

Le Mans, where they had been searching a deserted coach-house.

"You may be sure that the search had already been made by Lupin, and that we shall know the results. Listen: eight o'clock!"

At the same moment they heard the throbbing of a motor car. It stopped outside the house; and the bell rang almost immediately after. Orders had been given beforehand. The door opened and Don Luis Perenna was shown in.

To Valenglay and the Prefect of Police his arrival was certainly not unexpected, for they had just been saying that they would have been surprised if he had not come. Nevertheless, their attitude showed that astonishment which we all experience in the face of events that seem to pass the bounds of human possibility.

"Well?" cried the Prime Minister eagerly.

"It's done, Monsieur le Président."

"Have you collared the scoundrel?"

"Yes."

"By Jove!" said Valenglay. "You're a fine fellow!" And he went on to ask, "An ogre, of course? An evil, undaunted brute? ——"

"No, Monsieur le Président, a cripple, a degenerate, responsible for his actions, certainly, but a man in whom the doctors will find every form of wasting illness: disease of the spinal cord, tuberculosis, and all the rest of it."

"And is that the man whom Florence Levasseur loved?"

"Monsieur le Président!" Don Luis violently protested. "Florence never loved that wretch! She felt sorry for him, as any one would for a fellow-creature doomed to an early death; and it was out of pity that she allowed him