

not have been safe language any where else : " The Clerics, oh indeed. I know them well. They are a lot of hypocrites who use religion as a stepping-stone to fortune. I have more faith than they have."

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Suddenly he stopped... What had he seen?... He could not have been mistaken... Surely he saw a man quietly approach and as quietly disappear through a door hidden in the wall of the old church. But where is he now ? " Oh ! I must have been dreaming, or the victim of some illusion," he thinks, rubbing his eyes and resuming his walk ; but his gaze is again attracted and riveted by a second shadowy form followed by a few others who glide along in the gloom of the pillars and disappear like the first one. Balandreau is sure now he was not mistaken. He scents mischief... A conspiracy... one of those clerical plots the lodge so forcibly denounced !...

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But as we have already remarked Balandreau was a brave, self-reliant specimen of humanity. In an instant he mastered his fears and made up his mind that even were he to die in the attempt, he will not recede before the glorious mission so evidently entrusted to him by the Great Ruler of the universe Himself. He will go alone and unarmed into the midst of those conspirators and wrest their diabolic secrets from them. Luckily the last-comer had left the door partly open, so Balandreau had no trouble in finding it and entered unmolested. The first thing that confronts him is a short flight of stairs which he ascends then another door and another short flight of stairs, and he finds himself in the sacristy. Has he not had good reason to denounce sacristies for some time past ?

From an adjoining room, the sound of loud talking reaches him and he catches his breath as a deep voice says : " Let us draw and see whose turn it will be."

" Just as I surmised," thinks the unseen listener. They are drawing to decide who will fire the shots.

Scarcely had he reached this conclusion when he is obliged to hide. Two of the conspirators leave the room. Let us follow them.