

me, inasmuch as I was aware of all these things when I made the engagement. No, do not seek any longer to discover the reason. I really am quite ashamed to have been the cause of your undergoing such severe self-examination; let us drop the subject, and adopt the middle course of delay, which implies neither a rupture nor an engagement. *Ma foi*, there is no hurry. My daughter is only seventeen years old, and your son twenty-one. While we wait, time will be progressing, events will succeed each other; things which in the evening look dark and obscure, appear but too clearly in the light of morning, and sometimes the utterance of one word, or the lapse of a single day, will reveal the most cruel calumnies. Calumnies, did you say, sir? cried Morcerf, turning livid with rage. Does anyone dare to slander me? Monsieur, I told you that I considered it best to avoid all explanation.

Then, sir, I am patiently to submit to your refusal? Yes, sir, although I assure you the refusal is as painful for me to give as it is for you to receive, for I had reckoned on the honor of your alliance, and the breaking off of a marriage contract always injures the lady more than the gentleman. Enough, sir, said Morcerf, we will speak no more on the subject. And clutching his gloves in anger, he left the apartment. Danglars observed that during the whole conversation Morcerf had never once dared to ask if it was on his own account that Danglars recalled his word.

That evening he had a long conference with several friends; and M. Cavalcanti, who had remained in the drawing-room with the ladies, was the last to leave the bankers house.

The next morning, as soon as he awoke, Danglars asked for the newspapers; they were brought to him; he laid aside three or four, and at last fixed on *l'Impartial*, the paper of which Beauchamp was the chief editor. He hastily tore off the cover, opened the journal with nervous precipitation, passed contemptuously over the Paris jottings, and arriving at the miscellaneous intelligence, stopped with a malicious smile, at a paragraph headed

—We hear from Yanina.—

Very good, observed Danglars, after having read the paragraph; here is a little article on Colonel Fernand, which, if I am not mistaken, would render the explanation which the Comte de Morcerf required of me perfectly unnecessary.

At the same moment, that is, at nine oclock in the morning, Albert de Morcerf, dressed in a black coat buttoned up to his chin, might have been seen walking with a quick and agitated step in the direction of Monte Cristos house in the Champs-Élysées. When he presented himself at the gate the porter informed him that the Count had gone out about half an hour previously.

Did he take Baptistin with him?

No, my lord.

Call him, then; I wish to speak to him.

The concierge went to seek the valet de chambre, and returned with him in an instant.

My good friend, said Albert, I beg pardon for my intrusion, but I was anxious to know from your own mouth if your master was really out or not.

He is really out, sir, replied Baptistin.

Out, even to me?

I know how happy my master always is to receive the vicomte, said Baptistin; and I should therefore never think of including him in any general order.

You are right; and now I wish to see him on an affair of great importance. Do you think it will be long before he comes in?

No, I think not, for he ordered his breakfast at ten oclock.

Well, I will go and take a turn in the Champs-Élysées, and at ten

oclock I will return here; meanwhile, if the count should come in, will you beg him not to go out again without seeing me?

You may depend on my doing so, sir, said Baptistin.

Albert left the cab in which he had come at the counts door, intending to take a turn on foot. As he was passing the Allée des Veuves, he thought he saw the counts horses standing at Gossets shooting-gallery; he approached, and soon recognized the coachman. Is the count shooting in the gallery? said Morcerf.

Yes, sir, replied the coachman. While he was speaking, Albert had heard the report of two or three pistol-shots. He entered, and on his way met the waiter.

Excuse me, my lord, said the lad; but will you have the kindness to wait a moment?

What for, Philip? asked Albert, who, being a constant visitor there, did not understand this opposition to his entrance.

Because the person who is now in the gallery prefers being alone, and never practices in the presence of anyone.

Not even before you, Philip? Then who loads his pistol?

His servant.

A Nubian?

A negro.

It is he, then.

Do you know this gentleman?

Yes, and I am come to look for him; he is a friend of mine.

Oh, that is quite another thing, then. I will go immediately and inform him of your arrival.

And Philip, urged by his own curiosity, entered the gallery; a second afterwards, Monte Cristo appeared on the threshold.

I ask your pardon, my dear count, said Albert, for following you here, and I must first tell you that it was not the fault of your servants that I did so; I alone am to blame for the indiscretion. I went to your house, and they told me you were out, but that they expected you home at ten oclock to breakfast. I was walking about in order to pass away the time till ten oclock, when I caught sight of your carriage and horses.

What you have just said induces me to hope that you intend breakfasting with me.

40092m

No, thank you, I am thinking of other things besides breakfast just now; perhaps we may take that meal at a later hour and in worse company.

What on earth are you talking of?

I am to fight today.

For what?

For the sake of fighting!

Yes, I understand that, but what is the quarrel? People fight for all sorts of reasons, you know.

I fight in the cause of honor.

Ah, that is something serious.

So serious, that I come to beg you to render me a service.

What is it?

To be my second.

That is a serious matter, and we will not discuss it here; let us speak of nothing till we get home. Ali, bring me some water.

The count turned up his sleeves, and passed into the little vestibule where the gentlemen were accustomed to wash their hands after shooting.

Come in, my lord, said Philip in a low tone, and I will show you something droll. Morcerf entered, and in place of the usual target, he saw some playing-cards fixed against the wall. At a distance Albert thought it was a complete suit, for he counted from the ace to the ten.

Ah, ha, said Albert, I see you were preparing for a game of cards.

No, said the count, I was making a suit.

How? said Albert.

Those are really aces and twos which you see, but my shots have turned them into threes, fives, sevens, eights, nines, and tens.

Albert approached. In fact, the bullets had actually pierced the cards in the exact places which the painted signs would otherwise have occupied, the lines and distances being as regularly kept as if they had been ruled with pencil. In going up to the target Morcerf picked up two or three swallows that had been rash enough to come within the range of the counts pistol.

Diable! said Morcerf.

What would you have, my dear viscount? said Monte Cristo, wiping his hands on the towel which Ali had brought him; I must occupy my leisure moments in some way or other. But come, I am waiting for you.

Both men entered Monte Cristos carriage, which in the course of a few minutes deposited them safely at No. 30. Monte Cristo took Albert into his study, and pointing to a seat, placed another for himself. Now let us talk the matter over quietly, said the count.

You see I am perfectly composed, said Albert.

With whom are you going to fight?

With Beauchamp.

One of your friends!

Of course; it is always with friends that one fights.

I suppose you have some cause of quarrel?

I have.

40094m

What has he done to you?

There appeared in his journal last night"but wait, and read for yourself. And Albert handed over the paper to the count, who read as follows:

A correspondent at Yanina informs us of a fact of which until now we had remained in ignorance. The castle which formed the protection of the town was given up to the Turks by a French officer named Fernand, in whom the grand vizier, Ali Tepelini, had reposed the greatest confidence.

Well, said Monte Cristo, what do you see in that to annoy you?

What do I see in it?

Yes; what does it signify to you if the castle of Yanina was given up by a French officer?

It signifies to my father, the Count of Morcerf, whose Christian name is Fernand!

Did your father serve under Ali Pasha?

Yes; that is to say, he fought for the independence of the Greeks, and hence arises the calumny.

Oh, my dear viscount, do talk reason!

I do not desire to do otherwise.

Now, just tell me who the devil should know in France that the officer Fernand and the Count of Morcerf are one and the same person? and who cares now about Yanina, which was taken as long ago as the year 1822 or 1823?

That just shows the meanness of this slander. They have allowed all this time to elapse, and then all of a sudden rake up events which have been forgotten to furnish materials for scandal, in order to tarnish the lustre of our high position. I inherit my fathers name, and I do not choose that the shadow of disgrace should darken it. I am going to Beauchamp, in whose journal this paragraph appears, and I shall insist on his retracting the assertion before two witnesses.

Beauchamp will never retract.

Then we must fight.

No you will not, for he will tell you, what is very true, that perhaps there were fifty officers in the Greek army bearing the same name.

We will fight, nevertheless. I will efface that blot on my fathers character. My father, who was such a brave soldier, whose career was so brilliant""

Oh, well, he will add, ~We are warranted in believing that this

Fernand is not the illustrious Count of Morcerf, who also bears the same Christian name.

I am determined not to be content with anything short of an entire retractation.

And you intend to make him do it in the presence of two witnesses, do you?

Yes.

You do wrong.

Which means, I suppose, that you refuse the service which I asked of you?

You know my theory regarding duels; I told you my opinion on that subject, if you remember, when we were at Rome.

Nevertheless, my dear count, I found you this morning engaged in an occupation but little consistent with the notions you profess to entertain.

Because, my dear fellow, you understand one must never be eccentric.

If one's lot is cast among fools, it is necessary to study folly. I shall perhaps find myself one day called out by some harebrained scamp, who has no more real cause of quarrel with me than you have with Beauchamp; he may take me to task for some foolish trifle or other, he will bring his witnesses, or will insult me in some public place, and I am expected to kill him for all that.

You admit that you would fight, then? Well, if so, why do you object to my doing so?

I do not say that you ought not to fight, I only say that a duel is a serious thing, and ought not to be undertaken without due reflection.

Did he reflect before he insulted my father?

If he spoke hastily, and owns that he did so, you ought to be satisfied.

Ah, my dear count, you are far too indulgent.

And you are far too exacting. Supposing, for instance, and do not be angry at what I am going to say""

Well.

Supposing the assertion to be really true?

A son ought not to submit to such a stain on his father's honor.

Ma foi! we live in times when there is much to which we must submit.

That is precisely the fault of the age.

And do you undertake to reform it?

Yes, as far as I am personally concerned.

Well, you are indeed exacting, my dear fellow!

Yes, I own it.

Are you quite impervious to good advice?

Not when it comes from a friend.

And do you account me that title?

Certainly I do.

Well, then, before going to Beauchamp with your witnesses, seek further information on the subject.

From whom?

From HaydÃ©e.

Why, what can be the use of mixing a woman up in the affair?"what can she do in it?

She can declare to you, for example, that your father had no hand whatever in the defeat and death of the vizier; or if by chance he had, indeed, the misfortune to""

I have told you, my dear count, that I would not for one moment admit of such a proposition.

You reject this means of information, then?

I do"most decidedly.

Then let me offer one more word of advice.

Do so, then, but let it be the last.

You do not wish to hear it, perhaps?

On the contrary, I request it.

Do not take any witnesses with you when you go to Beauchamp"visit him alone.

That would be contrary to all custom.

Your case is not an ordinary one.

And what is your reason for advising me to go alone?

Because then the affair will rest between you and Beauchamp.

Explain yourself.

I will do so. If Beauchamp be disposed to retract, you ought at least to give him the opportunity of doing it of his own free will,"the satisfaction to you will be the same. If, on the contrary, he refuses to do so, it will then be quite time enough to admit two strangers into your secret.

They will not be strangers, they will be friends.

Ah, but the friends of today are the enemies of tomorrow; Beauchamp, for instance.

So you recommend""

I recommend you to be prudent.

Then you advise me to go alone to Beauchamp?

I do, and I will tell you why. When you wish to obtain some concession from a mans self-love, you must avoid even the appearance of wishing to wound it.

I believe you are right.

I am glad of it.

Then I will go alone.

Go; but you would do better still by not going at all.

That is impossible.

Do so, then; it will be a wiser plan than the first which you proposed.

But if, in spite of all my precautions, I am at last obliged to fight, will you not be my second?

My dear viscount, said Monte Cristo gravely, you must have seen before today that at all times and in all places I have been at your disposal, but the service which you have just demanded of me is one which it is out of my power to render you.

Why?

Perhaps you may know at some future period, and in the mean time I request you to excuse my declining to put you in possession of my reasons.

Well, I will have Franz and Château-Renaud; they will be the very men for it.

Do so, then.

But if I do fight, you will surely not object to giving me a lesson or two in shooting and fencing?

That, too, is impossible.

What a singular being you are!"you will not interfere in anything.

You are right"that is the principle on which I wish to act.

We will say no more about it, then. Good-bye, count.

Morcerf took his hat, and left the room. He found his carriage at the door, and doing his utmost to restrain his anger he went at once to find Beauchamp, who was in his office. It was a gloomy, dusty-looking apartment, such as journalists offices have always been from time immemorial. The servant announced M. Albert de Morcerf. Beauchamp repeated the name to himself, as though he could scarcely believe that he had heard aright, and then gave orders for him to be admitted.

Albert entered.

Beauchamp uttered an exclamation of surprise on seeing his friend leap over and trample under foot all the newspapers which were strewed about the room.

This way, this way, my dear Albert! said he, holding out his hand to the young man. Are you out of your senses, or do you come peaceably to take breakfast with me? Try and find a seat"there is one by that geranium, which is the only thing in the room to remind me that there are other leaves in the world besides leaves of paper.

Beauchamp, said Albert, it is of your journal that I come to speak.

Indeed? What do you wish to say about it?

I desire that a statement contained in it should be rectified.

To what do you refer? But pray sit down.

Thank you, said Albert, with a cold and formal bow.

Will you now have the kindness to explain the nature of the statement which has displeased you?

An announcement has been made which implicates the honor of a member of my family.

What is it? said Beauchamp, much surprised; surely you must be mistaken.

The story sent you from Yanina.

Yanina?

Yes; really you appear to be totally ignorant of the cause which brings me here.

Such is really the case, I assure you, upon my honor! Baptiste, give me yesterdays paper, cried Beauchamp.

Here, I have brought mine with me, replied Albert.

Beauchamp took the paper, and read the article to which Albert pointed in an undertone.

You see it is a serious annoyance, said Morcerf, when Beauchamp had finished the perusal of the paragraph.

Is the officer referred to a relation of yours, then? demanded the journalist.

Yes, said Albert, blushing.

Well, what do you wish me to do for you? said Beauchamp mildly.

My dear Beauchamp, I wish you to contradict this statement. Beauchamp looked at Albert with a benevolent expression.

Come, said he, this matter will want a good deal of talking over; a retraction is always a serious thing, you know. Sit down, and I will read it again.

Albert resumed his seat, and Beauchamp read, with more attention than at first, the lines denounced by his friend.

Well, said Albert in a determined tone, you see that your paper has insulted a member of my family, and I insist on a retraction being made.

You insist?

Yes, I insist.

Permit me to remind you that you are not in the Chamber, my dear viscount.

Nor do I wish to be there, replied the young man, rising. I repeat that I am determined to have the announcement of yesterday contradicted. You have known me long enough, continued Albert, biting his lips convulsively, for he saw that Beauchamps anger was beginning to rise, "you have been my friend, and therefore sufficiently intimate with me to be aware that I am likely to maintain my resolution on this point.

If I have been your friend, Morcerf, your present manner of speaking would almost lead me to forget that I ever bore that title. But wait a moment, do not let us get angry, or at least not yet. You are irritated and vexed"tell me how this Fernand is related to you?

He is merely my father, said Albert "M. Fernand Mondego, Count of Morcerf, an old soldier who has fought in twenty battles and whose honorable scars they would denounce as badges of disgrace.

Is it your father? said Beauchamp; that is quite another thing. Then I can well understand your indignation, my dear Albert. I will look at it again; and he read the paragraph for the third time, laying a stress on each word as he proceeded. But the paper nowhere identifies this Fernand with your father.

40100m

No; but the connection will be seen by others, and therefore I will have the article contradicted.

At the words _I will_, Beauchamp steadily raised his eyes to Alberts

countenance, and then as gradually lowering them, he remained thoughtful for a few moments.

You will retract this assertion, will you not, Beauchamp? said Albert with increased though stifled anger.

Yes, replied Beauchamp.

Immediately? said Albert.

When I am convinced that the statement is false.

What?

The thing is worth looking into, and I will take pains to investigate the matter thoroughly.

But what is there to investigate, sir? said Albert, enraged beyond measure at Beauchamp's last remark. If you do not believe that it is my father, say so immediately; and if, on the contrary, you believe it to be him, state your reasons for doing so.

Beauchamp looked at Albert with the smile which was so peculiar to him, and which in its numerous modifications served to express every varied emotion of his mind.

Sir, replied he, if you came to me with the idea of demanding satisfaction, you should have gone at once to the point, and not have entertained me with the idle conversation to which I have been patiently listening for the last half hour. Am I to put this construction on your visit?

Yes, if you will not consent to retract that infamous calumny.

Wait a moment"no threats, if you please, M. Fernand Mondego, Vicomte de Morcerf; I never allow them from my enemies, and therefore shall not put up with them from my friends. You insist on my contradicting the article relating to General Fernand, an article with which, I assure you on my word of honor, I had nothing whatever to do?

Yes, I insist on it, said Albert, whose mind was beginning to get bewildered with the excitement of his feelings.

And if I refuse to retract, you wish to fight, do you? said Beauchamp in a calm tone.

Yes, replied Albert, raising his voice.

Well, said Beauchamp, here is my answer, my dear sir. The article was not inserted by me"I was not even aware of it; but you have, by the step you have taken, called my attention to the paragraph in question, and it will remain until it shall be either contradicted or confirmed by someone who has a right to do so.

Sir, said Albert, rising, I will do myself the honor of sending my seconds to you, and you will be kind enough to arrange with them the place of meeting and the weapons.

Certainly, my dear sir.

And this evening, if you please, or tomorrow at the latest, we will meet.

No, no, I will be on the ground at the proper time; but in my opinion (and I have a right to dictate the preliminaries, as it is I who have received the provocation)"in my opinion the time ought not to be yet. I know you to be well skilled in the management of the sword, while I am only moderately so; I know, too, that you are a good marksman"there we are about equal. I know that a duel between us two would be a serious affair, because you are brave, and I am brave also. I do not therefore wish either to kill you, or to be killed myself without a cause. Now, I am going to put a question to you, and one very much to the purpose too. Do you insist on this retraction so far as to kill me if I do not make it, although I have repeated more than once, and affirmed on my honor, that I was ignorant of the thing with which you charge me, and although I still declare that it is impossible for anyone but you to recognize the Count of Morcerf under the name of Fernand?

I maintain my original resolution.

Very well, my dear sir; then I consent to cut throats with you. But I require three weeks preparation; at the end of that time I shall come and say to you, "The assertion is false, and I retract it, or "The assertion is true, when I shall immediately draw the sword from its

sheath, or the pistols from the case, whichever you please.

Three weeks! cried Albert; they will pass as slowly as three centuries when I am all the time suffering dishonor.

Had you continued to remain on amicable terms with me, I should have said, ~Patience, my friend; but you have constituted yourself my enemy, therefore I say, ~What does that signify to me, sir?

Well, let it be three weeks then, said Morcerf; but remember, at the expiration of that time no delay or subterfuge will justify you in"

M. Albert de Morcerf, said Beauchamp, rising in his turn, I cannot throw you out of window for three weeks"that is to say, for twenty-four days to come"nor have you any right to split my skull open till that time has elapsed. Today is the 29th of August; the 21st of September will, therefore, be the conclusion of the term agreed on, and till that time arrives"and it is the advice of a gentleman which I am about to give you"till then we will refrain from growling and barking like two dogs chained within sight of each other.

When he had concluded his speech, Beauchamp bowed coldly to Albert, turned his back upon him, and went to the press-room. Albert vented his anger on a pile of newspapers, which he sent flying all over the office by switching them violently with his stick; after which ebullition he departed"not, however, without walking several times to the door of the press-room, as if he had half a mind to enter.

40104m

While Albert was lashing the front of his carriage in the same manner that he had the newspapers which were the innocent agents of his discomfiture, as he was crossing the barrier he perceived Morrel, who was walking with a quick step and a bright eye. He was passing the Chinese Baths, and appeared to have come from the direction of the Porte Saint-Martin, and to be going towards the Madeleine.

Ah, said Morcerf, there goes a happy man! And it so happened Albert was not mistaken in his opinion.

Chapter 79. The Lemonade

Morrel was, in fact, very happy. M. Noirtier had just sent for him, and he was in such haste to know the reason of his doing so that he had not stopped to take a cab, placing infinitely more dependence on his own two legs than on the four legs of a cab-horse. He had therefore set off at a furious rate from the Rue Meslay, and was hastening with rapid strides in the direction of the Faubourg Saint-HonorÃ©.

Morrel advanced with a firm, manly tread, and poor Barrois followed him as he best might. Morrel was only thirty-one, Barrois was sixty years of age; Morrel was deeply in love, and Barrois was dying with heat and exertion. These two men, thus opposed in age and interests, resembled two parts of a triangle, presenting the extremes of separation, yet nevertheless possessing their point of union. This point of union was Noirtier, and it was he who had just sent for Morrel, with the request that the latter would lose no time in coming to him"a command which Morrel obeyed to the letter, to the great discomfiture of Barrois. On arriving at the house, Morrel was not even out of breath, for love lends wings to our desires; but Barrois, who had long forgotten what it was to love, was sorely fatigued by the expedition he had been constrained to use.

The old servant introduced Morrel by a private entrance, closed the door of the study, and soon the rustling of a dress announced the arrival of Valentine. She looked marvellously beautiful in her deep mourning dress, and Morrel experienced such intense delight in gazing upon her that he felt as if he could almost have dispensed with the conversation of her grandfather.

But the easy-chair of the old man was heard rolling along the floor, and he soon made his appearance in the room. Noirtier acknowledged by a look of extreme kindness and benevolence the thanks which Morrel lavished on him for his timely intervention on behalf of Valentine and himself"an intervention which had saved them from despair. Morrel then cast on the invalid an interrogative look as to the new favor which he

designed to bestow on him. Valentine was sitting at a little distance from them, timidly awaiting the moment when she should be obliged to speak. Noirtier fixed his eyes on her.

Am I to say what you told me? asked Valentine. Noirtier made a sign that she was to do so.

Monsieur Morrel, said Valentine to the young man, who was regarding her with the most intense interest, my grandfather, M. Noirtier, had a thousand things to say, which he told me three days ago; and now, he has sent for you, that I may repeat them to you. I will repeat them, then; and since he has chosen me as his interpreter, I will be faithful to the trust, and will not alter a word of his intentions.

Oh, I am listening with the greatest impatience, replied the young man; speak, I beg of you.

Valentine cast down her eyes; this was a good omen for Morrel, for he knew that nothing but happiness could have the power of thus overcoming Valentine.

My grandfather intends leaving this house, said she, and Barrois is looking out for suitable apartments for him in another.

But you, Mademoiselle de Villefort, "you, who are necessary to M. Noirtiers happiness"

I? interrupted Valentine; I shall not leave my grandfather, "that is an understood thing between us. My apartment will be close to his. Now, M. de Villefort must either give his consent to this plan or his refusal; in the first case, I shall leave directly, and in the second, I shall wait till I am of age, which will be in about ten months. Then I shall be free, I shall have an independent fortune, and"

And what? demanded Morrel.

And with my grandfathers consent I shall fulfil the promise which I have made you.

Valentine pronounced these last few words in such a low tone, that nothing but Morrels intense interest in what she was saying could have enabled him to hear them.

Have I not explained your wishes, grandpapa? said Valentine, addressing Noirtier.

Yes, looked the old man.

Once under my grandfathers roof, M. Morrel can visit me in the presence of my good and worthy protector, if we still feel that the union we contemplated will be likely to insure our future comfort and happiness; in that case I shall expect M. Morrel to come and claim me at my own hands. But, alas, I have heard it said that hearts inflamed by obstacles to their desire grew cold in time of security; I trust we shall never find it so in our experience!

Oh, cried Morrel, almost tempted to throw himself on his knees before Noirtier and Valentine, and to adore them as two superior beings, what have I ever done in my life to merit such unbounded happiness?

Until that time, continued the young girl in a calm and self-possessed tone of voice, we will conform to circumstances, and be guided by the wishes of our friends, so long as those wishes do not tend finally to separate us; in a word, and I repeat it, because it expresses all I wish to convey, "we will wait.

And I swear to make all the sacrifices which this word imposes, sir, said Morrel, not only with resignation, but with cheerfulness.

Therefore, continued Valentine, looking playfully at Maximilian, no more inconsiderate actions "no more rash projects; for you surely would not wish to compromise one who from this day regards herself as destined, honorably and happily, to bear your name?

Morrel looked obedience to her commands. Noirtier regarded the lovers with a look of ineffable tenderness, while Barrois, who had remained in the room in the character of a man privileged to know everything that passed, smiled on the youthful couple as he wiped the perspiration from his bald forehead.

How hot you look, my good Barrois, said Valentine.

Ah, I have been running very fast, mademoiselle, but I must do M.

Morrel the justice to say that he ran still faster.

Noirtier directed their attention to a waiter, on which was placed a decanter containing lemonade and a glass. The decanter was nearly full, with the exception of a little, which had been already drunk by M. Noirtier.

Come, Barrois, said the young girl, take some of this lemonade; I see you are coveting a good draught of it.

The fact is, mademoiselle, said Barrois, I am dying with thirst, and since you are so kind as to offer it me, I cannot say I should at all object to drinking your health in a glass of it.

Take some, then, and come back immediately.

Barrois took away the waiter, and hardly was he outside the door, which in his haste he forgot to shut, than they saw him throw back his head and empty to the very dregs the glass which Valentine had filled.

Valentine and Morrel were exchanging their adieux in the presence of Noirtier when a ring was heard at the door-bell. It was the signal of a visit. Valentine looked at her watch.

It is past noon, said she, and today is Saturday; I dare say it is the doctor, grandpapa.

Noirtier looked his conviction that she was right in her supposition. He will come in here, and M. Morrel had better go,"do you not think so, grandpapa?

Yes, signed the old man.

Barrois, cried Valentine, Barrois!

I am coming, mademoiselle, replied he.

Barrois will open the door for you, said Valentine, addressing Morrel. And now remember one thing, Monsieur Officer, that my grandfather commands you not to take any rash or ill-advised step which would be likely to compromise our happiness.

40108m

I promised him to wait, replied Morrel; and I will wait.

At this moment Barrois entered. Who rang? asked Valentine.

Doctor dAvrigny, said Barrois, staggering as if he would fall.

What is the matter, Barrois? said Valentine. The old man did not answer, but looked at his master with wild staring eyes, while with his cramped hand he grasped a piece of furniture to enable him to stand upright.

He is going to fall! cried Morrel.

The rigors which had attacked Barrois gradually increased, the features of the face became quite altered, and the convulsive movement of the muscles appeared to indicate the approach of a most serious nervous disorder. Noirtier, seeing Barrois in this pitiable condition, showed by his looks all the various emotions of sorrow and sympathy which can animate the heart of man. Barrois made some steps towards his master.

Ah, sir, said he, tell me what is the matter with me. I am suffering"I cannot see. A thousand fiery darts are piercing my brain.

Ah, dont touch me, pray dont.

By this time his haggard eyes had the appearance of being ready to start from their sockets; his head fell back, and the lower extremities of the body began to stiffen. Valentine uttered a cry of horror; Morrel took her in his arms, as if to defend her from some unknown danger.

M. dAvrigny, M. dAvrigny, cried she, in a stifled voice. Help, help!

Barrois turned round and with a great effort stumbled a few steps, then fell at the feet of Noirtier, and resting his hand on the knee of the invalid, exclaimed:

My master, my good master!

At this moment M. de Villefort, attracted by the noise, appeared on the threshold. Morrel relaxed his hold of Valentine, and retreating to a distant corner of the room remained half hidden behind a curtain. Pale as if he had been gazing on a serpent, he fixed his terrified eye on the agonized sufferer.

Noirtier, burning with impatience and terror, was in despair at his

utter inability to help his old domestic, whom he regarded more in the light of a friend than a servant. One might by the fearful swelling of the veins of his forehead and the contraction of the muscles round the eye, trace the terrible conflict which was going on between the living energetic mind and the inanimate and helpless body.

Barrois, his features convulsed, his eyes suffused with blood, and his head thrown back, was lying at full length, beating the floor with his hands, while his legs had become so stiff, that they looked as if they would break rather than bend. A slight appearance of foam was visible around the mouth, and he breathed painfully, and with extreme difficulty.

Villefort seemed stupefied with astonishment, and remained gazing intently on the scene before him without uttering a word. He had not seen Morrel. After a moment of dumb contemplation, during which his face became pale and his hair seemed to stand on end, he sprang towards the door, crying out:

Doctor, doctor! come instantly, pray come!

Madame, madame! cried Valentine, calling her step-mother, and running upstairs to meet her; come quick, quick!"and bring your bottle of smelling-salts with you.

What is the matter? said Madame de Villefort in a harsh and constrained tone.

Oh! come! come!

But where is the doctor? exclaimed Villefort; where is he?

Madame de Villefort now deliberately descended the staircase. In one hand she held her handkerchief, with which she appeared to be wiping her face, and in the other a bottle of English smelling-salts. Her first look on entering the room was at Noirtier, whose face, independent of the emotion which such a scene could not fail of producing, proclaimed him to be in possession of his usual health; her second glance was at the dying man. She turned pale, and her eye passed quickly from the servant and rested on the master.

In the name of heaven, madame, said Villefort, where is the doctor?

He was with you just now. You see this is a fit of apoplexy, and he might be saved if he could but be bled!

Has he eaten anything lately? asked Madame de Villefort, eluding her husbands question.

Madame, replied Valentine, he has not even breakfasted. He has been running very fast on an errand with which my grandfather charged him, and when he returned, took nothing but a glass of lemonade.

Ah, said Madame de Villefort, why did he not take wine? Lemonade was a very bad thing for him.

Grandpapas bottle of lemonade was standing just by his side; poor Barrois was very thirsty, and was thankful to drink anything he could find.

Madame de Villefort started. Noirtier looked at her with a glance of the most profound scrutiny.

He has such a short neck, said she.

Madame, said Villefort, I ask where is M. d'Avrigny? In Gods name answer me!

He is with Edward, who is not quite well, replied Madame de Villefort, no longer being able to avoid answering.

Villefort rushed upstairs to fetch him.

Take this, said Madame de Villefort, giving her smelling-bottle to Valentine. They will, no doubt, bleed him; therefore I will retire, for I cannot endure the sight of blood; and she followed her husband upstairs. Morrel now emerged from his hiding-place, where he had remained quite unperceived, so great had been the general confusion. Go away as quick as you can, Maximilian, said Valentine, and stay till I send for you. Go.

Morrel looked towards Noirtier for permission to retire. The old man, who had preserved all his usual coolness, made a sign to him to do so. The young man pressed Valentines hand to his lips, and then left the

house by a back staircase.

At the same moment that he quitted the room, Villefort and the doctor entered by an opposite door. Barrois was now showing signs of returning consciousness. The crisis seemed past, a low moaning was heard, and he raised himself on one knee. d'Avrigny and Villefort laid him on a couch.

What do you prescribe, doctor? demanded Villefort.

Give me some water and ether. You have some in the house, have you not?

Yes.

Send for some oil of turpentine and tartar emetic.

Villefort immediately despatched a messenger. And now let everyone retire.

Must I go too? asked Valentine timidly.

Yes, mademoiselle, you especially, replied the doctor abruptly.

Valentine looked at M. d'Avrigny with astonishment, kissed her grandfather on the forehead, and left the room. The doctor closed the door after her with a gloomy air.

Look, look, doctor, said Villefort, he is quite coming round again;

I really do not think, after all, it is anything of consequence.

M. d'Avrigny answered by a melancholy smile.

How do you feel, Barrois? asked he.

A little better, sir.

Will you drink some of this ether and water?

I will try; but don't touch me.

Why not?

Because I feel that if you were only to touch me with the tip of your finger the fit would return.

Drink.

Barrois took the glass, and, raising it to his purple lips, took about half of the liquid offered him.

Where do you suffer? asked the doctor.

Everywhere. I feel cramps over my whole body.

Do you find any dazzling sensation before the eyes?

Yes.

Any noise in the ears?

Frightful.

40112m

When did you first feel that?

Just now.

Suddenly?

Yes, like a clap of thunder.

Did you feel nothing of it yesterday or the day before?

Nothing.

No drowsiness?

None.

What have you eaten today?

I have eaten nothing; I only drank a glass of my master's lemonade—that's all. And Barrois turned towards Noirtier, who, immovably fixed in his armchair, was contemplating this terrible scene without allowing a word or a movement to escape him.

Where is this lemonade? asked the doctor eagerly.

Downstairs in the decanter.

Whereabouts downstairs?

In the kitchen.

Shall I go and fetch it, doctor? inquired Villefort.

No, stay here and try to make Barrois drink the rest of this glass of ether and water. I will go myself and fetch the lemonade.

d'Avrigny bounded towards the door, flew down the back staircase, and almost knocked down Madame de Villefort, in his haste, who was herself going down to the kitchen. She cried out, but d'Avrigny paid no attention to her; possessed with but one idea, he cleared the last four steps with a bound, and rushed into the kitchen, where he saw the

decanter about three parts empty still standing on the waiter, where it had been left. He darted upon it as an eagle would seize upon its prey. Panting with loss of breath, he returned to the room he had just left. Madame de Villefort was slowly ascending the steps which led to her room.

Is this the decanter you spoke of? asked dAvrigny.

Yes, doctor.

Is this the same lemonade of which you partook?

I believe so.

What did it taste like?

It had a bitter taste.

The doctor poured some drops of the lemonade into the palm of his hand, put his lips to it, and after having rinsed his mouth as a man does when he is tasting wine, he spat the liquor into the fireplace.

It is no doubt the same, said he. Did you drink some too, M.

Noirtier?

Yes.

And did you also discover a bitter taste?

Yes.

Oh, doctor, cried Barrois, the fit is coming on again. Oh, do something for me. The doctor flew to his patient.

That emetic, Villefort"see if it is coming.

Villefort sprang into the passage, exclaiming, The emetic! the emetic!"is it come yet? No one answered. The most profound terror reigned throughout the house.

If I had anything by means of which I could inflate the lungs, said dAvrigny, looking around him, perhaps I might prevent suffocation. But there is nothing which would do!"nothing!

40114m

Oh, sir, cried Barrois, are you going to let me die without help?

Oh, I am dying! Oh, save me!

A pen, a pen! said the doctor. There was one lying on the table; he endeavored to introduce it into the mouth of the patient, who, in the midst of his convulsions, was making vain attempts to vomit; but the jaws were so clenched that the pen could not pass them. This second attack was much more violent than the first, and he had slipped from the couch to the ground, where he was writhing in agony. The doctor left him in this paroxysm, knowing that he could do nothing to alleviate it, and, going up to Noirtier, said abruptly:

How do you find yourself?"well?

Yes.

Have you any weight on the chest; or does your stomach feel light and comfortable"eh?

Yes.

Then you feel pretty much as you generally do after you have had the dose which I am accustomed to give you every Sunday?

Yes.

Did Barrois make your lemonade?

Yes.

Was it you who asked him to drink some of it?

No.

Was it M. de Villefort?

No.

Madame?

No.

It was your granddaughter, then, was it not?

Yes.

A groan from Barrois, accompanied by a yawn which seemed to crack the very jawbones, attracted the attention of M. dAvrigny; he left M. Noirtier, and returned to the sick man.

Barrois, said the doctor, can you speak? Barrois muttered a few unintelligible words. Try and make an effort to do so, my good man. said dAvrigny. Barrois reopened his bloodshot eyes.

Who made the lemonade?
I did.
Did you bring it to your master directly it was made?
No.
You left it somewhere, then, in the meantime?
Yes; I left it in the pantry, because I was called away.
Who brought it into this room, then?
Mademoiselle Valentine. DAvrigny struck his forehead with his hand.
Gracious heaven, exclaimed he.
Doctor, doctor! cried Barrois, who felt another fit coming.
Will they never bring that emetic? asked the doctor.
Here is a glass with one already prepared, said Villefort, entering the room.
Who prepared it?
The chemist who came here with me.
40116m
Drink it, said the doctor to Barrois.
Impossible, doctor; it is too late; my throat is closing up. I am choking! Oh, my heart! Ah, my head!"Oh, what agony!"Shall I suffer like this long?
No, no, friend, replied the doctor, you will soon cease to suffer.
Ah, I understand you, said the unhappy man. My God, have mercy upon me! and, uttering a fearful cry, Barrois fell back as if he had been struck by lightning. DAvrigny put his hand to his heart, and placed a glass before his lips.
Well? said Villefort.
Go to the kitchen and get me some syrup of violets.
Villefort went immediately.
Do not be alarmed, M. Noirtier, said dAvrigny; I am going to take my patient into the next room to bleed him; this sort of attack is very frightful to witness.
And taking Barrois under the arms, he dragged him into an adjoining room; but almost immediately he returned to fetch the lemonade.
Noirtier closed his right eye.
You want Valentine, do you not? I will tell them to send her to you.
Villefort returned, and dAvrigny met him in the passage.
Well, how is he now? asked he.
Come in here, said dAvrigny, and he took him into the chamber where the sick man lay.
Is he still in a fit? said the procureur.
He is dead.
Villefort drew back a few steps, and, clasping his hands, exclaimed, with real amazement and sympathy, Dead?"and so soon too!
Yes, it is very soon, said the doctor, looking at the corpse before him; but that ought not to astonish you; Monsieur and Madame de Saint-MÃ©ran died as soon. People die very suddenly in your house, M. de Villefort.
What? cried the magistrate, with an accent of horror and consternation, are you still harping on that terrible idea?
Still, sir; and I shall always do so, replied dAvrigny, for it has never for one instant ceased to retain possession of my mind; and that you may be quite sure I am not mistaken this time, listen well to what I am going to say, M. de Villefort.
The magistrate trembled convulsively.
There is a poison which destroys life almost without leaving any perceptible traces. I know it well; I have studied it in all its forms and in the effects which it produces. I recognized the presence of this poison in the case of poor Barrois as well as in that of Madame de Saint-MÃ©ran. There is a way of detecting its presence. It restores the blue color of litmus-paper reddened by an acid, and it turns syrup of violets green. We have no litmus-paper, but, see, here they come with the syrup of violets.
The doctor was right; steps were heard in the passage. M. dAvrigny

opened the door, and took from the hands of the chambermaid a cup which contained two or three spoonfuls of the syrup, he then carefully closed the door.

Look, said he to the procureur, whose heart beat so loudly that it might almost be heard, here is in this cup some syrup of violets, and this decanter contains the remainder of the lemonade of which M. Noirtier and Barrois partook. If the lemonade be pure and inoffensive, the syrup will retain its color; if, on the contrary, the lemonade be drugged with poison, the syrup will become green. Look closely! The doctor then slowly poured some drops of the lemonade from the decanter into the cup, and in an instant a light cloudy sediment began to form at the bottom of the cup; this sediment first took a blue shade, then from the color of sapphire it passed to that of opal, and from opal to emerald. Arrived at this last hue, it changed no more. The result of the experiment left no doubt whatever on the mind.

The unfortunate Barrois has been poisoned, said dAvrigny, and I will maintain this assertion before God and man.

Villefort said nothing, but he clasped his hands, opened his haggard eyes, and, overcome with his emotion, sank into a chair.

Chapter 80. The Accusation

M. dAvrigny soon restored the magistrate to consciousness, who had looked like a second corpse in that chamber of death.

Oh, death is in my house! cried Villefort.

Say, rather, crime! replied the doctor.

M. dAvrigny, cried Villefort, I cannot tell you all I feel at this moment, "terror, grief, madness.

Yes, said M. dAvrigny, with an imposing calmness, but I think it is now time to act. I think it is time to stop this torrent of mortality. I can no longer bear to be in possession of these secrets without the hope of seeing the victims and society generally revenged.

Villefort cast a gloomy look around him. In my house, murmured he, in my house!

Come, magistrate, said M. dAvrigny, show yourself a man; as an interpreter of the law, do honor to your profession by sacrificing your selfish interests to it.

You make me shudder, doctor. Do you talk of a sacrifice?

I do.

Do you then suspect anyone?

I suspect no one; death raps at your door "it enters" it goes, not blindfolded, but circumspectly, from room to room. Well, I follow its course, I track its passage; I adopt the wisdom of the ancients, and feel my way, for my friendship for your family and my respect for you are as a twofold bandage over my eyes; well!"

Oh, speak, speak, doctor; I shall have courage.

Well, sir, you have in your establishment, or in your family, perhaps, one of the frightful monstrosities of which each century produces only one. Locusta and Agrippina, living at the same time, were an exception, and proved the determination of Providence to effect the entire ruin of the Roman empire, sullied by so many crimes. Brunhilda and Fredegund were the results of the painful struggle of civilization in its infancy, when man was learning to control mind, were it even by an emissary from the realms of darkness. All these women had been, or were, beautiful. The same flower of innocence had flourished, or was still flourishing, on their brow, that is seen on the brow of the culprit in your house.

40120m

Villefort shrieked, clasped his hands, and looked at the doctor with a supplicating air. But the latter went on without pity:

"Seek whom the crime will profit, says an axiom of jurisprudence.

Doctor, cried Villefort, alas, doctor, how often has man's justice been deceived by those fatal words. I know not why, but I feel that this crime"

You acknowledge, then, the existence of the crime?

Yes, I see too plainly that it does exist. But it seems that it is intended to affect me personally. I fear an attack myself, after all these disasters.

Oh, man! murmured dAvrigny, the most selfish of all animals, the most personal of all creatures, who believes the earth turns, the sun