

o so grossly belied his name, have you never made any effort to trace out whither he has gone, or what has become of him?

No; far from wishing to learn whither he has betaken himself, I should shun the possibility of meeting him as I would a wild beast. Thank God, I have never heard his name mentioned by any person, and I hope and believe he is dead.

Do not think so, Bertuccio, replied the count; for the wicked are not so easily disposed of, for God seems to have them under his special watch-care to make of them instruments of his vengeance.

So be it, responded Bertuccio, all I ask of heaven is that I may never see him again. And now, your excellency, he added, bowing his head, you know everything"you are my judge on earth, as the Almighty is in heaven; have you for me no words of consolation?

My good friend, I can only repeat the words addressed to you by the Abb  Busoni. Villefort merited punishment for what he had done to you, and, perhaps, to others. Benedetto, if still living, will become the instrument of divine retribution in some way or other, and then be duly punished in his turn. As far as you yourself are concerned, I see but one point in which you are really guilty. Ask yourself, wherefore, after rescuing the infant from its living grave, you did not restore it to its mother? There was the crime, Bertuccio"that was where you became really culpable.

True, excellency, that was the crime, the real crime, for in that I acted like a coward. My first duty, directly I had succeeded in recalling the babe to life, was to restore it to its mother; but, in order to do so, I must have made close and careful inquiry, which would, in all probability, have led to my own apprehension; and I clung to life, partly on my sisters account, and partly from that feeling of pride inborn in our hearts of desiring to come off untouched and victorious in the execution of our vengeance. Perhaps, too, the natural and instinctive love of life made me wish to avoid endangering my own. And then, again, I am not as brave and courageous as was my poor brother.

Bertuccio hid his face in his hands as he uttered these words, while Monte Cristo fixed on him a look of inscrutable meaning. After a brief silence, rendered still more solemn by the time and place, the count said, in a tone of melancholy wholly unlike his usual manner:

In order to bring this conversation to a fitting termination (the last we shall ever hold upon this subject), I will repeat to you some words I have heard from the lips of the Abb  Busoni. For all evils there are two remedies"time and silence. And now leave me, Monsieur Bertuccio, to walk alone here in the garden. The very circumstances which inflict on you, as a principal in the tragic scene enacted here, such painful emotions, are to me, on the contrary, a source of something like contentment, and serve but to enhance the value of this dwelling in my estimation. The chief beauty of trees consists in the deep shadow of their umbrageous boughs, while fancy pictures a moving multitude of shapes and forms flitting and passing beneath that shade. Here I have a garden laid out in such a way as to afford the fullest scope for the imagination, and furnished with thickly grown trees, beneath whose leafy screen a visionary like myself may conjure up phantoms at will. This to me, who expected but to find a blank enclosure surrounded by a straight wall, is, I assure you, a most agreeable surprise. I have no fear of ghosts, and I have never heard it said that so much harm had been done by the dead during six thousand years as is wrought by the living in a single day. Retire within, Bertuccio, and tranquillize your mind. Should your confessor be less indulgent to you in your dying moments than you found the Abb  Busoni, send for me, if I am still on earth, and I will soothe your ears with words that shall effectually calm and soothe your parting soul ere it goes forth to traverse the ocean called eternity.

Bertuccio bowed respectfully, and turned away, sighing heavily. Monte Cristo, left alone, took three or four steps onwards, and murmured:

Here, beneath this plane-tree, must have been where the infants grave was dug. There is the little door opening into the garden. At this corner is the private staircase communicating with the sleeping apartment. There will be no necessity for me to make a note of these particulars, for there, before my eyes, beneath my feet, all around me, I have the plan sketched with all the living reality of truth.

After making the tour of the garden a second time, the count re-entered his carriage, while Bertuccio, who perceived the thoughtful expression of his masters features, took his seat beside the driver without uttering a word. The carriage proceeded rapidly towards Paris.

That same evening, upon reaching his abode in the Champs-Élysées, the Count of Monte Cristo went over the whole building with the air of one long acquainted with each nook or corner. Nor, although preceding the party, did he once mistake one door for another, or commit the smallest error when choosing any particular corridor or staircase to conduct him to a place or suite of rooms he desired to visit. Ali was his principal attendant during this nocturnal survey. Having given various orders to Bertuccio relative to the improvements and alterations he desired to make in the house, the Count, drawing out his watch, said to the attentive Nubian:

It is half-past eleven oclock; Haydée will soon be here. Have the French attendants been summoned to await her coming?

Ali extended his hands towards the apartments destined for the fair Greek, which were so effectually concealed by means of a tapestried entrance, that it would have puzzled the most curious to have divined their existence. Ali, having pointed to the apartments, held up three fingers of his right hand, and then, placing it beneath his head, shut his eyes, and feigned to sleep.

I understand, said Monte Cristo, well acquainted with Alis pantomime; you mean to tell me that three female attendants await their new mistress in her sleeping-chamber.

Ali, with considerable animation, made a sign in the affirmative. Madame will be tired tonight, continued Monte Cristo, and will, no doubt, wish to rest. Desire the French attendants not to weary her with questions, but merely to pay their respectful duty and retire. You will also see that the Greek servants hold no communication with those of this country.

He bowed. Just at that moment voices were heard hailing the concierge. The gate opened, a carriage rolled down the avenue, and stopped at the steps. The count hastily descended, presented himself at the already opened carriage door, and held out his hand to a young woman, completely enveloped in a green silk mantle heavily embroidered with gold. She raised the hand extended towards her to her lips, and kissed it with a mixture of love and respect. Some few words passed between them in that sonorous language in which Homer makes his gods converse. The young woman spoke with an expression of deep tenderness, while the count replied with an air of gentle gravity.

Preceded by Ali, who carried a rose-colored flambeau in his hand, the young lady, who was no other than the lovely Greek who had been Monte Cristos companion in Italy, was conducted to her apartments, while the count retired to the pavilion reserved for himself. In another hour every light in the house was extinguished, and it might have been thought that all its inmates slept.

Chapter 46. Unlimited Credit

About two oclock the following day a calash, drawn by a pair of magnificent English horses, stopped at the door of Monte Cristo and a person, dressed in a blue coat, with buttons of a similar color, a white waistcoat, over which was displayed a massive gold chain, brown trousers, and a quantity of black hair descending so low over his eyebrows as to leave it doubtful whether it were not artificial so little did its jetty glossiness assimilate with the deep wrinkles stamped on his features—a person, in a word, who, although evidently past fifty, desired to be taken for not more than forty, bent forwards

from the carriage door, on the panels of which were emblazoned the armorial bearings of a baron, and directed his groom to inquire at the porters lodge whether the Count of Monte Cristo resided there, and if he were within.

While waiting, the occupant of the carriage surveyed the house, the garden as far as he could distinguish it, and the livery of servants who passed to and fro, with an attention so close as to be somewhat impertinent. His glance was keen but showed cunning rather than intelligence; his lips were straight, and so thin that, as they closed, they were drawn in over the teeth; his cheek-bones were broad and projecting, a never-failing proof of audacity and craftiness; while the flatness of his forehead, and the enlargement of the back of his skull, which rose much higher than his large and coarsely shaped ears, combined to form a physiognomy anything but prepossessing, save in the eyes of such as considered that the owner of so splendid an equipage must needs be all that was admirable and enviable, more especially when they gazed on the enormous diamond that glittered in his shirt, and the red ribbon that depended from his button-hole.

The groom, in obedience to his orders, tapped at the window of the porters lodge, saying:

Pray, does not the Count of Monte Cristo live here?

His excellency does reside here, replied the concierge; but"" added he, glancing an inquiring look at Ali. Ali returned a sign in the negative.

But what? asked the groom.

His excellency does not receive visitors today.

Then here is my masters card, the Baron Danglars. You will take it to the count, and say that, although in haste to attend the Chamber, my master came out of his way to have the honor of calling upon him.

I never speak to his excellency, replied the concierge; the valet de chambre will carry your message.

The groom returned to the carriage.

Well? asked Danglars.

The man, somewhat crest-fallen by the rebuke he had received, repeated what the concierge had said.

Bless me, murmured Baron Danglars, this must surely be a prince instead of a count by their styling him ~excellency, and only venturing to address him by the medium of his valet de chambre.

However, it does not signify; he has a letter of credit on me, so I must see him when he requires his money.

Then, throwing himself back in his carriage, Danglars called out to his coachman, in a voice that might be heard across the road, To the Chamber of Deputies.

Apprised in time of the visit paid him, Monte Cristo had, from behind the blinds of his pavilion, as minutely observed the baron, by means of an excellent lorgnette, as Danglars himself had scrutinized the house, garden, and servants.

That fellow has a decidedly bad countenance, said the count in a tone of disgust, as he shut up his glass into its ivory case. How comes it that all do not retreat in aversion at sight of that flat, receding, serpent-like forehead, round, vulture-shaped head, and sharp-hooked nose, like the beak of a buzzard? Ali, cried he, striking at the same time on the brazen gong. Ali appeared. Summon Bertuccio, said the count. Almost immediately Bertuccio entered the apartment.

Did your excellency desire to see me? inquired he.

I did, replied the count. You no doubt observed the horses standing a few minutes since at the door?

Certainly, your excellency. I noticed them for their remarkable beauty.

Then how comes it, said Monte Cristo with a frown, that, when I desired you to purchase for me the finest pair of horses to be found in Paris, there is another pair, fully as fine as mine, not in my stables?

At the look of displeasure, added to the angry tone in which the count spoke, Ali turned pale and held down his head.

It is not your fault, my good Ali, said the count in the Arabic language, and with a gentleness none would have thought him capable of showing, either in voice or face "it is not your fault. You do not understand the points of English horses.

The countenance of poor Ali recovered its serenity.

Permit me to assure your excellency, said Bertuccio, that the horses you speak of were not to be sold when I purchased yours.

Monte Cristo shrugged his shoulders. It seems, sir steward, said he, that you have yet to learn that all things are to be sold to such as care to pay the price.

His excellency is not, perhaps, aware that M. Danglars gave 16,000 francs for his horses?

Very well. Then offer him double that sum; a banker never loses an opportunity of doubling his capital.

Is your excellency really in earnest? inquired the steward.

Monte Cristo regarded the person who durst presume to doubt his words with the look of one equally surprised and displeased.

I have to pay a visit this evening, replied he. I desire that these horses, with completely new harness, may be at the door with my carriage.

Bertuccio bowed, and was about to retire; but when he reached the door, he paused, and then said, At what o'clock does your excellency wish the carriage and horses to be ready?

At five o'clock, replied the count.

I beg your excellencys pardon, interposed the steward in a deprecating manner, for venturing to observe that it is already two o'clock.

I am perfectly aware of that fact, answered Monte Cristo calmly.

Then, turning towards Ali, he said, Let all the horses in my stables be led before the windows of your young lady, that she may select those she prefers for her carriage. Request her also to oblige me by saying whether it is her pleasure to dine with me; if so, let dinner be served in her apartments. Now, leave me, and desire my valet de chambre to come hither.

Scarcely had Ali disappeared when the valet entered the chamber.

Monsieur Baptistin, said the count, you have been in my service one year, the time I generally give myself to judge of the merits or demerits of those about me. You suit me very well.

Baptistin bowed low.

It only remains for me to know whether I also suit you?

Oh, your excellency! exclaimed Baptistin eagerly.

Listen, if you please, till I have finished speaking, replied Monte Cristo. You receive 1,500 francs per annum for your services here "more than many a brave subaltern, who continually risks his life for his country, obtains. You live in a manner far superior to many clerks who work ten times harder than you do for their money. Then, though yourself a servant, you have other servants to wait upon you, take care of your clothes, and see that your linen is duly prepared for you. Again, you make a profit upon each article you purchase for my toilet, amounting in the course of a year to a sum equalling your wages.

Nay, indeed, your excellency.

I am not condemning you for this, Monsieur Baptistin; but let your profits end here. It would be long indeed ere you would find so lucrative a post as that you have now the good fortune to fill. I neither ill-use nor ill-treat my servants by word or action. An error I readily forgive, but wilful negligence or forgetfulness, never. My commands are ordinarily short, clear, and precise; and I would rather be obliged to repeat my words twice, or even three times, than they should be misunderstood. I am rich enough to know whatever I desire to know, and I can promise you I am not wanting in curiosity. If, then, I should learn that you had taken upon yourself to speak of me to anyone

favorably or unfavorably, to comment on my actions, or watch my conduct, that very instant you would quit my service. You may now retire. I never caution my servants a second time"remember that. Baptistin bowed, and was proceeding towards the door.

I forgot to mention to you, said the count, that I lay yearly aside a certain sum for each servant in my establishment; those whom I am compelled to dismiss lose (as a matter of course) all participation in this money, while their portion goes to the fund accumulating for those domestics who remain with me, and among whom it will be divided at my death. You have been in my service a year, your fund has already begun to accumulate"let it continue to do so.

This address, delivered in the presence of Ali, who, not understanding one word of the language in which it was spoken, stood wholly unmoved, produced an effect on M. Baptistin only to be conceived by such as have occasion to study the character and disposition of French domestics.

I assure your excellency, said he, that at least it shall be my study to merit your approbation in all things, and I will take M. Ali as my model.

By no means, replied the count in the most frigid tones; Ali has many faults mixed with most excellent qualities. He cannot possibly serve you as a pattern for your conduct, not being, as you are, a paid servant, but a mere slave"a dog, who, should he fail in his duty towards me, I should not discharge from my service, but kill.

Baptistin opened his eyes with astonishment.

You seem incredulous, said Monte Cristo, who repeated to Ali in the Arabic language what he had just been saying to Baptistin in French. The Nubian smiled assentingly to his masters words, then, kneeling on one knee, respectfully kissed the hand of the count. This corroboration of the lesson he had just received put the finishing stroke to the wonder and stupefaction of M. Baptistin. The count then motioned the valet de chambre to retire, and to Ali to follow to his study, where they conversed long and earnestly together. As the hand of the clock pointed to five the count struck thrice upon his gong. When Ali was wanted one stroke was given, two summoned Baptistin, and three Bertuccio. The steward entered.

My horses, said Monte Cristo.

They are at the door harnessed to the carriage as your excellency desired. Does your excellency wish me to accompany him?

No, the coachman, Ali, and Baptistin will go.

The count descended to the door of his mansion, and beheld his carriage drawn by the very pair of horses he had so much admired in the morning as the property of Danglars. As he passed them he said:

They are extremely handsome certainly, and you have done well to purchase them, although you weresomewhat remiss not to have procured them sooner.

Indeed, your excellency, I had very considerable difficulty in obtaining them, and, as it is, they have cost an enormous price.

Does the sum you gave for them make the animals less beautiful, inquired the count, shrugging his shoulders.

Nay, if your excellency is satisfied, it is all that I could wish.

Whither does your excellency desire to be driven?

To the residence of Baron Danglars, Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin.

This conversation had passed as they stood upon the terrace, from which a flight of stone steps led to the carriage-drive. As Bertuccio, with a respectful bow, was moving away, the count called him back.

I have another commission for you, M. Bertuccio, said he; I am desirous of having an estate by the seaside in Normandy"for instance, between Le Havre and Boulogne. You see I give you a wide range. It will be absolutely necessary that the place you may select have a small harbor, creek, or bay, into which my corvette can enter and remain at anchor. She draws only fifteen feet. She must be kept in constant readiness to sail immediately I think proper to give the signal. Make the requisite inquiries for a place of this description, and when you

have met with an eligible spot, visit it, and if it possess the advantages desired, purchase it at once in your own name. The corvette must now, I think, be on her way to FÃ©camp, must she not?

20333m

Certainly, your excellency; I saw her put to sea the same evening we quitted Marseilles.

And the yacht.

Was ordered to remain at Martigues.

Tis well. I wish you to write from time to time to the captains in charge of the two vessels so as to keep them on the alert.

And the steamboat?

She is at ChÃ¢lons?

Yes.

The same orders for her as for the two sailing vessels.

Very good.

When you have purchased the estate I desire, I want constant relays of horses at ten leagues apart along the northern and southern road.

Your excellency may depend upon me.

The Count made a gesture of satisfaction, descended the terrace steps, and sprang into his carriage, which was whirled along swiftly to the bankers house.

Danglars was engaged at that moment, presiding over a railroad committee. But the meeting was nearly concluded when the name of his visitor was announced. As the counts title sounded on his ear he rose, and addressing his colleagues, who were members of one or the other Chamber, he said:

Gentlemen, pardon me for leaving you so abruptly; but a most ridiculous circumstance has occurred, which is this, "Thomson & French, the Roman bankers, have sent to me a certain person calling himself the Count of Monte Cristo, and have given him an unlimited credit with me. I confess this is the drollest thing I have ever met with in the course of my extensive foreign transactions, and you may readily suppose it has greatly roused my curiosity. I took the trouble this morning to call on the pretended count "if he were a real count he wouldnt be so rich. But, would you believe it, ~He was not receiving. So the master of Monte Cristo gives himself airs befitting a great millionaire or a capricious beauty. I made inquiries, and found that the house in the Champs-Ã©lysÃ©es is his own property, and certainly it was very decently kept up. But, pursued Danglars with one of his sinister smiles, an order for unlimited credit calls for something like caution on the part of the banker to whom that order is given. I am very anxious to see this man. I suspect a hoax is intended, but the instigators of it little knew whom they had to deal with. ~They laugh best who laugh last!

Having delivered himself of this pompous address, uttered with a degree of energy that left the baron almost out of breath, he bowed to the assembled party and withdrew to his drawing-room, whose sumptuous furnishings of white and gold had caused a great sensation in the ChaussÃ©e d'Antin. It was to this apartment he had desired his guest to be shown, with the purpose of overwhelming him at the sight of so much luxury. He found the count standing before some copies of Albano and Fattore that had been passed off to the banker as originals; but which, mere copies as they were, seemed to feel their degradation in being brought into juxtaposition with the gaudy colors that covered the ceiling.

The count turned round as he heard the entrance of Danglars into the room. With a slight inclination of the head, Danglars signed to the count to be seated, pointing significantly to a gilded armchair, covered with white satin embroidered with gold. The count sat down.

20335m

I have the honor, I presume, of addressing M. de Monte Cristo.

The count bowed.

And I of speaking to Baron Danglars, chevalier of the Legion of Honor,

and member of the Chamber of Deputies?

Monte Cristo repeated all the titles he had read on the barons card. Danglars felt the irony and compressed his lips.

You will, I trust, excuse me, monsieur, for not calling you by your title when I first addressed you, he said, but you are aware that we are living under a popular form of government, and that I am myself a representative of the liberties of the people.

So much so, replied Monte Cristo, that while you call yourself baron you are not willing to call anybody else count.

Upon my word, monsieur, said Danglars with affected carelessness, I attach no sort of value to such empty distinctions; but the fact is, I was made baron, and also chevalier of the Legion of Honor, in return for services rendered, but"

But you have discarded your titles after the example set you by Messrs. de Montmorency and Lafayette? That was a noble example to follow, monsieur.

Why, replied Danglars, not entirely so; with the servants,"you understand.

I see; to your domestics you are ~my lord, the journalists style you ~monsieur, while your constituents call you ~citizen. These are distinctions very suitable under a constitutional government. I understand perfectly.

Again Danglars bit his lips; he saw that he was no match for Monte Cristo in an argument of this sort, and he therefore hastened to turn to subjects more congenial.

Permit me to inform you, Count, said he, bowing, that I have received a letter of advice from Thomson & French, of Rome.

I am glad to hear it, baron,"for I must claim the privilege of addressing you after the manner of your servants. I have acquired the bad habit of calling persons by their titles from living in a country where barons are still barons by right of birth. But as regards the letter of advice, I am charmed to find that it has reached you; that will spare me the troublesome and disagreeable task of coming to you for money myself. You have received a regular letter of advice?

Yes, said Danglars, but I confess I didnt quite comprehend its meaning.

Indeed?

And for that reason I did myself the honor of calling upon you, in order to beg for an explanation.

Go on, monsieur. Here I am, ready to give you any explanation you desire.

Why, said Danglars, in the letter"I believe I have it about me"here he felt in his breast-pocket"yes, here it is. Well, this letter gives the Count of Monte Cristo unlimited credit on our house.

Well, baron, what is there difficult to understand about that?

Merely the term _unlimited_"nothing else, certainly.

Is not that word known in France? The people who wrote are Anglo-Germans, you know.

Oh, as for the composition of the letter, there is nothing to be said; but as regards the competency of the document, I certainly have doubts.

Is it possible? asked the count, assuming all air and tone of the utmost simplicity and candor. Is it possible that Thomson & French are not looked upon as safe and solvent bankers? Pray tell me what you think, baron, for I feel uneasy, I can assure you, having some considerable property in their hands.

Thomson & French are perfectly solvent, replied Danglars, with an almost mocking smile; but the word _unlimited_, in financial affairs, is so extremely vague.

Is, in fact, unlimited, said Monte Cristo.

Precisely what I was about to say, cried Danglars. Now what is vague is doubtful; and it was a wise man who said, ~when in doubt, keep out.

Meaning to say, rejoined Monte Cristo, that however Thomson & French may be inclined to commit acts of imprudence and folly, the Baron Danglars is not disposed to follow their example.

Not at all.

Plainly enough; Messrs. Thomson & French set no bounds to their engagements while those of M. Danglars have their limits; he is a wise man, according to his own showing.

Monsieur, replied the banker, drawing himself up with a haughty air, the extent of my resources has never yet been questioned.

It seems, then, reserved for me, said Monte Cristo coldly, to be the first to do so.

By what right, sir?

By right of the objections you have raised, and the explanations you have demanded, which certainly must have some motive.

Once more Danglars bit his lips. It was the second time he had been worsted, and this time on his own ground. His forced politeness sat awkwardly upon him, and approached almost to impertinence. Monte Cristo on the contrary, preserved a graceful suavity of demeanor, aided by a certain degree of simplicity he could assume at pleasure, and thus possessed the advantage.

Well, sir, resumed Danglars, after a brief silence, I will endeavor to make myself understood, by requesting you to inform me for what sum you propose to draw upon me?

Why, truly, replied Monte Cristo, determined not to lose an inch of the ground he had gained, my reason for desiring an unlimited credit was precisely because I did not know how much money I might need.

The banker thought the time had come for him to take the upper hand. So throwing himself back in his armchair, he said, with an arrogant and purse-proud air:

Let me beg of you not to hesitate in naming your wishes; you will then be convinced that the resources of the house of Danglars, however limited, are still equal to meeting the largest demands; and were you even to require a million""

I beg your pardon, interposed Monte Cristo.

I said a million, replied Danglars, with the confidence of ignorance. But could I do with a million? retorted the count. My dear sir, if a trifle like that could suffice me, I should never have given myself the trouble of opening an account. A million? Excuse my smiling when you speak of a sum I am in the habit of carrying in my pocket-book or dressing-case.

And with these words Monte Cristo took from his pocket a small case containing his visiting-cards, and drew forth two orders on the treasury for 500,000 francs each, payable at sight to the bearer. A man like Danglars was wholly inaccessible to any gentler method of correction. The effect of the present revelation was stunning; he trembled and was on the verge of apoplexy. The pupils of his eyes, as he gazed at Monte Cristo dilated horribly.

Come, come, said Monte Cristo, confess honestly that you have not perfect confidence in Thomson & French. I understand, and foreseeing that such might be the case, I took, in spite of my ignorance of affairs, certain precautions. See, here are two similar letters to that you have yourself received; one from the house of Arstein & Eskeles of Vienna, to Baron Rothschild, the other drawn by Baring of London, upon M. Lafitte. Now, sir, you have but to say the word, and I will spare you all uneasiness by presenting my letter of credit to one or other of these two firms.

The blow had struck home, and Danglars was entirely vanquished; with a trembling hand he took the two letters from the count, who held them carelessly between finger and thumb, and proceeded to scrutinize the signatures, with a minuteness that the count might have regarded as insulting, had it not suited his present purpose to mislead the banker. Oh, sir, said Danglars, after he had convinced himself of the authenticity of the documents he held, and rising as if to salute the

power of gold personified in the man before him,"three letters of unlimited credit! I can be no longer mistrustful, but you must pardon me, my dear count, for confessing to some degree of astonishment. Nay, answered Monte Cristo, with the most gentlemanly air, tis not for such trifling sums as these that your banking house is to be incommoded. Then, you can let me have some money, can you not? Whatever you say, my dear count; I am at your orders.

Why, replied Monte Cristo, since we mutually understand each other"for such I presume is the case? Danglars bowed assentingly. You are quite sure that not a lurking doubt or suspicion lingers in your mind?

Oh, my dear count, exclaimed Danglars, I never for an instant entertained such a feeling towards you.

No, you merely wished to be convinced, nothing more; but now that we have come to so clear an understanding, and that all distrust and suspicion are laid at rest, we may as well fix a sum as the probable expenditure of the first year, suppose we say six millions to"" Six millions! gasped Danglars"so be it.

Then, if I should require more, continued Monte Cristo in a careless manner, why, of course, I should draw upon you; but my present intention is not to remain in France more than a year, and during that period I scarcely think I shall exceed the sum I mentioned. However, we shall see. Be kind enough, then, to send me 500,000 francs tomorrow. I shall be at home till midday, or if not, I will leave a receipt with my steward.

The money you desire shall be at your house by ten oclock tomorrow morning, my dear count, replied Danglars. How would you like to have it? in gold, silver, or notes?

Half in gold, and the other half in bank-notes, if you please, said the count, rising from his seat.

I must confess to you, count, said Danglars, that I have hitherto imagined myself acquainted with the degree of all the great fortunes of Europe, and still wealth such as yours has been wholly unknown to me. May I presume to ask whether you have long possessed it?

It has been in the family a very long while, returned Monte Cristo, a sort of treasure expressly forbidden to be touched for a certain period of years, during which the accumulated interest has doubled the capital. The period appointed by the testator for the disposal of these riches occurred only a short time ago, and they have only been employed by me within the last few years. Your ignorance on the subject, therefore, is easily accounted for. However, you will be better informed as to me and my possessions ere long.

And the count, while pronouncing these latter words, accompanied them with one of those ghastly smiles that used to strike terror into poor Franz d'Espingay.

With your tastes, and means of gratifying them, continued Danglars, you will exhibit a splendor that must effectually put us poor miserable millionaires quite in the shade. If I mistake not you are an admirer of paintings, at least I judged so from the attention you appeared to be bestowing on mine when I entered the room. If you will permit me, I shall be happy to show you my picture gallery, composed entirely of works by the ancient masters"warranted as such. Not a modern picture among them. I cannot endure the modern school of painting.

You are perfectly right in objecting to them, for this one great fault"that they have not yet had time to become old.

Or will you allow me to show you several fine statues by Thorwaldsen, Bartoloni, and Canova?"all foreign artists, for, as you may perceive, I think but very indifferently of our French sculptors.

You have a right to be unjust to them, monsieur; they are your compatriots.

But all this may come later, when we shall be better known to each other. For the present, I will confine myself (if perfectly agreeable

to you) to introducing you to the Baroness Danglars"excuse my impatience, my dear count, but a client like you is almost like a member of the family.

Monte Cristo bowed, in sign that he accepted the proffered honor; Danglars rang and was answered by a servant in a showy livery.

Is the baroness at home? inquired Danglars.

Yes, my lord, answered the man.

And alone?

No, my lord, madame has visitors.

Have you any objection to meet any persons who may be with madame, or do you desire to preserve a strict _incognito_?

No, indeed, replied Monte Cristo with a smile, I do not arrogate to myself the right of so doing.

And who is with madame?"M. Debray? inquired Danglars, with an air of indulgence and good-nature that made Monte Cristo smile, acquainted as he was with the secrets of the bankers domestic life.

Yes, my lord, replied the servant, M. Debray is with madame.

Danglars nodded his head; then, turning to Monte Cristo, said, M. Lucien Debray is an old friend of ours, and private secretary to the Minister of the Interior. As for my wife, I must tell you, she lowered herself by marrying me, for she belongs to one of the most ancient families in France. Her maiden name was De ServiÃres, and her first husband was Colonel the Marquis of Nargonne.

I have not the honor of knowing Madame Danglars; but I have already met M. Lucien Debray.

Ah, indeed? said Danglars; and where was that?

At the house of M. de Morcerf.

Ah! you are acquainted with the young viscount, are you?

We were together a good deal during the Carnival at Rome.

True, true, cried Danglars. Let me see; have I not heard talk of some strange adventure with bandits or thieves hid in ruins, and of his having had a miraculous escape? I forget how, but I know he used to amuse my wife and daughter by telling them about it after his return from Italy.

Her ladyship is waiting to receive you, gentlemen, said the servant, who had gone to inquire the pleasure of his mistress.

With your permission, said Danglars, bowing, I will precede you, to show you the way.

By all means, replied Monte Cristo; I follow you.

Chapter 47. The Dappled Grays

The baron, followed by the count, traversed a long series of apartments, in which the prevailing characteristics were heavy magnificence and the gaudiness of ostentatious wealth, until he reached the boudoir of Madame Danglars"a small octagonal-shaped room, hung with pink satin, covered with white Indian muslin. The chairs were of ancient workmanship and materials; over the doors were painted sketches of shepherds and shepherdesses, after the style and manner of Boucher; and at each side pretty medallions in crayons, harmonizing well with the furnishings of this charming apartment, the only one throughout the great mansion in which any distinctive taste prevailed. The truth was, it had been entirely overlooked in the plan arranged and followed out by M. Danglars and his architect, who had been selected to aid the baron in the great work of improvement solely because he was the most fashionable and celebrated decorator of the day. The decorations of the boudoir had then been left entirely to Madame Danglars and Lucien Debray. M. Danglars, however, while possessing a great admiration for the antique, as it was understood during the time of the Directory, entertained the most sovereign contempt for the simple elegance of his wifes favorite sitting-room, where, by the way, he was never permitted to intrude, unless, indeed, he excused his own appearance by ushering in some more agreeable visitor than himself; and even then he had rather the air and manner of a person who was himself introduced, than that of being the presenter of another, his reception being cordial or

frigid, in proportion as the person who accompanied him chanced to please or displease the baroness.

Madame Danglars (who, although past the first bloom of youth, was still strikingly handsome) was now seated at the piano, a most elaborate piece of cabinet and inlaid work, while Lucien Debray, standing before a small work-table, was turning over the pages of an album.

Lucien had found time, preparatory to the count's arrival, to relate many particulars respecting him to Madame Danglars. It will be remembered that Monte Cristo had made a lively impression on the minds of all the party assembled at the breakfast given by Albert de Morcerf; and although Debray was not in the habit of yielding to such feelings, he had never been able to shake off the powerful influence excited in his mind by the impressive look and manner of the count, consequently the description given by Lucien to the baroness bore the highly-colored tinge of his own heated imagination. Already excited by the wonderful stories related of the count by de Morcerf, it is no wonder that Madame Danglars eagerly listened to, and fully credited, all the additional circumstances detailed by Debray. This posing at the piano and over the album was only a little ruse adopted by way of precaution. A most gracious welcome and unusual smile were bestowed on M. Danglars; the count, in return for his gentlemanly bow, received a formal though graceful courtesy, while Lucien exchanged with the count a sort of distant recognition, and with Danglars a free and easy nod.

Baroness, said Danglars, give me leave to present to you the Count of Monte Cristo, who has been most warmly recommended to me by my correspondents at Rome. I need but mention one fact to make all the ladies in Paris court his notice, and that is, that he has come to take up his abode in Paris for a year, during which brief period he proposes to spend six millions of money. That means balls, dinners, and lawn parties without end, in all of which I trust the count will remember us, as he may depend upon it we shall him, in our own humble entertainments.

In spite of the gross flattery and coarseness of this address, Madame Danglars could not forbear gazing with considerable interest on a man capable of expending six millions in twelve months, and who had selected Paris for the scene of his princely extravagance.

And when did you arrive here? inquired she.

Yesterday morning, madame.

Coming, as usual, I presume, from the extreme end of the globe? Pardon me—at least, such I have heard is your custom.

Nay, madame. This time I have merely come from Cadiz.

You have selected a most unfavorable moment for your first visit.

Paris is a horrible place in summer. Balls, parties, and *fêtes* are over; the Italian opera is in London; the French opera everywhere except in Paris. As for the *Théâtre Français*, you know, of course, that it is nowhere. The only amusements left us are the indifferent races at the Champ-de-Mars and Satory. Do you propose entering any horses at either of these races, count?

I shall do whatever they do at Paris, madame, if I have the good fortune to find someone who will initiate me into the prevalent ideas of amusement.

Are you fond of horses, count?

I have passed a considerable part of my life in the East, madame, and you are doubtless aware that the Orientals value only two things—the fine breeding of their horses and the beauty of their women.

Nay, count, said the baroness, it would have been somewhat more gallant to have placed the ladies first.

You see, madame, how rightly I spoke when I said I required a preceptor to guide me in all my sayings and doings here.

At this instant the favorite attendant of Madame Danglars entered the boudoir; approaching her mistress, she spoke some words in an undertone. Madame Danglars turned very pale, then exclaimed:

I cannot believe it; the thing is impossible.

I assure you, madame, replied the woman, it is as I have said. Turning impatiently towards her husband, Madame Danglars demanded, Is this true?

Is what true, madame? inquired Danglars, visibly agitated.

What my maid tells me.

But what does she tell you?

That when my coachman was about to harness the horses to my carriage, he discovered that they had been removed from the stables without his knowledge. I desire to know what is the meaning of this?

Be kind enough, madame, to listen to me, said Danglars.

Oh, yes; I will listen, monsieur, for I am most curious to hear what explanation you will give. These two gentlemen shall decide between us; but, first, I will state the case to them. Gentlemen, continued the baroness, among the ten horses in the stables of Baron Danglars, are two that belong exclusively to me—a pair of the handsomest and most spirited creatures to be found in Paris. But to you, at least, M. Debray, I need not give a further description, because to you my beautiful pair of dappled grays were well known. Well, I had promised Madame de Villefort the loan of my carriage to drive tomorrow to the Bois; but when my coachman goes to fetch the grays from the stables they are gone—positively gone. No doubt M. Danglars has sacrificed them to the selfish consideration of gaining some thousands of paltry francs. Oh, what a detestable crew they are, these mercenary speculators!

Madame, replied Danglars, the horses were not sufficiently quiet for you; they were scarcely four years old, and they made me extremely uneasy on your account.

Nonsense, retorted the baroness; you could not have entertained any alarm on the subject, because you are perfectly well aware that I have had for a month in my service the very best coachman in Paris. But, perhaps, you have disposed of the coachman as well as the horses? My dear love, pray do not say any more about them, and I promise you another pair exactly like them in appearance, only more quiet and steady.

The baroness shrugged her shoulders with an air of ineffable contempt, while her husband, affecting not to observe this unconjugal gesture, turned towards Monte Cristo and said, "Upon my word, count, I am quite sorry not to have met you sooner. You are setting up an establishment, of course?

Why, yes, replied the count.

I should have liked to have made you the offer of these horses. I have almost given them away, as it is; but, as I before said, I was anxious to get rid of them upon any terms. They were only fit for a young man. I am much obliged by your kind intentions towards me, said Monte Cristo; but this morning I purchased a very excellent pair of carriage-horses, and I do not think they were dear. There they are. Come, M. Debray, you are a connoisseur, I believe, let me have your opinion upon them.

As Debray walked towards the window, Danglars approached his wife.

I could not tell you before others, said he in a low tone, the reason of my parting with the horses; but a most enormous price was offered me this morning for them. Some madman or fool, bent upon ruining himself as fast as he can, actually sent his steward to me to purchase them at any cost; and the fact is, I have gained 16,000 francs by the sale of them. Come, don't look so angry, and you shall have 4,000 francs of the money to do what you like with, and Eugénie shall have 2,000. There, what do you think now of the affair? Wasn't I right to part with the horses?

Madame Danglars surveyed her husband with a look of withering contempt. Great heavens? suddenly exclaimed Debray.

What is it? asked the baroness.

I cannot be mistaken; there are your horses! The very animals we were speaking of, harnessed to the count's carriage!

My dappled grays? demanded the baroness, springing to the window.
Tis indeed they! said she.

Danglars looked absolutely stupefied.

How very singular, cried Monte Cristo with well-feigned astonishment.
I cannot believe it, murmured the banker. Madame Danglars whispered a few words in the ear of Debray, who approached Monte Cristo, saying, The baroness wishes to know what you paid her husband for the horses.
I scarcely know, replied the count; it was a little surprise prepared for me by my steward, and cost me"well, somewhere about 30,000 francs.

Debray conveyed the counts reply to the baroness. Poor Danglars looked so crest-fallen and discomfited that Monte Cristo assumed a pitying air towards him.

See, said the count, how very ungrateful women are. Your kind attention, in providing for the safety of the baroness by disposing of the horses, does not seem to have made the least impression on her. But so it is; a woman will often, from mere wilfulness, prefer that which is dangerous to that which is safe. Therefore, in my opinion, my dear baron, the best and easiest way is to leave them to their fancies, and allow them to act as they please, and then, if any mischief follows, why, at least, they have no one to blame but themselves.

Danglars made no reply; he was occupied in anticipations of the coming scene between himself and the baroness, whose frowning brow, like that of Olympic Jove, predicted a storm. Debray, who perceived the gathering clouds, and felt no desire to witness the explosion of Madame Danglars rage, suddenly recollected an appointment, which compelled him to take his leave; while Monte Cristo, unwilling by prolonging his stay to destroy the advantages he hoped to obtain, made a farewell bow and departed, leaving Danglars to endure the angry reproaches of his wife.
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Excellent, murmured Monte Cristo to himself, as he came away. All has gone according to my wishes. The domestic peace of this family is henceforth in my hands. Now, then, to play another master-stroke, by which I shall gain the heart of both husband and wife"delightful! Still, added he, amid all this, I have not yet been presented to Mademoiselle Eugénie Danglars, whose acquaintance I should have been glad to make. But, he went on with his peculiar smile, I am here in Paris, and have plenty of time before me"by and by will do for that. With these reflections he entered his carriage and returned home. Two hours afterwards, Madame Danglars received a most flattering epistle from the count, in which he entreated her to receive back her favorite dappled grays, protesting that he could not endure the idea of making his entry into the Parisian world of fashion with the knowledge that his splendid equipage had been obtained at the price of a lovely womans regrets. The horses were sent back wearing the same harness she had seen on them in the morning; only, by the counts orders, in the centre of each rosette that adorned either side of their heads, had been fastened a large diamond.

To Danglars Monte Cristo also wrote, requesting him to excuse the whimsical gift of a capricious millionaire, and to beg the baroness to pardon the Eastern fashion adopted in the return of the horses. During the evening, Monte Cristo quitted Paris for Auteuil, accompanied by Ali. The following day, about three oclock, a single blow struck on the gong summoned Ali to the presence of the count.

Ali, observed his master, as the Nubian entered the chamber, you have frequently explained to me how more than commonly skilful you are in throwing the lasso, have you not?

Ali drew himself up proudly, and then returned a sign in the affirmative.

I thought I did not mistake. With your lasso you could stop an ox?

Again Ali repeated his affirmative gesture.

Or a tiger?

Ali bowed his head in token of assent.

A lion even?

Ali sprung forwards, imitating the action of one throwing the lasso, then of a strangled lion.

I understand, said Monte Cristo; you wish to tell me you have hunted the lion?

Ali smiled with triumphant pride as he signified that he had indeed both chased and captured many lions.

But do you believe you could arrest the progress of two horses rushing forwards with ungovernable fury?

The Nubian smiled.

It is well, said Monte Cristo. Then listen to me. Ere long a carriage will dash past here, drawn by the pair of dappled gray horses you saw me with yesterday; now, at the risk of your own life, you must