THE CHEVALIER D'AURIAC

By STANLEY WEYMAN.

SYNOPSIS.

D'Auriac, commanding outpost where scene is laid, tells the story. De Gomeron is in temporary command, appointed by Gen. de Rone to examine into a charge against d'Auriac. Nicholas, a sergeant, brings in a man and woman, from king's camp at Le Fère, prisoners. D'Auriac, angered by insulting manner of de Gomeron toward woman, strikes him, duel follows and prisoners escape. Duel is interrupted by appearance of de Rone, and d'Auriac is told he will hang if found alive at close of morrow's battle. Riding over field next day d'Auriac finds Nicholas, victim of de Gomeron's malice, in imminent danger of death, and releases him from awful predicament. After battle in which King Henry utterly routs de Rone's forces, d'Auriac, lying severely wounded, sees two forms moving through the darkness robbing the bodies of the dead and wounded. They find golden collar on de Leyva's corpse, and Babette stabs Mauginot (her partner) to gain possession. Henry with retinue, among whom is fair prisoner who had escaped from de Gomeron and d'Ayen, her suitor, rides over the field. Madame rescues d'Auriac, and afterwards visits him daily in hospital. Here he learns his friend is heiress of Bidache. When well enough he is taken to her Normandy chateau, where he learns from Maître Palin, madame's chaplain, the king is about to force her to marry d'Ayen. He sets out with Jacques, his knave, for Paris, to prevent this marriage. Delayed at Ezy, he he comes upon Nicholas, his old sergeant, who says de Gomeron is in neighborhood with associates from army and nobility, plotting treason against the king. They go to de Gomeron's retreat where they manage to overhear details of plot. Burning with revenge, Nicholas shoots at de Gomeron. Flying for their lives, the two men think themselves beyond pursuit, when suddenly they are face to face with Biron, one of the traitors, whom d'Auriac cuts down, and with de Gomeron, who makes short work of Nicholas; d'Auriac escapes. Arriving in Paris the chevalier lays what he knows of treasonable plot before Sully, master general of ordnance. Calling on de Belin, a friend d'Auriac secures from him a servant, Ravaillac, who had previously been in service of d'Ayen. D'Ayen's marriage to Madame de la Bidache is to occur within fornight, de Belin to stand sponsor. Palin and madame arrive in Paris. D'Auriac has suspicions aroused concerning Ravaillac; later witnesses meeting with de Gomeron, therefore dismisses him. The chevalier is introduced at court by de Belin, where he charges Biron with being traitor to France and king. For his pains Henry gives him 24 hours to quit France. King now commands marriage to be celebrated on the morrow, making it imperative that flight occur that night, if madame be saved. D'Auriac therefore meets her secretly, when masked men swoop down on pair and carry them off, bound and gagged. After 24 hours' imprisonment, during which he has interview with de Gomeron and Babette, he manages to escape. At his lodgings he finds Jacques, Palin, de Belin and his host Pantin assembled in council. Latter suggests all go immediately in search of madame. But d'Auriac is doubtful if he could find way back.

CHAPTER XVI.—CONTINUED.

"This settles our going out to-night," I went on, "there is but one thing to do to-morrow—to find the house. It will be easy to discover if madame is within. After that I propose to rescue by the ordinary means of the law."

"Would it not be as simple to have recourse to Villeroi the first thing to-morrow?" asked Belin.

"Simple enough; but the law has its delays, and if once the house is raided and madame is not there we may whistle for our prize."

"But the wheel?" put in Pantin.

"Will break Babette, who will not know. M. de Gomeron is no fool to trust her more than the length of his hand. No—I will leave nothing to chance. I propose then to seek out the house to-morrow with Pantin's help, if he will give it."

"Most willingly," put in the notary.

"Thanks, my good friend. That we will find it I am certain, and that we can act. In the meantime I must ask you by all means in your power to get the search of the law after me delayed."

"Then M. de Villeroi must hear some certain news to-morrow," said Annette.

"There speaks a woman's wit," exclaimed Belin, "well, after all, perhaps your plan is the best."

"And in this search of to-morrow I will share," Palin suddenly exclaimed. But my heart was sore against him for what he had said.

"Pardon me, Maitre Palin. This is my right. I do this alone."

"Your right?" he sneered.

"Yes, Maitre Palin—my right—I go to rescue my promised wife."

Palin said nothing for a moment, his features twitching nervously. At last he turned to me. "It is what I have hoped and prayed for," he said, holding out his hand, "forgive me—I take back the words so hastily spoken—it is an old man who seeks your pardon."

I took his hand in all frankness, and he embraced me as a son, and then, in awhile, Belin said:

"We must be up and doing early to-morrow, and d'Auriac is in need of rest. He will share my bed here to-night, and harkee, Palin! Rouse us with the dawn."

We then parted, the Pantins showing the Huguenot to his chamber, and Jacques but waiting for a moment or so to help me off with my dripping things. My valises were still lying in the room, and I was thus enabled to get the change of apparel I so much needed.

When at last we were abed I found it impossible to sleep, and Belin was at first equally wakeful. For this I was thankful, as I began to grow despondent, and felt that after all I had lost the game utterly. But the viscompte's courage never faltered, and in spite of myself I began to be cheered by his hopefulness. He explained to me fully how it came that he was at the Rue des Deux Mondes. He wished to discuss with Palin some means for discovering me, and as the Huguenot, fearing to return to the rue Varenne after what had to happen, and yet unwilling to leave Paris, had sought Pantin's home, de Belin had determined to pass the night here to consult with him, giving out to his people that he had gone on a business to Monceaux.

"I will see Sully the first thing to-morrow," he said, as we discussed our plans, "and if I mistake not, it is more than madame we will find at the Toison d'Or. Be of good cheer, d'Auriac—your lady will come to no harm. The carmarguer is playing too great a game to kill a goose that is likely to lay him golden eggs. I'm afraid, though, he has spoilt a greater game for his master."

"How do you mean?" I asked, interested in spite of myself.

"Only this, that unless you are extremely unfortunate I regard the rescue of Mme. de Bidache as certain—I am as certain that this will lead to the arrest of de Gomeron and his confederates—they will taste the wheel, and that makes loose tongues, and it may lead to details concerning M. de Biron that we sadly need."

"It seems to me that the wheel is perilously near to me as well."

"There is the edict, of course," said de Belin, "but madame's evidence will absolve you, and we can arrange that you are not put to the question at once."

The cool way in which he said this would have moved me to furious anger against him did I not know him to be so true a friend. As it was I said sharply:

"Thank you; I will take care that the wheel does not touch me."

"Very well," he answered; "and now I shall sleep—good night."

He turned on his side and seemed to drop off at once, and as I lay through the weary hours of that night I sometimes used to turn to the still figure at my side with envy at the peace of his slumber.

CHAPTER XVII.

MAITRE PANTIN SELLS CABBAGES.

At last, just as my patience was worn to its last shred, I saw the glaze in the window begin to whiten, and almost immediately after heard footsteps on the landing. This was enough for me, and unable to be still longer, I sprang out of bed and hastened to open the door myself. It admitted Jacques, and a figure in whom I should never have recognized the notary had I not known that it could be no other than Pantin. Jacques bore a tray loaded with refreshments and Pantin held a lantern, for it was still dark, in one hand, and something that looked like the folds of a long cloak hung in the loop of his arm. The noise of their entrance woke de Belin. With a muttered exclamation I did not catch he aroused himself, and the candles being lit we proceeded to make a hasty toilet. As I drew on my boots I saw they were yet wet and muddy, and was about to rate Jacques when Pantin anticipated: "I told him to let them be so, monsieur—you have a part to play—put this over your left eye." And with these words he handed me a huge patch. Then in place of my own hat, I found I had to wear a frayed cap of a dark sage-green velvet with a scarecrow looking white feather sticking from it. Lastly, Pantin flung over my shoulders a long cloak of the same color as the cap, and seemingly as old. It fell almost down to my heels and was fastened at the throat by a pair of leather straps in lieu of a clasp.

"Faith!" exclaimed the viscompte, as he stood a little to one side and surveyed me, "if you play up to your dress you are more likely to adorn than raise the gallows Jacques spoke of."

SUDDENLY SEIZED HIM BY THE BACK OF THE NECK.

Then Pantin and I started off on our search for the Toison d'Or.

As he closed the entrance door behind him carefully and Jacques turned the key, I looked up and down the rue des Deux Mondes, but there was not a soul stirring.

All Paris was asleep. Above us the sky still swarmed with stars, though a pale band of light was girdling the horizon. Here and there in the heaving mist on the river we saw the feeble glimmer of a lantern that had survived through the night and still served to mark the spot where a boat was moored. All around us the outlines of the city rose in a brown silhouette, but the golden cross on the spire of Notre Dame had already caught the dawn, and blazed like a beacon against the gray of the sky overhead.

We pushed on briskly, and by the time we had reached St. Jacques we were warm enough, despite the chilliness of the morning. At a stall near the church, and hard by the Pont Notre Dame, Pantin purchased a quantity of vegetables, bidding me to keep a little ahead of him in future, and guide him in this manner as far as I knew. Whilst he was filling his basket I turned up rue St. Martin, wondering what the noatry's object could be in transforming himself into a street hawker. I went slowly, stopping every now and again to see if Pantin was following, and observed that he kept on the side of the road opposite to me, and ever and again kept calling out his wares in a monotonous sing-song tone. Thus far, and for a space further, I knew the road, and observing that Pantin was able to keep me well in view, increased my pace, until at last we came to the cross street near which I had met the jealous Mangel and his wife. Up the cross street I turned without hesitation, now almost facing the tall spire that had been my landmark, and I began to think I would be able to trace my way to the Toison d'Or without difficulty when I suddenly came to a standstill and faltered, for there were half a dozen lanes that ran this way and that, and for the life of me I could not tell which was the one I had taken but a few hours before, so different did they look now to what they had appeared by moonlight. As I halted in a doubting manner, Pantin hurried up, and, there being one or two near me, began to urge me to buy his cabbages. I made a pretense of putting him off, and then the strangers, having passed, I explained I had lost my bearings. "I see a wineshop open across the road, chevalier—go in and call for a flask and await me," he answered rapidly.

I nodded, and bidding him begone in a loud tone, swaggered across the street, and entering the den, it could be called by no other name, shouted for a litre of Beaugency and flung myself down on a rough stool with a clatter of my sword and a great showing of the pistol butts that stuck out from my belt.

The cabaret had just opened, but early as I was I was not the first customer, for a man was sitting, half asleep, half drunk, on one of the foul-smelling benches, and as I called for my wine he rose up, muttering: "Beaugency! He wants Beaugency. There is none here," he went on, in a maudlin manner turning to me, "at the Toison d'Or—"

I almost started at the words, but the landlord, whose face appeared from behind a cask at my shout, and whose countenance now showed the utmost anger at his old client's speech, suddenly seized him by the neck and hustled him from the room. "The drunken knave," he said, with a great oath, "to say that I kept no Beaugency. Here, captain," and he handed me a litre, with a much-stained glass, "here is Beaugency that comes from More's own cellars," and he looked knowingly at me.

Not wishing to hold converse with the fellow, I filled the glass, and then, flinging him a crown, bade him drink the rest of the bottle for good luck. The scoundrel drank it there and then, and as soon as he had done so returned to the charge.

"It is good wine, eh, captain?"

"It is," I answered dryly, but he was not to be denied.

"Monsieur is out early, I see."

"Monsieur is out late, you mean," I made answer, playing my part and longing for Pantin to return.

"Ho! ho!" he roared. "A good joke. Captain, I do not know you, but tell me your name, and curse me if I do not drink your health in Arbois the day you ride to Montfaucon."

"You will know my name soon enough," I answered, humoring the fellow, "and I promise to send you the Arbois the day I ride there. I may tell you that it was to the Toison d'Or I was recommended by my friends, but your Beaugency and your company are so good, compere, that shall make this my house to call during my stay in the Fauborg St. Martin." And at that moment I caught sight of Pantin. "There is another crown to drink to our friendship, and, mind you, keep as good a flask for me against my return at noon. Au revoir. I have a business at my lodging."

The wretch overwhelmed me with thanks and stood at the door watching me as I crossed over the street with a warning glance to Pantin, and strolled slowly onward. A little further on I turned to my left, keeping well in the middle of the road to avoid the filth and refuse thrown carelessly on each side, and as I turned I saw that my man had gone in. I was certain of one thing, that the Toison d'Or was not far off, and whilst I picked my way slowly along, Pantin came up to me with his sing-song whine.

"Have you found it?" I asked in a low tone.

"No," he sang out.

At this moment a figure rose up from the steps of a house, where I had noticed it crouching a few steps from me, and swung forward.

"Hola! 'Tis monsieur le capitaine—has your excellency tasted the Beaugency—the dog poison? I tell your excellency, there is but one house in the Fauborg where they sell it—the Toison d'Or."

"Go and drink some there, then," and I tossed him a piece of silver.

He picked it up from the road where it had fallen, like a dog snatching at a bone, and then stood surveying the coin which he held in the open palm of his hand.

"You might," he said, "they wouldn't serve me," and then with drunken familiarity he came close to my elbow. "I'll show you the Toison d'Or. It is there—the second turn to the left and then straight before you. As for me—I go back to taste Grigot's Beaugency—his dog poison," he repeated with the spiteful insistence of a man in his cups.

"The fool in his folly speaketh wisdom," Pantin muttered under his breath, and then the man, staggering from me, attempted to go back whence he had been flung. But either the morning air was too strong for him, or else he was taken with a seizure of some kind, for ere he had gone ten paces he fell forward on his face and lay there in the slime of the street.

At any other time I would have stopped to assist the man, but now I could only look upon his condition as a direct interposition of Providence, and I let him lay where he had fallen.

"Come, Pantin," I cried, "we have found the spot."

Following the direction given by our guide, we found he had not deceived us, and in a few minutes I was standing at the entrance of the blind passage at one end of which was the Toison d'Or.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

TRANSIENT FAME.

Only the Very Few Live Long in the Memory of Man—Many Bitter Disappointments.

The cold fact is that the great mass of reputations, in literature as elsewhere, are small affairs, and transient at that—comets rather than stars, and not especially brilliant while they remain above the horizon. Like "our little systems" of theology, metaphysics or what not, "they have their day and cease to be," and while they last they generally cause less stir than did the little systems.

Something was done lately in commemoration of Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797-1839), "the most popular English song writer of his age" after Tom Moore. His lyrics were known in every drawing-room 50 years ago, but how many in our generation had ever heard of him? Somebody the other day called attention to the fact that Philip James Bailey, author of the brilliant, if erratic, "Festus" (1839), is still living. This was a surprise to the superfluous veterans who had read the book and remembered it. Yet these two were in their time larger figures than most of our living poets. So perishable and perfidious a thing is fame. The young writer whose heart swells with innocent joy at beholding his first effusions in print may fondly fancy himself on the high road to immortality. He is a pathetic spectacle to his seniors, reminding them of the

Old man in a boat,
Who cried "I'm afloat, I'm afloat!"

Alas, many have floated on what seemed a full tide of renown, only to be stranded before their voyage had run a lifetime.—Lippincott's.

Geese a Token of Love.

A Chinese gentleman always sends a pair of geese to the lady of his choice, and they are looked upon as the emblems of conjugal fidelity.

FACTS FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS.

What is needed among amateurs is more study and thought and not so many photographs.

Poor slides often make excellent cover glasses if they are free from bubbles and well cleaned. Thus they are not total losses.

Toning in photography means tinting or giving a slight change of color. It might just as well be called gilding, for in the toning bath a thin layer of gold is deposited on the surface of the picture.

It is a point to bear in mind in slidemaking that slides which are just right for a lantern with oil light are all wrong for the oxygen jet. Again, those that are suitable for the latter are not the finest for the electric light.

It is a rule of photography that breadths of shade should if possible be linked together by other accidental shadows, and the toning bath is sometimes manipulated to put the desired harmony there. This recalls the old story of the artist who was asked what the dog was doing in his picture. "Why," said he, "he is carrying the light and shade through it."

A marvel in the line of rapid photography was performed in York when biograph pictures of the parade of Astor's battery, taken in the afternoon, were shown the same night at Keith's theater. The pictures, 1,000 in number, were taken in 25 seconds, ten minutes after four o'clock. They were sent to Hoboken for development, and were back at the theater at 9:15 o'clock. This is said to be the fastest work of the kind on record, the best previous record of seven hours having been made in London on the occasion of the return of Gen. Kitchener from Egypt.

SCIENCE SIFTINGS.

Street cars propelled by liquid air have been satisfactorily tested in Zurich.

The Arctic sparrow, among all animals, has the biggest brain in proportion to its size. Relatively to bulk, the canary bird possesses a brain bigger than a man's, and the samo is true of the squirrel monkey of South America, which is not an exceptionally intelligent simian.

Mining engineers agree that the limit to which shafts may be sunk into the earth with the present machinery and equipments is 10,000 feet. The deepest shaft ever dug is the one now in existence in one of the copper mines on Lake Superior. It has a sheer depth of 5,000 feet.

Drs. Lang and Meltzing, of Berlin, describe an apparatus they have invented for photographing the interior of the stomach. The foremost end of the stomach tube contains a microscopic camera and an electric light. When the stomach is emptied and filled with air the apparatus photographs the most secret recesses. The negative is about the size of a cherry stone, but can be enlarged.

Dr. W. Hastings, summarizing observations made in this country and Europe, says that the regular growth of children continues from two up to sixteen years. From 16 to 17 the growth is usually retarded. A man does not fully attain his growth until after the age of 25, and athletic exercise extends the period of growth to 30 years. Between the ages of 50 and 60 the size of the human body diminishes. Deprivation of food and hard work interfere with bodily growth.

The following statistics of the Little Sisters of the Poor will be found interesting: Total number of sisters, 4,558; deaths during the year 1898, 73; total deaths since the community was founded, 1,013; old people cared for last year, 39,687; died during the year, 7,303; total decease since the beginning, 162,777; total number of establishments in various parts of the world, 274; houses in the United States, 41.

SAVED THE SECRET.

He Hoodwinked His Trusting Wifey But at What a Fearful Cost to Himself.

He had been out late. When he reached his residence the church clock was chiming five. Heavy, weary, disgusted, he opened the front door with some difficulty, and softly toiled up the stairs, entering the bed chamber with elaborate caution.

Thank goodness, she was asleep!

He dropped into a chair, and, without taking off his coat or hat, began to remove his shoes. One he placed with great care upon the floor, but, alas! as he took off the other it slipped out of his hand and fell with a loud noise.

"Wifey" awoke on the instant.

She looked at him and then at the summer sunlight that streamed through the blinds.

"Why, George, what are you getting up so early for?"

Talk about reprieves!

"Why, my dear," replied George, with the clearest enunciation of which he was capable, "I found I couldn't sleep, so I thought I'd get up and go out and take a walk."

And out the poor wretch went, dragging himself round wearily for an hour upon the verge of tears and torpor.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

He Is Learning Now.

Agent—The Barlows haven't asked for a cent's worth of repairs this spring. What do you think of that?

Landlord—I'm not surprised. Barlow got a house through a trade a few weeks ago and is so busy filling the wants of a tenant of his own that he has forgotten about bothering us.—Chicago Evening News.

A Misfit.

The young man who prefers to owe a tailor rather than to wear a suit which has been taken from the counters of a clothing store, says that he never cared for a counter fit anyway.—Boston Advertiser.

Evidence.

Mrs. Witherby—They say that a husband and wife grow to look like each other more and more all the time.

Witherby—I have noticed how handsome you were getting to be.—Detroit Free Press.

Philologic.

First Student—Can you tell me the origin of the expression giving a man the mitten?

Second Student—It was the ancient equivalent of (k)nit.—Crypt.

Adam was not born. Probably that's why he never wrote poetry.—Chicago Daily News.

We cling to our faults with a firmer grasp than we do to our virtues.—L. A. W. Bulletin.

HOW HE LOST HER.

He Struck Out and She Gave Herself to the Young Man Who Didn't Play Ball.

A bright flush overspread the face of the young girl in the pink shirt waist, who sat in the grand stand, as the stalwart young man who had played in the field in the first half of the inning stepped to the plate, bat in hand.

"Line 'er out, old man!" "Three-base hit!" "Good boy!" "Home run!" "Hit it in de nose!" "Swat it good an' hard!" sung out the cranks.

The stalwart young man carelessly lifted his cap, replaced it, grasped his bat with a firmer hold, moved it in graceful circles over his shoulder, while the pitcher was doing the preliminary mysterious juggling with the ball that marks the high-priced player, and as the leather sphere—it is the correct form to call it a leather sphere—came toward him like a rifle shot he swung his bat.

"Ah!" groaned the crowd.

He had fanned the air.

This phrase is also the correct form.

Again the high-priced pitcher juggled the ball mysteriously, again it came like a rifle shot, again the young man at the plate swung his bat—

And again the crowd groaned:

"Ah!"

The high-priced catcher rolled the ball carelessly down to third, put on his mask, came close behind the bat, spread his high-priced legs apart, placed his hands on his knees, leaned forward, and made an imperceptible signal to the high-priced pitcher.

The vast crowd held its breath.

Which is also the correct thing to do at a critical moment like this.

Like a shot the ball sped toward the plate.

With a mighty lunge the young athlete swung his bat a third time.

It smote only the air.

Another groan burst from the crowd.

He had not only struck out, but put the side out.

"Mr. Spoonamore," said the young woman in the pink shirt waist, turning with pale cheeks and flashing eyes to the pimply-faced young man who sat by her side. "I said 'no' to you the other day. I say yes now. I will marry you whenever you like!"—Chicago Tribune.

Was in the Wrong Office.

Agent—My dear sir, do you know how much time you lose dipping a pen into the ink? Ten dips a minute means 600 dips an hour, or 6,000 dips in ten hours, and each dip consumes—

Business Man—Yes, I know; I have worked it all out.

"And yet I find you still writing in the old way?"

"Yes, I am using the fountain pen you sold me about a month ago—using it in the old way because it won't write any other way."

"Beg pardon; I'm in the wrong office. Good-day."—Pearson's Weekly.

China's Powerful Sword.

There is an ancient and dreadful sword in China. It gives to the man who happens to hold it the power to cut off the head of any one he wishes without danger of punishment. All people flee from this sword as fearfully as stomach ills flee before the approach of Hostetter's Stomach Bitters. This famous remedy cures all forms of stomach troubles, beginning with constipation and ending with liver or kidney disease. It will be found in all drug stores and it always cures.

Modesty Is Unfashionable.

The modest man who takes a back seat these days is not called up higher, but is pushed out the back door to make room for the deadheads.—Galveston News.

"Pa," said little Willie, asking his sixteenth question. "Well, my son?" "Pa, how'd the man who named the first bicycle know it was a bicycle?"—Answers.