

did not tend to increase my enthusiasm; but the King was proof even against this, as well as against the kennel smells and the tedium of waiting, and presently his persistence was rewarded. The shutter swung slowly open, the noise made by its collision with the wall coming clearly to our ears. A minute later the boy appeared in the doorway, and stood looking up and down.

"Well," the king whispered in my ear, "what do you make of that, my friend?"

I muttered that it must be a beggar's trick.

"They would not earn a crown in a month," he answered. "There must be something more than that at the bottom of it."

Beginning to share his curiosity, I was about to propose that we sally out and see if the boy would repeat his overture to us, when I caught the sound of footsteps coming along the street. "Is it Maignan?" the king whispered, looking out cautiously.

"No, sire, I said. "He is in yonder doorway."

Before Henry could answer, the appearance of two strangers coming along the road confirmed my statement. They paused opposite the boy, and he advanced to them. Too far off to hear precisely what passed, we were near enough to be sure that the dialogue was in the main the same as that in which we had taken part. The men were cloaked, too, as were we, and presently they went in, as we had gone in. All, in fact, happened as it had happened to us, and after the necessary interval we saw and heard the shutter closed.

"Well," the King said, "what do you think of that?"

"The shutter is the catch-word, sire."