

from this murderous stain of blood? Their first attempt was to prevent the affair from going to trial, and their relative from being dragged before a criminal tribunal, on so horrible and degrading a charge. They applied, therefore, to the regent to intervene his power; to treat the count as having acted under an access of his mental malady; and to shut him up in a madhouse. The regent was deaf to their solicitations. He replied, coldly, that if the count was a madman, one could not get rid too quickly of madmen who were furious in their insanity. The crime was too public and atrocious to be hushed up or slurred over; justice must take its course.

Seeing there was no avoiding the humiliating scene of a public trial, the noble relatives of the count endeavored to predispose the minds of the magistrates before whom he was to be arraigned. They accordingly made urgent and eloquent representations of the high descent and noble and powerful connections of the count; set forth the circumstances of his early history; his mental malady; the nervous irritability to which he was subject, and his extreme sensitiveness to insult or contradiction. By these means they sought to prepare the judges to interpret everything in favor of the count, and, even if it should prove that he had inflicted the mortal blow on the usurer, to attribute it to access of insanity provoked by insult.

To give full effect to these representations, the noble conclave determined to bring upon the judges the dazzling rays of the whole assembled aristocracy. Accordingly, on the day that the trial took place, the relations of the count, to the number of fifty-seven persons, of both sexes, and of the highest rank, repaired in a body to the Palace of Justice, and took their stations in a long corridor which led to the court-room. Here, as the judges entered, they had to pass in review this array of lofty and noble personages, who saluted them mournfully and significantly as they passed. Any one conversant with the stately pride and jealous dignity of the French noblesse of that day may imagine the extreme state of sensitiveness that produced this self-abasement. It was confidently presumed, however, by the noble suppliants that, having once brought themselves to this measure, their influence over the tribunal would be irresistible. There was one lady present, however, Madame de Beaufremont, who was affected with the Scottish gift of second sight, and related such dismal and sinister apparitions as passing before her