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"Singular, singular!" he replied; "I never knew Perrot fail me before. But you have eloquence, madame, and he knew, no doubt, that you would always be welcome to my home."

There was that in his voice which sent the blood stinging through Gering's veins. He half came to his feet, but his wife's warning, pleading glance brought him to his chair again.

"Monsieur, tell me," she said, "will you give my husband his freedom?"

"Madame, his life is the State's."

"But he is in your hands now. Will you not set him free? You know that the charge against him is false—false! He is no spy. Oh, monsieur, you and he have been enemies, but you know that he could not do a dishonourable thing."

"Madame, *my* charges against him are true."

"I know what they are," she said earnestly, "but this strife is not worthy of you, and it is shaming me. Monsieur, you know I speak truly."