

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

## THE ORDER OF RELEASE.\*

Mr. Stacpoole has in this last work of his departed from his usual style, and has given us a delightful and enthralling tale of intrigue, the scene of which is laid at Versailles, and no less interesting persons are introduced than M. de Richelieu, Rousseau, and Mme. du Barry, to say nothing of the royal lover himself.

Richelieu is described as a marvellous figure, quite youthful still, in spite of his seventy-four years, small in stature, yet somehow great. A man with the past of a conqueror, and the present appearance at a distance of a youthful joy.

The interview of His Majesty with M. de Sartines, the Minister of the Police, gives the key to the story.

"How are our dear people?" asked His Majesty, casting some specks of gold sand off a sheet of note paper and folding the sheet.

"Still grumbling, Sire."

"And the pamphleteers?"

"Still writing, Sire."

"And the philosophers?"

"Still philosophising, your Majesty."

"And the price of corn—for it always seems to me that the price of corn is at the bottom of all our troubles?"

"Still rising, Sire."

"Good," said the King.

The word escaped from him almost without his knowing it. It was, all the same, meant, for the King and M. de Sartines had between them an interest in the price of corn. They were, in fact, partners, in that they had bought up all the available grain, and stored it in granaries. They would presently sell it at an enormous profit.

It is to obtain the papers relating to this discreditable alliance that the beautiful Baroness Linden, an emissary from the Court of Vienna, conspires with her lover, Count Armand de Jussac, kinsman to Richelieu, and the exciting events which follow on are consequences of this daring plot.

"The plan which she had formulated against the Minister of Police was of such a nature that she did not dare to discuss it with the man she loved. This strange woman had no scruples in her dealings with the unscrupulous, no mercy in her dealings with the merciless, no pity for the pitiless. Yet for the poor she was all charity, and for those who loved her and whom she loved her fidelity was deathless."

Jussac's attempt to gain possession of these papers ends for him in the Bastille, the horrors of which are drawn with terrible realism.

"Like the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, which still exists, to the shame of civilisation, the Bastille had one supreme and crowning terror, its silence."

\* By H. de Vere Stacpoole. Hutchinson & Co., London.

"The vision of Sophie Linden rose up before him. The woman who had shown him what a fair thing life is to those who love.

"'God!' cried the unfortunate . . . 'There would be raving winter afternoons that would creep into longer winter nights, hot summer days would pass over the Bastille, bringing nothing here. And men would say, Oh, the Comte de Jussac. He died, did he not, or at all events disappeared, but that was twenty years ago?' The performing rat, who was the pet of the unfortunate Marquis de Owerolles, the former inhabitant of the cell, fills him with horror.

"The man who had graced everything that he touched, charmed all he knew, lent his wit to so many men, his heart to so many women, his purse to so many friends, and his genius—to a rat!"

The spirit of the Bastille lay on that page of unwritten history.

There is plenty of humour, however, supplied in this story, and the wit of Mme. Linden sharpened upon her many enemies and detractors, fills many a paragraph. Its point, however, is not always very easy to follow.

The scene where she elects to try on her new hats with an audience of her enemies is at least unique.

"Tilted more slightly to the left, Madame."

"So," said the Baroness.

"Perfectly," said the hat artist, "and with the mouth closed, please. It is not a hat of conversation."

It is with great relief that we read of the escape of de Jussac and of his reunion with Sophie Linden.

We can cordially recommend this book to our readers.

H. H.

## COMING EVENTS.

May 20th.—Meeting in support of the Myddelton Square Maternity Nursing Association, by invitation of Viscountess Clifden, 1, Great Stanhope Street; Park Lane, 3.15 p.m.

May 21st.—Ninth Annual Meeting of the Rural Midwives Association, 3, Grosvenor Place, S.W., Lord Aberdare presiding. The National Insurance Act, with special reference to midwifery, will be discussed. 3 p.m.

May 21st.—Coronation Fund for Nurses in Ireland. Annual Meeting, College of Surgeons, Dublin.

May 22nd.—Asylum Workers' Association. Annual General Meeting. 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, W. Chair, Sir William Collins, M.D., F.R.C.S. 3.30 p.m.

May 28th.—Trained Maternity Nurses' Association. Lecture on "Hæmorrhage" by Dr. L. Frazer-Nash. 33, Strand. 4 p.m.

May 30th.—The Midland Matrons' Association, Birmingham. Meeting: Miss Mollett will speak on the Trained Women Nurses' Friendly Society in the afternoon, and to Nurses at the General Hospital, Birmingham, in the evening.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)