≈ THE ≈ REFUGEES

By A. CONAN DOYLE, Author of "The Return of Sherlock Holmes"

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(Continued from Thursday.)

It was with a feeling of curiosity, not unmixed with awe, that Amos Green entered the private chamber of the greatest monarch in Christendom. As his eyes fell upon a quietly dressed, bright eyed man, half a head shorter than himself, with a trim, dapper figure and an erect carriage, he could not help glancing round the room to see if this were indeed the monarch or if it were some other of those endless officlais who interposed themselves between him and the outer world. The reverent salute of his companion, however, showed him that this must indeed be the king, so he bowed, and then drew himself erect with the simple dignity of a man who had been trained in nature's school.

"Good evening, Captain de Catinat," said the king, with a pleasant smile.



"You must slay with me and be my

"Your friend, as I understand, is a stranger to this country. I trust, sir, that you have found something here to interest and to amuse you?"

"Yes, your majesty. I have seen your great city, and it is a wonderful one. And my friend has shown me this palace, with its woods and its grounds. When I go back to my own country I will have much to say of what I have seen in your beautiful land.

"You speak French, and yet you are

not a Canadian."

The king looked with interest at the powerful figure, the bold features and the free bearing of the young foreigner, and his mind flashed back to the dangers which the Comte de Frontenac had foretold from these same colonies. His mind, however, ran at present on other things than statecraft, and he hastened to give De Catinat his orders for the night.

"You will ride into Paris on my serv ice. Your friend can go with you. Two are safer than one when they bear a message of state. I wish you, however, to wait until nightfall before you start."

"Yes, sire." "Let none know your errand and see that none follow you. Go to the house of Archbishop Harlay, prelate of Paris, and bid him drive out hither and be at the northwest side postern by midnight. Let nothing hold him back. Storm or fine, he must be here tonight. It is of the first importance. Adleu, captain. Adleu, monsleur,"

CHAPTER X.

ME. DE MONTESPAN still kept her rooms, uneasy in mind at the king's disappearance, but unwilling to show her anxiety to the court by appearing among them or by making any inquiry as to what had occurred. While she thus remained in ignorance of the sudden and complete collapse of her fortunes, she had one active and energetic agent who had lost no incident of what had occurred and who watched her interests with as much zeal as if they were his own. And indeed they were his own, for her brother, M. de Vivonne, had gained everything for which he yearned-money, lands and preferment-through his sister's notoriety. By nature bold, unscrupulous and resourceful, he was not a man to lose the game without playing it out to the very end. Keenly alert to all that passed, he had from the time that he first heard the rumor of the king's intention haunted the nutechamber and drawn his own conclusions from what he had seen. Nothing had escaped him-the disconsolate faces of mousieur and of the dauphin, the visit of Pere la Chaise and Bossuet to the ladg's room, her return, the triumph which shows in her eyes as she came away from the interview. He had seen Bontens hurry off and summon the grandsman and his friend. He had heard them order their horses to be brought out in a couple of hours' time, and finally from a spy

he learned that an unwonted bustle was going forward in Mme, de Maintenon's room, that Mile. Nanon was half wild with excitement and that two court milliners had been hastily summoned to madame's apartment. It was only, however, when he heard from the same servant that a chamber was to be prepared for the reception that night of the archbishop of Paris that he understood how urgent was the danger.

Mme, de Montespan had spent the evening stretched upon a sofa in the worst possible humor with every one around her. There was the sound of an opening door and of a quick step in her anteroom. Was it the king, or at least his messenger with a note from him?

But, no; it was her brother, with the haggard eyes and drawn face of a man who is weighed down with his own evil tidings. He turned as he entered, fastened the door and then, striding across the room, locked the other one which led to her boudoir.

"We are safe from interruption," he panted. "I have hastened here, for every second may be invaluable. Have you heard anything from the king?" "Nothing." She had sprung to her

"The hour has come for action, Fran-

"What is it?" "The king is about to marry Mme.

de Maintenon." "The gouvernante! The widow Scar-

ren! It is impossible!" "It is certain that he will marry ber." The woman flung out her hands in a gesture of contempt and laughed loud

and bitterly. "You are easily frightened, brother," said she. "Ah, you do not know your little sister. Perchance if you were not my brother you might rate my powers more highly. One day is all I

ask to bring him back." "But you cannot have it. The marriage is tonight."

"You are mad, Charles."

"I am certain of it." In a few broken seatences he shot out all that he had seen and heard. She listened with a grim face and hands which closed ever tighter and tighter as he proceeded.

"I shall go and see him," she cried, sweeping toward the door.

"No, no, Francolse, Believe me, you will ruin everything if you do. Strict orders have been given to the guard to admit no one to the king."

"Had I only a day, Charles, I am sure that I could bring him back to me. There has been some other infinence here-that meddlesome Jesuit or the pompous Bossuet, perhaps. Only one day to counteract their wiles. "No, sire; I am from the English Charles, it must be stopped; I say it must be stopped! I will give anything. everything, to prevent it!"

"What will you give, my sister?" She looked at him aghast. "What! You do not wish me to buy you?" she

"No, but I wish to buy others." "Ha! You see a chance, then!"

"One, and one only. But time presses. I want money." "How much?"

"I cannot have too much-all that you can spare."

With hands which trembled with eagerness she unlocked a secret cupboard in the wall in which she concealed her valuables. A blaze of Jewelry met her brother's eyes as he peered over her shoulder. At one side were three drawers, the one over the other. She drew out the lowest one. It was full to the brim with glittering louis d'ora.

"Take what, you will!" she said. "And now your plan! Quick!" He stuffed the money in handfuls into the side pockets of his coat. Coins stipped between his fingers and tinkled and wheeled over the floor, but neither east a glance at them.

"Your plan?" she repeated. "We must prevent the srchbishop from arriving here. Then the marriage would be postponed until tomorrow night."

"But how prevent it?" There are a dozen good rapiers ont the court which are to be bought or less than I carry in one pocket. I vill gather them together and wait on

"And waylay the archbishop?" "No; the messengers

"Oh, excellent! You are a prince of brothers! If no message reach Paris we are saved. Go; go; do not lose a

"It is very well, Francoise, but what re we to do with them when we get them? We may lose our heads over the matter, it seems to me. After nil, they are the king's messengers, and we can scarce pass our swords through

"There would be no forgiveness for

But consider that before the matter looked into I shall have regained my

uffuence with the king," "All very fine, my little sister, but how long is your influence to last? A pleasant life for us if at every change of favor we have to fly the country! No, no. Francoise; the most that we can do is to detalu the messengers."

(To Be Continued.)

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