

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallage Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommssen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Raabe Gibbon Tschchow
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus Moltke
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht
Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz
Marx vom Stein Lawrence Irving
von Ossietzky May Michelangelo Knigge Kock Kafka
Petalozzi Platon Pückler Liebermann Korolenko
Sachs Poe de Sade Praetorius Mistral Zetkin



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CINQ MARS

By
ALFRED DE VIGNY

BOOK 4.

CHAPTER XIV

THE RIOT

"Thus with imagin'd wing our swift scene flies,
In motion of no less celerity
Than that of thought,"

exclaims the immortal Shakespeare in the chorus of one of his tragedies.

"Suppose that you have seen The well-appointed king Embark his royalty; and his brave fleet With silken streamers the young Phoebus fanning. behold, And follow."

With this poetic movement he traverses time and space, and transports at will the attentive assembly to the theatre of his sublime scenes.

We shall avail ourselves of the same privilege, though without the same genius. No more than he shall we seat ourselves upon the tripod of the unities, but merely casting our eyes upon Paris and the old dark palace of the Louvre, we will at once pass over the space of two hundred leagues and the period of two years.

Two years! what changes may they not have upon men, upon their families, and, above all, in that great and so troublous family of nations, whose long alliances a single day suffices to destroy, whose wars are ended by a birth, whose peace is broken by a death! We ourselves have beheld kings returning to their dwelling on a spring day; that same day a vessel sailed for a voyage of two years. The navigator returned. The kings were seated upon their thrones; nothing seemed to have taken place in his absence, and yet God had deprived those kings of a hundred days of their reign.

But nothing was changed for France in 1642, the epoch to which we turn, except her fears and her hopes. The future alone had changed its aspect. Before again beholding our personages, we must contemplate at large the state of the kingdom.

The powerful unity of the monarchy was rendered still more imposing by the misfortunes of the neighboring States. The revolutions in England, and those in Spain and Portugal, rendered the peace which France enjoyed still more admired. Strafford and Olivares, overthrown or defeated, aggrandized the immovable Riche-lieu.

Six formidable armies, reposing upon their triumphant weapons, served as a rampart to the kingdom. Those of the north, in league with Sweden, had put the Imperialists to flight, still pursued by the spirit of Gustavus Adolphus, those on the frontiers of Italy had in Piedmont received the keys of the towns which had been defended by Prince Thomas; and those which strengthened the chain of the Pyrenees held in check revolted Catalonia, and chafed before Perpignan, which they were not allowed to take. The interior was not happy, but tranquil. An invisible genius seemed to have maintained this calm, for the King, mortally sick, languished at St. Germain with a young favorite; and the Cardinal was, they said, dying at Narbonne. Some deaths, however, betrayed that he yet lived; and at intervals, men falling as if struck by a poisonous blast recalled to mind the invisible power.

St.-Preuil, one of Richelieu's enemies, had just laid his "iron head" upon the scaffold without shame or fear, as he himself said on mounting it.

Meantime, France seemed to govern herself, for the prince and the minister had been separated a long time; and of these two sick men, who hated each other, one never had held the reins of State, the other no longer showed his power—he was no longer named in the public acts; he appeared no longer in the government, and seemed effaced everywhere; he slept, like the spider surrounded by his webs.

If some events and some revolutions had taken place during these two years, it must have been in hearts; it must have been some of

those occult changes from which, in monarchies without firm foundation, terrible overthrows and long and bloody dissensions arise.

To enlighten ourselves, let us glance at the old black building of the unfinished Louvre, and listen to the conversation of those who inhabited it and those who surrounded it.

It was the month of December; a rigorous winter had afflicted Paris, where the misery and inquietude of the people were extreme. However, curiosity was still alive, and they were eager for the spectacles given by the court. Their poverty weighed less heavily upon them while they contemplated the agitations of the rich. Their tears were less bitter on beholding the struggles of power; and the blood of the nobles which reddened their streets, and seemed the only blood worthy of being shed, made them bless their own obscurity. Already had tumultuous scenes and conspicuous assassinations proved the monarch's weakness, the absence and approaching end of the minister, and, as a kind of prologue to the bloody comedy of the Fronde, sharpened the malice and even fired the passions of the Parisians. This confusion was not displeasing to them. Indifferent to the causes of the quarrels which were abstruse for them, they were not so with regard to individuals, and already began to regard the party chiefs with affection or hatred, not on account of the interest which they supposed them to take in the welfare of their class, but simply because as actors they pleased or displeased.

One night, especially, pistol and gun-shots had been heard frequently in the city; the numerous patrols of the Swiss and the body-guards had even been attacked, and had met with some barricades in the tortuous streets of the Ile Notre-Dame; carts chained to the posts, and laden with barrels, prevented the cavaliers from advancing, and some musket-shots had wounded several men and horses. However, the town still slept, except the quarter which surrounded the Louvre, which was at this time inhabited by the Queen and M. le Duc d'Orleans. There everything announced a nocturnal expedition of a very serious nature.

It was two o'clock in the morning. It was freezing, and the darkness was intense, when a numerous assemblage stopped upon the quay, which was then hardly paved, and slowly and by degrees occupied the sandy ground that sloped down to the Seine. This

troop was composed of about two hundred men; they were wrapped in large cloaks, raised by the long Spanish swords which they wore. Walking to and fro without preserving any order, they seemed to wait for events rather than to seek them. Many seated themselves, with their arms folded, upon the loose stones of the newly begun parapet; they preserved perfect silence. However, after a few minutes passed in this manner, a man, who appeared to come out of one of the vaulted doors of the Louvre, approached slowly, holding a dark- lantern, the light from which he turned upon the features of each individual, and which he blew out after finding the man he sought among them. He spoke to him in a whisper, taking him by the hand:

"Well, Olivier, what did Monsieur le Grand say to you?

[The master of the horse, Cinq-Mars, was thus named by abbreviation.

This name will often occur in the course of the recital.]

Does all go well?"

"Yes, I saw him yesterday at Saint-Germain. The old cat is very ill at Narbonne; he is going 'ad patres'. But we must manage our affairs shrewdly, for it is not the first time that he has played the torpid. Have you people enough for this evening, my dear Fontrailles?"

"Be easy; Montresor is coming with a hundred of Monsieur's gentlemen. You will recognize him; he will be disguised as a master-mason, with a rule in his hand. But, above all, do not forget the passwords. Do you know them all well, you and your friends?"

"Yes, all except the Abbe de Gondi, who has not yet arrived; but 'Dieu me pardonne', I think he is there himself! Who the devil would have known him?"

And here a little man without a cassock, dressed as a soldier of the French guards, and wearing a very black false moustache, slipped between them. He danced about with a joyous air, and rubbed his hands.

"Vive Dieu! all goes on well, my friend. Fiesco could not do better;" and rising upon his toes to tap Olivier upon the shoulder, he continued:

"Do you know that for a man who has just quitted the rank of pages, you don't manage badly, Sire Olivier d'Entraigues? and you will be among our illustrious men if we find a Plutarch. All is well organized; you arrive at the very moment, neither too soon nor too late, like a true party chief. Fontrailles, this young man will get on, I prophesy. But we must make haste; in two hours we shall have some of the archbishops of Paris, my, uncle's parishioners. I have instructed them well; and they will cry, 'Long live Monsieur! Long live the Regency! No more of the Cardinal!' like madmen. They are good devotees, thanks to me, who have stirred them up. The King is very ill. Oh, all goes well, very well! I come from Saint-Germain. I have seen our friend Cinq-Mars; he is good, very good, still firm as a rock. Ah, that is what I call a man! How he has played with them with his careless and melancholy air! He is master of the court at present. The King, they say, is going to make him duke and peer. It is much talked of; but he still hesitates. We must decide that by our movement this evening. The will of the people! He must do the will of the people; we will make him hear it. It will be the death of Richelieu, you'll see. It is, above all, hatred of him which is to predominate in the cries, for that is the essential thing. That will at last decide our Gaston, who is still uncertain, is he not?"

"And how can he be anything else?" said Fontrailles. "If he were to take a resolution to-day in our favor it would be unfortunate."

"Why so?"

"Because we should be sure that to-morrow morning he would be against us."

"Never mind," replied the Abbe; "the Queen is firm."

"And she has heart also," said Olivier; "that gives me some hope for Cinq-Mars, who, it seems to me, has sometimes dared to frown when he looked at her."

"Child that you are, how little do you yet know of the court! Nothing can sustain him but the hand of the King, who loves him as a son; and as for the Queen, if her heart beats, it is for the past and

not for the future. But these trifles are not to the purpose. Tell me, dear friend, are you sure of your young Advocate whom I see roaming about there? Is he all right?"

"Perfectly; he is an excellent Royalist. He would throw the Cardinal into the river in an instant. Besides, it is Fournier of Loudun; that is saying everything."

"Well, well, this is the kind of men we like. But take care of yourselves, Messieurs; some one comes from the Rue Saint-Honore."

"Who goes there?" cried the foremost of the troop to some men who were advancing. "Royalists or Cardinalists?"

"Gaston and Le Grand," replied the newcomers, in low tones.

"It is Montresor and Monsieur's people," said Fontrailles. "We may soon begin."

"Yes, 'par la corbleu!'" said the newcomer, "for the Cardinalists will pass at three o'clock. Some one told us so just now."

"Where are they going?" said Fontrailles.

"There are more than two hundred of them to escort Monsieur de Chavigny, who is going to see the old cat at Narbonne, they say. They thought it safer to pass by the Louvre."

"Well, we will give him a velvet paw!" said the Abbe.

As he finished saying this, a noise of carriages and horses was heard. Several men in cloaks rolled an enormous stone into the middle of the street. The foremost cavaliers passed rapidly through the crowd, pistols in hand, suspecting that something unusual was going on; but the postilion, who drove the horses of the first carriage, ran upon the stone and fell.

"Whose carriage is this which thus crushes foot-passengers?" cried the cloakmen, all at once. "It is tyrannical. It can be no other than a friend of the Cardinal de la Rochelle."

[During the long siege of La Rochelle, this name was given to Cardinal Richelieu, to ridicule his obstinacy in commanding as General-in-Chief, and claiming for himself the merit of taking that

town.]

"It is one who fears not the friends of the little Le Grand," exclaimed a voice from the open door, from which a man threw himself upon a horse.

"Drive these Cardinalists into the river!" cried a shrill, piercing voice.

This was a signal for the pistol-shots which were furiously exchanged on every side, and which lighted up this tumultuous and sombre scene. The clashing of swords and trampling of horses did not prevent the cries from being heard on one side: "Down with the minister! Long live the King! Long live Monsieur and Monsieur le Grand! Down with the red-stockings!" On the other: "Long live his Eminence! Long live the great Cardinal! Death to the factious! Long live the King!" For the name of the King presided over every hatred, as over every affection, at this strange time.

The men on foot had succeeded, however, in placing the two carriages across the quay so as to make a rampart against Chavigny's horses, and from this, between the wheels, through the doors and springs, overwhelmed them with pistol-shots, and dismounted many. The tumult was frightful, but suddenly the gates of the Louvre were thrown open, and two squadrons of the body-guard came out at a trot. Most of them carried torches in their hands to light themselves and those they were about to attack. The scene changed. As the guards reached each of the men on foot, the latter was seen to stop, remove his hat, make himself known, and name himself; and the guards withdrew, sometimes saluting him, and sometimes shaking him by the hand. This succor to Chavigny's carriages was then almost useless, and only served to augment the confusion. The body-guards, as if to satisfy their consciences, rushed through the throng of duellists, saying:

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, be moderate!"

But when two gentlemen had decidedly crossed swords, and were in active conflict, the guard who beheld them stopped to judge the fight, and sometimes even to favor the one who he thought was

of his opinion, for this body, like all France, had their Royalists and their Cardinalists.

The windows of the Louvre were lighted one after another, and many women's heads were seen behind the little lozenge-shaped panes, attentively watching the combat.

Numerous Swiss patrols came out with flambeaux.

These soldiers were easily distinguished by an odd uniform. The right sleeve was striped blue and red, and the silk stocking of the right leg was red; the left side was striped with blue, red, and white, and the stocking was white and red. It had, no doubt, been hoped in the royal chateau that this foreign troop would disperse the crowd, but they were mistaken. These impassible soldiers coldly and exactly executed, without going beyond, the orders they had received, circulating symmetrically among the armed groups, which they divided for a moment, returning before the gate with perfect precision, and resuming their ranks as on parade, without informing themselves whether the enemies among whom they had passed had rejoined or not.

But the noise, for a moment appeased, became general by reason of personal disputes. In every direction challenges, insults, and imprecations were heard. It seemed as if nothing but the destruction of one of the two parties could put an end to the combat, when loud cries, or rather frightful howls, raised the tumult to its highest pitch. The Abbe de Gondi, dragging a cavalier by his cloak to pull him down, exclaimed:

"Here are my people! Fontrailles, now you will see something worth while!

Look! look already who they run! It is really charming."

And he abandoned his hold, and mounted upon a stone to contemplate the manoeuvres of his troops, crossing his arms with the importance of a General of an army. Day was beginning to break, and from the end of the Ile St.-Louis a crowd of men, women, and children of the lowest dregs of the people was seen rapidly advancing, casting toward heaven and the Louvre strange vociferations. Girls carried long swords; children dragged great halberds and

piques of the time of the League; old women in rags pulled by cords old carts full of rusty and broken arms; workmen of every trade, the greater number drunk, followed, armed with clubs, forks, lances, shovels, torches, stakes, crooks, levers, sabres, and spits. They sang and howled alternately, counterfeiting with atrocious yells the cries of a cat, and carrying as a flag one of these animals suspended from a pole and wrapped in a red rag, thus representing the Cardinal, whose taste for cats was generally known. Public criers rushed about, red and breathless, throwing on the pavement and sticking up on the parapets, the posts, the walls of the houses, and even on the palace, long satires in short stanzas upon the personages of the time. Butcher-boys and scullions, carrying large cutlasses, beat the charge upon saucepans, and dragged in the mud a newly slaughtered pig, with the red cap of a chorister on its head. Young and vigorous men, dressed as women, and painted with a coarse vermilion, were yelling, "We are mothers of families ruined by Richelieu! Death to the Cardinal!" They carried in their arms figures of straw that looked like children, which they threw into the river.

When this disgusting mob overran the quays with its thousands of imps, it produced a strange effect upon the combatants, and entirely contrary to that expected by their patron. The enemies on both sides lowered their arms and separated. Those of Monsieur and Cinq-Mars were revolted at seeing themselves succored by such auxiliaries, and, themselves aiding the Cardinal's gentlemen to remount their horses and to gain their carriages, and their valets to convey the wounded to them, gave their adversaries personal rendezvous to terminate their quarrel upon a ground more secret and more worthy of them. Ashamed of the superiority of numbers and the ignoble troops which they seemed to command, foreseeing, perhaps, for the first time the fearful consequences of their political machinations, and what was the scum they were stirring up, they withdrew, drawing their large hats over their eyes, throwing their cloaks over their shoulders, and avoiding the daylight.

"You have spoiled all, my dear Abbe, with this mob," said Fontailles, stamping his foot, to Gondi, who was already sufficiently nonplussed; "your good uncle has fine parishioners!"

"It is not my fault," replied Gondi, in a sullen tone; "these idiots came an hour too late. Had they arrived in the night, they would not have been seen, which spoils the effect somewhat, to speak the truth (for I grant that daylight is detrimental to them), and we would only have heard the voice of the people 'Vox populi, vox Dei'. Nevertheless, no great harm has been done. They will by their numbers give us the means of escaping without being known, and, after all, our task is ended; we did not wish the death of the sinner. Chavigny and his men are worthy fellows, whom I love; if he is only slightly wounded, so much the better. Adieu; I am going to see Monsieur de Bouillon, who has arrived from Italy."

"Olivier," said Fontrailles, "go at once to Saint-Germain with Fournier and Ambrosio; I will go and give an account to Monsieur, with Montresor."

All separated, and disgust accomplished, with these highborn men, what force could not bring about.

Thus ended this fray, likely to bring forth great misfortunes. No one was killed in it. The cavaliers, having gained a few scratches and lost a few purses, resumed their route by the side of the carriages along the by-streets; the others escaped, one by one, through the populace they had attracted. The miserable wretches who composed it, deprived of the chief of the troops, still remained two hours, yelling and screaming until the effect of their wine was gone, and the cold had extinguished at once the fire of their blood and that of their enthusiasm. At the windows of the houses, on the quay of the city, and along the walls, the thoughtful and genuine people of Paris watched with a sorrowful air and in mournful silence these preludes of disorder; while the various bodies of merchants, dressed in black and preceded by their provosts, walked slowly and courageously through the populace toward the Palais de justice, where the parliament was to assemble, to make complaint of these terrible nocturnal scenes.

The apartments of Gaston d'Orleans were in great confusion. This Prince occupied the wing of the Louvre parallel with the Tuileries; and his windows looked into the court on one side, and on the other over a mass of little houses and narrow streets which almost entirely covered the place. He had risen precipitately, awakened sudden-

ly by the report of the firearms, had thrust his feet into large square-toed slippers with high heels, and, wrapped in a large silk dressing-gown, covered with golden ornaments embroidered in relief, walked to and fro in his bedroom, sending every minute a fresh lackey to see what was going on, and ordering them immediately to go for the Abbe de la Riviere, his general counsellor; but he was unfortunately out of Paris. At every pistol-shot this timid Prince rushed to the windows, without seeing anything but some flam-beaux, which were carried quickly along. It was in vain he was told that the cries he heard were in his favor; he did not cease to walk up and down the apartments, in the greatest disorder-his long black hair dishevelled, and his blue eyes open and enlarged by disquiet and terror. He was still thus when Montresor and Fontrailles at length arrived and found him beating his breast, and repeating a thousand times, "Mea culpa, mea culpa!"

"You have come at last!" he exclaimed from a distance, running to meet them. "Come! quick! What is going on? What are they doing there? Who are these assassins? What are these cries?"

"They cry, 'Long live Monsieur!'"

Gaston, without appearing to hear, and holding the door of his chamber open for an instant, that his voice might reach the galleries in which were the people of his household, continued to cry with all his strength, gesticulating violently:

"I know nothing of all this, and I have authorized nothing. I will not hear anything! I will not know anything! I will never enter into any project! These are rioters who make all this noise; do not speak to me of them, if you wish to be well received here. I am the enemy of no man; I detest such scenes!"

Fontrailles, who knew the man with whom he had to deal, said nothing, but entered with his friend, that Monsieur might have time to discharge his first fury; and when all was said, and the door carefully shut, he began to speak:

"Monseigneur," said he, "we come to ask you a thousand pardons for the impertinence of these people, who will persist in crying out that they desire the death of your enemy, and that they would even wish to make you regent should we have the misfortune to lose his

Majesty. Yes, the people are always frank in their discourse; but they are so numerous that all our efforts could not restrain them. It was truly a cry from the heart—an explosion of love, which reason could not restrain, and which escaped all bounds."

"But what has happened, then?" interrupted Gaston, somewhat calmed.

"What have they been doing these four hours that I have heard them?"

"That love," said Montresor, coldly, "as Monsieur de Fontrailles had the honor of telling you, so escaped all rule and bounds that we ourselves were carried away by it, and felt seized with that enthusiasm which always transports us at the mere name of Monsieur, and which leads us on to things which we had not premeditated."

"But what, then, have you done?" said the Prince.

"Those things," replied Fontrailles, "of which Monsieur de Montresor had the honor to speak to Monsieur are precisely those which I foresaw here yesterday evening, when I had the honor of conversing with you."

"That is not the question," interrupted Gaston. "You cannot say that I have ordered or authorized anything. I meddle with nothing; I know nothing of government."

"I admit," continued Fontrailles, "that your Highness ordered nothing, but you permitted me to tell you that I foresaw that this night would be a troubled one about two o'clock, and I hoped that your astonishment would not have been too great."

The Prince, recovering himself little by little, and seeing that he did not alarm the two champions, having also upon his conscience and reading in their eyes the recollection of the consent which he had given them the evening before, sat down upon the side of his bed, crossed his arms, and, looking at them with the air of a judge, again said in a commanding tone:

"But what, then, have you done?"

"Why, hardly anything, Monseigneur," said Fontrailles. "Chance led us to meet in the crowd some of our friends who had a quarrel

with Monsieur de Chavigny's coachman, who was driving over them. A few hot words ensued and rough gestures, and a few scratches, which kept Monsieur de Chavigny waiting, and that is all."

"Absolutely all," repeated Montresor.

"What, all?" exclaimed Gaston, much moved, and tramping about the chamber. "And is it, then, nothing to stop the carriage of a friend of the Cardinal-Duke? I do not like such scenes. I have already told you so. I do not hate the Cardinal; he is certainly a great politician, a very great politician. You have compromised me horribly; it is known that Montresor is with me. If he has been recognized, they will say that I sent him."

"Chance," said Montresor, "threw in my way this peasant's dress, which Monsieur may see under my cloak, and which, for that reason, I preferred to any other."

Gaston breathed again.

"You are sure, then, that you have not been recognized. You understand, my dear friend, how painful it would be to me. You must admit yourself—"

"Sure of it!" exclaimed the Prince's gentleman. "I would stake my head and my share in Paradise that no one has seen my features or called my by my name."

"Well," continued Gaston, again seating himself on his bed, and assuming a calmer air, in which even a slight satisfaction was visible, "tell me, then, what has happened."

Fontrailles took upon himself the recital, in which, as we may suppose, the populace played a great part and Monsieur's people none, and in his peroration he said:

"From our windows even, Monseigneur, respectable mothers of families might have been seen, driven by despair, throwing their children into the Seine, cursing Richelieu."

"Ah, it is dreadful!" exclaimed the Prince, indignant, or feigning to be so, and to believe in these excesses. "Is it, then, true that he is so generally detested? But we must allow that he deserves it. What!

his ambition and avarice have, then, reduced to this extremity the good inhabitants of Paris, whom I love so much."

"Yes, Monseigneur," replied the orator. "And it is not Paris alone, it is all France, which, with us, entreats you to decide upon delivering her from this tyrant. All is ready; nothing is wanting but a sign from your august head to annihilate this pygmy, who has attempted to assault the royal house itself."

"Alas! Heaven is my witness that I myself forgive him!" answered Gaston, raising up his eyes. "But I can no longer bear the cries of the people. Yes, I will help them; that is to say," continued the Prince, "so that my dignity is not compromised, and that my name does not appear in the matter."

"Well, but it is precisely that which we want," exclaimed Fontailles, a little more at his ease.

"See, Monseigneur, there are already some names to put after yours, who will not fear to sign. I will tell you them immediately, if you wish it."

"But—but," said the Duc d'Orleans, timidly, "do you know that it is a conspiracy which you propose to me so coolly?"

"Fie, Monseigneur, men of honor like us! a conspiracy! Oh! not at all; a league at the utmost, a slight combination to give a direction to the unanimous wish of the nation and the court—that is all."

"But that is not so clear, for, after all, this affair will be neither general nor public; therefore, it is a conspiracy. You will not avow that you are concerned in it."

"I, Monseigneur! Excuse me to all the world, since the kingdom is already in it, and I am of the kingdom. And who would not sign his name after that of Messieurs de Bouillon and Cinq-Mars?"

"After, perhaps, not before," said Gaston, fixing his eyes upon Fontailles more keenly than he had expected.

The latter hesitated a moment.

"Well, then, what would Monseigneur do should I tell him the names after which he could sign his?"