

you to be carried out of this square in the morning. I came here spoiling for a fight, and had my sword all ready to begin carving you when Cartier's voice struck me like a whiff of bracing, salt-sea air. But what great enterprise have you on hand? Your serious looks bespeak some weighty scheme. Whatever it is, my sword is at your service."

"I doubt if it would be wise to take such a fire-eating duellist into our confidence," said Claude, regarding his friend with a smile.

"Now, Claude, that is hardly fair. You know I am no duellist. I merely fight when I am compelled to, and never without just provocation. For instance, I had a delightful passage-at-arms last night, but it was no fault of mine. I was coming across the Sillon when a pretty girl came towards me with a leisurely step that seemed to say: "I have just been watching for you." She had a face like a flower, in the moonlight, and I could not resist snatching a kiss. That was all: but it acted like a match in a powder magazine. She started back with a cry. Evidently she had not been waiting for me; and before I could apologise, or take back the kiss, her lover swooped down upon me with drawn sword."

"I trust," exclaimed Claude, "he let a little of the impudence out of your gallant hide."

"Not a drop. I know the danger of kissing pretty girls in the public thoroughfare, and never do it without having my hand on my sword-hilt. He sprang forward, and I sprang back. The girl was between us, and in his haste to spit me, he pushed her roughly aside. The slight pause gave