

s prelude.

Well, said the president; your name?

I cannot tell you my name, since I do not know it; but I know my fathers, and can tell it to you.

A painful giddiness overwhelmed Villefort; great drops of acrid sweat fell from his face upon the papers which he held in his convulsed hand. Repeat your fathers name, said the president.

Not a whisper, not a breath, was heard in that vast assembly; everyone waited anxiously.

My father is kings attorney, replied Andrea calmly.

50179m

Kings attorney? said the president, stupefied, and without noticing the agitation which spread over the face of M. de Villefort; kings attorney?

Yes; and if you wish to know his name, I will tell it,"he is named Villefort.

The explosion, which had been so long restrained from a feeling of respect to the court of justice, now burst forth like thunder from the breasts of all present; the court itself did not seek to restrain the feelings of the audience. The exclamations, the insults addressed to Benedetto, who remained perfectly unconcerned, the energetic gestures, the movement of the gendarmes, the sneers of the scum of the crowd always sure to rise to the surface in case of any disturbance"all this lasted five minutes, before the door-keepers and magistrates were able to restore silence. In the midst of this tumult the voice of the president was heard to exclaim:

Are you playing with justice, accused, and do you dare set your fellow-citizens an example of disorder which even in these times has never been equalled?

Several persons hurried up to M. de Villefort, who sat half bowed over in his chair, offering him consolation, encouragement, and protestations of zeal and sympathy. Order was re-established in the hall, except that a few people still moved about and whispered to one another. A lady, it was said, had just fainted; they had supplied her with a smelling-bottle, and she had recovered. During the scene of tumult, Andrea had turned his smiling face towards the assembly; then, leaning with one hand on the oaken rail of the dock, in the most graceful attitude possible, he said:

Gentlemen, I assure you I had no idea of insulting the court, or of making a useless disturbance in the presence of this honorable assembly. They ask my age; I tell it. They ask where I was born; I answer. They ask my name, I cannot give it, since my parents abandoned me. But though I cannot give my own name, not possessing one, I can tell them my fathers. Now I repeat, my father is named M. de Villefort, and I am ready to prove it.

There was an energy, a conviction, and a sincerity in the manner of the young man, which silenced the tumult. All eyes were turned for a moment towards the procureur, who sat as motionless as though a thunderbolt had changed him into a corpse.

Gentlemen, said Andrea, commanding silence by his voice and manner;

I owe you the proofs and explanations of what I have said.

But, said the irritated president, you called yourself Benedetto, declared yourself an orphan, and claimed Corsica as your country.

I said anything I pleased, in order that the solemn declaration I have just made should not be withheld, which otherwise would certainly have been the case. I now repeat that I was born at Auteuil on the night of the 27th of September, 1817, and that I am the son of the procureur, M. de Villefort. Do you wish for any further details? I will give them. I was born in No. 28, Rue de la Fontaine, in a room hung with red damask; my father took me in his arms, telling my mother I was dead, wrapped me in a napkin marked with an H and an N, and carried me into a garden, where he buried me alive.

A shudder ran through the assembly when they saw that the confidence of

the prisoner increased in proportion to the terror of M. de Villefort. But how have you become acquainted with all these details? asked the president.

I will tell you, Mr. President. A man who had sworn vengeance against my father, and had long watched his opportunity to kill him, had introduced himself that night into the garden in which my father buried me. He was concealed in a thicket; he saw my father bury something in the ground, and stabbed him; then thinking the deposit might contain some treasure he turned up the ground, and found me still living. The man carried me to the foundling asylum, where I was registered under the number 37. Three months afterwards, a woman travelled from Rogliano to Paris to fetch me, and having claimed me as her son, carried me away. Thus, you see, though born in Paris, I was brought up in Corsica.

There was a moments silence, during which one could have fancied the hall empty, so profound was the stillness.

Proceed, said the president.

Certainly, I might have lived happily amongst those good people, who adored me, but my perverse disposition prevailed over the virtues which my adopted mother endeavored to instil into my heart. I increased in wickedness till I committed crime. One day when I cursed Providence for making me so wicked, and ordaining me to such a fate, my adopted father said to me, "Do not blaspheme, unhappy child, the crime is that of your father, not yours," of your father, who consigned you to hell if you died, and to misery if a miracle preserved you alive. After that I ceased to blaspheme, but I cursed my father. That is why I have uttered the words for which you blame me; that is why I have filled this whole assembly with horror. If I have committed an additional crime, punish me, but if you will allow that ever since the day of my birth my fate has been sad, bitter, and lamentable, then pity me.

But your mother? asked the president.

My mother thought me dead; she is not guilty. I did not even wish to know her name, nor do I know it.

Just then a piercing cry, ending in a sob, burst from the centre of the crowd, who encircled the lady who had before fainted, and who now fell into a violent fit of hysterics. She was carried out of the hall, the thick veil which concealed her face dropped off, and Madame Danglars was recognized. Notwithstanding his shattered nerves, the ringing sensation in his ears, and the madness which turned his brain, Villefort rose as he perceived her.

The proofs, the proofs! said the president; remember this tissue of horrors must be supported by the clearest proofs.

The proofs? said Benedetto, laughing; do you want proofs?

Yes.

Well, then, look at M. de Villefort, and then ask me for proofs.

Everyone turned towards the procureur, who, unable to bear the universal gaze now riveted on him alone, advanced staggering into the midst of the tribunal, with his hair dishevelled and his face indented with the mark of his nails. The whole assembly uttered a long murmur of astonishment.

Father, said Benedetto, I am asked for proofs, do you wish me to give them?

No, no, it is useless, stammered M. de Villefort in a hoarse voice; no, it is useless!

How useless? cried the president, what do you mean?

I mean that I feel it impossible to struggle against this deadly weight which crushes me. Gentlemen, I know I am in the hands of an avenging God! We need no proofs; everything relating to this young man is true.

A dull, gloomy silence, like that which precedes some awful phenomenon of nature, pervaded the assembly, who shuddered in dismay.

What, M. de Villefort, cried the president, do you yield to an hallucination? What, are you no longer in possession of your senses?

This strange, unexpected, terrible accusation has disordered your reason. Come, recover.

The procureur dropped his head; his teeth chattered like those of a man under a violent attack of fever, and yet he was deadly pale.

I am in possession of all my senses, sir, he said; my body alone suffers, as you may suppose. I acknowledge myself guilty of all the young man has brought against me, and from this hour hold myself under the authority of the procureur who will succeed me.

And as he spoke these words with a hoarse, choking voice, he staggered towards the door, which was mechanically opened by a door-keeper. The whole assembly were dumb with astonishment at the revelation and confession which had produced a catastrophe so different from that which had been expected during the last fortnight by the Parisian world.

Well, said Beauchamp, let them now say that drama is unnatural!

Ma foi! said Châteaurenault, I would rather end my career like M. de Morcerf; a pistol-shot seems quite delightful compared with this catastrophe.

And moreover, it kills, said Beauchamp.

And to think that I had an idea of marrying his daughter, said Debray. She did well to die, poor girl!

The sitting is adjourned, gentlemen, said the president; fresh inquiries will be made, and the case will be tried next session by another magistrate.

As for Andrea, who was calm and more interesting than ever, he left the hall, escorted by gendarmes, who involuntarily paid him some attention. Well, what do you think of this, my fine fellow? asked Debray of the sergeant-at-arms, slipping a louis into his hand.

There will be extenuating circumstances, he replied.

Chapter 111. Expiation

Notwithstanding the density of the crowd, M. de Villefort saw it open before him. There is something so awe-inspiring in great afflictions that even in the worst times the first emotion of a crowd has generally been to sympathize with the sufferer in a great catastrophe. Many people have been assassinated in a tumult, but even criminals have rarely been insulted during trial. Thus Villefort passed through the mass of spectators and officers of the Palais, and withdrew. Though he had acknowledged his guilt, he was protected by his grief. There are some situations which men understand by instinct, but which reason is powerless to explain; in such cases the greatest poet is he who gives utterance to the most natural and vehement outburst of sorrow. Those who hear the bitter cry are as much impressed as if they listened to an entire poem, and when the sufferer is sincere they are right in regarding his outburst as sublime.

It would be difficult to describe the state of stupor in which Villefort left the Palais. Every pulse beat with feverish excitement, every nerve was strained, every vein swollen, and every part of his body seemed to suffer distinctly from the rest, thus multiplying his agony a thousand-fold. He made his way along the corridors through force of habit; he threw aside his magisterial robe, not out of deference to etiquette, but because it was an unbearable burden, a veritable garb of Nessus, insatiate in torture. Having staggered as far as the Rue Dauphine, he perceived his carriage, awoke his sleeping coachman by opening the door himself, threw himself on the cushions, and pointed towards the Faubourg Saint-Honoré; the carriage drove on. All the weight of his fallen fortune seemed suddenly to crush him; he could not foresee the consequences; he could not contemplate the future with the indifference of the hardened criminal who merely faces a contingency already familiar.

God was still in his heart. God, he murmured, not knowing what he said, "God! God! Behind the event that had overwhelmed him he saw the hand of God. The carriage rolled rapidly onward. Villefort, while turning restlessly on the cushions, felt something press against him.

He put out his hand to remove the object; it was a fan which Madame de Villefort had left in the carriage; this fan awakened a recollection which darted through his mind like lightning. He thought of his wife.
50189m

Oh! he exclaimed, as though a red-hot iron were piercing his heart. During the last hour his own crime had alone been presented to his mind; now another object, not less terrible, suddenly presented itself. His wife! He had just acted the inexorable judge with her, he had condemned her to death, and she, crushed by remorse, struck with terror, covered with the shame inspired by the eloquence of _his_ irreproachable virtue,"she, a poor, weak woman, without help or the power of defending herself against his absolute and supreme will,"she might at that very moment, perhaps, be preparing to die!

An hour had elapsed since her condemnation; at that moment, doubtless, she was recalling all her crimes to her memory; she was asking pardon for her sins; perhaps she was even writing a letter imploring forgiveness from her virtuous husband"a forgiveness she was purchasing with her death! Villefort again groaned with anguish and despair.

Ah, he exclaimed, that woman became criminal only from associating with me! I carried the infection of crime with me, and she has caught it as she would the typhus fever, the cholera, the plague! And yet I have punished her"I have dared to tell her"_I_ have""Repent and die! But no, she must not die; she shall live, and with me. We will flee from Paris and go as far as the earth reaches. I told her of the scaffold; oh, Heavens, I forgot that it awaits me also! How could I pronounce that word? Yes, we will fly; I will confess all to her,"I will tell her daily that I also have committed a crime!"Oh, what an alliance"the tiger and the serpent; worthy wife of such as I am! She _must_ live that my infamy may diminish hers.

And Villefort dashed open the window in front of the carriage.

Faster, faster! he cried, in a tone which electrified the coachman.

The horses, impelled by fear, flew towards the house.

Yes, yes, repeated Villefort, as he approached his home"yes, that woman must live; she must repent, and educate my son, the sole survivor, with the exception of the indestructible old man, of the wreck of my house. She loves him; it was for his sake she has committed these crimes. We ought never to despair of softening the heart of a mother who loves her child. She will repent, and no one will know that she has been guilty. The events which have taken place in my house, though they now occupy the public mind, will be forgotten in time, or if, indeed, a few enemies should persist in remembering them, why then I will add them to my list of crimes. What will it signify if one, two, or three more are added? My wife and child shall escape from this gulf, carrying treasures with them; she will live and may yet be happy, since her child, in whom all her love is centred, will be with her. I shall have performed a good action, and my heart will be lighter.

And the procureur breathed more freely than he had done for some time.
50191m

The carriage stopped at the door of the house. Villefort leaped out of the carriage, and saw that his servants were surprised at his early return; he could read no other expression on their features. Neither of them spoke to him; they merely stood aside to let him pass by, as usual, nothing more. As he passed by M. Noirtiers room, he perceived two figures through the half-open door; but he experienced no curiosity to know who was visiting his father; anxiety carried him on further. Come, he said, as he ascended the stairs leading to his wifes room, nothing is changed here.

He then closed the door of the landing.

No one must disturb us, he said; I must speak freely to her, accuse myself, and say"he approached the door, touched the crystal handle, which yielded to his hand. Not locked, he cried; that is well.

And he entered the little room in which Edward slept; for though the child went to school during the day, his mother could not allow him to

be separated from her at night. With a single glance Villeforts eye ran through the room.

Not here, he said; doubtless she is in her bedroom. He rushed towards the door, found it bolted, and stopped, shuddering.

HÃ©loÃ©se! he cried. He fancied he heard the sound of a piece of furniture being removed.

HÃ©loÃ©se! he repeated.

Who is there? answered the voice of her he sought. He thought that voice more feeble than usual.

Open the door! cried Villefort. Open; it is I.

But notwithstanding this request, notwithstanding the tone of anguish in which it was uttered, the door remained closed. Villefort burst it open with a violent blow. At the entrance of the room which led to her boudoir, Madame de Villefort was standing erect, pale, her features contracted, and her eyes glaring horribly.

HÃ©loÃ©se, HÃ©loÃ©se! he said, what is the matter? Speak! The young woman extended her stiff white hands towards him.

It is done, monsieur, she said with a rattling noise which seemed to tear her throat. What more do you want? and she fell full length on the floor.

Villefort ran to her and seized her hand, which convulsively clasped a crystal bottle with a golden stopper. Madame de Villefort was dead. Villefort, maddened with horror, stepped back to the threshold of the door, fixing his eyes on the corpse.

My son! he exclaimed suddenly, where is my son?"Edward, Edward! and he rushed out of the room, still crying, Edward, Edward! The name was pronounced in such a tone of anguish that the servants ran up.

Where is my son? asked Villefort; let him be removed from the house, that he may not see"

Master Edward is not downstairs, sir, replied the valet.

Then he must be playing in the garden; go and see.

50193m

No, sir; Madame de Villefort sent for him half an hour ago; he went into her room, and has not been downstairs since.

A cold perspiration burst out on Villeforts brow; his legs trembled, and his thoughts flew about madly in his brain like the wheels of a disordered watch.

In Madame de Villeforts room? he murmured and slowly returned, with one hand wiping his forehead, and with the other supporting himself against the wall. To enter the room he must again see the body of his unfortunate wife. To call Edward he must reawaken the echo of that room which now appeared like a sepulchre; to speak seemed like violating the silence of the tomb. His tongue was paralyzed in his mouth.

Edward! he stammered"Edward!

The child did not answer. Where, then, could he be, if he had entered his mothers room and not since returned? He stepped forward. The corpse of Madame de Villefort was stretched across the doorway leading to the room in which Edward must be; those glaring eyes seemed to watch over the threshold, and the lips bore the stamp of a terrible and mysterious irony. Through the open door was visible a portion of the boudoir, containing an upright piano and a blue satin couch. Villefort stepped forward two or three paces, and beheld his child lying"no doubt asleep"on the sofa. The unhappy man uttered an exclamation of joy; a ray of light seemed to penetrate the abyss of despair and darkness. He had only to step over the corpse, enter the boudoir, take the child in his arms, and flee far, far away.

Villefort was no longer the civilized man; he was a tiger hurt unto death, gnashing his teeth in his wound. He no longer feared realities, but phantoms. He leaped over the corpse as if it had been a burning brazier. He took the child in his arms, embraced him, shook him, called him, but the child made no response. He pressed his burning lips to the cheeks, but they were icy cold and pale; he felt the stiffened limbs; he pressed his hand upon the heart, but it no longer beat,"the child

was dead.

A folded paper fell from Edwards breast. Villefort, thunderstruck, fell upon his knees; the child dropped from his arms, and rolled on the floor by the side of its mother. He picked up the paper, and, recognizing his wifes writing, ran his eyes rapidly over its contents; it ran as follows:

You know that I was a good mother, since it was for my sons sake I became criminal. A good mother cannot depart without her son.

Villefort could not believe his eyes,"he could not believe his reason; he dragged himself towards the childs body, and examined it as a lioness contemplates its dead cub. Then a piercing cry escaped from his breast, and he cried,
Still the hand of God.

The presence of the two victims alarmed him; he could not bear solitude shared only by two corpses. Until then he had been sustained by rage, by his strength of mind, by despair, by the supreme agony which led the Titans to scale the heavens, and Ajax to defy the gods. He now arose, his head bowed beneath the weight of grief, and, shaking his damp, dishevelled hair, he who had never felt compassion for anyone determined to seek his father, that he might have someone to whom he could relate his misfortunes,"someone by whose side he might weep.

50195m

He descended the little staircase with which we are acquainted, and entered Noirtiers room. The old man appeared to be listening attentively and as affectionately as his infirmities would allow to the Abb  Busoni, who looked cold and calm, as usual. Villefort, perceiving the abb , passed his hand across his brow. The past came to him like one of those waves whose wrath foams fiercer than the others.

He recollected the call he had made upon him after the dinner at Auteuil, and then the visit the abb  had himself paid to his house on the day of Valentines death.

You here, sir! he exclaimed; do you, then, never appear but to act as an escort to death?

Busoni turned around, and, perceiving the excitement depicted on the magistrates face, the savage lustre of his eyes, he understood that the revelation had been made at the assizes; but beyond this he was ignorant.

I came to pray over the body of your daughter.

And now why are you here?

I come to tell you that you have sufficiently repaid your debt, and that from this moment I will pray to God to forgive you, as I do. Good heavens! exclaimed Villefort, stepping back fearfully, surely that is not the voice of the Abb  Busoni!

No! The abb  threw off his wig, shook his head, and his hair, no longer confined, fell in black masses around his manly face.

It is the face of the Count of Monte Cristo! exclaimed the procureur, with a haggard expression.

You are not exactly right, M. Procureur; you must go farther back.

That voice, that voice!"where did I first hear it?

You heard it for the first time at Marseilles, twenty-three years ago, the day of your marriage with Mademoiselle de Saint-M ran. Refer to your papers.

You are not Busoni?"you are not Monte Cristo? Oh, heavens! you are, then, some secret, implacable, and mortal enemy! I must have wronged you in some way at Marseilles. Oh, woe to me!

Yes; you are now on the right path, said the count, crossing his arms over his broad chest; search"search!

But what have I done to you? exclaimed Villefort, whose mind was balancing between reason and insanity, in that cloud which is neither a dream nor reality; what have I done to you? Tell me, then! Speak!

You condemned me to a horrible, tedious death; you killed my father; you deprived me of liberty, of love, and happiness.

Who are you, then? Who are you?

I am the spectre of a wretch you buried in the dungeons of the Ch teau d'If. God gave that spectre the form of the Count of Monte Cristo when he at length issued from his tomb, enriched him with gold and diamonds, and led him to you!

Ah, I recognize you!"I recognize you! exclaimed the king's attorney; you are""

I am Edmond Dant s!

You are Edmond Dant s, cried Villefort, seizing the count by the wrist; then come here!

And up the stairs he dragged Monte Cristo; who, ignorant of what had happened, followed him in astonishment, foreseeing some new catastrophe.

There, Edmond Dant s! he said, pointing to the bodies of his wife and child, see, are you well avenged?

Monte Cristo became pale at this horrible sight; he felt that he had passed beyond the bounds of vengeance, and that he could no longer say, God is for and with me. With an expression of indescribable anguish he threw himself upon the body of the child, reopened its eyes, felt its pulse, and then rushed with him into Valentine's room, of which he double-locked the door.

My child, cried Villefort, he carries away the body of my child! Oh, curses, woe, death to you!

He tried to follow Monte Cristo; but as though in a dream he was transfixed to the spot, "his eyes glared as though they were starting through the sockets; he gripped the flesh on his chest until his nails were stained with blood; the veins of his temples swelled and boiled as though they would burst their narrow boundary, and deluge his brain with living fire. This lasted several minutes, until the frightful overturn of reason was accomplished; then uttering a loud cry followed by a burst of laughter, he rushed down the stairs.

A quarter of an hour afterwards the door of Valentine's room opened, and Monte Cristo reappeared. Pale, with a dull eye and heavy heart, all the noble features of that face, usually so calm and serene, were overcast by grief. In his arms he held the child, whom no skill had been able to recall to life. Bending on one knee, he placed it reverently by the side of its mother, with its head upon her breast. Then, rising, he went out, and meeting a servant on the stairs, he asked:

Where is M. de Villefort?

The servant, instead of answering, pointed to the garden. Monte Cristo ran down the steps, and advancing towards the spot designated beheld Villefort, encircled by his servants, with a spade in his hand, and digging the earth with fury.

It is not here! he cried. It is not here!

50197m

And then he moved farther on, and began again to dig.

Monte Cristo approached him, and said in a low voice, with an expression almost humble:

Sir, you have indeed lost a son; but""

Villefort interrupted him; he had neither listened nor heard.

Oh, I _will_ find it, he cried; you may pretend he is not here, but I _will_ find him, though I dig forever!

Monte Cristo drew back in horror.

Oh, he said, he is mad! And as though he feared that the walls of the accursed house would crumble around him, he rushed into the street, for the first time doubting whether he had the right to do as he had done. Oh, enough of this, "enough of this, he cried; let me save the last. On entering his house, he met Morrel, who wandered about like a ghost awaiting the heavenly mandate for return to the tomb.

Prepare yourself, Maximilian, he said with a smile; we leave Paris tomorrow.

Have you nothing more to do there? asked Morrel.

No, replied Monte Cristo; God grant I may not have done too much

already.

The next day they indeed left, accompanied only by Baptistin. HaydÃ©e had taken away Ali, and Bertuccio remained with Noirtier.

Chapter 112. The Departure

The recent events formed the theme of conversation throughout all Paris. Emmanuel and his wife conversed with natural astonishment in their little apartment in the Rue Meslay upon the three successive, sudden, and most unexpected catastrophes of Morcerf, Danglars, and Villefort. Maximilian, who was paying them a visit, listened to their conversation, or rather was present at it, plunged in his accustomed state of apathy.

Indeed, said Julie, might we not almost fancy, Emmanuel, that those people, so rich, so happy but yesterday, had forgotten in their prosperity that an evil genius"like the wicked fairies in Perraults stories who present themselves unbidden at a wedding or baptism"hovered over them, and appeared all at once to revenge himself for their fatal neglect?

What a dire misfortune! said Emmanuel, thinking of Morcerf and Danglars.

What dreadful sufferings! said Julie, remembering Valentine, but whom, with a delicacy natural to women, she did not name before her brother.

If the Supreme Being has directed the fatal blow, said Emmanuel, it must be that he in his great goodness has perceived nothing in the past lives of these people to merit mitigation of their awful punishment.

Do you not form a very rash judgment, Emmanuel? said Julie. When my father, with a pistol in his hand, was once on the point of committing suicide, had anyone then said, "This man deserves his misery, would not that person have been deceived?

Yes; but your father was not allowed to fall. A being was commissioned to arrest the fatal hand of death about to descend on him.

Emmanuel had scarcely uttered these words when the sound of the bell was heard, the well-known signal given by the porter that a visitor had arrived. Nearly at the same instant the door was opened and the Count of Monte Cristo appeared on the threshold. The young people uttered a cry of joy, while Maximilian raised his head, but let it fall again immediately.

50201m

Maximilian, said the count, without appearing to notice the different impressions which his presence produced on the little circle, I come to seek you.

To seek me? repeated Morrel, as if awakening from a dream.

Yes, said Monte Cristo; has it not been agreed that I should take you with me, and did I not tell you yesterday to prepare for departure?

I am ready, said Maximilian; I came expressly to wish them farewell.

Whither are you going, count? asked Julie.

In the first instance to Marseilles, madame.

To Marseilles! exclaimed the young couple.

Yes, and I take your brother with me.

Oh, count. said Julie, will you restore him to us cured of his melancholy? Morrel turned away to conceal the confusion of his countenance.

You perceive, then, that he is not happy? said the count.

Yes, replied the young woman; and fear much that he finds our home but a dull one.

I will undertake to divert him, replied the count.

I am ready to accompany you, sir, said Maximilian. Adieu, my kind friends! Emmanuel"Julie"farewell!

How farewell? exclaimed Julie; do you leave us thus, so suddenly, without any preparations for your journey, without even a passport? Needless delays but increase the grief of parting, said Monte Cristo,

and Maximilian has doubtless provided himself with everything requisite; at least, I advised him to do so.

I have a passport, and my clothes are ready packed, said Morrel in his tranquil but mournful manner.

Good, said Monte Cristo, smiling; in these prompt arrangements we recognize the order of a well-disciplined soldier.

And you leave us, said Julie, at a moments warning? you do not give us a day"no, not even an hour before your departure?

My carriage is at the door, madame, and I must be in Rome in five days.

But does Maximilian go to Rome? exclaimed Emmanuel.

I am going wherever it may please the count to take me, said Morrel, with a smile full of grief; I am under his orders for the next month.

Oh, heavens, how strangely he expresses himself, count! said Julie.

Maximilian goes with _me_, said the count, in his kindest and most persuasive manner; therefore do not make yourself uneasy on your brothers account.

Once more farewell, my dear sister; Emmanuel, adieu! Morrel repeated.

His carelessness and indifference touch me to the heart, said Julie.

Oh, Maximilian, Maximilian, you are certainly concealing something from us.

Pshaw! said Monte Cristo, you will see him return to you gay, smiling, and joyful.

Maximilian cast a look of disdain, almost of anger, on the count.

We must leave you, said Monte Cristo.

50203m

Before you quit us, count, said Julie, will you permit us to express to you all that the other day""

Madame, interrupted the count, taking her two hands in his, all that you could say in words would never express what I read in your eyes; the thoughts of your heart are fully understood by mine. Like benefactors in romances, I should have left you without seeing you again, but that would have been a virtue beyond my strength, because I am a weak and vain man, fond of the tender, kind, and thankful glances of my fellow-creatures. On the eve of departure I carry my egotism so far as to say, ~Do not forget me, my kind friends, for probably you will never see me again.

Never see you again? exclaimed Emmanuel, while two large tears rolled down Julies cheeks, never behold you again? It is not a man, then, but some angel that leaves us, and this angel is on the point of returning to heaven after having appeared on earth to do good.

Say not so, quickly returned Monte Cristo"said not so, my friends; angels never err, celestial beings remain where they wish to be. Fate is not more powerful than they; it is they who, on the contrary, overcome fate. No, Emmanuel, I am but a man, and your admiration is as unmerited as your words are sacrilegious.

And pressing his lips on the hand of Julie, who rushed into his arms, he extended his other hand to Emmanuel; then tearing himself from this abode of peace and happiness, he made a sign to Maximilian, who followed him passively, with the indifference which had been perceptible in him ever since the death of Valentine had so stunned him.

Restore my brother to peace and happiness, whispered Julie to Monte Cristo. And the count pressed her hand in reply, as he had done eleven years before on the staircase leading to Morrels study.

You still confide, then, in Sinbad the Sailor? asked he, smiling.

Oh, yes, was the ready answer.

Well, then, sleep in peace, and put your trust in the Lord.

As we have before said, the post-chaise was waiting; four powerful horses were already pawing the ground with impatience, while Ali, apparently just arrived from a long walk, was standing at the foot of the steps, his face bathed in perspiration.

Well, asked the count in Arabic, have you been to see the old man?

Ali made a sign in the affirmative.

And have you placed the letter before him, as I ordered you to do?

The slave respectfully signalized that he had.

And what did he say, or rather do? Ali placed himself in the light, so that his master might see him distinctly, and then imitating in his intelligent manner the countenance of the old man, he closed his eyes, as Noirtier was in the custom of doing when saying Yes.

Good; he accepts, said Monte Cristo. Now let us go.

50205m

These words had scarcely escaped him, when the carriage was on its way, and the feet of the horses struck a shower of sparks from the pavement. Maximilian settled himself in his corner without uttering a word. Half an hour had passed when the carriage stopped suddenly; the count had just pulled the silken check-string, which was fastened to Alis finger. The Nubian immediately descended and opened the carriage door. It was a lovely starlight night—they had just reached the top of the hill Villejuif, from whence Paris appears like a sombre sea tossing its millions of phosphoric waves into light—waves indeed more noisy, more passionate, more changeable, more furious, more greedy, than those of the tempestuous ocean, “waves which never rest as those of the sea sometimes do,” waves ever dashing, ever foaming, ever ingulphing what falls within their grasp.

The count stood alone, and at a sign from his hand, the carriage went on for a short distance. With folded arms, he gazed for some time upon the great city. When he had fixed his piercing look on this modern Babylon, which equally engages the contemplation of the religious enthusiast, the materialist, and the scoffer,”

Great city, murmured he, inclining his head, and joining his hands as if in prayer, less than six months have elapsed since first I entered thy gates. I believe that the Spirit of God led my steps to thee and that he also enables me to quit thee in triumph; the secret cause of my presence within thy walls I have confided alone to him who only has had the power to read my heart. God only knows that I retire from thee without pride or hatred, but not without many regrets; he only knows that the power confided to me has never been made subservient to my personal good or to any useless cause. Oh, great city, it is in thy palpitating bosom that I have found that which I sought; like a patient miner, I have dug deep into thy very entrails to root out evil thence. Now my work is accomplished, my mission is terminated, now thou canst neither afford me pain nor pleasure. Adieu, Paris, adieu!

His look wandered over the vast plain like that of some genius of the night; he passed his hand over his brow, got into the carriage, the door was closed on him, and the vehicle quickly disappeared down the other side of the hill in a whirlwind of dust and noise.

Ten leagues were passed and not a single word was uttered. Morrel was dreaming, and Monte Cristo was looking at the dreamer.

Morrel, said the count to him at length, do you repent having followed me?

No, count; but to leave Paris”

If I thought happiness might await you in Paris, Morrel, I would have left you there.

Valentine reposes within the walls of Paris, and to leave Paris is like losing her a second time.

Maximilian, said the count, the friends that we have lost do not repose in the bosom of the earth, but are buried deep in our hearts, and it has been thus ordained that we may always be accompanied by them. I have two friends, who in this way never depart from me; the one who gave me being, and the other who conferred knowledge and intelligence on me. Their spirits live in me. I consult them when doubtful, and if I ever do any good, it is due to their beneficent counsels. Listen to the voice of your heart, Morrel, and ask it whether you ought to preserve this melancholy exterior towards me.

My friend, said Maximilian, the voice of my heart is very sorrowful,

and promises me nothing but misfortune.

It is the way of weakened minds to see everything through a black cloud. The soul forms its own horizons; your soul is darkened, and consequently the sky of the future appears stormy and unpromising. That may possibly be true, said Maximilian, and he again subsided into his thoughtful mood.

The journey was performed with that marvellous rapidity which the unlimited power of the count ever commanded. Towns fled from them like shadows on their path, and trees shaken by the first winds of autumn seemed like giants madly rushing on to meet them, and retreating as rapidly when once reached. The following morning they arrived at Châlon, where the counts steamboat waited for them. Without the loss of an instant, the carriage was placed on board and the two travellers embarked without delay. The boat was built for speed; her two paddle-wheels were like two wings with which she skimmed the water like a bird.

Morrel was not insensible to that sensation of delight which is generally experienced in passing rapidly through the air, and the wind which occasionally raised the hair from his forehead seemed on the point of dispelling momentarily the clouds collected there.

As the distance increased between the travellers and Paris, almost superhuman serenity appeared to surround the count; he might have been taken for an exile about to revisit his native land.

Ere long Marseilles presented herself to view, "Marseilles, white, fervid, full of life and energy," Marseilles, the younger sister of Tyre and Carthage, the successor to them in the empire of the Mediterranean, "Marseilles, old, yet always young. Powerful memories were stirred within them by the sight of the round tower, Fort Saint-Nicolas, the City Hall designed by Puget, the port with its brick quays, where they had both played in childhood, and it was with one accord that they stopped on the Canébière.

A vessel was setting sail for Algiers, on board of which the bustle usually attending departure prevailed. The passengers and their relations crowded on the deck, friends taking a tender but sorrowful leave of each other, some weeping, others noisy in their grief, the whole forming a spectacle that might be exciting even to those who witnessed similar sights daily, but which had no power to disturb the current of thought that had taken possession of the mind of Maximilian from the moment he had set foot on the broad pavement of the quay. Here, said he, leaning heavily on the arm of Monte Cristo, "here is the spot where my father stopped, when the Pharaon entered the port; it was here that the good old man, whom you saved from death and dishonor, threw himself into my arms. I yet feel his warm tears on my face, and his were not the only tears shed, for many who witnessed our meeting wept also.

Monte Cristo gently smiled and said, "I was there; at the same time pointing to the corner of a street. As he spoke, and in the very direction he indicated, a groan, expressive of bitter grief, was heard, and a woman was seen waving her hand to a passenger on board the vessel about to sail. Monte Cristo looked at her with an emotion that must have been remarked by Morrel had not his eyes been fixed on the vessel. Oh, heavens! exclaimed Morrel, I do not deceive myself that young man who is waving his hat, that youth in the uniform of a lieutenant, is Albert de Morcerf!

Yes, said Monte Cristo, I recognized him.

How so?" you were looking the other way.

50209m

The count smiled, as he was in the habit of doing when he did not want to make any reply, and he again turned towards the veiled woman, who soon disappeared at the corner of the street. Turning to his friend: Dear Maximilian, said the count, have you nothing to do in this land?

I have to weep over the grave of my father, replied Morrel in a

broken voice.

Well, then, go, "wait for me there, and I will soon join you.

You leave me, then?

Yes; I also have a pious visit to pay.

Morrel allowed his hand to fall into that which the count extended to him; then with an inexpressibly sorrowful inclination of the head he quitted the count and bent his steps to the east of the city. Monte Cristo remained on the same spot until Maximilian was out of sight; he then walked slowly towards the Allées de Meilhan to seek out a small house with which our readers were made familiar at the beginning of this story.

It yet stood, under the shade of the fine avenue of lime-trees, which forms one of the most frequent walks of the idlers of Marseilles, covered by an immense vine, which spreads its aged and blackened branches over the stone front, burnt yellow by the ardent sun of the south. Two stone steps worn away by the friction of many feet led to the door, which was made of three planks; the door had never been painted or varnished, so great cracks yawned in it during the dry season to close again when the rains came on. The house, with all its crumbling antiquity and apparent misery, was yet cheerful and picturesque, and was the same that old Dantès formerly inhabited "the only difference being that the old man occupied merely the garret, while the whole house was now placed at the command of Mercédès by the count.

The woman whom the count had seen leave the ship with so much regret entered this house; she had scarcely closed the door after her when Monte Cristo appeared at the corner of a street, so that he found and lost her again almost at the same instant. The worn out steps were old acquaintances of his; he knew better than anyone else how to open that weather-beaten door with the large headed nail which served to raise the latch within. He entered without knocking, or giving any other intimation of his presence, as if he had been a friend or the master of the place. At the end of a passage paved with bricks, was a little garden, bathed in sunshine, and rich in warmth and light. In this garden Mercédès had found, at the place indicated by the count, the sum of money which he, through a sense of delicacy, had described as having been placed there twenty-four years previously. The trees of the garden were easily seen from the steps of the street-door.

Monte Cristo, on stepping into the house, heard a sigh that was almost a deep sob; he looked in the direction whence it came, and there under an arbor of Virginia jessamine,²⁹ with its thick foliage and beautiful long purple flowers, he saw Mercédès seated, with her head bowed, and weeping bitterly. She had raised her veil, and with her face hidden by her hands was giving free scope to the sighs and tears which had been so long restrained by the presence of her son.

Monte Cristo advanced a few steps, which were heard on the gravel.

Mercédès raised her head, and uttered a cry of terror on beholding a man before her.

50211m

Madame, said the count, it is no longer in my power to restore you to happiness, but I offer you consolation; will you deign to accept it as coming from a friend?

I am, indeed, most wretched, replied Mercédès. Alone in the world, I had but my son, and he has left me!

He possesses a noble heart, madame, replied the count, and he has acted rightly. He feels that every man owes a tribute to his country; some contribute their talents, others their industry; these devote their blood, those their nightly labors, to the same cause. Had he remained with you, his life must have become a hateful burden, nor would he have participated in your griefs. He will increase in strength and honor by struggling with adversity, which he will convert into prosperity. Leave him to build up the future for you, and I venture to say you will confide it to safe hands.

Oh, replied the wretched woman, mournfully shaking her head, the prosperity of which you speak, and which, from the bottom of my heart, I pray God in his mercy to grant him, I can never enjoy. The bitter cup of adversity has been drained by me to the very dregs, and I feel that the grave is not far distant. You have acted kindly, count, in bringing me back to the place where I have enjoyed so much bliss. I ought to meet death on the same spot where happiness was once all my own.

Alas, said Monte Cristo, your words sear and embitter my heart, the more so as you have every reason to hate me. I have been the cause of all your misfortunes; but why do you pity, instead of blaming me? You render me still more unhappy"

Hate you, blame you"_you_, Edmond! Hate, reproach, the man that has spared my sons life! For was it not your fatal and sanguinary intention to destroy that son of whom M. de Morcerf was so proud? Oh, look at me closely, and discover, if you can, even the semblance of a reproach in me.

The count looked up and fixed his eyes on MercÃ©dÃ©s, who arose partly from her seat and extended both her hands towards him.

Oh, look at me, continued she, with a feeling of profound melancholy, my eyes no longer dazzle by their brilliancy, for the time has long fled since I used to smile on Edmond DantÃ©s, who anxiously looked out for me from the window of yonder garret, then inhabited by his old father. Years of grief have created an abyss between those days and the present. I neither reproach you nor hate you, my friend. Oh, no, Edmond, it is myself that I blame, myself that I hate! Oh, miserable creature that I am! cried she, clasping her hands, and raising her eyes to heaven. I once possessed piety, innocence, and love, the three ingredients of the happiness of angels, and now what am I?

Monte Cristo approached her, and silently took her hand.

No, said she, withdrawing it gently"no, my friend, touch me not. You have spared me, yet of all those who have fallen under your vengeance I was the most guilty. They were influenced by hatred, by avarice, and by self-love; but I was base, and for want of courage acted against my judgment. Nay, do not press my hand, Edmond; you are thinking, I am sure, of some kind speech to console me, but do not utter it to me, reserve it for others more worthy of your kindness. See (and she exposed her face completely to view)"see, misfortune has silvered my hair, my eyes have shed so many tears that they are encircled by a rim of purple, and my brow is wrinkled. You, Edmond, on the contrary,"you are still young, handsome, dignified; it is because you have had faith; because you have had strength, because you have had trust in God, and God has sustained you. But as for me, I have been a coward; I have denied God and he has abandoned me.

50213m

MercÃ©dÃ©s burst into tears; her womans heart was breaking under its load of memories. Monte Cristo took her hand and imprinted a kiss on it; but she herself felt that it was a kiss of no greater warmth than he would have bestowed on the hand of some marble statue of a saint. It often happens, continued she, that a first fault destroys the prospects of a whole life. I believed you dead; why did I survive you? What good has it done me to mourn for you eternally in the secret recesses of my heart?"only to make a woman of thirty-nine look like a woman of fifty. Why, having recognized you, and I the only one to do so"why was I able to save my son alone? Ought I not also to have rescued the man that I had accepted for a husband, guilty though he were? Yet I let him die! What do I say? Oh, merciful heavens, was I not accessory to his death by my supine insensibility, by my contempt for him, not remembering, or not willing to remember, that it was for my sake he had become a traitor and a perjurer? In what am I benefited by accompanying my son so far, since I now abandon him, and allow him to depart alone to the baneful climate of Africa? Oh, I have been base, cowardly, I tell you; I have abjured my affections, and like all renegades I am of evil omen to those who surround me!

No, Mercédès, said Monte Cristo, no; you judge yourself with too much severity. You are a noble-minded woman, and it was your grief that disarmed me. Still I was but an agent, led on by an invisible and offended Deity, who chose not to withhold the fatal blow that I was destined to hurl. I take that God to witness, at whose feet I have prostrated myself daily for the last ten years, that I would have sacrificed my life to you, and with my life the projects that were indissolubly linked with it. But—and I say it with some pride, Mercédès—God needed me, and I lived. Examine the past and the present, and endeavor to dive into futurity, and then say whether I am not a divine instrument. The most dreadful misfortunes, the most frightful sufferings, the abandonment of all those who loved me, the persecution of those who did not know me, formed the trials of my youth; when