

ake" a glass of sherry, port, or
Alicante?

Alicante, if you please; it is my favorite wine.

I have some that is very good. You will take a biscuit with it, will
you not?

Yes, I will take a biscuit, as you are so obliging.

Monte Cristo rang; Baptistin appeared. The count advanced to meet him.

Well? said he in a low voice.

The young man is here, said the valet de chambre in the same tone.

Into what room did you take him?

Into the blue drawing-room, according to your excellencys orders.

Thats right; now bring the Alicante and some biscuits.

Baptistin left the room.

Really, said the major, I am quite ashamed of the trouble I am
giving you.

Pray dont mention such a thing, said the count. Baptistin re-entered
with glasses, wine, and biscuits. The count filled one glass, but in
the other he only poured a few drops of the ruby-colored liquid. The
bottle was covered with spiders webs, and all the other signs which
indicate the age of wine more truly than do wrinkles on a mans face.
The major made a wise choice; he took the full glass and a biscuit. The
count told Baptistin to leave the plate within reach of his guest, who
began by sipping the Alicante with an expression of great satisfaction,
and then delicately steeped his biscuit in the wine.

30123m

So, sir, you lived at Lucca, did you? You were rich, noble, held in
great esteem" had all that could render a man happy?

All, said the major, hastily swallowing his biscuit, positively
all.

And yet there was one thing wanting in order to complete your
happiness?

Only one thing, said the Italian.

And that one thing, your lost child.

Ah, said the major, taking a second biscuit, that consummation of my
happiness was indeed wanting. The worthy major raised his eyes to
heaven and sighed.

Let me hear, then, said the count, who this deeply regretted son
was; for I always understood you were a bachelor.

That was the general opinion, sir, said the major, and I"

Yes, replied the count, and you confirmed the report. A youthful
indiscretion, I suppose, which you were anxious to conceal from the
world at large?

The major recovered himself, and resumed his usual calm manner, at the
same time casting his eyes down, either to give himself time to compose
his countenance, or to assist his imagination, all the while giving an
under-look at the count, the protracted smile on whose lips still
announced the same polite curiosity.

Yes, said the major, I did wish this fault to be hidden from every
eye.

Not on your own account, surely, replied Monte Cristo; for a man is
above that sort of thing?

Oh, no, certainly not on my own account, said the major with a smile
and a shake of the head.

But for the sake of the mother? said the count.

Yes, for the mothers sake" his poor mother! cried the major, taking a
third biscuit.

Take some more wine, my dear Cavalcanti, said the count, pouring out
for him a second glass of Alicante; your emotion has quite overcome
you.

His poor mother, murmured the major, trying to get the lachrymal
gland in operation, so as to moisten the corner of his eye with a false
tear.

She belonged to one of the first families in Italy, I think, did she

not?

She was of a noble family of Fiesole, count.

And her name was""

Do you desire to know her name""?

Oh, said Monte Cristo it would be quite superfluous for you to tell me, for I already know it.

The count knows everything, said the Italian, bowing.

Oliva Corsinari, was it not?

Oliva Corsinari!

A marchioness?

A marchioness!

And you married her at last, notwithstanding the opposition of her family?

Yes, that was the way it ended.

And you have doubtless brought all your papers with you? said Monte Cristo.

What papers?

The certificate of your marriage with Oliva Corsinari, and the register of your child's birth.

The register of my child's birth?

The register of the birth of Andrea Cavalcanti"of your son; is not his name Andrea?

I believe so, said the major.

What? You believe so?

I dare not positively assert it, as he has been lost for so long a time.

Well, then, said Monte Cristo you have all the documents with you?

Your excellency, I regret to say that, not knowing it was necessary to come provided with these papers, I neglected to bring them.

That is unfortunate, returned Monte Cristo.

Were they, then, so necessary?

They were indispensable.

The major passed his hand across his brow. Ah, _perbacco_, indispensable, were they?

Certainly they were; supposing there were to be doubts raised as to the validity of your marriage or the legitimacy of your child?

True, said the major, there might be doubts raised.

In that case your son would be very unpleasantly situated.

It would be fatal to his interests.

It might cause him to fail in some desirable matrimonial alliance.

O peccato!

You must know that in France they are very particular on these points; it is not sufficient, as in Italy, to go to the priest and say, ~We love each other, and want you to marry us. Marriage is a civil affair in France, and in order to marry in an orthodox manner you must have papers which undeniably establish your identity.

That is the misfortune! You see I have not these necessary papers.

Fortunately, I have them, though, said Monte Cristo.

You?

Yes.

You have them?

I have them.

Ah, indeed? said the major, who, seeing the object of his journey frustrated by the absence of the papers, feared also that his forgetfulness might give rise to some difficulty concerning the 48,000 francs"ah, indeed, that is a fortunate circumstance; yes, that really is lucky, for it never occurred to me to bring them.

I do not at all wonder at it"one cannot think of everything; but, happily, the Abb  Busoni thought for you.

He is an excellent person.

He is extremely prudent and thoughtful.

He is an admirable man, said the major; and he sent them to you?

Here they are.

The major clasped his hands in token of admiration.
You married Oliva Corsinari in the church of San Paolo del Monte-Cattini; here is the priests certificate.
Yes indeed, there it is truly, said the Italian, looking on with astonishment.
And here is Andrea Cavalcanti's baptismal register, given by the curÃ© of Saravezza.
All quite correct.
Take these documents, then; they do not concern me. You will give them to your son, who will, of course, take great care of them.
I should think so, indeed! If he were to lose them""
Well, and if he were to lose them? said Monte Cristo.
In that case, replied the major, it would be necessary to write to the curÃ© for duplicates, and it would be some time before they could be obtained.
It would be a difficult matter to arrange, said Monte Cristo.
Almost an impossibility, replied the major.
I am very glad to see that you understand the value of these papers.
I regard them as invaluable.
Now, said Monte Cristo as to the mother of the young man""
As to the mother of the young man"" repeated the Italian, with anxiety.
As regards the Marchesa Corsinari""
Really, said the major, difficulties seem to thicken upon us; will she be wanted in any way?
No, sir, replied Monte Cristo; besides, has she not""
Yes, sir, said the major, she has""
30127m
Paid the last debt of nature?
Alas, yes, returned the Italian.
I knew that, said Monte Cristo; she has been dead these ten years.
And I am still mourning her loss, exclaimed the major, drawing from his pocket a checked handkerchief, and alternately wiping first the left and then the right eye.
What would you have? said Monte Cristo; we are all mortal. Now, you understand, my dear Monsieur Cavalcanti, that it is useless for you to tell people in France that you have been separated from your son for fifteen years. Stories of gypsies, who steal children, are not at all in vogue in this part of the world, and would not be believed. You sent him for his education to a college in one of the provinces, and now you wish him to complete his education in the Parisian world. That is the reason which has induced you to leave Via Reggio, where you have lived since the death of your wife. That will be sufficient.
You think so?
Certainly.
Very well, then.
If they should hear of the separation""
Ah, yes; what could I say?
That an unfaithful tutor, bought over by the enemies of your family""
By the Corsinari?
Precisely. Had stolen away this child, in order that your name might become extinct.
That is reasonable, since he is an only son.
Well, now that all is arranged, do not let these newly awakened remembrances be forgotten. You have, doubtless, already guessed that I was preparing a surprise for you?
An agreeable one? asked the Italian.
Ah, I see the eye of a father is no more to be deceived than his heart.
Hum! said the major.
Someone has told you the secret; or, perhaps, you guessed that he was here.
That who was here?

Your child"your son"your Andrea!

I did guess it, replied the major with the greatest possible coolness. Then he is here?

He is, said Monte Cristo; when the valet de chambre came in just now, he told me of his arrival.

Ah, very well, very well, said the major, clutching the buttons of his coat at each exclamation.

My dear sir, said Monte Cristo, I understand your emotion; you must have time to recover yourself. I will, in the meantime, go and prepare the young man for this much-desired interview, for I presume that he is not less impatient for it than yourself.

I should quite imagine that to be the case, said Cavalcanti.

Well, in a quarter of an hour he shall be with you.

You will bring him, then? You carry your goodness so far as even to present him to me yourself?

No; I do not wish to come between a father and son. Your interview will be private. But do not be uneasy; even if the powerful voice of nature should be silent, you cannot well mistake him; he will enter by this door. He is a fine young man, of fair complexion"a little too fair, perhaps"pleasing in manners; but you will see and judge for yourself.

By the way, said the major, you know I have only the 2,000 francs which the Abb  Busoni sent me; this sum I have expended upon travelling expenses, and""

And you want money; that is a matter of course, my dear M. Cavalcanti.

Well, here are 8,000 francs on account.

The majors eyes sparkled brilliantly.

It is 40,000 francs which I now owe you, said Monte Cristo.

Does your excellency wish for a receipt? said the major, at the same time slipping the money into the inner pocket of his coat.

For what? said the count.

I thought you might want it to show the Abb  Busoni.

Well, when you receive the remaining 40,000, you shall give me a receipt in full. Between honest men such excessive precaution is, I think, quite unnecessary.

Yes, so it is, between perfectly upright people.

One word more, said Monte Cristo.

Say on.

You will permit me to make one remark?

Certainly; pray do so.

Then I should advise you to leave off wearing that style of dress.

Indeed, said the major, regarding himself with an air of complete satisfaction.

Yes. It may be worn at Via Reggio; but that costume, however elegant in itself, has long been out of fashion in Paris.

Thats unfortunate.

Oh, if you really are attached to your old mode of dress; you can easily resume it when you leave Paris.

But what shall I wear?

What you find in your trunks.

In my trunks? I have but one portmanteau.

I dare say you have nothing else with you. What is the use of boring ones self with so many things? Besides an old soldier always likes to march with as little baggage as possible.

That is just the case"precisely so.

But you are a man of foresight and prudence, therefore you sent your luggage on before you. It has arrived at the H tel des Princes, Rue de Richelieu. It is there you are to take up your quarters.

Then, in these trunks""

I presume you have given orders to your valet de chambre to put in all you are likely to need,"your plain clothes and your uniform. On grand occasions you must wear your uniform; that will look very well. Do not forget your crosses. They still laugh at them in France, and yet always

wear them, for all that.

Very well, very well, said the major, who was in ecstasy at the attention paid him by the count.

Now, said Monte Cristo, that you have fortified yourself against all painful excitement, prepare yourself, my dear M. Cavalcanti, to meet your lost Andrea.

Saying which Monte Cristo bowed, and disappeared behind the tapestry, leaving the major fascinated beyond expression with the delightful reception which he had received at the hands of the count.

Chapter 56. Andrea Cavalcanti

The Count of Monte Cristo entered the adjoining room, which Baptistin had designated as the drawing-room, and found there a young man, of graceful demeanor and elegant appearance, who had arrived in a cab about half an hour previously. Baptistin had not found any difficulty in recognizing the person who presented himself at the door for admittance. He was certainly the tall young man with light hair, red beard, black eyes, and brilliant complexion, whom his master had so particularly described to him. When the count entered the room the young man was carelessly stretched on a sofa, tapping his boot with the gold-headed cane which he held in his hand. On perceiving the count he rose quickly.

The Count of Monte Cristo, I believe? said he.

Yes, sir, and I think I have the honor of addressing Count Andrea Cavalcanti?

Count Andrea Cavalcanti, repeated the young man, accompanying his words with a bow.

You are charged with a letter of introduction addressed to me, are you not? said the count.

I did not mention that, because the signature seemed to me so strange.

The letter signed ~Sinbad the Sailor, is it not?

Exactly so. Now, as I have never known any Sinbad, with the exception of the one celebrated in the _Thousand and One Nights_" "

Well, it is one of his descendants, and a great friend of mine; he is a very rich Englishman, eccentric almost to insanity, and his real name is Lord Wilmore.

Ah, indeed? Then that explains everything that is extraordinary, said Andrea. He is, then, the same Englishman whom I met"at"ah"yes, indeed.

Well, monsieur, I am at your service.

If what you say be true, replied the count, smiling, perhaps you will be kind enough to give me some account of yourself and your family?

Certainly, I will do so, said the young man, with a quickness which gave proof of his ready invention. I am (as you have said) the Count Andrea Cavalcanti, son of Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, a descendant of the Cavalcanti whose names are inscribed in the golden book at Florence. Our family, although still rich (for my fathers income amounts to half a million), has experienced many misfortunes, and I myself was, at the age of five years, taken away by the treachery of my tutor, so that for fifteen years I have not seen the author of my existence. Since I have arrived at years of discretion and become my own master, I have been constantly seeking him, but all in vain. At length I received this letter from your friend, which states that my father is in Paris, and authorizes me to address myself to you for information respecting him.

Really, all you have related to me is exceedingly interesting, said Monte Cristo, observing the young man with a gloomy satisfaction; and you have done well to conform in everything to the wishes of my friend Sinbad; for your father is indeed here, and is seeking you.

The count from the moment of first entering the drawing-room, had not once lost sight of the expression of the young mans countenance; he had admired the assurance of his look and the firmness of his voice; but at these words, so natural in themselves, Your father is indeed

here, and is seeking you, young Andrea started, and exclaimed, My father? Is my father here?

Most undoubtedly, replied Monte Cristo; your father, Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti. The expression of terror which, for the moment, had overspread the features of the young man, had now disappeared.

Ah, yes, that is the name, certainly. Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti. And you really mean to say; monsieur, that my dear father is here?

Yes, sir; and I can even add that I have only just left his company.

The history which he related to me of his lost son touched me to the quick; indeed, his griefs, hopes, and fears on that subject might furnish material for a most touching and pathetic poem. At length, he one day received a letter, stating that the abductors of his son now offered to restore him, or at least to give notice where he might be found, on condition of receiving a large sum of money, by way of ransom. Your father did not hesitate an instant, and the sum was sent to the frontier of Piedmont, with a passport signed for Italy. You were in the south of France, I think?

Yes, replied Andrea, with an embarrassed air, I was in the south of France.

A carriage was to await you at Nice?

Precisely so; and it conveyed me from Nice to Genoa, from Genoa to Turin, from Turin to Chambéry, from Chambéry to Pont-de-Beauvoisin, and from Pont-de-Beauvoisin to Paris.

30133m

Indeed? Then your father ought to have met with you on the road, for it is exactly the same route which he himself took, and that is how we have been able to trace your journey to this place.

But, said Andrea, if my father had met me, I doubt if he would have recognized me; I must be somewhat altered since he last saw me.

Oh, the voice of nature, said Monte Cristo.

True, interrupted the young man, I had not looked upon it in that light.

Now, replied Monte Cristo there is only one source of uneasiness left in your fathers mind, which is this—he is anxious to know how you have been employed during your long absence from him, how you have been treated by your persecutors, and if they have conducted themselves towards you with all the deference due to your rank. Finally, he is anxious to see if you have been fortunate enough to escape the bad moral influence to which you have been exposed, and which is infinitely more to be dreaded than any physical suffering; he wishes to discover if the fine abilities with which nature had endowed you have been weakened by want of culture; and, in short, whether you consider yourself capable of resuming and retaining in the world the high position to which your rank entitles you.

Sir! exclaimed the young man, quite astounded, I hope no false report””

As for myself, I first heard you spoken of by my friend Wilmore, the philanthropist. I believe he found you in some unpleasant position, but do not know of what nature, for I did not ask, not being inquisitive. Your misfortunes engaged his sympathies, so you see you must have been interesting. He told me that he was anxious to restore you to the position which you had lost, and that he would seek your father until he found him. He did seek, and has found him, apparently, since he is here now; and, finally, my friend apprised me of your coming, and gave me a few other instructions relative to your future fortune. I am quite aware that my friend Wilmore is peculiar, but he is sincere, and as rich as a gold mine, consequently, he may indulge his eccentricities without any fear of their ruining him, and I have promised to adhere to his instructions. Now, sir, pray do not be offended at the question I am about to put to you, as it comes in the way of my duty as your patron. I would wish to know if the misfortunes which have happened to you—misfortunes entirely beyond your control, and which in no degree diminish my regard for you—I would wish to know if they have not, in

some measure, contributed to render you a stranger to the world in which your fortune and your name entitle you to make a conspicuous figure?

Sir, returned the young man, with a reassurance of manner, make your mind easy on this score. Those who took me from my father, and who always intended, sooner or later, to sell me again to my original proprietor, as they have now done, calculated that, in order to make the most of their bargain, it would be politic to leave me in possession of all my personal and hereditary worth, and even to increase the value, if possible. I have, therefore, received a very good education, and have been treated by these kidnappers very much as the slaves were treated in Asia Minor, whose masters made them grammarians, doctors, and philosophers, in order that they might fetch a higher price in the Roman market.

Monte Cristo smiled with satisfaction; it appeared as if he had not expected so much from M. Andrea Cavalcanti.

Besides, continued the young man, if there did appear some defect in education, or offence against the established forms of etiquette, I suppose it would be excused, in consideration of the misfortunes which accompanied my birth, and followed me through my youth.

Well, said Monte Cristo in an indifferent tone, you will do as you please, count, for you are the master of your own actions, and are the person most concerned in the matter, but if I were you, I would not divulge a word of these adventures. Your history is quite a romance, and the world, which delights in romances in yellow covers, strangely mistrusts those which are bound in living parchment, even though they be gilded like yourself. This is the kind of difficulty which I wished to represent to you, my dear count. You would hardly have recited your touching history before it would go forth to the world, and be deemed unlikely and unnatural. You would be no longer a lost child found, but you would be looked upon as an upstart, who had sprung up like a mushroom in the night. You might excite a little curiosity, but it is not everyone who likes to be made the centre of observation and the subject of unpleasant remark.

I agree with you, monsieur, said the young man, turning pale, and, in spite of himself, trembling beneath the scrutinizing look of his companion, such consequences would be extremely unpleasant.

Nevertheless, you must not exaggerate the evil, said Monte Cristo, for by endeavoring to avoid one fault you will fall into another. You must resolve upon one simple and single line of conduct, and for a man of your intelligence, this plan is as easy as it is necessary; you must form honorable friendships, and by that means counteract the prejudice which may attach to the obscurity of your former life.

Andrea visibly changed countenance.

I would offer myself as your surety and friendly adviser, said Monte Cristo, did I not possess a moral distrust of my best friends, and a sort of inclination to lead others to doubt them too; therefore, in departing from this rule, I should (as the actors say) be playing a part quite out of my line, and should, therefore, run the risk of being hissed, which would be an act of folly.

However, your excellency, said Andrea, in consideration of Lord Wilmore, by whom I was recommended to you"

Yes, certainly, interrupted Monte Cristo; but Lord Wilmore did not omit to inform me, my dear M. Andrea, that the season of your youth was rather a stormy one. Ah, said the count, watching Andreas countenance, I do not demand any confession from you; it is precisely to avoid that necessity that your father was sent for from Lucca. You shall soon see him. He is a little stiff and pompous in his manner, and he is disfigured by his uniform; but when it becomes known that he has been for eighteen years in the Austrian service, all that will be pardoned. We are not generally very severe with the Austrians. In short, you will find your father a very presentable person, I assure you.

Ah, sir, you have given me confidence; it is so long since we were separated, that I have not the least remembrance of him, and, besides, you know that in the eyes of the world a large fortune covers all defects.

He is a millionaire"his income is 500,000 francs.

Then, said the young man, with anxiety, I shall be sure to be placed in an agreeable position.

One of the most agreeable possible, my dear sir; he will allow you an income of 50,000 livres per annum during the whole time of your stay in Paris.

Then in that case I shall always choose to remain there.

You cannot control circumstances, my dear sir; ~man proposes, and God disposes. Andrea sighed.

But, said he, so long as I do remain in Paris, and nothing forces me to quit it, do you mean to tell me that I may rely on receiving the sum you just now mentioned to me?

You may.

Shall I receive it from my father? asked Andrea, with some uneasiness.

Yes, you will receive it from your father personally, but Lord Wilmore will be the security for the money. He has, at the request of your father, opened an account of 5,000 francs a month at M. Danglars, which is one of the safest banks in Paris.

And does my father mean to remain long in Paris? asked Andrea.

Only a few days, replied Monte Cristo. His service does not allow him to absent himself more than two or three weeks together.

Ah, my dear father! exclaimed Andrea, evidently charmed with the idea of his speedy departure.

Therefore, said Monte Cristo feigning to mistake his meaning"therefore I will not, for another instant, retard the pleasure of your meeting. Are you prepared to embrace your worthy father?

I hope you do not doubt it.

30137m

Go, then, into the drawing-room, my young friend, where you will find your father awaiting you.

Andrea made a low bow to the count, and entered the adjoining room.

Monte Cristo watched him till he disappeared, and then touched a spring in a panel made to look like a picture, which, in sliding partly from the frame, discovered to view a small opening, so cleverly contrived that it revealed all that was passing in the drawing-room now occupied by Cavalcanti and Andrea. The young man closed the door behind him, and advanced towards the major, who had risen when he heard steps approaching him.

Ah, my dear father! said Andrea in a loud voice, in order that the count might hear him in the next room, is it really you?

How do you do, my dear son? said the major gravely.

After so many years of painful separation, said Andrea, in the same tone of voice, and glancing towards the door, what a happiness it is to meet again!

Indeed it is, after so long a separation.

Will you not embrace me, sir? said Andrea.

30139m

If you wish it, my son, said the major; and the two men embraced each other after the fashion of actors on the stage; that is to say, each rested his head on the others shoulder.

Then we are once more reunited? said Andrea.

Once more, replied the major.

Never more to be separated?

Why, as to that"I think, my dear son, you must be by this time so accustomed to France as to look upon it almost as a second country.

The fact is, said the young man, that I should be exceedingly grieved to leave it.

As for me, you must know I cannot possibly live out of Lucca;

therefore I shall return to Italy as soon as I can.

But before you leave France, my dear father, I hope you will put me in possession of the documents which will be necessary to prove my descent.

Certainly; I am come expressly on that account; it has cost me much trouble to find you, but I had resolved on giving them into your hands, and if I had to recommence my search, it would occupy all the few remaining years of my life.

Where are these papers, then?

Here they are.

Andrea seized the certificate of his fathers marriage and his own baptismal register, and after having opened them with all the eagerness which might be expected under the circumstances, he read them with a facility which proved that he was accustomed to similar documents, and with an expression which plainly denoted an unusual interest in the contents. When he had perused the documents, an indefinable expression of pleasure lighted up his countenance, and looking at the major with a most peculiar smile, he said, in very excellent Tuscan:

Then there is no longer any such thing, in Italy as being condemned to the galleys?

The major drew himself up to his full height.

Why?"what do you mean by that question?

I mean that if there were, it would be impossible to draw up with impunity two such deeds as these. In France, my dear sir, half such a piece of effrontery as that would cause you to be quickly despatched to Toulon for five years, for change of air.

Will you be good enough to explain your meaning? said the major, endeavoring as much as possible to assume an air of the greatest majesty.

My dear M. Cavalcanti, said Andrea, taking the major by the arm in a confidential manner, how much are you paid for being my father?

The major was about to speak, when Andrea continued, in a low voice: Nonsense, I am going to set you an example of confidence, they give me 50,000 francs a year to be your son; consequently, you can understand that it is not at all likely I shall ever deny my parent.

The major looked anxiously around him.

Make yourself easy, we are quite alone, said Andrea; besides, we are conversing in Italian.

Well, then, replied the major, they paid me 50,000 francs down.

Monsieur Cavalcanti, said Andrea, do you believe in fairy tales?

I used not to do so, but I really feel now almost obliged to have faith in them.

You have, then, been induced to alter your opinion; you have had some proofs of their truth? The major drew from his pocket a handful of gold.

Most palpable proofs, said he, as you may perceive.

You think, then, that I may rely on the counts promises?

Certainly I do.

You are sure he will keep his word with me?

To the letter, but at the same time, remember, we must continue to play our respective parts. I, as a tender father""

And I as a dutiful son, as they choose that I shall be descended from you.

Whom do you mean by they?

Ma foi, I can hardly tell, but I was alluding to those who wrote the letter; you received one, did you not?

Yes.

From whom?

From a certain Abb  Busoni.

Have you any knowledge of him?

No, I have never seen him.

What did he say in the letter?

You will promise not to betray me?

Rest assured of that; you well know that our interests are the same. Then read for yourself; and the major gave a letter into the young mans hand. Andrea read in a low voice:

~You are poor; a miserable old age awaits you. Would you like to become rich, or at least independent? Set out immediately for Paris, and demand of the Count of Monte Cristo, Avenue des Champs-Élysées, No. 30, the son whom you had by the Marchesa Corsinari, and who was taken from you at five years of age. This son is named Andrea Cavalcanti. In order that you may not doubt the kind intention of the writer of this letter, you will find enclosed an order for 2,400 francs, payable in Florence, at Signor Gozzis; also a letter of introduction to the Count of Monte Cristo, on whom I give you a draft of 48,000 francs. Remember to go to the count on the 26th May at seven oclock in the evening. (Signed) ~Abbé Busoni.

It is the same.

What do you mean? said the major.

I was going to say that I received a letter almost to the same effect.

You?

Yes.

From the Abbé Busoni?

No.

From whom, then?

From an Englishman, called Lord Wilmore, who takes the name of Sinbad the Sailor.

And of whom you have no more knowledge than I of the Abbé Busoni?

You are mistaken; there I am ahead of you.

You have seen him, then?

Yes, once.

Where?

Ah, that is just what I cannot tell you; if I did, I should make you as wise as myself, which it is not my intention to do.

And what did the letter contain?

Read it.

~You are poor, and your future prospects are dark and gloomy. Do you wish for a name? should you like to be rich, and your own master?

Parbleu! said the young man; was it possible there could be two answers to such a question?

~Take the post-chaise which you will find waiting at the Porte de Gènes, as you enter Nice; pass through Turin, Chambéry, and Pont-de-Beauvoisin. Go to the Count of Monte Cristo, Avenue des Champs-Élysées, on the 26th of May, at seven oclock in the evening, and demand of him your father. You are the son of the Marchese Cavalcanti and the Marchesa Oliva Corsinari. The marquis will give you some papers which will certify this fact, and authorize you to appear under that name in the Parisian world. As to your rank, an annual income of 50,000 livres will enable you to support it admirably. I enclose a draft for 5,000 livres, payable on M. Ferrea, banker at Nice, and also a letter of introduction to the Count of Monte Cristo, whom I have directed to supply all your wants.

~Sinbad the Sailor.

Humph, said the major; very good. You have seen the count, you say?

I have only just left him.

And has he conformed to all that the letter specified?

He has.

Do you understand it?

Not in the least.

There is a dupe somewhere.

At all events, it is neither you nor I.

Certainly not.

Well, then""

Why, it does not much concern us, do you think it does?

No; I agree with you there. We must play the game to the end, and

consent to be blindfolded.

Ah, you shall see; I promise you I will sustain my part to admiration.

I never once doubted your doing so. Monte Cristo chose this moment for re-entering the drawing-room. On hearing the sound of his footsteps, the two men threw themselves in each others arms, and while they were in the midst of this embrace, the count entered.

Well, marquis, said Monte Cristo, you appear to be in no way disappointed in the son whom your good fortune has restored to you.

Ah, your excellency, I am overwhelmed with delight.

And what are your feelings? said Monte Cristo, turning to the young man.

As for me, my heart is overflowing with happiness.

Happy father, happy son! said the count.

There is only one thing which grieves me, observed the major, and that is the necessity for my leaving Paris so soon.

Ah, my dear M. Cavalcanti, I trust you will not leave before I have had the honor of presenting you to some of my friends.

I am at your service, sir, replied the major.

Now, sir, said Monte Cristo, addressing Andrea, make your confession.

To whom?

Tell M. Cavalcanti something of the state of your finances.

Ma foi! monsieur, you have touched upon a tender chord.

Do you hear what he says, major?

Certainly I do.

But do you understand?

I do.

Your son says he requires money.

Well, what would you have me do? said the major.

You should furnish him with some of course, replied Monte Cristo.

I?

Yes, you, said the count, at the same time advancing towards Andrea, and slipping a packet of bank-notes into the young mans hand.

What is this?

It is from your father.

From my father?

Yes; did you not tell him just now that you wanted money? Well, then, he deposes me to give you this.

Am I to consider this as part of my income on account?

No, it is for the first expenses of your settling in Paris.

Ah, how good my dear father is!

Silence, said Monte Cristo; he does not wish you to know that it comes from him.

I fully appreciate his delicacy, said Andrea, cramming the notes hastily into his pocket.

And now, gentlemen, I wish you good-morning, said Monte Cristo.

And when shall we have the honor of seeing you again, your excellency? asked Cavalcanti.

Ah, said Andrea, when may we hope for that pleasure?

On Saturday, if you will."Yes."Let me see"Saturday"I am to dine at my country house, at Auteuil, on that day, Rue de la Fontaine, No. 28.

Several persons are invited, and among others, M. Danglars, your banker. I will introduce you to him, for it will be necessary he should know you, as he is to pay your money.

Full dress? said the major, half aloud.

Oh, yes, certainly, said the count; uniform, cross, knee-breeches.

And how shall I be dressed? demanded Andrea.

30145m

Oh, very simply; black trousers, patent leather boots, white waistcoat, either a black or blue coat, and a long cravat. Go to Blin or VÃ©ronique for your clothes. Baptistin will tell you where, if you do not know their address. The less pretension there is in your attire,

the better will be the effect, as you are a rich man. If you mean to buy any horses, get them of Devedeux, and if you purchase a phaeton, go to Baptiste for it.

At what hour shall we come? asked the young man.

About half-past six.

We will be with you at that time, said the major. The two Cavalcanti bowed to the count, and left the house. Monte Cristo went to the window, and saw them crossing the street, arm in arm.

There go two miscreants; said he, it is a pity they are not really related! Then, after an instant of gloomy reflection, Come, I will go to see the Morrels, said he; I think that disgust is even more sickening than hatred.

30147m

Chapter 57. In the Lucern Patch

Our readers must now allow us to transport them again to the enclosure surrounding M. de Villeforts house, and, behind the gate, half screened from view by the large chestnut-trees, which on all sides spread their luxuriant branches, we shall find some people of our acquaintance. This time Maximilian was the first to arrive. He was intently watching for a shadow to appear among the trees, and awaiting with anxiety the sound of a light step on the gravel walk.

At length, the long-desired sound was heard, and instead of one figure, as he had expected, he perceived that two were approaching him. The delay had been occasioned by a visit from Madame Danglars and Eug nie, which had been prolonged beyond the time at which Valentine was expected. That she might not appear to fail in her promise to

Maximilian, she proposed to Mademoiselle Danglars that they should take a walk in the garden, being anxious to show that the delay, which was doubtless a cause of vexation to him, was not occasioned by any neglect on her part. The young man, with the intuitive perception of a lover, quickly understood the circumstances in which she was involuntarily placed, and he was comforted. Besides, although she avoided coming within speaking distance, Valentine arranged so that Maximilian could see her pass and repass, and each time she went by, she managed, unperceived by her companion, to cast an expressive look at the young man, which seemed to say, Have patience! You see it is not my fault.

And Maximilian was patient, and employed himself in mentally contrasting the two girls, "one fair, with soft languishing eyes, a figure gracefully bending like a weeping willow; the other a brunette, with a fierce and haughty expression, and as straight as a poplar. It is unnecessary to state that, in the eyes of the young man, Valentine did not suffer by the contrast. In about half an hour the girls went away, and Maximilian understood that Mademoiselle Danglars visit had at last come to an end. In a few minutes Valentine re-entered the garden alone. For fear that anyone should be observing her return, she walked slowly; and instead of immediately directing her steps towards the gate, she seated herself on a bench, and, carefully casting her eyes around, to convince herself that she was not watched, she presently arose, and proceeded quickly to join Maximilian.

Good-evening, Valentine, said a well-known voice.

Good-evening, Maximilian; I know I have kept you waiting, but you saw the cause of my delay.

Yes, I recognized Mademoiselle Danglars. I was not aware that you were so intimate with her.

Who told you we were intimate, Maximilian?

No one, but you appeared to be so. From the manner in which you walked and talked together, one would have thought you were two school-girls telling your secrets to each other.

We were having a confidential conversation, returned Valentine; she was owing to me her repugnance to the marriage with M. de Morcerf; and I, on the other hand, was confessing to her how wretched it made me to think of marrying M. d'Esp nay.

Dear Valentine!

That will account to you for the unreserved manner which you observed between me and Eugénie, as in speaking of the man whom I could not love, my thoughts involuntarily reverted to him on whom my affections were fixed.

Ah, how good you are to say so, Valentine! You possess a quality which can never belong to Mademoiselle Danglars. It is that indefinable charm which is to a woman what perfume is to the flower and flavor to the fruit, for the beauty of either is not the only quality we seek.

It is your love which makes you look upon everything in that light.

No, Valentine, I assure you such is not the case. I was observing you both when you were walking in the garden, and, on my honor, without at all wishing to depreciate the beauty of Mademoiselle Danglars, I cannot understand how any man can really love her.

The fact is, Maximilian, that I was there, and my presence had the effect of rendering you unjust in your comparison.

No; but tell me "it is a question of simple curiosity, and which was suggested by certain ideas passing in my mind relative to Mademoiselle Danglars"

I dare say it is something disparaging which you are going to say. It only proves how little indulgence we may expect from your sex, interrupted Valentine.

You cannot, at least, deny that you are very harsh judges of each other.

If we are so, it is because we generally judge under the influence of excitement. But return to your question.

30151m

Does Mademoiselle Danglars object to this marriage with M. de Morcerf on account of loving another?

I told you I was not on terms of strict intimacy with Eugénie.

Yes, but girls tell each other secrets without being particularly intimate; own, now, that you did question her on the subject. Ah, I see you are smiling.

If you are already aware of the conversation that passed, the wooden partition which interposed between us and you has proved but a slight security.

Come, what did she say?

She told me that she loved no one, said Valentine; that she disliked the idea of being married; that she would infinitely prefer leading an independent and unfettered life; and that she almost wished her father might lose his fortune, that she might become an artist, like her friend, Mademoiselle Louise d'Armilly.

Ah, you see"

Well, what does that prove? asked Valentine.

Nothing, replied Maximilian.

Then why did you smile?

Why, you know very well that you are reflecting on yourself, Valentine.

Do you want me to go away?

Ah, no, no. But do not let us lose time; you are the subject on which I wish to speak.

True, we must be quick, for we have scarcely ten minutes more to pass together.

Ma foi! said Maximilian, in consternation.

Yes, you are right; I am but a poor friend to you. What a life I cause you to lead, poor Maximilian, you who are formed for happiness! I bitterly reproach myself, I assure you.

Well, what does it signify, Valentine, so long as I am satisfied, and feel that even this long and painful suspense is amply repaid by five minutes of your society, or two words from your lips? And I have also a deep conviction that heaven would not have created two hearts, harmonizing as ours do, and almost miraculously brought us together, to separate us at last.

Those are kind and cheering words. You must hope for us both,

Maximilian; that will make me at least partly happy.

But why must you leave me so soon?

I do not know particulars. I can only tell you that Madame de Villefort sent to request my presence, as she had a communication to make on which a part of my fortune depended. Let them take my fortune, I am already too rich; and, perhaps, when they have taken it, they will leave me in peace and quietness. You would love me as much if I were poor, would you not, Maximilian?

Oh, I shall always love you. What should I care for either riches or poverty, if my Valentine was near me, and I felt certain that no one could deprive me of her? But do you not fear that this communication may relate to your marriage?

I do not think that is the case.

However it may be, Valentine, you must not be alarmed. I assure you that, as long as I live, I shall never love anyone else!

Do you think to reassure me when you say that, Maximilian?

Pardon me, you are right. I am a brute. But I was going to tell you that I met M. de Morcerf the other day.

Well?

Monsieur Franz is his friend, you know.

What then?

Monsieur de Morcerf has received a letter from Franz, announcing his immediate return. Valentine turned pale, and leaned her hand against the gate.

Ah heavens, if it were that! But no, the communication would not come through Madame de Villefort.

Why not?

Because "I scarcely know why" but it has appeared as if Madame de Villefort secretly objected to the marriage, although she did not choose openly to oppose it.

Is it so? Then I feel as if I could adore Madame de Villefort.

Do not be in such a hurry to do that, said Valentine, with a sad smile.

If she objects to your marrying M. de Morcerf, she would be all the more likely to listen to any other proposition.

No, Maximilian, it is not suitors to which Madame de Villefort objects, it is marriage itself.

Marriage? If she dislikes that so much, why did she ever marry herself?

You do not understand me, Maximilian. About a year ago, I talked of retiring to a convent. Madame de Villefort, in spite of all the remarks which she considered it her duty to make, secretly approved of the proposition, my father consented to it at her instigation, and it was only on account of my poor grandfather that I finally abandoned the project. You can form no idea of the expression of that old man's eye when he looks at me, the only person in the world whom he loves, and, I had almost said, by whom he is beloved in return. When he learned my resolution, I shall never forget the reproachful look which he cast on me, and the tears of utter despair which chased each other down his lifeless cheeks. Ah, Maximilian, I experienced, at that moment, such remorse for my intention, that, throwing myself at his feet, I exclaimed, "Forgive me, pray forgive me, my dear grandfather; they may do what they will with me, I will never leave you. When I had ceased speaking, he thankfully raised his eyes to heaven, but without uttering a word. Ah, Maximilian, I may have much to suffer, but I feel as if my grandfathers look at that moment would more than compensate for all.

Dear Valentine, you are a perfect angel, and I am sure I do not know what I "sabring right and left among the Bedouins" can have done to merit your being revealed to me, unless, indeed, Heaven took into consideration the fact that the victims of my sword were infidels. But tell me what interest Madame de Villefort can have in your remaining unmarried?

Did I not tell you just now that I was rich, Maximilian? "too rich? I

possess nearly 50,000 livres in right of my mother; my grandfather and my grandmother, the Marquis and Marquise de Saint-MÃ©ran, will leave me as much, and M. Noirtier evidently intends making me his heir. My brother Edward, who inherits nothing from his mother, will, therefore, be poor in comparison with me. Now, if I had taken the veil, all this fortune would have descended to my father, and, in reversion, to his son.

Ah, how strange it seems that such a young and beautiful woman should be so avaricious.

It is not for herself that she is so, but for her son, and what you regard as a vice becomes almost a virtue when looked at in the light of maternal love.

But could you not compromise matters, and give up a portion of your fortune to her son?

How could I make such a proposition, especially to a woman who always professes to be so entirely disinterested?

Valentine, I have always regarded our love in the light of something sacred; consequently, I have covered it with the veil of respect, and hid it in the innermost recesses of my soul. No human being, not even my sister, is aware of its existence. Valentine, will you permit me to make a confidant of a friend and reveal to him the love I bear you?

Valentine started. A friend, Maximilian; and who is this friend? I tremble to give my permission.

Listen, Valentine. Have you never experienced for anyone that sudden and irresistible sympathy which made you feel as if the object of it had been your old and familiar friend, though, in reality, it was the first time you had ever met? Nay, further, have you never endeavored to recall the time, place, and circumstances of your former intercourse, and failing in this attempt, have almost believed that your spirits must have held converse with each other in some state of being anterior to the present, and that you are only now occupied in a reminiscence of the past?

Yes.

Well, that is precisely the feeling which I experienced when I first saw that extraordinary man.

Extraordinary, did you say?

Yes.

You have known him for some time, then?

Scarcely longer than eight or ten days.

And do you call a man your friend whom you have only known for eight or ten days? Ah, Maximilian, I had hoped you set a higher value on the title of friend.

Your logic is most powerful, Valentine, but say what you will, I can never renounce the sentiment which has instinctively taken possession of my mind. I feel as if it were ordained that this man should be associated with all the good which the future may have in store for me, and sometimes it really seems as if his eye was able to see what was to come, and his hand endowed with the power of directing events according to his own will.

He must be a prophet, then, said Valentine, smiling.

Indeed, said Maximilian, I have often been almost tempted to attribute to him the gift of prophecy; at all events, he has a wonderful power of foretelling any future good.

Ah, said Valentine in a mournful tone, do let me see this man, Maximilian; he may tell me whether I shall ever be loved sufficiently to make amends for all I have suffered.

My poor girl, you know him already.

I know him?