

Things remained in this state some weeks, and, growing no wiser, I was beginning to think less of the affair—which, of itself, and apart from a whimsical interest which the King took in it, was unimportant—when one day, stopping in the Quartier du Marais to view the works at the new Place Royale, I saw the boy. He was in charge of a decent-looking servant whose hand he was holding, and the two were gazing at a horse that, alarmed by the heaps of stone and mortar, was rearing and trying to unseat its rider. The child did not see me, and I bade Maignan follow him home, and learn where he lived and who he was.

In an hour my equerry returned with the information I desired. The child was the only son of Fauchet, one of the Receivers-General of the Revenue; a man who kept great state in the largest of the old-fashioned houses in the Rue de Bethisy, where he had lately entertained the King. I could not imagine anyone less likely to be concerned in treasonable practices; and, certain that I had made no mistake in the boy, I was driven for a while to believe that some servant had perverted the child to his use. Presently, however, second thoughts, and the position of the father, taken, perhaps, with suspicions that I had for a long time entertained of Fauchet—in common with most of his kind—suggested an explanation, hitherto unconsidered. It was not an explanation very probable at first sight, nor one that would have commended itself to those who divide all men by hard and fast rules and assort them like sheep. But I had seen too much of the world to fall into this mistake, and it satisfied me. I began by weighing it carefully; I procured evidence, I had Fauchet watched; and, at length, one evening in August, I went to the Louvre.

The King was dicing with Fernandez, the Portu-