

, with his head hidden in the bedclothes, saw nothing around him, dAvrigny approached the window, that he might the better examine the contents of the glass, and dipping the tip of his finger in, tasted it.

Ah, he exclaimed, it is no longer brucine that is used; let me see what it is!

Then he ran to one of the cupboards in Valentines room, which had been transformed into a medicine closet, and taking from its silver case a small bottle of nitric acid, dropped a little of it into the liquor, which immediately changed to a blood-red color.

Ah, exclaimed dAvrigny, in a voice in which the horror of a judge unveiling the truth was mingled with the delight of a student making a discovery.

Madame de Villefort was overpowered; her eyes first flashed and then swam, she staggered towards the door and disappeared. Directly afterwards the distant sound of a heavy weight falling on the ground was heard, but no one paid any attention to it; the nurse was engaged in watching the chemical analysis, and Villefort was still absorbed in grief. M. dAvrigny alone had followed Madame de Villefort with his eyes, and watched her hurried retreat. He lifted up the drapery over the entrance to Edwards room, and his eye reaching as far as Madame de Villeforts apartment, he beheld her extended lifeless on the floor. Go to the assistance of Madame de Villefort, he said to the nurse. Madame de Villefort is ill.

50087m

But Mademoiselle de Villefort"" stammered the nurse.

Mademoiselle de Villefort no longer requires help, said dAvrigny, since she is dead.

Dead,"dead! groaned forth Villefort, in a paroxysm of grief, which was the more terrible from the novelty of the sensation in the iron heart of that man.

Dead! repeated a third voice. Who said Valentine was dead?

The two men turned round, and saw Morrel standing at the door, pale and terror-stricken. This is what had happened. At the usual time, Morrel had presented himself at the little door leading to Noirtiers room. Contrary to custom, the door was open, and having no occasion to ring he entered. He waited for a moment in the hall and called for a servant to conduct him to M. Noirtier; but no one answered, the servants having, as we know, deserted the house. Morrel had no particular reason for uneasiness; Monte Cristo had promised him that Valentine should live, and so far he had always fulfilled his word. Every night the count had given him news, which was the next morning confirmed by Noirtier. Still this extraordinary silence appeared strange to him, and he called a second and third time; still no answer. Then he determined to go up. Noirtiers room was opened, like all the rest. The first thing he saw was the old man sitting in his armchair in his usual place, but his eyes expressed alarm, which was confirmed by the pallor which overspread his features.

How are you, sir? asked Morrel, with a sickness of heart.

Well, answered the old man, by closing his eyes; but his appearance manifested increasing uneasiness.

You are thoughtful, sir, continued Morrel; you want something; shall I call one of the servants?

Yes, replied Noirtier.

Morrel pulled the bell, but though he nearly broke the cord no one answered. He turned towards Noirtier; the pallor and anguish expressed on his countenance momentarily increased.

Oh, exclaimed Morrel, why do they not come? Is anyone ill in the house? The eyes of Noirtier seemed as though they would start from their sockets. What is the matter? You alarm me. Valentine?

Valentine?

Yes, yes, signed Noirtier.

Maximilian tried to speak, but he could articulate nothing; he

staggered, and supported himself against the wainscot. Then he pointed to the door.

Yes, yes, yes! continued the old man.

50089m

Maximilian rushed up the little staircase, while Noirtiers eyes seemed to say, "Quicker, quicker!

In a minute the young man darted through several rooms, till at length he reached Valentines.

There was no occasion to push the door, it was wide open. A sob was the only sound he heard. He saw as though in a mist, a black figure kneeling and buried in a confused mass of white drapery. A terrible fear transfixed him. It was then he heard a voice exclaim Valentine is dead! and another voice which, like an echo repeated:

Dead, "dead!

50090m

Chapter 103. Maximilian

Villefort rose, half-ashamed of being surprised in such a paroxysm of grief. The terrible office he had held for twenty-five years had succeeded in making him more or less than man. His glance, at first wandering, fixed itself upon Morrel. Who are you, sir, he asked, that forget that this is not the manner to enter a house stricken with death? Go, sir, go!

But Morrel remained motionless; he could not detach his eyes from that disordered bed, and the pale corpse of the young girl who was lying on it.

Go!"do you hear? said Villefort, while dAvrigny advanced to lead Morrel out. Maximilian stared for a moment at the corpse, gazed all around the room, then upon the two men; he opened his mouth to speak, but finding it impossible to give utterance to the innumerable ideas that occupied his brain, he went out, thrusting his hands through his hair in such a manner that Villefort and dAvrigny, for a moment diverted from the engrossing topic, exchanged glances, which seemed to say, "He is mad!

But in less than five minutes the staircase groaned beneath an extraordinary weight. Morrel was seen carrying, with superhuman strength, the armchair containing Noirtier upstairs. When he reached the landing he placed the armchair on the floor and rapidly rolled it into Valentines room. This could only have been accomplished by means of unnatural strength supplied by powerful excitement. But the most fearful spectacle was Noirtier being pushed towards the bed, his face expressing all his meaning, and his eyes supplying the want of every other faculty. That pale face and flaming glance appeared to Villefort like a frightful apparition. Each time he had been brought into contact with his father, something terrible had happened.

See what they have done! cried Morrel, with one hand leaning on the back of the chair, and the other extended towards Valentine. See, my father, see!

Villefort drew back and looked with astonishment on the young man, who, almost a stranger to him, called Noirtier his father. At this moment the whole soul of the old man seemed centred in his eyes which became bloodshot; the veins of the throat swelled; his cheeks and temples became purple, as though he was struck with epilepsy; nothing was wanting to complete this but the utterance of a cry. And the cry issued from his pores, if we may thus speak "a cry frightful in its silence. DAvrigny rushed towards the old man and made him inhale a powerful restorative.

Sir, cried Morrel, seizing the moist hand of the paralytic, they ask me who I am, and what right I have to be here. Oh, you know it, tell them, tell them! And the young mans voice was choked by sobs.

As for the old man, his chest heaved with his panting respiration. One could have thought that he was undergoing the agonies preceding death. At length, happier than the young man, who sobbed without weeping, tears glistened in the eyes of Noirtier.

Tell them, said Morrel in a hoarse voice, tell them that I am her betrothed. Tell them she was my beloved, my noble girl, my only blessing in the world. Tell them"oh, tell them, that corpse belongs to me!

The young man overwhelmed by the weight of his anguish, fell heavily on his knees before the bed, which his fingers grasped with convulsive energy. dAvrigny, unable to bear the sight of this touching emotion, turned away; and Villefort, without seeking any further explanation, and attracted towards him by the irresistible magnetism which draws us towards those who have loved the people for whom we mourn, extended his hand towards the young man.

But Morrel saw nothing; he had grasped the hand of Valentine, and unable to weep vented his agony in groans as he bit the sheets. For some time nothing was heard in that chamber but sobs, exclamations, and prayers. At length Villefort, the most composed of all, spoke:

Sir, said he to Maximilian, you say you loved Valentine, that you were betrothed to her. I knew nothing of this engagement, of this love, yet I, her father, forgive you, for I see that your grief is real and deep; and besides my own sorrow is too great for anger to find a place in my heart. But you see that the angel whom you hoped for has left this earth"she has nothing more to do with the adoration of men. Take a last farewell, sir, of her sad remains; take the hand you expected to possess once more within your own, and then separate yourself from her forever. Valentine now requires only the ministrations of the priest.

50093m

You are mistaken, sir, exclaimed Morrel, raising himself on one knee, his heart pierced by a more acute pang than any he had yet felt"you are mistaken; Valentine, dying as she has, not only requires a priest, but an avenger. \_You\_, M. de Villefort, send for the priest; \_I\_ will be the avenger.

What do you mean, sir? asked Villefort, trembling at the new idea inspired by the delirium of Morrel.

I tell you, sir, that two persons exist in you; the father has mourned sufficiently, now let the procureur fulfil his office.

The eyes of Noirtier glistened, and dAvrigny approached.

Gentlemen, said Morrel, reading all that passed through the minds of the witnesses to the scene, I know what I am saying, and you know as well as I do what I am about to say"Valentine has been assassinated! Villefort hung his head, dAvrigny approached nearer, and Noirtier said Yes with his eyes.

Now, sir, continued Morrel, in these days no one can disappear by violent means without some inquiries being made as to the cause of her disappearance, even were she not a young, beautiful, and adorable creature like Valentine. Now, M. le Procureur du Roi, said Morrel with increasing vehemence, no mercy is allowed; I denounce the crime; it is your place to seek the assassin.

The young mans implacable eyes interrogated Villefort, who, on his side, glanced from Noirtier to dAvrigny. But instead of finding sympathy in the eyes of the doctor and his father, he only saw an expression as inflexible as that of Maximilian.

Yes, indicated the old man.

Assuredly, said dAvrigny.

Sir, said Villefort, striving to struggle against this triple force and his own emotion,"sir, you are deceived; no one commits crimes here. I am stricken by fate. It is horrible, indeed, but no one assassinates.

The eyes of Noirtier lighted up with rage, and dAvrigny prepared to speak. Morrel, however, extended his arm, and commanded silence.

And I say that murders \_are\_ committed here, said Morrel, whose voice, though lower in tone, lost none of its terrible distinctness: I tell you that this is the fourth victim within the last four months. I tell you, Valentines life was attempted by poison four days ago, though she escaped, owing to the precautions of M. Noirtier. I tell you

that the dose has been double, the poison changed, and that this time it has succeeded. I tell you that you know these things as well as I do, since this gentleman has forewarned you, both as a doctor and as a friend.

Oh, you rave, sir, exclaimed Villefort, in vain endeavoring to escape the net in which he was taken.

50095m

I rave? said Morrel; well, then, I appeal to M. d'Avrigny himself.

Ask him, sir, if he recollects the words he uttered in the garden of this house on the night of Madame de Saint-MÃ©rands death. You thought yourselves alone, and talked about that tragical death, and the fatality you mentioned then is the same which has caused the murder of Valentine. Villefort and d'Avrigny exchanged looks.

Yes, yes, continued Morrel; recall the scene, for the words you thought were only given to silence and solitude fell into my ears. Certainly, after witnessing the culpable indolence manifested by M. de Villefort towards his own relations, I ought to have denounced him to the authorities; then I should not have been an accomplice to thy death, as I now am, sweet, beloved Valentine; but the accomplice shall become the avenger. This fourth murder is apparent to all, and if thy father abandon thee, Valentine, it is I, and I swear it, that shall pursue the assassin.

And this time, as though nature had at least taken compassion on the vigorous frame, nearly bursting with its own strength, the words of Morrel were stifled in his throat; his breast heaved; the tears, so long rebellious, gushed from his eyes; and he threw himself weeping on his knees by the side of the bed.

Then d'Avrigny spoke. And I, too, he exclaimed in a low voice, I unite with M. Morrel in demanding justice for crime; my blood boils at the idea of having encouraged a murderer by my cowardly concession.

Oh, merciful Heavens! murmured Villefort. Morrel raised his head, and reading the eyes of the old man, which gleamed with unnatural lustre," Stay, he said, M. Noirtier wishes to speak.

Yes, indicated Noirtier, with an expression the more terrible, from all his faculties being centred in his glance.

Do you know the assassin? asked Morrel.

Yes, replied Noirtier.

And will you direct us? exclaimed the young man. Listen, M.

d'Avrigny, listen!

Noirtier looked upon Morrel with one of those melancholy smiles which had so often made Valentine happy, and thus fixed his attention. Then, having riveted the eyes of his interlocutor on his own, he glanced towards the door.

Do you wish me to leave? said Morrel, sadly.

Yes, replied Noirtier.

Alas, alas, sir, have pity on me!

The old mans eyes remained fixed on the door.

May I, at least, return? asked Morrel.

Yes.

Must I leave alone?

No.

Whom am I to take with me? The procureur?

No.

The doctor?

Yes.

You wish to remain alone with M. de Villefort?

Yes.

But can he understand you?

Yes.

Oh, said Villefort, inexpressibly delighted to think that the inquiries were to be made by him alone,"oh, be satisfied, I can understand my father. While uttering these words with this expression of joy, his teeth clashed together violently.

dAvrigny took the young mans arm, and led him out of the room. A more than deathlike silence then reigned in the house. At the end of a quarter of an hour a faltering footstep was heard, and Villefort appeared at the door of the apartment where dAvrigny and Morrel had been staying, one absorbed in meditation, the other in grief. You can come, he said, and led them back to Noirtier. Morrel looked attentively on Villefort. His face was livid, large drops rolled down his face, and in his fingers he held the fragments of a quill pen which he had torn to atoms. Gentlemen, he said in a hoarse voice, give me your word of honor that this horrible secret shall forever remain buried amongst ourselves! The two men drew back. I entreat you"" continued Villefort. But, said Morrel, the culprit"the murderer"the assassin. Do not alarm yourself, sir; justice will be done, said Villefort. My father has revealed the culprits name; my father thirsts for revenge as much as you do, yet even he conjures you as I do to keep this secret. Do you not, father? Yes, resolutely replied Noirtier. Morrel suffered an exclamation of horror and surprise to escape him. Oh, sir, said Villefort, arresting Maximilian by the arm, if my father, the inflexible man, makes this request, it is because he knows, be assured, that Valentine will be terribly revenged. Is it not so, father? The old man made a sign in the affirmative. Villefort continued: He knows me, and I have pledged my word to him. Rest assured, gentlemen, that within three days, in a less time than justice would demand, the revenge I shall have taken for the murder of my child will be such as to make the boldest heart tremble; and as he spoke these words he ground his teeth, and grasped the old mans senseless hand. Will this promise be fulfilled, M. Noirtier? asked Morrel, while dAvrigny looked inquiringly. Yes, replied Noirtier with an expression of sinister joy. Swear, then, said Villefort, joining the hands of Morrel and dAvrigny, swear that you will spare the honor of my house, and leave me to avenge my child. dAvrigny turned round and uttered a very feeble Yes, but Morrel, disengaging his hand, rushed to the bed, and after having pressed the cold lips of Valentine with his own, hurriedly left, uttering a long, deep groan of despair and anguish. We have before stated that all the servants had fled. M. de Villefort was therefore obliged to request M. dAvrigny to superintend all the arrangements consequent upon a death in a large city, more especially a death under such suspicious circumstances. It was something terrible to witness the silent agony, the mute despair of Noirtier, whose tears silently rolled down his cheeks. Villefort retired to his study, and dAvrigny left to summon the doctor of the mayoralty, whose office it is to examine bodies after decease, and who is expressly named the doctor of the dead. M. Noirtier could not be persuaded to quit his grandchild. At the end of a quarter of an hour M. dAvrigny returned with his associate; they found the outer gate closed, and not a servant remaining in the house; Villefort himself was obliged to open to them. But he stopped on the landing; he had not the courage to again visit the death chamber. The two doctors, therefore, entered the room alone. Noirtier was near the bed, pale, motionless, and silent as the corpse. The district doctor approached with the indifference of a man accustomed to spend half his time amongst the dead; he then lifted the sheet which was placed over the face, and just unclosed the lips. Alas, said dAvrigny, she is indeed dead, poor child!

50099m

Yes, answered the doctor laconically, dropping the sheet he had raised. Noirtier uttered a kind of hoarse, rattling sound; the old

mans eyes sparkled, and the good doctor understood that he wished to behold his child. He therefore approached the bed, and while his companion was dipping the fingers with which he had touched the lips of the corpse in chloride of lime, he uncovered the calm and pale face, which looked like that of a sleeping angel.

A tear, which appeared in the old mans eye, expressed his thanks to the doctor. The doctor of the dead then laid his permit on the corner of the table, and having fulfilled his duty, was conducted out by dAvrigny. Villefort met them at the door of his study; having in a few words thanked the district doctor, he turned to dAvrigny, and said: And now the priest.

Is there any particular priest you wish to pray with Valentine? asked dAvrigny.

No. said Villefort; fetch the nearest.

The nearest, said the district doctor, is a good Italian abbÃ©, who lives next door to you. Shall I call on him as I pass?

dAvrigny, said Villefort, be so kind, I beseech you, as to accompany this gentleman. Here is the key of the door, so that you can go in and out as you please; you will bring the priest with you, and will oblige me by introducing him into my childs room.

50101m

Do you wish to see him?

I only wish to be alone. You will excuse me, will you not? A priest can understand a fathers grief.

And M. de Villefort, giving the key to dAvrigny, again bade farewell to the strange doctor, and retired to his study, where he began to work. For some temperaments work is a remedy for all afflictions. As the doctors entered the street, they saw a man in a cassock standing on the threshold of the next door.

This is the abbÃ© of whom I spoke, said the doctor to dAvrigny.

dAvrigny accosted the priest.

Sir, he said, are you disposed to confer a great obligation on an unhappy father who has just lost his daughter? I mean M. de Villefort, the kings attorney.

Ah, said the priest, in a marked Italian accent; yes, I have heard that death is in that house.

Then I need not tell you what kind of service he requires of you.

I was about to offer myself, sir, said the priest; it is our mission to forestall our duties.

It is a young girl.

I know it, sir; the servants who fled from the house informed me. I also know that her name is Valentine, and I have already prayed for her.

Thank you, sir, said dAvrigny; since you have commenced your sacred office, deign to continue it. Come and watch by the dead, and all the wretched family will be grateful to you.

I am going, sir; and I do not hesitate to say that no prayers will be more fervent than mine.

dAvrigny took the priests hand, and without meeting Villefort, who was engaged in his study, they reached Valentines room, which on the following night was to be occupied by the undertakers. On entering the room, Noirtiers eyes met those of the abbÃ©, and no doubt he read some particular expression in them, for he remained in the room. dAvrigny recommended the attention of the priest to the living as well as to the dead, and the abbÃ© promised to devote his prayers to Valentine and his attentions to Noirtier.

In order, doubtless, that he might not be disturbed while fulfilling his sacred mission, the priest rose as soon as dAvrigny departed, and not only bolted the door through which the doctor had just left, but also that leading to Madame de Villeforts room.

Chapter 104. Danglars Signature

The next morning dawned dull and cloudy. During the night the undertakers had executed their melancholy office, and wrapped the

corpse in the winding-sheet, which, whatever may be said about the equality of death, is at least a last proof of the luxury so pleasing in life. This winding-sheet was nothing more than a beautiful piece of cambric, which the young girl had bought a fortnight before.

During the evening two men, engaged for the purpose, had carried Noirtier from Valentines room into his own, and contrary to all expectation there was no difficulty in withdrawing him from his child. The Abbé Busoni had watched till daylight, and then left without calling anyone. dAvrigny returned about eight oclock in the morning; he met Villefort on his way to Noirtiers room, and accompanied him to see how the old man had slept. They found him in the large armchair, which served him for a bed, enjoying a calm, nay, almost a smiling sleep. They both stood in amazement at the door.

See, said dAvrigny to Villefort, nature knows how to alleviate the deepest sorrow. No one can say that M. Noirtier did not love his child, and yet he sleeps.

Yes, you are right, replied Villefort, surprised; he sleeps, indeed! And this is the more strange, since the least contradiction keeps him awake all night.

Grief has stunned him, replied dAvrigny; and they both returned thoughtfully to the procureurs study.

See, I have not slept, said Villefort, showing his undisturbed bed; grief does not stun me. I have not been in bed for two nights; but then look at my desk; see what I have written during these two days and nights. I have filled those papers, and have made out the accusation against the assassin Benedetto. Oh, work, work,"my passion, my joy, my delight,"it is for thee to alleviate my sorrows! and he convulsively grasped the hand of dAvrigny.

Do you require my services now? asked dAvrigny.

No, said Villefort; only return again at eleven oclock; at twelve the"the"oh, Heavens, my poor, poor child! and the procureur again becoming a man, lifted up his eyes and groaned.

Shall you be present in the reception-room?

No; I have a cousin who has undertaken this sad office. I shall work, doctor"when I work I forget everything.

And, indeed, no sooner had the doctor left the room, than he was again absorbed in work. On the doorsteps dAvrigny met the cousin whom Villefort had mentioned, a personage as insignificant in our story as in the world he occupied"one of those beings designed from their birth to make themselves useful to others. He was punctual, dressed in black, with crape around his hat, and presented himself at his cousins with a face made up for the occasion, and which he could alter as might be required.

At eleven oclock the mourning-coaches rolled into the paved court, and the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré was filled with a crowd of idlers, equally pleased to witness the festivities or the mourning of the rich, and who rush with the same avidity to a funeral procession as to the marriage of a duchess.

Gradually the reception-room filled, and some of our old friends made their appearance"we mean Debray, Châteaufort-Renaud, and Beauchamp, accompanied by all the leading men of the day at the bar, in literature, or the army, for M. de Villefort moved in the first Parisian circles, less owing to his social position than to his personal merit.

The cousin standing at the door ushered in the guests, and it was rather a relief to the indifferent to see a person as unmoved as themselves, and who did not exact a mournful face or force tears, as would have been the case with a father, a brother, or a lover. Those who were acquainted soon formed into little groups. One of them was made of Debray, Châteaufort-Renaud, and Beauchamp.

Poor girl, said Debray, like the rest, paying an involuntary tribute to the sad event,"poor girl, so young, so rich, so beautiful! Could you have imagined this scene, Châteaufort-Renaud, when we saw her, at the

most three weeks ago, about to sign that contract?

Indeed, no, said Châteaurenault.

Did you know her?

I spoke to her once or twice at Madame de Morcerfs, among the rest; she appeared to me charming, though rather melancholy. Where is her stepmother? Do you know?

She is spending the day with the wife of the worthy gentleman who is receiving us.

50105m

Who is he?

Whom do you mean?

The gentleman who receives us? Is he a deputy?

Oh, no. I am condemned to witness those gentlemen every day, said Beauchamp; but he is perfectly unknown to me.

Have you mentioned this death in your paper?

It has been mentioned, but the article is not mine; indeed, I doubt if it will please M. Villefort, for it says that if four successive deaths had happened anywhere else than in the house of the king's attorney, he would have interested himself somewhat more about it.

Still, said Châteaurenault, Dr. d'Avrigny, who attends my mother, declares he is in despair about it. But whom are you seeking, Debray?

I am seeking the Count of Monte Cristo said the young man.

I met him on the boulevard, on my way here, said Beauchamp. I think he is about to leave Paris; he was going to his banker.

His banker? Danglars is his banker, is he not? asked Châteaurenault of Debray.

I believe so, replied the secretary with slight uneasiness. But Monte Cristo is not the only one I miss here; I do not see Morrel.

Morrel? Do they know him? asked Châteaurenault. I think he has only been introduced to Madame de Villefort.

Still, he ought to have been here, said Debray; I wonder what will be talked about tonight; this funeral is the news of the day. But hush, here comes our minister of justice; he will feel obliged to make some little speech to the cousin, and the three young men drew near to listen.

Beauchamp told the truth when he said that on his way to the funeral he had met Monte Cristo, who was directing his steps towards the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, to M. Danglars. The banker saw the carriage of the count enter the courtyard, and advanced to meet him with a sad, though affable smile.

Well, said he, extending his hand to Monte Cristo, I suppose you have come to sympathize with me, for indeed misfortune has taken possession of my house. When I perceived you, I was just asking myself whether I had not wished harm towards those poor Morcerfs, which would have justified the proverb of "He who wishes misfortunes to happen to others experiences them himself. Well, on my word of honor, I answered, "No! I wished no ill to Morcerf; he was a little proud, perhaps, for a man who like myself has risen from nothing; but we all have our faults. Do you know, count, that persons of our time of life"not that you belong to the class, you are still a young man,"but as I was saying, persons of our time of life have been very unfortunate this year. For example, look at the puritanical procureur, who has just lost his daughter, and in fact nearly all his family, in so singular a manner; Morcerf dishonored and dead; and then myself covered with ridicule through the villany of Benedetto; besides""

Besides what? asked the Count.

Alas, do you not know?

What new calamity?

My daughter""

Mademoiselle Danglars?

Eugénie has left us!

Good heavens, what are you telling me?

The truth, my dear count. Oh, how happy you must be in not having



either wife or children!

Do you think so?

Indeed I do.

And so Mademoiselle Danglars?"

She could not endure the insult offered to us by that wretch, so she asked permission to travel.

And is she gone?

The other night she left.

With Madame Danglars?

No, with a relation. But still, we have quite lost our dear Eug nie; for I doubt whether her pride will ever allow her to return to France. Still, baron, said Monte Cristo, family griefs, or indeed any other affliction which would crush a man whose child was his only treasure, are endurable to a millionaire. Philosophers may well say, and practical men will always support the opinion, that money mitigates many trials; and if you admit the efficacy of this sovereign balm, you ought to be very easily consoled"you, the king of finance, the focus of immeasurable power.

Danglars looked at him askance, as though to ascertain whether he spoke seriously.

Yes, he answered, if a fortune brings consolation, I ought to be consoled; I am rich.

So rich, dear sir, that your fortune resembles the pyramids; if you wished to demolish them you could not, and if it were possible, you would not dare!

Danglars smiled at the good-natured pleasantry of the count. That reminds me, he said, that when you entered I was on the point of signing five little bonds; I have already signed two: will you allow me to do the same to the others?

Pray do so.

There was a moments silence, during which the noise of the bankers pen was alone heard, while Monte Cristo examined the gilt mouldings on the ceiling.

Are they Spanish, Haitian, or Neapolitan bonds? said Monte Cristo.

No, said Danglars, smiling, they are bonds on the bank of France, payable to bearer. Stay, count, he added, you, who may be called the emperor, if I claim the title of king of finance, have you many pieces of paper of this size, each worth a million?

The count took into his hands the papers, which Danglars had so proudly presented to him, and read:"

~To the Governor of the Bank. Please pay to my order, from the fund deposited by me, the sum of a million, and charge the same to my account.

Baron Danglars.

One, two, three, four, five, said Monte Cristo; five millions"why what a Cr sus you are!

This is how I transact business, said Danglars.

It is really wonderful, said the count; above all, if, as I suppose, it is payable at sight.

It is, indeed, said Danglars.

It is a fine thing to have such credit; really, it is only in France these things are done. Five millions on five little scraps of paper!"it must be seen to be believed.

You do not doubt it?

No!

You say so with an accent"stay, you shall be convinced; take my clerk to the bank, and you will see him leave it with an order on the Treasury for the same sum.

No, said Monte Cristo folding the five notes, most decidedly not; the thing is so curious, I will make the experiment myself. I am credited on you for six millions. I have drawn nine hundred thousand francs, you therefore still owe me five millions and a hundred thousand francs. I will take the five scraps of paper that I now hold as bonds,

with your signature alone, and here is a receipt in full for the six millions between us. I had prepared it beforehand, for I am much in want of money today.

And Monte Cristo placed the bonds in his pocket with one hand, while with the other he held out the receipt to Danglars. If a thunderbolt had fallen at the bankers feet, he could not have experienced greater terror.

What, he stammered, do you mean to keep that money? Excuse me, excuse me, but I owe this money to the charity fund,"a deposit which I promised to pay this morning.

Oh, well, then, said Monte Cristo, I am not particular about these five notes, pay me in a different form; I wished, from curiosity, to take these, that I might be able to say that without any advice or preparation the house of Danglars had paid me five millions without a minutes delay; it would have been remarkable. But here are your bonds; pay me differently; and he held the bonds towards Danglars, who seized them like a vulture extending its claws to withhold the food that is being wrested from its grasp.

Suddenly he rallied, made a violent effort to restrain himself, and then a smile gradually widened the features of his disturbed countenance.

50109m

Certainly, he said, your receipt is money.

Oh dear, yes; and if you were at Rome, the house of Thomson & French would make no more difficulty about paying the money on my receipt than you have just done.

Pardon me, count, pardon me.

Then I may keep this money?

Yes, said Danglars, while the perspiration started from the roots of his hair. Yes, keep it"keep it.

Monte Cristo replaced the notes in his pocket with that indescribable expression which seemed to say, Come, reflect; if you repent there is still time.

No, said Danglars, no, decidedly no; keep my signatures. But you know none are so formal as bankers in transacting business; I intended this money for the charity fund, and I seemed to be robbing them if I did not pay them with these precise bonds. How absurd"as if one crown were not as good as another. Excuse me; and he began to laugh loudly, but nervously.

Certainly, I excuse you, said Monte Cristo graciously, and pocket them. And he placed the bonds in his pocket-book.

But, said Danglars, there is still a sum of one hundred thousand francs?

Oh, a mere nothing, said Monte Cristo. The balance would come to about that sum; but keep it, and we shall be quits.

Count, said Danglars, are you speaking seriously?

I never joke with bankers, said Monte Cristo in a freezing manner, which repelled impertinence; and he turned to the door, just as the valet de chambre announced:

M. de Boville, Receiver-General of the charities.

\_Ma foi\_, said Monte Cristo; I think I arrived just in time to obtain your signatures, or they would have been disputed with me.

Danglars again became pale, and hastened to conduct the count out.

Monte Cristo exchanged a ceremonious bow with M. de Boville, who was standing in the waiting-room, and who was introduced into Danglars room as soon as the count had left.

The counts serious face was illumined by a faint smile, as he noticed the portfolio which the receiver-general held in his hand. At the door he found his carriage, and was immediately driven to the bank.

Meanwhile Danglars, repressing all emotion, advanced to meet the receiver-general. We need not say that a smile of condescension was stamped upon his lips.

Good-morning, creditor, said he; for I wager anything it is the

creditor who visits me.

You are right, baron, answered M. de Boville; the charities present themselves to you through me; the widows and orphans depute me to receive alms to the amount of five millions from you.

And yet they say orphans are to be pitied, said Danglars, wishing to prolong the jest. Poor things!

Here I am in their name, said M. de Boville; but did you receive my letter yesterday?

Yes.

I have brought my receipt.

50111m

My dear M. de Boville, your widows and orphans must oblige me by waiting twenty-four hours, since M. de Monte Cristo whom you just saw leaving here"you did see him, I think?

Yes; well?

Well, M. de Monte Cristo has just carried off their five millions.

How so?

The count has an unlimited credit upon me; a credit opened by Thomson & French, of Rome; he came to demand five millions at once, which I paid him with checks on the bank. My funds are deposited there, and you can understand that if I draw out ten millions on the same day it will appear rather strange to the governor. Two days will be a different thing, said Danglars, smiling.

Come, said Boville, with a tone of entire incredulity, five millions to that gentleman who just left, and who bowed to me as though he knew me?

Perhaps he knows you, though you do not know him; M. de Monte Cristo knows everybody.

Five millions!

Here is his receipt. Believe your own eyes. M. de Boville took the paper Danglars presented him, and read:

Received of Baron Danglars the sum of five million one hundred thousand francs, to be repaid on demand by the house of Thomson & French of Rome.

It is really true, said M. de Boville.

Do you know the house of Thomson & French?

Yes, I once had business to transact with it to the amount of 200,000 francs; but since then I have not heard it mentioned.

It is one of the best houses in Europe, said Danglars, carelessly throwing down the receipt on his desk.

And he had five millions in your hands alone! Why, this Count of Monte Cristo must be a nabob?

Indeed I do not know what he is; he has three unlimited credits"one on me, one on Rothschild, one on Lafitte; and, you see, he added carelessly, he has given me the preference, by leaving a balance of 100,000 francs.

M. de Boville manifested signs of extraordinary admiration.

I must visit him, he said, and obtain some pious grant from him.

Oh, you may make sure of him; his charities alone amount to 20,000 francs a month.

It is magnificent! I will set before him the example of Madame de Morcerf and her son.

What example?

They gave all their fortune to the hospitals.

What fortune?

Their own"M. de Morcerfs, who is deceased.

For what reason?

Because they would not spend money so guiltily acquired.

And what are they to live upon?

The mother retires into the country, and the son enters the army.

50113m

Well, I must confess, these are scruples.

I registered their deed of gift yesterday.

And how much did they possess?

Oh, not much—from twelve to thirteen hundred thousand francs. But to return to our millions.

Certainly, said Danglars, in the most natural tone in the world. Are you then pressed for this money?

Yes; for the examination of our cash takes place tomorrow.

Tomorrow? Why did you not tell me so before? Why, it is as good as a century! At what hour does the examination take place?

At two oclock.

Send at twelve, said Danglars, smiling.

M. de Boville said nothing, but nodded his head, and took up the portfolio.

Now I think of it, you can do better, said Danglars.

How do you mean?

The receipt of M. de Monte Cristo is as good as money; take it to Rothschilds or Lafittes, and they will take it off your hands at once.

What, though payable at Rome?

Certainly; it will only cost you a discount of 5,000 or 6,000 francs.

The receiver started back.

\_Ma foi!\_ he said, I prefer waiting till tomorrow. What a proposition!

I thought, perhaps, said Danglars with supreme impertinence, that you had a deficiency to make up?

Indeed, said the receiver.

And if that were the case it would be worth while to make some sacrifice.

Thank you, no, sir.

Then it will be tomorrow.

Yes; but without fail.

Ah, you are laughing at me; send tomorrow at twelve, and the bank shall be notified.

I will come myself.

Better still, since it will afford me the pleasure of seeing you.

They shook hands.

By the way, said M. de Boville, are you not going to the funeral of poor Mademoiselle de Villefort, which I met on my road here?

No, said the banker; I have appeared rather ridiculous since that affair of Benedetto, so I remain in the background.

Bah, you are wrong. How were you to blame in that affair?

Listen—when one bears an irreproachable name, as I do, one is rather sensitive.

Everybody pities you, sir; and, above all, Mademoiselle Danglars!

Poor Eugénie! said Danglars; do you know she is going to embrace a religious life?

No.

Alas, it is unhappily but too true. The day after the event, she decided on leaving Paris with a nun of her acquaintance; they are gone to seek a very strict convent in Italy or Spain.

Oh, it is terrible! and M. de Boville retired with this exclamation, after expressing acute sympathy with the father. But he had scarcely left before Danglars, with an energy of action those can alone understand who have seen Robert Macaire represented by Frédéric, exclaimed:

Fool!

Then enclosing Monte Cristos receipt in a little pocket-book, he added: "Yes, come at twelve oclock; I shall then be far away.

Then he double-locked his door, emptied all his drawers, collected about fifty thousand francs in bank-notes, burned several papers, left others exposed to view, and then commenced writing a letter which he addressed:

To Madame la Baronne Danglars.

I will place it on her table myself tonight, he murmured. Then taking

a passport from his drawer he said, "Good, it is available for two months longer.

#### Chapter 105. The Cemetery of Père-Lachaise

M. de Boville had indeed met the funeral procession which was taking Valentine to her last home on earth. The weather was dull and stormy, a cold wind shook the few remaining yellow leaves from the boughs of the trees, and scattered them among the crowd which filled the boulevards. M. de Villefort, a true Parisian, considered the cemetery of Père-Lachaise alone worthy of receiving the mortal remains of a Parisian family; there alone the corpses belonging to him would be surrounded by worthy associates. He had therefore purchased a vault, which was quickly occupied by members of his family. On the front of the monument was inscribed: The families of Saint-Méran and Villefort, for such had been the last wish expressed by poor Renée, Valentines mother. The pompous procession therefore wended its way towards Père-Lachaise from the Faubourg Saint-Honoré. Having crossed Paris, it passed through the Faubourg du Temple, then leaving the exterior boulevards, it reached the cemetery. More than fifty private carriages followed the twenty mourning-coaches, and behind them more than five hundred persons joined in the procession on foot.

50117m

These last consisted of all the young people whom Valentines death had struck like a thunderbolt, and who, notwithstanding the raw chilliness of the season, could not refrain from paying a last tribute to the memory of the beautiful, chaste, and adorable girl, thus cut off in the flower of her youth.

As they left Paris, an equipage with four horses, at full speed, was seen to draw up suddenly; it contained Monte Cristo. The count left the carriage and mingled in the crowd who followed on foot. Châteaurenault perceived him and immediately alighting from his \_coupé\_, joined him; Beauchamp did the same.

The count looked attentively through every opening in the crowd; he was evidently watching for someone, but his search ended in disappointment.

50119m

Where is Morrel? he asked; do either of these gentlemen know where he is?

We have already asked that question, said Châteaurenault, for none of us has seen him.

The count was silent, but continued to gaze around him. At length they arrived at the cemetery. The piercing eye of Monte Cristo glanced through clusters of bushes and trees, and was soon relieved from all anxiety, for seeing a shadow glide between the yew-trees, Monte Cristo recognized him whom he sought.

One funeral is generally very much like another in this magnificent metropolis. Black figures are seen scattered over the long white avenues; the silence of earth and heaven is alone broken by the noise made by the crackling branches of hedges planted around the monuments; then follows the melancholy chant of the priests, mingled now and then with a sob of anguish, escaping from some woman concealed behind a mass of flowers.

The shadow Monte Cristo had noticed passed rapidly behind the tomb of Abélard and Héloïse, placed itself close to the heads of the horses belonging to the hearse, and following the undertakers men, arrived with them at the spot appointed for the burial. Each persons attention was occupied. Monte Cristo saw nothing but the shadow, which no one else observed. Twice the count left the ranks to see whether the object of his interest had any concealed weapon beneath his clothes. When the procession stopped, this shadow was recognized as Morrel, who, with his coat buttoned up to his throat, his face livid, and convulsively crushing his hat between his fingers, leaned against a tree, situated on an elevation commanding the mausoleum, so that none of the funeral details could escape his observation.

Everything was conducted in the usual manner. A few men, the least

impressed of all by the scene, pronounced a discourse, some deploring this premature death, others expatiating on the grief of the father, and one very ingenious person quoting the fact that Valentine had solicited pardon of her father for criminals on whom the arm of justice was ready to fall"until at length they exhausted their stores of metaphor and mournful speeches, elaborate variations on the stanzas of Malherbe to Du P  rier.

Monte Cristo heard and saw nothing, or rather he only saw Morrel, whose calmness had a frightful effect on those who knew what was passing in his heart.

See, said Beauchamp, pointing out Morrel to Debray. What is he doing up there? And they called Ch  teau-Renauds attention to him.

How pale he is! said Ch  teau-Renaud, shuddering.

He is cold, said Debray.

Not at all, said Ch  teau-Renaud, slowly; I think he is violently agitated. He is very susceptible.

Bah, said Debray; he scarcely knew Mademoiselle de Villefort; you said so yourself.

True. Still I remember he danced three times with her at Madame de Morcerfs. Do you recollect that ball, count, where you produced such an effect?

50121m

No, I do not, replied Monte Cristo, without even knowing of what or to whom he was speaking, so much was he occupied in watching Morrel, who was holding his breath with emotion.

The discourse is over; farewell, gentlemen, said the count, unceremoniously.

And he disappeared without anyone seeing whither he went.

The funeral being over, the guests returned to Paris. Ch  teau-Renaud looked for a moment for Morrel; but while they were watching the departure of the count, Morrel had quitted his post, and

Ch  teau-Renaud, failing in his search, joined Debray and Beauchamp.

Monte Cristo concealed himself behind a large tomb and awaited the arrival of Morrel, who by degrees approached the tomb now abandoned by spectators and workmen. Morrel threw a glance around, but before it reached the spot occupied by Monte Cristo the latter had advanced yet nearer, still unperceived. The young man knelt down. The count, with outstretched neck and glaring eyes, stood in an attitude ready to pounce upon Morrel upon the first occasion. Morrel bent his head till it touched the stone, then clutching the grating with both hands, he murmured:

Oh, Valentine!

The counts heart was pierced by the utterance of these two words; he stepped forward, and touching the young mans shoulder, said:

I was looking for you, my friend. Monte Cristo expected a burst of passion, but he was deceived, for Morrel turning round, said calmly, "You see I was praying. The scrutinizing glance of the count searched the young man from head to foot. He then seemed more easy.

Shall I drive you back to Paris? he asked.

No, thank you.

Do you wish anything?

Leave me to pray.

The count withdrew without opposition, but it was only to place himself in a situation where he could watch every movement of Morrel, who at length arose, brushed the dust from his knees, and turned towards Paris, without once looking back. He walked slowly down the Rue de la Roquette. The count, dismissing his carriage, followed him about a hundred paces behind. Maximilian crossed the canal and entered the Rue Meslay by the boulevards.

Five minutes after the door had been closed on Morrels entrance, it was again opened for the count. Julie was at the entrance of the garden, where she was attentively watching Penelon, who, entering with zeal into his profession of gardener, was very busy grafting some

Bengal roses. Ah, count, she exclaimed, with the delight manifested by every member of the family whenever he visited the Rue Meslay. Maximilian has just returned, has he not, madame? asked the count.  
50123m

Yes, I think I saw him pass; but pray, call Emmanuel.

Excuse me, madame, but I must go up to Maximilians room this instant, replied Monte Cristo, I have something of the greatest importance to tell him.

Go, then, she said with a charming smile, which accompanied him until he had disappeared.

Monte Cristo soon ran up the staircase conducting from the ground floor to Maximilians room; when he reached the landing he listened attentively, but all was still. Like many old houses occupied by a single family, the room door was panelled with glass; but it was locked, Maximilian was shut in, and it was impossible to see what was passing in the room, because a red curtain was drawn before the glass. The counts anxiety was manifested by a bright color which seldom appeared on the face of that imperturbable man.

What shall I do! he uttered, and reflected for a moment; shall I ring? No, the sound of a bell, announcing a visitor, will but accelerate the resolution of one in Maximilians situation, and then the bell would be followed by a louder noise.

Monte Cristo trembled from head to foot and as if his determination had been taken with the rapidity of lightning, he struck one of the panes