

have crushed the old gentleman's, and crushed the heart of Consolata too. Archange's medical knowledge assured him that the assault on the Comte had precipitated and aggravated the attack of cardiac epilepsy; except for the assault it might not have been cardiac and, just possibly, the Comte might now be alive. "I suppose I ought to wish he was," Dick Stewart mused. "But I can't. He was such a bounder! I knew he was, first time I saw him. Archange said he wasn't, but I knew better. Nobody but a bounder would have been in such a hurry to think the worst of"—his face contracted—"the sweetest girl alive."

Leroux guessed the truth, too, and that seemed to Stewart the best of the whole matter. He had never forgiven the great Joseph Leroux for fooling him, play-acting the Pied-de-nez, and using an Englishman for a French policeman's purposes of *espionage*. And Leroux knew that M. Stoo-ar knew that Leroux knew, which to Leroux seemed the worst of the whole matter. Leroux had felt himself beaten. Leroux had hunted everywhere for Shott, because he guessed that Shott could disprove Stewart's self-accusation. If Leroux could have fixed the guilt on M. de Grandemaison it would have been a triumph of professional pride; but if he could have cleared Dick Stewart it would have been a salve to wounded self-conceit. As it was, however, Shott refusing to be found and M. de Grandemaison to confess, Stewart's self-accusation stood good, and Leroux felt himself doubly beaten. "You are a fool, M'sieur Stoo-ar," Leroux had said. "Maybe, maybe," had been the answer. "But I've scored against Pied-de-nez this time, you impertinent beggar!"

Dick Stewart had scored the point at his own expense, however. "Fool of a thing to do, no doubt—stupid and Quixotic and all that, but. . . I've spared you, Consolata!" Something very much like tears stood in his eyes at that moment, blurring their far-away look that had been seeing right back to Château Royal and all the immediate past. He knew that what he had done for Consolata, all for Consolata, had set him farther off from her than ever. "'Tisn't ekity, but it's law and convention," he said grimly. "The old gentleman would never consent to our marriage, now,