

again. He was justifying himself to himself, he was explaining away what he had done, he was relieving his conscience by an argument which only a father who is also a king could use.

"He—ah—defamed our daughter. We had the right to punish him. He was our—ah—subject. It was our right."

Then suddenly the bark of Tan was heard outside the door.

"Seer, Seer! What is it? My deary wants to come in, but I'm not letting her! What is it, Seer? . . . It's something she oughtn't to see, that's all! . . . No, deary, you mustn't—you *shan't*, deary! Seer, I'm holding her! Lock the door!" And then came again the loud pert bark of the dog.

Dick Stewart had sprung to the door and was locking it; that was an anguished moment for every one there except Joseph Leroux. M. Joseph Leroux was scanning the face of M. de Grandemaison keenly. "You punished him, did you, sir?" he was saying. "You did justice on him, eh? You throttled him, didn't you?"

And then, his back to the door and his face full of woe, for he had heard the sobs of the girl who was dearer to him than all else, Dick Stewart growled, "Confound you, you hound! He didn't—he didn't throttle him!"

"Who did, then?" said the detective coldly. "Who did, Monsieur Faldalaldo?" He was kneeling beside the corpse again, and examining the neck.

A minute, a strained and heavy minute, ticked away before Dick Stewart answered. He hated to do it, but for him that minute had been a period of swift thought, repugnant argument, and grudging decision. He hated his decision, but he made it. The knowledge of what his decision might mean was plain to his mind, but the sobs outside the door were audible. It was he himself, he thought, who had brought this terrible trouble upon the Grandemaçons. Had he not searched Consolata out and found her the Comte would never have been jealous, Consolata would never have been accused, and her father would