

wounds had made him imbecile enough to adopt it. More than once I took myself to task for the selfish way in which I had acted toward him.

While these thoughts recurred, time flitted by, until I perceived by the fading light at my window, that night was at hand. Finally I was left in utter darkness, and the stillness which prevailed was almost unbearable. To one who has become accustomed to the booming of cannon, the rattle of musketry, the blare of bugles, and the fierce demoniac battle yells of desperate soldiers, absolute stillness is an awful thing to endure. The least sound made my scalp tingle. Now I am no coward, as my cross and my scar will testify, but being extremely nervous, I was annoyed by the little noises, which, under ordinary circumstances, I probably would not have noticed. At one time it was the squeal of a rat; at another, the scampering of mice, and through it all the monotonous drip, drip, drip of water from the damp walls. It was growing colder, and as my blood cooled down, I began to pace about my narrow cell to keep warm. I suffered most from the pangs of hunger. I could never go very long beyond my regular meal time without bringing on a miserable headache, and I began to dread the result of fasting.

After a while, and it seemed a very long while, I heard footsteps approaching my door. Then a key was inserted into the lock, and as the door swung open the light from a lantern was flashed into the cell.

"Come forth, you!" cried a gruff voice. "And don't be a fool either, or you may get yourself shot. Monsieur le Baron wants you in the library; though if I had my way about it, pardieu, I'd end your music here. You will perhaps remember me."

The fellow held the lantern nearer his face. It was Leloup, and there was an expression in his eyes which made me uneasy. I wondered if I were not among madmen, but endeavored to conceal the feelings of alarm which now possessed me.

I was in hopes the rascal had brought food, and when I found that he had not, my hunger being great, I ventured to remind him that I had not tasted food since we were

at Le Chien d'Or. His response was to the effect that it was his business to take me to the baron, after which, if it were monsieur's pleasure that I should have food, there would be those who would supply it forthwith. But he cautioned me against taking any satisfaction out of this, for it was his belief that I would soon be where food was not required.

Without further parley he bade me precede him, and placed his pistol against my head, as a reminder that resistance would be dangerous. I therefore concluded that it would be well to follow his instructions, and immediately started in the direction he desired.

I was conducted up several flights of stairs, and through as many corridors, all of which were lighted, and finally ushered into a brilliantly illumined apartment.

I had good reason to remember this room. It was the one in which my uncle and I usually discussed our matters of difference, and it was here that we had had our final altercation. It was the old gentleman's study, and I remembered that one of the panels opposite me was the entrance to a secret passage which ran underground from the chateau to the river. When a boy I had several times explored this, and knew all about it. After a sweeping glance around the luxurious apartment, my gaze rested upon a man seated at a writing desk, with his back towards me. In a moment, having finished writing, he dusted the paper with sand, then turned toward me.

Mon Dieu! it was Montluc.

For a moment I was dazed with astonishment. As I stood staring, he waved his hand for Leloup to leave the room. His expression of authority, and Leloup's immediate acquiescence almost stupefied me. It was several moments before I recovered sufficiently to speak, then—

"Montluc!" I cried. "What devil's work is this? Why are you here? Where is my uncle? What does this all mean?"

His smile was so tantalizing, that I could have throttled him.

"Pray calm yourself, my dear du Morney," said he, in an amiable tone. "You ask