

thought my plots weak, but you have not taken into account the untrustworthy material with which I have had to deal, therefore I prefer to say nothing about this latest development. I may mention, however, that I was able to distinguish certain capabilities in that young man, Cardillac, which the rest of you overlooked. I refuse to state in what way I have occupied my time since last I saw you. I prefer to be judged by results. Marshal your men, therefore, at Montrichard on the morning of the twenty-second at six o'clock. I do not ask you to believe that Her Majesty the Queen will be delivered into your hands, but I do ask you to be prepared for such a contingency.'

"If you say this, abbé, with an air of dignity and hauteur, you will find it most effective. You see, there is no desire on my part to pose as the rescuer of the Queen. I ask no reward from Epernon, his son, or yourself. I do not intend to offer my sword to Her Majesty, nor is there any office in her gift which I could possibly accept.

"Therefore, abbé, a word to the wise is sufficient. You are free. Make what use you like of that freedom. Divulge the secret of your unauthorised imprisonment or keep silence about it as best suits your convenience. Forgive me, and farewell until six o'clock on the morning of the twenty-second."