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*A SQUADRON OF GUARDS*

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momentary terror to those concerned — although God knows death by violence was common enough thereabout in those days — yet it would not prevent return. The guiltless would swiftly come back as soon as reason asserted itself. There must be some terror here of which I was ignorant, some knowledge of the movement of troops this way, or, perchance, a superstitious horror more deadly still.

I shrugged my shoulders, sipping the wine, careless of what the cause might be. I was young, a soldier, content to take things as they came, confident in my strength and wit. Whatever came I would meet the onset as best a man might, and meanwhile here was food and shelter — what could I ask more? It was some hours yet until night, and I lay down on a bench to wait the shadows, pillowing my head on my jacket while endeavoring to revive some definite memory of the country I must traverse through the dark. It was vague enough, that road to Paris, only I would be safer to ride between Douai and Valenciennes,