot was their name, their ancestors, who in the eyes of the republican Convention rose up like embodied crimes behind their progeny, to accuse the guilty.

The Jacobin Club, a short time after the capture of Mayence, began again in an infuriated session the conflict against the nobility, and the fanatical Hebert moved:

“All the noblemen who serve in the army, in the magistracy, in any public office, must be driven away and dismissed. The people must require this, the people themselves! They must go in masses to the Convention, and after exposing the crimes and the treachery of the aristocrats, must insist on their expulsion. The people must not leave the Convention, it must remain in permanent session there until it is assured that its will is carried out.”

The multitude with loud, jubilant tones cried, “Yes, yes, that is what we want, let us go to the Convention! No more nobility! the nobles are our murderers!”

The next day, the Jacobins, accompanied by thousands of shouting women and infuriated men, went to the Convention to make known its will in the name of the people. The Convention received their petition and decreed the exile and the dissolution of the nobility, and delivered to the punishment of the law the guilty subject who would dare use the name of noble.

General de Beauharnais saw full well the blow aimed at him, and at all the officers from the nobility in the army; he foresaw that they would not stop at these measures; that soon he and his companions of fate would be accused and charged with treason, as had been already done to General Custine, and to so many others who had paid with their lives their tried loyalty to the republic. He wanted to anticipate the storm, and sent in his resignation. As the Convention left his petition unanswered, he renewed it, and as it remained still ineffective, he gladly, forced to this measure by sickness, transferred his command to General Landremont. The Convention had then to grant him leave of absence, and, as it maintained him in his rank, they ordered him back to Paris.

At last Josephine saw her husband again, for whom during the last few months she had suffered so much anxiety and pain. At last she was enabled to bring to her children the father for whom every evening they had prayed God to guard him from foes abroad and from foes at home. As a gift sent again by Heaven, she received her husband and entreated him to save himself with his family from revolution's yawning abyss, which was ready to swallow them all, and to go away with his own into a foreign land, as his brother had done, who for some months past had been in Coblenz with the Prince d'Artois.

But Alexandre de Beauharnais rejected with something like anger these tearful supplications of his wife. He was not blinded to the dangers which threatened him, but he

wanted to meet them bravely; true to the oath he had taken to the republic and to his country, he wished as a dutiful son to remain near her, even if his allegiance had to be paid with his death.

Josephine, on the bosom of her husband, wept hot, burning tears as he communicated to her his irrevocable decision not to leave France, but in the depths of her heart she experienced a noble satisfaction to find her husband so heroic and so brave, and, offering him her hand, said with tears in her eyes:

"It is well—we remain; and if we must go to the scaffold, we will at least die together."

The general, with his wife and children, retired to his small property, Ferté-Beauharnais, where he longed to obtain rest during a few happy months of quietude.

But the fearful storms which had agitated France in her innermost life, now raged so violently that each household, each family, trembled; there was neither peace nor rest in the home nor in the hearts of men.

The Convention, threatened from outside by failures and defeats—for the capture of Mayence by the Prussians and Austrians had been followed by the capture of Toulon in September by the English—the Convention wanted to consolidate at least its internal authority, and to terrify by severe measures those who, on account of the misfortunes on the frontiers, might hope for a fresh change of affairs in the interior, and who might help it to pass.

Consequently the Convention issued a decree ordering all dismissed or destitute soldiers to return in four-and-twenty hours to their respective municipalities, under pain of ten years in chains, and at the same time forbade them to enter Paris or to approach the capital nearer than ten leagues.

A second decree ordered the formation of a revolutionary army in Paris, to which was assigned the duty of carrying out the decrees of the Convention.

Finally a third decree, which appeared on the 17th of September, ordered the arrest and punishment of all suspected persons.

This decree thus characterized the suspected ones: "All those who, by their conduct, their relations, their discourses, their writings, had shown themselves the adherents of tyranny, of federalism, the enemies of liberty, much more all the ex-nobles, men, women, fathers, brothers, sons or daughters, sisters or brothers, or agents of the migrated ones, all who had not invariably exhibited and proved their adherence to the revolution."

With this decree the days of terror had reached their deepest gloom; with this decree began the wild, bloody, hunting down of aristocrats and *ci-devants*; then began suspicions, accusations which needed no evidence to bring the accused to the guillotine; then were renewed the dragonnades of the days of Louis XIV., only that now, instead of Protestants, the nobles were hunted down, and hunted down to death. The night of the St. Bartholomew, the night of the murderess Catharine de Medicis and of her mad son Charles IX., found now in France its cruel and bloody repetition; only this night of horror was prolonged during the day, and shrank not back from the light.

The sun beamed upon the pools of blood which flowed through the streets of Paris, and packs of ferocious dogs in large numbers lay in the streets, and fed upon this blood, which imparted to these once tamed creatures their natural wildness. The sun beamed on the scaffold, which, like a threatening monster, lifted itself upon the *Place de la Révolution*, and the sun beamed upon the horrible axe, which every day cut off so many noble heads, and ever glittering, ever menacing, rose up from the midst of blood and death.

The sun also shone upon the day in which Marie Antoinette, like her husband, ascended the scaffold, to rest at last

in the grave from all her dishonor and from the agonies of the last years.

This day was the 16th of October, 1793. For the last four months, Marie Antoinette had longed for this day as for a long-expected bliss; four months ago she had been led from the prison of the Temple into the Conciergerie, and she knew that the prisoners of the Conciergerie only left it to obtain the freedom which men do not give, but which God gives to the suffering ones, the freedom of death.

Marie Antoinette longed for this liberty, and for this deliverance of death. How distant behind were the days of happiness, of joyous youth, far behind in infinite legendary distance! How long since this tall, grave figure, with its proud and yet affable countenance, had lost all similarity to the charming Queen Marie Antoinette, around whom had fluttered the *genii* of beauty, of youth, of love, of happiness; who once in Trianon had represented the idyl of a pastoral queen; who, in the exuberance of joy, had visited in disguise the public opera-ball; who imagined herself so secure amid the French people as to believe she could dispense with the protection of "Madame Etiquette;" who then was applauded by all France with jubilant acclamations, and who now was persecuted with mad anger!

No, the queen of that day, Marie Antoinette, who, in the golden halls of Versailles and of the Tuileries, received the homage of all France, and who, with smiling grace and face radiant with happiness, responded to all this homage; she had no resemblance with Louis Capet's widow, who now stands before the tribunal of the revolution, and gravely, firmly gives her answers to the proposed questions.

She has also made her toilet for this day; but how different is this toilet of the Widow Capet from that which once Marie Antoinette had worn to be admired!

Then could Marie Antoinette, the frivolous, fortunate

daughter of bliss, shut herself up in her boudoir for long hours with her confidante the milliner, Madame Bertier, to devise some new ball-dress, some new *fichu*, some new ornament for her robes; then could Leonard, for this queen with her wondrous blond hair, tax all the wealth of his science and of his imagination; to invent continually new *coiffures* and new head-dresses wherewith to adorn the beautiful head of the Queen Marie Antoinette, on whose towering curls clustered tufts of white plumes; or else diminutive men-of-war unfurled the net-work of their sails; or else, for variety's sake, on that royal head was arranged a garden, a *parterre* adorned with flowers and fruits, with butterflies and birds of paradise.

The Widow Capet needs no milliner now; she needs no *friseur* now for her toilette. Her tall, slim figure is draped in a black woollen dress, which the republic at her request has granted her to mourn her beheaded husband; her neck and shoulders, once the admiration of France, are now covered with a white muslin kerchief, which in pity Bault, her attendant at the jail, has given her. Her hair is uncovered, and falls in long natural curls on either side of her transparent, blanched cheeks. This hair needs no powder now; the long sleepless nights, the anxious days, have covered it with their powder forever, and the thirty-eight-year-old widow of Louis Capet wears on her head the gray hairs of a seventy-year-old woman.

In this toilet, Marie Antoinette stands before the tribunal of the revolution from the 6th to the 13th day of October. There is nothing royal about her, nothing but her look and the proud attitude of her figure.

And the people who fill the galleries in closely-packed masses, and who weary not to gaze on the queen in her humiliation, in her toilet of anguish, the people claim constantly that Marie Antoinette will rise from her rush-woven seat; that she will allow herself to be stared at by these

masses of people, whom curiosity and not compassion have brought there.

Once, as at the call from the public in the galleries, she rose up, the queen sighed: "Ah, will not the people soon be tired of my sufferings?"\*

Another time her dry, blanched lips murmured, "I thirst." But no one near her dares have compassion on this sigh of agony from the queen; each looks embarrassed at his neighbor; not one dares give a glass of water to the thirsty woman.

One of the gendarmes has at last the courage to do so, and Marie Antoinette thanks him with a look which brings tears in the eyes of the gendarme, and which may perchance cause his death to-morrow under the guillotine as a traitor!

The gendarmes who guard the queen have alone the courage to show pity!

One night, as she is led from the hall of trial to her prison, Marie Antoinette becomes so exhausted, so overpowered, that staggering, she murmurs, "I can see no longer! I can go no farther! I cannot move!"

One of the gendarmes walking alongside of her offers his arm, and supported by it Marie Antoinette totters up the three stone steps which lead into the prison.

At last, at four o'clock in the morning, on the 15th of August, the jury have given their verdict. It runs: "Death!—execution by the guillotine!"

Marie Antoinette has heard the verdict with unmoved composure, whilst the noise from the excited crowd in the galleries is suddenly hushed as by a magic spell, and even the faces of the infuriated fishwomen turn pale!

Marie Antoinette alone has remained calm; grave and cool she rises from her seat and herself opens the balustrade to leave the hall and return to her prison.

\* Marie Antoinette's own words.—See Goncourt, "Histoire de Marie Antoinette," p. 404.

And then at last, on the morning of the 16th of October, her sorrows will end, and Marie Antoinette can find refuge in the grave! Her soul is almost joyous and serene; she has suffered so much, and for her to sink into death is truly blessedness!

She has passed the undisturbed hours of the night in writing to her sister-in-law, Madame Elizabeth, and this letter is also the queen's testament. But the widow of Louis Capet has no riches, no treasures, no property to will; she has nothing left which belongs to her—nothing but her love, her tears, her farewell salutations. These she leaves behind to all those who have loved her. She takes leave of her relatives, her brothers and sisters, and cries out to them a farewell.

"I had friends," she continues; "the thought of being forever separated from them, and your grief for my death, are my deepest sorrow; you will at least know that to the last moment I have remembered you."

Then, when Marie Antoinette has finished this letter, some of whose characters here and there are disfigured by her tears, she thinks of leaving to her children a last token of remembrance—one which the executioner's hand has not desecrated.

The only ornament which remains is her long hair, whose silver-gray locks are the tearful history of her sufferings.

Marie Antoinette with her own hands despoils herself of this last ornament; she cuts off her long hair behind the head, so as to leave it as a last token to her children, to her relatives and friends. Then, after having taken her spiritual farewell of life, she prepares herself for the last great ceremony of her existence, for death.

She feels exhausted, weary unto death, and she strengthens herself for this last toilsome journey, that she may worthily pass through it.

Marie Antoinette needs food, and with courageous mind she eats a chicken's wing which has been brought to her. After having eaten, she makes her last toilet, the toilet of death.

The wife of the jailer, at the queen's request, gives her one of her own chemises, and Marie Antoinette puts it on. Then she clothes herself with the garments which she has worn during her days of trial before the tribunal of the revolution, only over the black woollen dress, which she has often mended and patched with her own hand, she puts on a mantle of white needlework. Around her neck she ties a small plain kerchief of white muslin, and, as it is not allowed her to mount the scaffold with uncovered head, she puts on it the round linen hood which the peasant-women used to wear. Black stockings cover her feet, and over them she draws shoes of black woollen stuff.

Her toilet is now ended—earthly things have passed away! Ready to meet death, the queen lays herself down on her bed and sleeps.

She still sleeps when she is notified that a priest is there, ready to come in, if she will confess.

But Marie Antoinette has already unveiled her heart to God; she will have none of these priests of reason, whom the republic has ordained, after having exiled or murdered with the guillotine the priests of the Church.

"As I cannot do as I please," she has written to Madame Elizabeth, in her farewell letter, "so must I endure it if a priest is sent to me; but I now declare that I will tell him not a word, that I will consider him entirely as a stranger to me."

And Marie Antoinette held her word. She forbids not the priest Girard to come in, but she answers in the negative when he asks her if she will receive from him the consolations of religion.

She paces her small cell to and fro, to warm herself, for



her feet are stiff with cold. As seven o'clock strikes, the door opens.

It is the executioner of Paris, Samson, who enters.

A slight tremor runs through the queen's frame. "You come very early, sir," murmurs she, "could you not delay somewhat?"

As Samson replies in the negative, Marie Antoinette assumes again a calm, cold attitude. She drinks without any reluctance the cup of chocolate which has been brought to her from a neighboring *café*. Proudly, calmly, she allows her hands to be bound with strong ropes behind her back.

At eleven o'clock she finally leaves her room to descend the corridor, and to mount into the wagon which waits for her before the gate of the Conciergerie.

No one guides her on the way; no one bids her a last farewell; no one shows a sympathizing or sad countenance to the departing one.

Alone, between two rows of gendarmes posted on both sides of the corridor, the queen walks forward; behind her is Samson, holding in his hand the end of the rope; the priest and the two assistants of the executioner follow him.

On the path of Death—such is the suite of the queen, the daughter of an emperor!

Perchance at this hour thousands were on their knees to offer to God their heart-felt prayers for Marie Antoinette, whom in the silence of the soul they still call "the queen;" perchance many thousand compassionate hearts pour out warm tears of sympathy for her who now ascends into the miserable wagon, and sits on a plank which ropes have made firm to both sides of the vehicle. But those who pray and weep have retired into the solitude of their rooms, for God alone must receive their sighs and see their tears. The eyes which follow the queen on her last journey must not weep; the words which are shouted at her must betray no compassion.

Paris knows that this is the hour of the queen's execution, and the Parisian crowd is ready, it is waiting. In the streets, in the windows of the houses, on the roofs, the people have stationed themselves in enormous masses; they fill the whole *Place de la Révolution* with their dark, destructive forms.

Now resound the drums of the National Guard posted before the Conciergerie. The large white horse, which draws the chariot in which Marie Antoinette sits backward, at the side of the priest, is driven onward by the man who swings on its back. Behind her in the wagon is Samson and his assistants.

The queen's face is white; all blood has left her cheeks and lips, but her eyes are red; they have wept so much, unfortunate queen! She weeps not now. Not one tear dims her eye, which pensively and calmly soars above the crowd, then is lifted up to the very roofs of the houses, then again is slowly lowered, and seems to stare over the human heads away into infinite distance.

Calm and pensive as the eye is the queen's countenance, her lips are nearly closed, no nervous movement on her face tells whether she suffers, whether she feels, whether she notices those tens of thousands of eyes which are fixed on her, cold, curious, sarcastic! And yet Marie Antoinette sees every thing! She sees yonder woman who lifts up her child; she sees how this child with his tiny hands sends a kiss to the queen! Suddenly a nervous agitation passes over the queen's features, her lips tremble, and her eyes are obscured with a tear! This first, this single token of human sympathy has revived the heart of the queen and awakened her from her torpor.

But the people are bent upon this, that Marie Antoinette shall not reach the end of her journey with this last comfort of pity. They press on, howling and shouting, scorning and jubilant, nearer and nearer to the wagon; they sing sarcas-

tic songs on Madame Veto, they clap hands, and point at her with the finger of scorn.

She, however, is calm; her look, cold and indifferent, runs over the crowd; only once it flames up with a last angry flash as she passes by the Palais Royal, where Philippe Egalité, the ex-Duke d'Orleans, resides, as she reads the inscription which he had placed at the gate of his palace.

At noon the chariot reaches at last its destination. It stops at the foot of the scaffold, and Marie Antoinette alights from the wagon, and then calm and erect ascends the steps of the scaffold.

Her lips have not opened once on this awful journey; they now have no word of complaint, of farewell! The only farewell which she has yet to say on earth is told by her look—by a look which is slowly directed yonder to the Tuileries—it is the farewell to past memories—it deepens the pallor on the cheeks, it opens her lips to a painful sigh. She then bows her head—a momentary, breathless silence follows. Samson lifts up the white head, which once had been the head of the Queen of France, and the people cry and shout, “Long live the republic!”

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE ARREST.

UNINTERRUPTEDLY had the guillotine for the last three months of the year 1793 continued its destructive work of murder, and the noblest and worthiest heads had fallen under this reaper of Death. No personal merit, no nobility of character, no age, no youth, could hope to escape the death-instrument of the revolution when a noble name stood up as accuser. Before this accuser every service was con-

sidered as nothing; it was enough to be an aristocrat, a *ci-devant*, to be suspected, to be dragged as a criminal before the tribunal of the revolution, and to be condemned.

The execution of the queen was followed by that of the Girondists; and this brilliant array of noble and great men was followed in the next month by names no less noble, no less great. It was an infuriated chase of the aristocrats as well as of the officers, of all the military persons who, in the unfortunate days of Toulon and of Mayence, had been in the army, and who had been dismissed, or whose resignation had been accepted.

The aristocrats were tracked in their most secret recesses, and not only were they punished, but also those who dared screen them from the avenging hand of the republic. The officers were recognized under every disguise, and the very fact that they had disguised themselves or remained silent as to their true character was a crime great enough to be punished with the guillotine.

More than twenty generals were imprisoned during the last months of the year 1793, and many more paid with their lives for crimes which they had never committed, and which had existence only in the heated imagination of their accusers. Thus had General Houchard fallen; he was followed in the first days of the new year of 1794 by the Generals Luckner and Biron.

Alexandre de Beauharnais had served under Luckner, he had been Biron's adjutant, he had been united with General Houchard in the unfortunate attempt to relieve Mayence. It was therefore natural that he should be noticed and espied. Besides which, he was an aristocrat, a relative of many of the *émigrés*, the brother of the Count de Beauharnais, who was now residing in Coblenz with the Count d'Artois, and it had not been forgotten what an important part Alexandre de Beauharnais had played in the National Assembly; it was well known that he belonged