

is a game of chance, monsieur, but I shall play my cards to win beyond a doubt."

"You certainly have been dealt a good hand," I remarked, somewhat awed by his extraordinary sang-froid, "and thus far you seem to have played it well. But since you have taken me into the game, the probability is that I hold the ace."

"Your ace cannot possibly win, monsieur. I hold two cards which you cannot beat, and which will place you at a great disadvantage."

"But you admit that yours is a game of chance?"

"Yes, with the chances in my favor. Bear in mind, monsieur, that I have about me men who will do my bidding. The old servants are gone. I could not trust them, so I substituted those whom I knew to be trustworthy. Leloup is my overseer. A word from me and your life will not be worth a sou."

"An excellent card, monsieur, I must admit. Still I am not without hope that my ace will win."

"Impossible. On the other hand, I took the trouble to read the semaphores this morning, and I learned that a man of your description, landed a few days ago at Cannes, with despatches from Elba to the Bonapartists in Paris. I am of the belief that you are the man. I have not studied that portrait up there for nothing. I knew you the moment you entered the Inn of the Golden Fleece. You have not changed much, barring that scar upon your face, and that does you credit. A word from me will place you in the hands of the police. Your execution will no doubt be the consequence."

Mon Dieu! the semaphores! So my presence in France had been telegraphed to Paris. D'André was indeed a wise watch dog, and had many a sharp detective in his service. Had the King trusted to his Minister of Police his downfall in all probability would not have been recorded. But I thought little of the King. At that moment I was too greatly exercised over my own safety. Escape now seemed out of the question, and yet I decided to brave out the situation as far as possible.

"My ace is a better card than you think, monsieur," I ventured to remark. "It is

not likely that you would run the risk of an exposure by handing me over to the police."

"You would denounce me, eh?"

"Most assuredly. I wonder that you ask the question."

"In that case then I have but one card against your ace. But it is a good one, nevertheless, and yet one which I would rather not play myself."

"Another murder, I presume."

"Call it what you will, monsieur, but I shall play on the principle that dead men tell no tales."

"In that case then, your card wins. My ace is useless against the hand of a cowardly assassin."

"Take care monsieur!" he cried, fiercely, drawing his feet back and slapping his hands upon his knees, "you are at my mercy, and your bravado may do you harm."

"You are a cowardly rascal, nevertheless," I answered, with an assumption of sang-froid which I did not feel.

"Tonnerre de Dieu!" he cried, springing to his feet with clinched hands and savage countenance.

He was in a temper now, and this was what I wanted, since whom the gods would destroy they first make mad. He stood for a moment trembling with rage. Then he began to pace the floor in front of the desk, with hands behind him and with head bent forward. I have seen the Emperor do the same thing, and I remember that a great many men in those days got into the habit of patterning after him.

Montluc passed back and forth, growing more absorbed each moment. I was not slow to observe that the desk was situated in the middle of one end of the room, and the room was wide. Montluc began by moving only a short distance from the desk, but as his thought deepened he gradually got further away and nearer the walls. He seemed to have forgotten everything but that which was passing through his mind; even my presence; even the pistol upon the desk. My pulses began to throb violently. My plan was formed. I was alert, yet apparently listless, and I trembled with suppressed excitement.

Beside the window was a small table upon