

fore me," he smiled. "In this room," pointing over his shoulder, "is a faithful servant, who, at my command, will shoot her and Miss De Marcellin. And," with a sweeping bow, "I think I can be trusted to hold you and your hirelings in check long enough for the two revolver shots."

The King regarded him thoughtfully—and Lotzen smiled afresh, and tapped the floor with the point of his sword.

"Ordinarily, I would not credit your threat," Armand replied, "but you are so monstrous a villain—so unspeakable in your viciousness—that you are incomprehensible to human minds. You are a savage brute, cousin—and a savage brute is capable of any atrocity."

"My thanks, cousin, my best thanks!" was the answer.

"Therefore, that I may credit your tale of murder ready to be done, will you be good enough to ask the faithful servant, who is just behind the door awaiting your word, to indicate his presence there by speaking."

"No! No! cousin—the uncertainty whether I lied or not is an added impetus to your fear!" he laughed. "You must decide unaided."

But even as he said it, the Queen's voice came from within.

"He lies, Armand! There is no one here."

The King gave a glad cry.