

The King's hand was on mine, to stop me before the last word was out; but his touch came too late. As it rang through the room one of the curtains before us was twitched aside, and a face glared out, so ghastly and drawn and horror-stricken, that few would have known it for that of the wealthy fermier, who had grown sleek and fat on the King's revenues. I did not know whether he knew us, or whether, on the contrary, he found this accusation, so precise, so accurate, coming from an unknown source, still more terrible than if he had known us; but on the instant he fell forward in a swoon.

"St. Gris!" Henry cried, looking on the body with a shudder, "you have killed him, Grand Master! It was true, was it?"

"Yes, sire," I answered. "But he is not dead, I think." And going to the window I whistled for Maignan, who in a minute came to us. He was not very willing to touch the man, but I bade him lay him on the bed and loosen his clothes and throw water on his face; and presently M. Fauchet began to recover.

I stepped a little aside that he might not see me, and accordingly, the first person his eyes rested on was the King, who had laid aside his hat and cloak, and taken the terrified and weeping child on his lap. M. Fauchet stared at him awhile before he recognized him; but at last the trembling man knew him, and tottering to his feet, threw himself on his knees, looking years older than when I had last seen him in the street.

"Sire," he said faintly, "I will make restitution."

Henry looked at him gravely, and nodded. "It is well," he said. "You are fortunate, M. Fauchet;