

om TrÃ©port.

Indeed?

And I have come at once to see you.

That is extremely kind of you, said Monte Cristo with a tone of perfect indifference.

And what is the news?

You should not ask a stranger, a foreigner, for news.

I know it, but in asking for news, I mean, have you done anything for me?

Had you commissioned me? said Monte Cristo, feigning uneasiness.

Come, come, said Albert, do not assume so much indifference. It is said, sympathy travels rapidly, and when at TrÃ©port, I felt the electric shock; you have either been working for me or thinking of me. Possibly, said Monte Cristo, I have indeed thought of you, but the magnetic wire I was guiding acted, indeed, without my knowledge.

30277m

Indeed! Pray tell me how it happened.

Willingly. M. Danglars dined with me.

I know it; to avoid meeting him, my mother and I left town.

But he met here M. Andrea Cavalcanti.

Your Italian prince?

Not so fast; M. Andrea only calls himself count.

Calls himself, do you say?

Yes, calls himself.

Is he not a count?

What can I know of him? He calls himself so. I, of course, give him the same title, and everyone else does likewise.

What a strange man you are! What next? You say M. Danglars dined here?

Yes, with Count Cavalcanti, the marquis his father, Madame Danglars, M. and Madame de Villefort, "charming people," M. Debray, Maximilian Morrel, and M. de ChÃ¢teau-Renaud.

Did they speak of me?

Not a word.

So much the worse.

Why so? I thought you wished them to forget you?

If they did not speak of me, I am sure they thought about me, and I am in despair.

How will that affect you, since Mademoiselle Danglars was not among the number here who thought of you? Truly, she might have thought of you at home.

I have no fear of that; or, if she did, it was only in the same way in which I think of her.

Touching sympathy! So you hate each other? said the count.

Listen, said Morcerf "if Mademoiselle Danglars were disposed to take pity on my supposed martyrdom on her account, and would dispense with all matrimonial formalities between our two families, I am ready to agree to the arrangement. In a word, Mademoiselle Danglars would make a charming mistress "but a wife" _diable!_

And this, said Monte Cristo, is your opinion of your intended spouse?

Yes; it is rather unkind, I acknowledge, but it is true. But as this dream cannot be realized, since Mademoiselle Danglars must become my lawful wife, live perpetually with me, sing to me, compose verses and music within ten paces of me, and that for my whole life, it frightens me. One may forsake a mistress, but a wife, "good heavens! There she must always be; and to marry Mademoiselle Danglars would be awful.

You are difficult to please, viscount.

Yes, for I often wish for what is impossible.

What is that?

To find such a wife as my father found.

Monte Cristo turned pale, and looked at Albert, while playing with some magnificent pistols.

Your father was fortunate, then? said he.

You know my opinion of my mother, count; look at her,"still beautiful, witty, more charming than ever. For any other son to have stayed with his mother for four days at TrÃ©port, it would have been a condescension or a martyrdom, while I return, more contented, more peaceful"shall I say more poetic!"than if I had taken Queen Mab or Titania as my companion.

30279m

That is an overwhelming demonstration, and you would make everyone vow to live a single life.

Such are my reasons for not liking to marry Mademoiselle Danglars. Have you ever noticed how much a thing is heightened in value when we obtain possession of it? The diamond which glittered in the window at MarlÃ©s or Fossins shines with more splendor when it is our own; but if we are compelled to acknowledge the superiority of another, and still must retain the one that is inferior, do you not know what we have to endure?

Worldling, murmured the count.

Thus I shall rejoice when Mademoiselle EugÃ©nie perceives I am but a pitiful atom, with scarcely as many hundred thousand francs as she has millions. Monte Cristo smiled. One plan occurred to me, continued Albert; Franz likes all that is eccentric; I tried to make him fall in love with Mademoiselle Danglars; but in spite of four letters, written in the most alluring style, he invariably answered: ~My eccentricity may be great, but it will not make me break my promise.

That is what I call devoted friendship, to recommend to another one whom you would not marry yourself. Albert smiled.

Apropos, continued he, Franz is coming soon, but it will not interest you; you dislike him, I think?

I? said Monte Cristo; my dear viscount, how have you discovered that I did not like M. Franz! I like everyone.

And you include me in the expression everyone"many thanks!

Let us not mistake, said Monte Cristo; I love everyone as God commands us to love our neighbor, as Christians; but I thoroughly hate but a few. Let us return to M. Franz dÃ©pinay. Did you say he was coming?

Yes; summoned by M. de Villefort, who is apparently as anxious to get Mademoiselle Valentine married as M. Danglars is to see Mademoiselle EugÃ©nie settled. It must be a very irksome office to be the father of a grown-up daughter; it seems to make one feverish, and to raise ones pulse to ninety beats a minute until the deed is done.

But M. dÃ©pinay, unlike you, bears his misfortune patiently.

Still more, he talks seriously about the matter, puts on a white tie, and speaks of his family. He entertains a very high opinion of M. and Madame de Villefort.

Which they deserve, do they not?

I believe they do. M. de Villefort has always passed for a severe but a just man.

There is, then, one, said Monte Cristo, whom you do not condemn like poor Danglars?

Because I am not compelled to marry his daughter perhaps, replied Albert, laughing.

Indeed, my dear sir, said Monte Cristo, you are revoltingly foppish.

I foppish? how do you mean?

Yes; pray take a cigar, and cease to defend yourself, and to struggle to escape marrying Mademoiselle Danglars. Let things take their course; perhaps you may not have to retract.

Bah! said Albert, staring.

Doubtless, my dear viscount, you will not be taken by force; and seriously, do you wish to break off your engagement?

I would give a hundred thousand francs to be able to do so.

Then make yourself quite easy. M. Danglars would give double that sum

to attain the same end.

Am I, indeed, so happy? said Albert, who still could not prevent an almost imperceptible cloud passing across his brow. But, my dear count, has M. Danglars any reason?

Ah! there is your proud and selfish nature. You would expose the self-love of another with a hatchet, but you shrink if your own is attacked with a needle.

But yet, M. Danglars appeared""

Delighted with you, was he not? Well, he is a man of bad taste, and is still more enchanted with another. I know not whom; look and judge for yourself.

Thank you, I understand. But my mother"no, not my mother; I mistake"my father intends giving a ball.

A ball at this season?

Summer balls are fashionable.

If they were not, the countess has only to wish it, and they would become so.

You are right; You know they are select affairs; those who remain in Paris in July must be true Parisians. Will you take charge of our invitation to Messieurs Cavalcanti?

When will it take place?

On Saturday.

M. Cavalcanti's father will be gone.

But the son will be here; will you invite young M. Cavalcanti?

I do not know him, viscount.

You do not know him?

No, I never saw him until a few days since, and am not responsible for him.

But you receive him at your house?

That is another thing: he was recommended to me by a good abbÃ©, who may be deceived. Give him a direct invitation, but do not ask me to present him. If he were afterwards to marry Mademoiselle Danglars, you would accuse me of intrigue, and would be challenging me,"besides, I may not be there myself.

Where?

At your ball.

Why should you not be there?

Because you have not yet invited me.

But I come expressly for that purpose.

You are very kind, but I may be prevented.

If I tell you one thing, you will be so amiable as to set aside all impediments.

Tell me what it is.

My mother begs you to come.

The Comtesse de Morcerf? said Monte Cristo, starting.

Ah, count, said Albert, I assure you Madame de Morcerf speaks freely to me, and if you have not felt those sympathetic fibres of which I spoke just now thrill within you, you must be entirely devoid of them, for during the last four days we have spoken of no one else.

You have talked of me?

Yes, that is the penalty of being a living puzzle!

Then I am also a puzzle to your mother? I should have thought her too reasonable to be led by imagination.

A problem, my dear count, for everyone"for my mother as well as others; much studied, but not solved, you still remain an enigma, do not fear. My mother is only astonished that you remain so long unsolved. I believe, while the Countess G"" takes you for Lord Ruthven, my mother imagines you to be Cagliostro or the Count Saint-Germain. The first opportunity you have, confirm her in her opinion; it will be easy for you, as you have the philosophy of the one and the wit of the other.

I thank you for the warning, said the count; I shall endeavor to be prepared for all suppositions.

You will, then, come on Saturday?
 Yes, since Madame de Morcerf invites me.
 You are very kind.
 Will M. Danglars be there?
 He has already been invited by my father. We shall try to persuade the great d'Aguesseau, M. de Villefort, to come, but have not much hope of seeing him.
 ~Never despair of anything, says the proverb.
 Do you dance, count?
 I dance?
 Yes, you; it would not be astonishing.
 That is very well before one is over forty. No, I do not dance, but I like to see others do so. Does Madame de Morcerf dance?
 Never; you can talk to her, she so delights in your conversation.
 Indeed?
 30283m
 Yes, truly; and I assure you. You are the only man of whom I have heard her speak with interest. Albert rose and took his hat; the count conducted him to the door.
 I have one thing to reproach myself with, said he, stopping Albert on the steps. What is it?
 I have spoken to you indiscreetly about Danglars.
 On the contrary, speak to me always in the same strain about him.
 I am glad to be reassured on that point. Apropos, when do you expect M. d'Espinoza?
 Five or six days hence at the latest.
 And when is he to be married?
 Immediately on the arrival of M. and Madame de Saint-Maran.
 Bring him to see me. Although you say I do not like him, I assure you I shall be happy to see him.
 I will obey your orders, my lord.
 Good-bye.
 Until Saturday, when I may expect you, may I not?
 Yes, I promised you. The Count watched Albert, waving his hand to him. When he had mounted his phaeton, Monte Cristo turned, and seeing Bertuccio, What news? said he.
 She went to the Palais, replied the steward.
 Did she stay long there?
 An hour and a half.
 Did she return home?
 Directly.

Well, my dear Bertuccio, said the count, I now advise you to go in quest of the little estate I spoke to you of in Normandy.
 Bertuccio bowed, and as his wishes were in perfect harmony with the order he had received, he started the same evening.

Chapter 69. The Inquiry

M. de Villefort kept the promise he had made to Madame Danglars, to endeavor to find out how the Count of Monte Cristo had discovered the history of the house at Auteuil. He wrote the same day for the required information to M. de Boville, who, from having been an inspector of prisons, was promoted to a high office in the police; and the latter begged for two days time to ascertain exactly who would be most likely to give him full particulars. At the end of the second day M. de Villefort received the following note:

The person called the Count of Monte Cristo is an intimate acquaintance of Lord Wilmore, a rich foreigner, who is sometimes seen in Paris and who is there at this moment; he is also known to the Abbé Busoni, a Sicilian priest, of high repute in the East, where he has done much good.

M. de Villefort replied by ordering the strictest inquiries to be made respecting these two persons; his orders were executed, and the following evening he received these details:

The abbé, who was in Paris only for a month, inhabited a small

two-storied house behind Saint-Sulpice; there were two rooms on each floor and he was the only tenant. The two lower rooms consisted of a dining-room, with a table, chairs, and side-board of walnut, and a wainscoted parlor, without ornaments, carpet, or timepiece. It was evident that the abbé limited himself to objects of strict necessity. He preferred to use the sitting-room upstairs, which was more library than parlor, and was furnished with theological books and parchments, in which he delighted to bury himself for months at a time, according to his valet de chambre. His valet looked at the visitors through a sort of wicket; and if their faces were unknown to him or displeased him, he replied that the abbé was not in Paris, an answer which satisfied most persons, because the abbé was known to be a great traveller. Besides, whether at home or not, whether in Paris or Cairo, the abbé always left something to give away, which the valet distributed through this wicket in his masters name. The other room near the library was a bedroom. A bed without curtains, four armchairs, and a couch, covered with yellow Utrecht velvet, composed, with a prie-Dieu, all its furniture.

Lord Wilmore resided in Rue Fontaine-Saint-Georges. He was one of those English tourists who consume a large fortune in travelling. He hired the apartment in which he lived furnished, passed only a few hours in the day there, and rarely slept there. One of his peculiarities was never to speak a word of French, which he however wrote with great facility.

The day after this important information had been given to the kings attorney, a man alighted from a carriage at the corner of the Rue Fârou, and rapping at an olive-green door, asked if the Abbé Busoni were within.

No, he went out early this morning, replied the valet.

I might not always be content with that answer, replied the visitor, for I come from one to whom everyone must be at home. But have the kindness to give the Abbé Busoni""

I told you he was not at home, repeated the valet.

Then on his return give him that card and this sealed paper. Will he be at home at eight oclock this evening?

Doubtless, unless he is at work, which is the same as if he were out.

I will come again at that time, replied the visitor, who then retired.

At the appointed hour the same man returned in the same carriage, which, instead of stopping this time at the end of the Rue Fârou, drove up to the green door. He knocked, and it opened immediately to admit him. From the signs of respect the valet paid him, he saw that his note had produced a good effect.

Is the abbé at home? asked he.

Yes; he is at work in his library, but he expects you, sir, replied the valet. The stranger ascended a rough staircase, and before a table, illumined by a lamp whose light was concentrated by a large shade while the rest of the apartment was in partial darkness, he perceived the abbé in a monks dress, with a cowl on his head such as was used by learned men of the Middle Ages.

Have I the honor of addressing the Abbé Busoni? asked the visitor.

Yes, sir, replied the abbé; and you are the person whom M. de Boville, formerly an inspector of prisons, sends to me from the prefect of police?

Exactly, sir.

One of the agents appointed to secure the safety of Paris?

Yes, sir replied the stranger with a slight hesitation, and blushing.

The abbé replaced the large spectacles, which covered not only his eyes but his temples, and sitting down motioned to his visitor to do the same. I am at your service, sir, said the abbé, with a marked Italian accent.

The mission with which I am charged, sir, replied the visitor, speaking with hesitation, is a confidential one on the part of him who

fulfils it, and him by whom he is employed. The abbé bowed. Your probity, replied the stranger, is so well known to the prefect that he wishes as a magistrate to ascertain from you some particulars connected with the public safety, to ascertain which I am deputed to see you. It is hoped that no ties of friendship or humane consideration will induce you to conceal the truth.

Provided, sir, the particulars you wish for do not interfere with my scruples or my conscience. I am a priest, sir, and the secrets of confession, for instance, must remain between me and God, and not between me and human justice.

Do not alarm yourself, monsieur, we will duly respect your conscience.

At this moment the abbé pressed down his side of the shade and so raised it on the other, throwing a bright light on the strangers face, while his own remained obscured.

Excuse me, abbé, said the envoy of the prefect of the police, but the light tries my eyes very much. The abbé lowered the shade.

Now, sir, I am listening" go on.

I will come at once to the point. Do you know the Count of Monte Cristo?

You mean Monsieur Zaccane, I presume?

Zaccane?" is not his name Monte Cristo?

Monte Cristo is the name of an estate, or, rather, of a rock, and not a family name.

Well, be it so" let us not dispute about words; and since M. de Monte Cristo and M. Zaccane are the same"

Absolutely the same.

Let us speak of M. Zaccane.

Agreed.

I asked you if you knew him?

Extremely well.

Who is he?

The son of a rich shipbuilder in Malta.

I know that is the report; but, as you are aware, the police does not content itself with vague reports.

However, replied the abbé, with an affable smile, when that report is in accordance with the truth, everybody must believe it, the police as well as all the rest.

Are you sure of what you assert?

What do you mean by that question?

Understand, sir, I do not in the least suspect your veracity; I ask if you are certain of it?

I knew his father, M. Zaccane.

Ah, indeed?

And when a child I often played with the son in the timber-yards.

But whence does he derive the title of count?

You are aware that may be bought.

In Italy?

Everywhere.

And his immense riches, whence does he procure them?

They may not be so very great.

How much do you suppose he possesses?

From one hundred and fifty to two hundred thousand livres per annum.

That is reasonable, said the visitor; I have heard he had three or four millions.

Two hundred thousand per annum would make four millions of capital.

But I was told he had four millions per annum.

That is not probable.

Do you know this Island of Monte Cristo?

Certainly, everyone who has come from Palermo, Naples, or Rome to France by sea must know it, since he has passed close to it and must have seen it.

I am told it is a delightful place?

It is a rock.
And why has the count bought a rock?
For the sake of being a count. In Italy one must have territorial possessions to be a count.
You have, doubtless, heard the adventures of M. Zaccone's youth?
The fathers?
No, the sons.
I know nothing certain; at that period of his life, I lost sight of my young comrade.
Was he in the wars?
I think he entered the service.
In what branch?
In the navy.
Are you not his confessor?
No, sir; I believe he is a Lutheran.
A Lutheran?
I say, I believe such is the case, I do not affirm it; besides, liberty of conscience is established in France.
Doubtless, and we are not now inquiring into his creed, but his actions; in the name of the prefect of police, I ask you what you know of him.
He passes for a very charitable man. Our holy father, the pope, has made him a knight of Jesus Christ for the services he rendered to the Christians in the East; he has five or six rings as testimonials from Eastern monarchs of his services.
Does he wear them?
No, but he is proud of them; he is better pleased with rewards given to the benefactors of man than to his destroyers.
He is a Quaker then?
Exactly, he is a Quaker, with the exception of the peculiar dress.
Has he any friends?
Yes, everyone who knows him is his friend.
But has he any enemies?
One only.
What is his name?
Lord Wilmore.
Where is he?
He is in Paris just now.
Can he give me any particulars?
Important ones; he was in India with Zaccone.
Do you know his abode?
It's somewhere in the Chauss e d'Antin; but I know neither the street nor the number.
30289m
Are you at variance with the Englishman?
I love Zaccone, and he hates him; we are consequently not friends.
Do you think the Count of Monte Cristo had ever been in France before he made this visit to Paris?
To that question I can answer positively; no, sir, he had not, because he applied to me six months ago for the particulars he required, and as I did not know when I might again come to Paris, I recommended M. Cavalcanti to him.
Andrea?
No, Bartolomeo, his father.
Now, sir, I have but one question more to ask, and I charge you, in the name of honor, of humanity, and of religion, to answer me candidly.
What is it, sir?
Do you know with what design M. de Monte Cristo purchased a house at Auteuil?
Certainly, for he told me.
What is it, sir?
To make a lunatic asylum of it, similar to that founded by the Count

of Pisani at Palermo. Do you know about that institution?

I have heard of it.

It is a magnificent charity. Having said this, the abb  bowed to imply he wished to pursue his studies.

The visitor either understood the abb s meaning, or had no more questions to ask; he arose, and the abb  accompanied him to the door. You are a great almsgiver, said the visitor, and although you are said to be rich, I will venture to offer you something for your poor people; will you accept my offering?

I thank you, sir; I am only jealous in one thing, and that is that the relief I give should be entirely from my own resources.

However"

My resolution, sir, is unchangeable, but you have only to search for yourself and you will find, alas, but too many objects upon whom to exercise your benevolence.

The abb  once more bowed as he opened the door, the stranger bowed and took his leave, and the carriage conveyed him straight to the house of M. de Villefort. An hour afterwards the carriage was again ordered, and this time it went to the Rue Fontaine-Saint-Georges, and stopped at No. 5, where Lord Wilmore lived. The stranger had written to Lord Wilmore, requesting an interview, which the latter had fixed for ten oclock. As the envoy of the prefect of police arrived ten minutes before ten, he was told that Lord Wilmore, who was precision and punctuality personified, was not yet come in, but that he would be sure to return as the clock struck.

The visitor was introduced into the drawing-room, which was like all other furnished drawing-rooms. A mantle-piece, with two modern S vres vases, a timepiece representing Cupid with his bent bow, a mirror with an engraving on each side"one representing Homer carrying his guide, the other, Belisarius begging"a grayish paper; red and black tapestry"such was the appearance of Lord Wilmores drawing-room.

It was illuminated by lamps with ground-glass shades which gave only a feeble light, as if out of consideration for the envoys weak sight.

After ten minutes expectation the clock struck ten; at the fifth stroke the door opened and Lord Wilmore appeared. He was rather above the middle height, with thin reddish whiskers, light complexion and light hair, turning rather gray. He was dressed with all the English peculiarity, namely, in a blue coat, with gilt buttons and high collar, in the fashion of 1811, a white kerseymere waistcoat, and nankeen pantaloons, three inches too short, but which were prevented by straps from slipping up to the knee. His first remark on entering was:

You know, sir, I do not speak French?

I know you do not like to converse in our language, replied the envoy.

But you may use it, replied Lord Wilmore; I understand it.

And I, replied the visitor, changing his idiom, know enough of English to keep up the conversation. Do not put yourself to the slightest inconvenience.

Aw? said Lord Wilmore, with that tone which is only known to natives of Great Britain.

The envoy presented his letter of introduction, which the latter read with English coolness, and having finished:

I understand, said he, perfectly.

30293m

Then began the questions, which were similar to those which had been addressed to the Abb  Busoni. But as Lord Wilmore, in the character of the counts enemy, was less restrained in his answers, they were more numerous; he described the youth of Monte Cristo, who he said, at ten years of age, entered the service of one of the petty sovereigns of India who make war on the English. It was there Wilmore had first met him and fought against him; and in that war Zaccane had been taken prisoner, sent to England, and consigned to the hulks, whence he had escaped by swimming. Then began his travels, his duels, his caprices;

then the insurrection in Greece broke out, and he had served in the Grecian ranks. While in that service he had discovered a silver mine in the mountains of Thessaly, but he had been careful to conceal it from everyone. After the battle of Navarino, when the Greek government was consolidated, he asked of King Otho a mining grant for that district, which was given him. Hence that immense fortune, which, in Lord Wilmore's opinion, possibly amounted to one or two millions per annum, "a precarious fortune, which might be momentarily lost by the failure of the mine.

But, asked the visitor, do you know why he came to France?

He is speculating in railways, said Lord Wilmore, and as he is an expert chemist and physicist, he has invented a new system of telegraphy, which he is seeking to bring to perfection.

How much does he spend yearly? asked the prefect.

Not more than five or six hundred thousand francs, said Lord Wilmore; he is a miser. Hatred evidently inspired the Englishman, who, knowing no other reproach to bring on the count, accused him of avarice.

Do you know his house at Auteuil?

Certainly.

What do you know respecting it?

Do you wish to know why he bought it?

Yes.

The count is a speculator, who will certainly ruin himself in experiments. He supposes there is in the neighborhood of the house he has bought a mineral spring equal to those at Bagn res, Luchon, and Cauterets. He is going to turn his house into a _Badhaus_, as the Germans term it. He has already dug up all the garden two or three times to find the famous spring, and, being unsuccessful, he will soon purchase all the contiguous houses. Now, as I dislike him, and hope his railway, his electric telegraph, or his search for baths, will ruin him, I am watching for his discomfiture, which must soon take place.

What was the cause of your quarrel?

When he was in England he seduced the wife of one of my friends.

Why do you not seek revenge?

I have already fought three duels with him, said the Englishman, the first with the pistol, the second with the sword, and the third with the sabre.

And what was the result of those duels?

The first time, he broke my arm; the second, he wounded me in the breast; and the third time, made this large wound. The Englishman turned down his shirt-collar, and showed a scar, whose redness proved it to be a recent one. So that, you see, there is a deadly feud between us.

But, said the envoy, you do not go about it in the right way to kill him, if I understand you correctly.

Aw? said the Englishman, I practice shooting every day, and every other day Grisier comes to my house.

This was all the visitor wished to ascertain, or, rather, all the Englishman appeared to know. The agent arose, and having bowed to Lord Wilmore, who returned his salutation with the stiff politeness of the English, he retired. Lord Wilmore, having heard the door close after him, returned to his bedroom, where with one hand he pulled off his light hair, his red whiskers, his false jaw, and his wound, to resume the black hair, dark complexion, and pearly teeth of the Count of Monte Cristo.

It was M. de Villefort, and not the prefect, who returned to the house of M. de Villefort. The procureur felt more at ease, although he had learned nothing really satisfactory, and, for the first time since the dinner-party at Auteuil, he slept soundly.

Chapter 70. The Ball

It was in the warmest days of July, when in due course of time the Saturday arrived upon which the ball was to take place at M. de Morcerfs. It was ten o'clock at night; the branches of the great trees

in the garden of the counts house stood out boldly against the azure canopy of heaven, which was studded with golden stars, but where the last fleeting clouds of a vanishing storm yet lingered.

From the apartments on the ground floor might be heard the sound of music, with the whirl of the waltz and galop, while brilliant streams of light shone through the openings of the Venetian blinds. At this moment the garden was only occupied by about ten servants, who had just received orders from their mistress to prepare the supper, the serenity of the weather continuing to increase. Until now, it had been undecided whether the supper should take place in the dining-room, or under a long tent erected on the lawn, but the beautiful blue sky, studded with stars, had settled the question in favor of the lawn.

The gardens were illuminated with colored lanterns, according to the Italian custom, and, as is usual in countries where the luxuries of the table—the rarest of all luxuries in their complete form—are well understood, the supper-table was loaded with wax-lights and flowers.

30297m

At the time the Countess of Morcerf returned to the rooms, after giving her orders, many guests were arriving, more attracted by the charming hospitality of the countess than by the distinguished position of the count; for, owing to the good taste of MercÃ©dÃ©s, one was sure of finding some devices at her entertainment worthy of describing, or even copying in case of need.

Madame Danglars, in whom the events we have related had caused deep anxiety, had hesitated about going to Madame de Morcerfs, when during the morning her carriage happened to meet that of Villefort. The latter made a sign, and when the carriages had drawn close together, said:

You are going to Madame de Morcerfs, are you not?

No, replied Madame Danglars, I am too ill.

You are wrong, replied Villefort, significantly; it is important that you should be seen there.

Do you think so? asked the baroness.

I do.

In that case I will go.

And the two carriages passed on towards their different destinations.

Madame Danglars therefore came, not only beautiful in person, but radiant with splendor; she entered by one door at the time when MercÃ©dÃ©s appeared at the door. The countess took Albert to meet Madame Danglars. He approached, paid her some well merited compliments on her toilet, and offered his arm to conduct her to a seat. Albert looked around him.

You are looking for my daughter? said the baroness, smiling.

I confess it, replied Albert. Could you have been so cruel as not to bring her?

Calm yourself. She has met Mademoiselle de Villefort, and has taken her arm; see, they are following us, both in white dresses, one with a bouquet of camellias, the other with one of myosotis. But tell me—

Well, what do you wish to know?

Will not the Count of Monte Cristo be here tonight?

Seventeen! replied Albert.

What do you mean?

I only mean that the count seems the rage, replied the viscount, smiling, and that you are the seventeenth person that has asked me the same question. The count is in fashion; I congratulate him upon it.

And have you replied to everyone as you have to me?

Ah, to be sure, I have not answered you; be satisfied, we shall have this ~lion; we are among the privileged ones.

Were you at the Opera yesterday?

No.

He was there.

Ah, indeed? And did the eccentric person commit any new originality?

Can he be seen without doing so? Elssler was dancing in _Le Diable boiteux_; the Greek princess was in ecstasies. After the cachucha he

placed a magnificent ring on the stem of a bouquet, and threw it to the charming danseuse, who, in the third act, to do honor to the gift, reappeared with it on her finger. And the Greek princess, "will she be here?

No, you will be deprived of that pleasure; her position in the counts establishment is not sufficiently understood.

Wait; leave me here, and go and speak to Madame de Villefort, who is trying to attract your attention.

Albert bowed to Madame Danglars, and advanced towards Madame de Villefort, whose lips opened as he approached.

I wager anything, said Albert, interrupting her, that I know what you were about to say.

Well, what is it?

If I guess rightly, will you confess it?

Yes.

On your honor?

On my honor.

You were going to ask me if the Count of Monte Cristo had arrived, or was expected.

Not at all. It is not of him that I am now thinking. I was going to ask you if you had received any news of Monsieur Franz.

Yes, "yesterday.

What did he tell you?

That he was leaving at the same time as his letter.

Well, now then, the count?

The count will come, of that you may be satisfied.

You know that he has another name besides Monte Cristo?

No, I did not know it.

Monte Cristo is the name of an island, and he has a family name.

I never heard it.

Well, then, I am better informed than you; his name is Zaccane.

It is possible.

He is a Maltese.

That is also possible.

The son of a shipowner.

Really, you should relate all this aloud, you would have the greatest success.

He served in India, discovered a mine in Thessaly, and comes to Paris to establish a mineral water-cure at Auteuil.

Well, I'm sure, said Morcerf, this is indeed news! Am I allowed to repeat it?

Yes, but cautiously, tell one thing at a time, and do not say I told you.

Why so?

Because it is a secret just discovered.

By whom?

The police.

Then the news originated " " "

At the prefects last night. Paris, you can understand, is astonished at the sight of such unusual splendor, and the police have made inquiries.

Well, well! Nothing more is wanting than to arrest the count as a vagabond, on the pretext of his being too rich.

Indeed, that doubtless would have happened if his credentials had not been so favorable.

Poor count! And is he aware of the danger he has been in?

I think not.

Then it will be but charitable to inform him. When he arrives, I will not fail to do so.

Just then, a handsome young man, with bright eyes, black hair, and glossy moustache, respectfully bowed to Madame de Villefort. Albert extended his hand.

Madame, said Albert, allow me to present to you M. Maximilian

Morrel, captain of Spahis, one of our best, and, above all, of our bravest officers.

I have already had the pleasure of meeting this gentleman at Auteuil, at the house of the Count of Monte Cristo, replied Madame de Villefort, turning away with marked coldness of manner.

This answer, and especially the tone in which it was uttered, chilled the heart of poor Morrel. But a recompense was in store for him; turning around, he saw near the door a beautiful fair face, whose large blue eyes were, without any marked expression, fixed upon him, while the bouquet of myosotis was gently raised to her lips.

The salutation was so well understood that Morrel, with the same expression in his eyes, placed his handkerchief to his mouth; and these two living statues, whose hearts beat so violently under their marble aspect, separated from each other by the whole length of the room, forgot themselves for a moment, or rather forgot the world in their mutual contemplation. They might have remained much longer lost in one another, without anyone noticing their abstraction. The Count of Monte Cristo had just entered.

We have already said that there was something in the count which attracted universal attention wherever he appeared. It was not the coat, unexceptional in its cut, though simple and unornamented; it was not the plain white waistcoat; it was not the trousers, that displayed the foot so perfectly formed; it was none of these things that attracted the attention, "it was his pale complexion, his waving black hair, his calm and serene expression, his dark and melancholy eye, his mouth, chiselled with such marvellous delicacy, which so easily expressed such high disdain," these were what fixed the attention of all upon him. Many men might have been handsomer, but certainly there could be none whose appearance was more significant, if the expression may be used. Everything about the count seemed to have its meaning, for the constant habit of thought which he had acquired had given an ease and vigor to the expression of his face, and even to the most trifling gesture, scarcely to be understood. Yet the Parisian world is so strange, that even all this might not have won attention had there not been connected with it a mysterious story gilded by an immense fortune.

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Meanwhile he advanced through the assemblage of guests under a battery of curious glances towards Madame de Morcerf, who, standing before a mantle-piece ornamented with flowers, had seen his entrance in a looking-glass placed opposite the door, and was prepared to receive him. She turned towards him with a serene smile just at the moment he was bowing to her. No doubt she fancied the count would speak to her, while on his side the count thought she was about to address him; but both remained silent, and after a mere bow, Monte Cristo directed his steps to Albert, who received him cordially.

Have you seen my mother? asked Albert.

I have just had the pleasure, replied the count; but I have not seen your father.

See, he is down there, talking politics with that little group of great geniuses.

Indeed? said Monte Cristo; and so those gentlemen down there are men of great talent. I should not have guessed it. And for what kind of talent are they celebrated? You know there are different sorts.

That tall, harsh-looking man is very learned, he discovered, in the neighborhood of Rome, a kind of lizard with a vertebra more than lizards usually have, and he immediately laid his discovery before the Institute. The thing was discussed for a long time, but finally decided in his favor. I can assure you the vertebra made a great noise in the learned world, and the gentleman, who was only a knight of the Legion of Honor, was made an officer.

Come, said Monte Cristo, this cross seems to me to be wisely awarded. I suppose, had he found another additional vertebra, they would have made him a commander.

Very likely, said Albert.

And who can that person be who has taken it into his head to wrap himself up in a blue coat embroidered with green?

Oh, that coat is not his own idea; it is the Republics, which deputed David¹² to devise a uniform for the Academicians.

Indeed? said Monte Cristo; so this gentleman is an Academician?

Within the last week he has been made one of the learned assembly.

And what is his especial talent?

His talent? I believe he thrusts pins through the heads of rabbits, he makes fowls eat madder, and punches the spinal marrow out of dogs with whalebone.

And he is made a member of the Academy of Sciences for this?

No; of the French Academy.

But what has the French Academy to do with all this?

I was going to tell you. It seems""

That his experiments have very considerably advanced the cause of science, doubtless?

No; that his style of writing is very good.

This must be very flattering to the feelings of the rabbits into whose heads he has thrust pins, to the fowls whose bones he has dyed red, and to the dogs whose spinal marrow he has punched out?

Albert laughed.

And the other one? demanded the count.

That one?

Yes, the third.

The one in the dark blue coat?

Yes.

He is a colleague of the count, and one of the most active opponents to the idea of providing the Chamber of Peers with a uniform. He was very successful upon that question. He stood badly with the Liberal papers, but his noble opposition to the wishes of the court is now getting him into favor with the journalists. They talk of making him an ambassador.

30303m

And what are his claims to the peerage?

He has composed two or three comic operas, written four or five articles in the *Si cle*, and voted five or six years on the ministerial side.

Bravo, viscount, said Monte Cristo, smiling; you are a delightful *cicerone*. And now you will do me a favor, will you not?

What is it?

Do not introduce me to any of these gentlemen; and should they wish it, you will warn me. Just then the count felt his arm pressed. He turned round; it was Danglars.

Ah! is it you, baron? said he.

Why do you call me baron? said Danglars; you know that I care nothing for my title. I am not like you, viscount; you like your title, do you not?

Certainly, replied Albert, seeing that without my title I should be nothing; while you, sacrificing the baron, would still remain the millionaire.

Which seems to me the finest title under the royalty of July, replied Danglars.

Unfortunately, said Monte Cristo, ones title to a millionaire does not last for life, like that of baron, peer of France, or academician; for example, the millionaires Franck & Poulmann, of Frankfurt, who have just become bankrupts.

Indeed? said Danglars, becoming pale.

Yes; I received the news this evening by a courier. I had about a million in their hands, but, warned in time, I withdrew it a month ago.

Ah, *mon Dieu!* exclaimed Danglars, they have drawn on me for 200,000 francs!

Well, you can throw out the draft; their signature is worth five per cent.

Yes, but it is too late, said Danglars, I have honored their bills.

Then, said Monte Cristo, here are 200,000 francs gone after""

Hush, do not mention these things, said Danglars; then, approaching Monte Cristo, he added, especially before young M. Cavalcanti; after which he smiled, and turned towards the young man in question.

Albert had left the count to speak to his mother, Danglars to converse with young Cavalcanti; Monte Cristo was for an instant alone. Meanwhile the heat became excessive. The footmen were hastening through the rooms with waiters loaded with ices. Monte Cristo wiped the perspiration from his forehead, but drew back when the waiter was presented to him; he took no refreshment. Madame de Morcerf did not lose sight of Monte Cristo; she saw that he took nothing, and even noticed his gesture of refusal.

Albert, she asked, did you notice that?

What, mother?

That the count has never been willing to partake of food under the roof of M. de Morcerf.

Yes; but then he breakfasted with me"indeed, he made his first appearance in the world on that occasion.

But your house is not M. de Morcerfs, murmured MercÃ©dÃ©s; and since he has been here I have watched him.

Well?

Well, he has taken nothing yet.

The count is very temperate.

MercÃ©dÃ©s smiled sadly.

Approach him, said she, and when the next waiter passes, insist upon his taking something.

But why, mother?

Just to please me, Albert, said MercÃ©dÃ©s. Albert kissed his mothers hand, and drew near the count. Another salver passed, loaded like the preceding ones; she saw Albert attempt to persuade the count, but he obstinately refused. Albert rejoined his mother; she was very pale.

Well, said she, you see he refuses?

Yes; but why need this annoy you?

You know, Albert, women are singular creatures. I should like to have seen the count take something in my house, if only an ice. Perhaps he cannot reconcile himself to the French style of living, and might prefer something else.

Oh, no; I have seen him eat of everything in Italy; no doubt he does not feel inclined this evening.

And besides, said the countess, accustomed as he is to burning climates, possibly he does not feel the heat as we do.

I do not think that, for he has complained of feeling almost suffocated, and asked why the Venetian blinds were not opened as well as the windows.

In a word, said MercÃ©dÃ©s, it was a way of assuring me that his abstinence was intended.

And she left the room.

A minute afterwards the blinds were thrown open, and through the jessamine and clematis that overhung the window one could see the garden ornamented with lanterns, and the supper laid under the tent. Dancers, players, talkers, all uttered an exclamation of joy"everyone inhaled with delight the breeze that floated in. At the same time MercÃ©dÃ©s reappeared, paler than before, but with that imperturbable expression of countenance which she sometimes wore. She went straight to the group of which her husband formed the centre.

Do not detain those gentlemen here, count, she said; they would prefer, I should think, to breathe in the garden rather than suffocate here, since they are not playing.

Ah, said a gallant old general, who, in 1809, had sung _Partant pour la Syrie_, "we will not go alone to the garden.

Then, said Mercédès, I will lead the way.

Turning towards Monte Cristo, she added, count, will you oblige me with your arm?

The count almost staggered at these simple words; then he fixed his eyes on Mercédès. It was only a momentary glance, but it seemed to the countess to have lasted for a century, so much was expressed in that one look. He offered his arm to the countess; she took it, or rather just touched it with her little hand, and they together descended the steps, lined with rhododendrons and camellias. Behind them, by another outlet, a group of about twenty persons rushed into the garden with loud exclamations of delight.

Chapter 71. Bread and Salt

Madame de Morcerf entered an archway of trees with her companion. It led through a grove of lindens to a conservatory.

It was too warm in the room, was it not, count? she asked.

Yes, madame; and it was an excellent idea of yours to open the doors and the blinds. As he ceased speaking, the count felt the hand of Mercédès tremble. But you, he said, with that light dress, and without anything to cover you but that gauze scarf, perhaps you feel cold?

Do you know where I am leading you? said the countess, without replying to the question.

No, madame, replied Monte Cristo; but you see I make no resistance. We are going to the greenhouse that you see at the other end of the grove.

The count looked at Mercédès as if to interrogate her, but she continued to walk on in silence, and he refrained from speaking. They reached the building, ornamented with magnificent fruits, which ripen at the beginning of July in the artificial temperature which takes the place of the sun, so frequently absent in our climate. The countess left the arm of Monte Cristo, and gathered a bunch of Muscatel grapes. See, count, she said, with a smile so sad in its expression that one could almost detect the tears on her eyelids"see, our French grapes are not to be compared, I know, with yours of Sicily and Cyprus, but you will make allowance for our northern sun. The count bowed, but stepped back.

Do you refuse? said Mercédès, in a tremulous voice.

Pray excuse me, madame, replied Monte Cristo, but I never eat Muscatel grapes.

Mercédès let them fall, and sighed. A magnificent peach was hanging against an adjoining wall, ripened by the same artificial heat.

Mercédès drew near, and plucked the fruit.

Take this peach, then, she said. The count again refused. What, again? she exclaimed, in so plaintive an accent that it seemed to stifle a sob; really, you pain me.

A long silence followed; the peach, like the grapes, fell to the ground.

Count, added Mercédès with a supplicating glance, there is a beautiful Arabian custom, which makes eternal friends of those who have together eaten bread and salt under the same roof.

I know it, madame, replied the count; but we are in France, and not in Arabia, and in France eternal friendships are as rare as the custom of dividing bread and salt with one another.

But, said the countess, breathlessly, with her eyes fixed on Monte Cristo, whose arm she convulsively pressed with both hands, we are friends, are we not?

The count became pale as death, the blood rushed to his heart, and then again rising, dyed his cheeks with crimson; his eyes swam like those of a man suddenly dazzled.

Certainly, we are friends, he replied; why should we not be?

The answer was so little like the one Mercédès desired, that she turned away to give vent to a sigh, which sounded more like a groan. Thank you, she said. And they walked on again. They went the whole length of

the garden without uttering a word.

Sir, suddenly exclaimed the countess, after their walk had continued ten minutes in silence, is it true that you have seen so much, travelled so far, and suffered so deeply?

I have suffered deeply, madame, answered Monte Cristo.

But now you are happy?

Doubtless, replied the count, since no one hears me complain.

And your present happiness, has it softened your heart?

My present happiness equals my past misery, said the count.

Are you not married? asked the countess.

I, married? exclaimed Monte Cristo, shuddering; who could have told you so?

No one told me you were, but you have frequently been seen at the Opera with a young and lovely woman.

She is a slave whom I bought at Constantinople, madame, the daughter of a prince. I have adopted her as my daughter, having no one else to love in the world.

You live alone, then?

I do.

You have no sister? no son? no father?

I have no one.

How can you exist thus without anyone to attach you to life?