

utation with one of her most gracious smiles.

What is this that M. de Villefort has been telling me? demanded Monte Cristo and what incomprehensible misfortune""

Incomprehensible is the word! interrupted the procureur, shrugging his shoulders. It is an old mans caprice!

And is there no means of making him revoke his decision?

Yes, said Madame de Villefort; and it is still entirely in the power of my husband to cause the will, which is now in prejudice of Valentine, to be altered in her favor.

The count, who perceived that M. and Madame de Villefort were beginning to speak in parables, appeared to pay no attention to the conversation, and feigned to be busily engaged in watching Edward, who was mischievously pouring some ink into the birds water-glass.

My dear, said Villefort, in answer to his wife, you know I have never been accustomed to play the patriarch in my family, nor have I ever considered that the fate of a universe was to be decided by my nod. Nevertheless, it is necessary that my will should be respected in my family, and that the folly of an old man and the caprice of a child should not be allowed to overturn a project which I have entertained for so many years. The Baron d'Espinay was my friend, as you know, and an alliance with his son is the most suitable thing that could possibly be arranged.

Do you think, said Madame de Villefort, that Valentine is in league with him? She has always been opposed to this marriage, and I should not be at all surprised if what we have just seen and heard is nothing but the execution of a plan concerted between them.

Madame, said Villefort, believe me, a fortune of 900,000 francs is not so easily renounced.

She could, nevertheless, make up her mind to renounce the world, sir, since it is only about a year ago that she herself proposed entering a convent.

Never mind, replied Villefort; I say that this marriage _shall_ be consummated.

Notwithstanding your fathers wishes to the contrary? said Madame de Villefort, selecting a new point of attack. That is a serious thing. Monte Cristo, who pretended not to be listening, heard however, every word that was said.

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Madame, replied Villefort I can truly say that I have always entertained a high respect for my father, because, to the natural feeling of relationship was added the consciousness of his moral superiority. The name of father is sacred in two senses; he should be revered as the author of our being and as a master whom we ought to obey. But, under the present circumstances, I am justified in doubting the wisdom of an old man who, because he hated the father, vents his anger on the son. It would be ridiculous in me to regulate my conduct by such caprices. I shall still continue to preserve the same respect toward M. Noirtier; I will suffer, without complaint, the pecuniary deprivation to which he has subjected me; but I shall remain firm in my determination, and the world shall see which party has reason on his side. Consequently I shall marry my daughter to the Baron Franz d'Espinay, because I consider it would be a proper and eligible match for her to make, and, in short, because I choose to bestow my daughters hand on whomever I please.

What? said the count, the approbation of whose eye Villefort had frequently solicited during this speech. What? Do you say that M. Noirtier disinherits Mademoiselle de Villefort because she is going to marry M. le Baron Franz d'Espinay?

Yes, sir, that is the reason, said Villefort, shrugging his shoulders.

The apparent reason, at least, said Madame de Villefort.

The _real_ reason, madame, I can assure you; I know my father.

But I want to know in what way M. d'Épinay can have displeased your father more than any other person?

I believe I know M. Franz d'Épinay, said the count; is he not the son of General de Quesnel, who was created Baron d'Épinay by Charles X.?

The same, said Villefort.

Well, but he is a charming young man, according to my ideas.

He is, which makes me believe that it is only an excuse of M. Noirtier to prevent his granddaughter marrying; old men are always so selfish in their affection, said Madame de Villefort.

But, said Monte Cristo do you not know any cause for this hatred?

Ah, _ma foi!_ who is to know?

Perhaps it is some political difference?

My father and the Baron d'Épinay lived in the stormy times of which I only saw the ending, said Villefort.

Was not your father a Bonapartist? asked Monte Cristo; I think I remember that you told me something of that kind.

My father has been a Jacobin more than anything else, said Villefort, carried by his emotion beyond the bounds of prudence; and the senators robe, which Napoleon cast on his shoulders, only served to disguise the old man without in any degree changing him. When my father conspired, it was not for the emperor, it was against the Bourbons; for M. Noirtier possessed this peculiarity, he never projected any Utopian schemes which could never be realized, but strove for possibilities, and he applied to the realization of these possibilities the terrible theories of The Mountain, "theories that never shrank from any means that were deemed necessary to bring about the desired result.

Well, said Monte Cristo, it is just as I thought; it was politics which brought Noirtier and M. d'Épinay into personal contact. Although General d'Épinay served under Napoleon, did he not still retain royalist sentiments? And was he not the person who was assassinated one evening on leaving a Bonapartist meeting to which he had been invited on the supposition that he favored the cause of the emperor?

Villefort looked at the count almost with terror.

Am I mistaken, then? said Monte Cristo.

No, sir, the facts were precisely what you have stated, said Madame de Villefort; and it was to prevent the renewal of old feuds that M. de Villefort formed the idea of uniting in the bonds of affection the two children of these inveterate enemies.

It was a sublime and charitable thought, said Monte Cristo, and the whole world should applaud it. It would be noble to see Mademoiselle Noirtier de Villefort assuming the title of Madame Franz d'Épinay. Villefort shuddered and looked at Monte Cristo as if he wished to read in his countenance the real feelings which had dictated the words he had just uttered. But the count completely baffled the procureur, and prevented him from discovering anything beneath the never-varying smile he was so constantly in the habit of assuming.

Although, said Villefort, it will be a serious thing for Valentine to lose her grandfathers fortune, I do not think that M. d'Épinay will be frightened at this pecuniary loss. He will, perhaps, hold me in greater esteem than the money itself, seeing that I sacrifice everything in order to keep my word with him. Besides, he knows that Valentine is rich in right of her mother, and that she will, in all probability, inherit the fortune of M. and Madame de Saint-Méran, her mothers parents, who both love her tenderly.

And who are fully as well worth loving and tending as M. Noirtier, said Madame de Villefort; besides, they are to come to Paris in about a month, and Valentine, after the affront she has received, need not consider it necessary to continue to bury herself alive by being shut up with M. Noirtier.

The count listened with satisfaction to this tale of wounded self-love and defeated ambition.

But it seems to me, said Monte Cristo, and I must begin by asking

your pardon for what I am about to say, that if M. Noirtier disinherits Mademoiselle de Villefort because she is going to marry a man whose father he detested, he cannot have the same cause of complaint against this dear Edward.

True, said Madame de Villefort, with an intonation of voice which it is impossible to describe; is it not unjust"shamefully unjust? Poor Edward is as much M. Noirtiers grandchild as Valentine, and yet, if she had not been going to marry M. Franz, M. Noirtier would have left her all his money; and supposing Valentine to be disinherited by her grandfather, she will still be three times richer than he.

The count listened and said no more.

Count, said Villefort, we will not entertain you any longer with our family misfortunes. It is true that my patrimony will go to endow charitable institutions, and my father will have deprived me of my lawful inheritance without any reason for doing so, but I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have acted like a man of sense and feeling. M. d'Espinoza, to whom I had promised the interest of this sum, shall receive it, even if I endure the most cruel privations.

However, said Madame de Villefort, returning to the one idea which incessantly occupied her mind, perhaps it would be better to explain this unlucky affair to M. d'Espinoza, in order to give him the opportunity of himself renouncing his claim to the hand of Mademoiselle de Villefort.

Ah, that would be a great pity, said Villefort.

A great pity, said Monte Cristo.

Undoubtedly, said Villefort, moderating the tones of his voice, a marriage once concerted and then broken off, throws a sort of discredit on a young lady; then again, the old reports, which I was so anxious to put an end to, will instantly gain ground. No, it will all go well; M. d'Espinoza, if he is an honorable man, will consider himself more than ever pledged to Mademoiselle de Villefort, unless he were actuated by a decided feeling of avarice, but that is impossible.

I agree with M. de Villefort, said Monte Cristo, fixing his eyes on Madame de Villefort; and if I were sufficiently intimate with him to allow of giving my advice, I would persuade him, since I have been told M. d'Espinoza is coming back, to settle this affair at once beyond all possibility of revocation. I will answer for the success of a project which will reflect so much honor on M. de Villefort.

The procureur arose, delighted with the proposition, but his wife slightly changed color.

Well, that is all that I wanted, and I will be guided by a counsellor such as you are, said he, extending his hand to Monte Cristo.

Therefore let everyone here look upon what has passed today as if it had not happened, and as though we had never thought of such a thing as a change in our original plans.

Sir, said the count, the world, unjust as it is, will be pleased with your resolution; your friends will be proud of you, and M. d'Espinoza, even if he took Mademoiselle de Villefort without any dowry, which he will not do, would be delighted with the idea of entering a family which could make such sacrifices in order to keep a promise and fulfil a duty.

At the conclusion of these words, the count rose to depart.

Are you going to leave us, count? said Madame de Villefort.

I am sorry to say I must do so, madame, I only came to remind you of your promise for Saturday.

Did you fear that we should forget it?

You are very good, madame, but M. de Villefort has so many important and urgent occupations.

My husband has given me his word, sir, said Madame de Villefort; you have just seen him resolve to keep it when he has everything to lose, and surely there is more reason for his doing so where he has everything to gain.

And, said Villefort, is it at your house in the Champs-Élysées that

you receive your visitors?

No, said Monte Cristo, which is precisely the reason which renders your kindness more meritorious, "it is in the country.

In the country?

Yes.

Where is it, then? Near Paris, is it not?

Very near, only half a league from the Barriers, "it is at Auteuil.

At Auteuil? said Villefort; true, Madame de Villefort told me you lived at Auteuil, since it was to your house that she was taken. And in what part of Auteuil do you reside?

Rue de la Fontaine.

Rue de la Fontaine! exclaimed Villefort in an agitated tone; at what number?

No. 28.

Then, cried Villefort, was it you who bought M. de Saint-MÃ©rans house!

Did it belong to M. de Saint-MÃ©ran? demanded Monte Cristo.

Yes, replied Madame de Villefort; and, would you believe it, count"

Believe what?

You think this house pretty, do you not?

I think it charming.

Well, my husband would never live in it.

Indeed? returned Monte Cristo, that is a prejudice on your part, M. de Villefort, for which I am quite at a loss to account.

I do not like Auteuil, sir, said the procureur, making an evident effort to appear calm.

But I hope you will not carry your antipathy so far as to deprive me of the pleasure of your company, sir, said Monte Cristo.

No, count, "I hope" I assure you I shall do my best, stammered Villefort.

Oh, said Monte Cristo, I allow of no excuse. On Saturday, at six o'clock. I shall be expecting you, and if you fail to come, I shall think "for how do I know to the contrary?" that this house, which has remained uninhabited for twenty years, must have some gloomy tradition or dreadful legend connected with it.

I will come, count, "I will be sure to come, said Villefort eagerly.

Thank you, said Monte Cristo; now you must permit me to take my leave of you.

You said before that you were obliged to leave us, monsieur, said Madame de Villefort, and you were about to tell us why when your attention was called to some other subject.

Indeed madame, said Monte Cristo: I scarcely know if I dare tell you where I am going.

Nonsense; say on.

Well, then, it is to see a thing on which I have sometimes mused for hours together.

What is it?

A telegraph. So now I have told my secret.

A telegraph? repeated Madame de Villefort.

Yes, a telegraph. I had often seen one placed at the end of a road on a hillock, and in the light of the sun its black arms, bending in every direction, always reminded me of the claws of an immense beetle, and I assure you it was never without emotion that I gazed on it, for I could not help thinking how wonderful it was that these various signs should be made to cleave the air with such precision as to convey to the distance of three hundred leagues the ideas and wishes of a man sitting at a table at one end of the line to another man similarly placed at the opposite extremity, and all this effected by a simple act of volition on the part of the sender of the message. I began to think of genii, sylphs, gnomes, in short, of all the ministers of the occult sciences, until I laughed aloud at the freaks of my own imagination. Now, it never occurred to me to wish for a nearer inspection of these

large insects, with their long black claws, for I always feared to find under their stone wings some little human genius fagged to death with cabals, factions, and government intrigues. But one fine day I learned that the mover of this telegraph was only a poor wretch, hired for twelve hundred francs a year, and employed all day, not in studying the heavens like an astronomer, or in gazing on the water like an angler, or even in enjoying the privilege of observing the country around him, but all his monotonous life was passed in watching his white-bellied, black-clawed fellow insect, four or five leagues distant from him. At length I felt a desire to study this living chrysalis more closely, and to endeavor to understand the secret part played by these insect-actors when they occupy themselves simply with pulling different pieces of string.

30191m

And are you going there?

I am.

What telegraph do you intend visiting? that of the home department, or of the observatory?

Oh, no; I should find there people who would force me to understand things of which I would prefer to remain ignorant, and who would try to explain to me, in spite of myself, a mystery which even they do not understand. _Ma foi!_ I should wish to keep my illusions concerning insects unimpaired; it is quite enough to have those dissipated which I had formed of my fellow-creatures. I shall, therefore, not visit either of these telegraphs, but one in the open country where I shall find a good-natured simpleton, who knows no more than the machine he is employed to work.

You are a singular man, said Villefort.

What line would you advise me to study?

The one that is most in use just at this time.

The Spanish one, you mean, I suppose?

Yes; should you like a letter to the minister that they might explain to you""

No, said Monte Cristo; since, as I told you before, I do not wish to comprehend it. The moment I understand it there will no longer exist a telegraph for me; it will be nothing more than a sign from M. DuchÃ¢tel, or from M. Montalivet, transmitted to the prefect of Bayonne, mystified by two Greek words, _tÃ¢le_, _graphein_. It is the insect with black claws, and the awful word which I wish to retain in my imagination in all its purity and all its importance.

Go then; for in the course of two hours it will be dark, and you will not be able to see anything.

Ma foi! you frighten me. Which is the nearest way? Bayonne?

Yes; the road to Bayonne.

And afterwards the road to ChÃ¢tillon?

Yes.

By the tower of MontlhÃ©ry, you mean?

Yes.

Thank you. Good-bye. On Saturday I will tell you my impressions concerning the telegraph.

At the door the count was met by the two notaries, who had just completed the act which was to disinherit Valentine, and who were leaving under the conviction of having done a thing which could not fail of redounding considerably to their credit.

Chapter 61. How a Gardener May Get Rid of the Dormice that Eat His Peaches

Not on the same night as he had stated, but the next morning, the Count of Monte Cristo went out by the BarriÃ©re d'Enfer, taking the road to OrlÃ©ans. Leaving the village of Linas, without stopping at the telegraph, which flourished its great bony arms as he passed, the count reached the tower of MontlhÃ©ry, situated, as everyone knows, upon the highest point of the plain of that name. At the foot of the hill the count dismounted and began to ascend by a little winding path, about

eighteen inches wide; when he reached the summit he found himself stopped by a hedge, upon which green fruit had succeeded to red and white flowers.

Monte Cristo looked for the entrance to the enclosure, and was not long in finding a little wooden gate, working on willow hinges, and fastened with a nail and string. The count soon mastered the mechanism, the gate opened, and he then found himself in a little garden, about twenty feet long by twelve wide, bounded on one side by part of the hedge, which contained the ingenious contrivance we have called a gate, and on the other by the old tower, covered with ivy and studded with wall-flowers. No one would have thought in looking at this old, weather-beaten, floral-decked tower (which might be likened to an elderly dame dressed up to receive her grandchildren at a birthday feast) that it would have been capable of telling strange things, if, "in addition to the menacing ears which the proverb says all walls are provided with," it had also a voice.

The garden was crossed by a path of red gravel, edged by a border of thick box, of many years growth, and of a tone and color that would have delighted the heart of Delacroix, our modern Rubens. This path was formed in the shape of the figure of 8, thus, in its windings, making a walk of sixty feet in a garden of only twenty.

Never had Flora, the fresh and smiling goddess of gardeners, been honored with a purer or more scrupulous worship than that which was paid to her in this little enclosure. In fact, of the twenty rose-trees which formed the _parterre_, not one bore the mark of the slug, nor were there evidences anywhere of the clustering aphids which is so destructive to plants growing in a damp soil. And yet it was not because the damp had been excluded from the garden; the earth, black as soot, the thick foliage of the trees betrayed its presence; besides, had natural humidity been wanting, it could have been immediately supplied by artificial means, thanks to a tank of water, sunk in one of the corners of the garden, and upon which were stationed a frog and a toad, who, from antipathy, no doubt, always remained on the two opposite sides of the basin. There was not a blade of grass to be seen in the paths, or a weed in the flower-beds; no fine lady ever trained and watered her geraniums, her cacti, and her rhododendrons, in her porcelain _jardinière_ with more pains than this hitherto unseen gardener bestowed upon his little enclosure.

Monte Cristo stopped after having closed the gate and fastened the string to the nail, and cast a look around.

The man at the telegraph, said he, must either engage a gardener or devote himself passionately to agriculture.

Suddenly he struck against something crouching behind a wheelbarrow filled with leaves; the something rose, uttering an exclamation of astonishment, and Monte Cristo found himself facing a man about fifty years old, who was plucking strawberries, which he was placing upon grape leaves. He had twelve leaves and about as many strawberries, which, on rising suddenly, he let fall from his hand.

You are gathering your crop, sir? said Monte Cristo, smiling.

30193m

Excuse me, sir, replied the man, raising his hand to his cap; I am not up there, I know, but I have only just come down.

Do not let me interfere with you in anything, my friend, said the count; gather your strawberries, if, indeed, there are any left.

I have ten left, said the man, for here are eleven, and I had twenty-one, five more than last year. But I am not surprised; the spring has been warm this year, and strawberries require heat, sir.

This is the reason that, instead of the sixteen I had last year, I have this year, you see, eleven, already plucked"twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen. Ah, I miss three, they were here last night, sir"I am sure they were here"I counted them. It must be the son of M^{re} Simon who has stolen them; I saw him strolling about here this morning. Ah, the young rascal"stealing in a garden"he does not

know where that may lead him to.

Certainly, it is wrong, said Monte Cristo, but you should take into consideration the youth and greediness of the delinquent.

Of course, said the gardener, but that does not make it the less unpleasant. But, sir, once more I beg pardon; perhaps you are an officer that I am detaining here. And he glanced timidly at the counts blue coat.

30197m

Calm yourself, my friend, said the count, with the smile which he made at will either terrible or benevolent, and which now expressed only the kindest feeling; I am not an inspector, but a traveller, brought here by a curiosity he half repents of, since he causes you to lose your time.

Ah, my time is not valuable, replied the man with a melancholy smile. Still it belongs to government, and I ought not to waste it; but, having received the signal that I might rest for an hour (here he glanced at the sun-dial, for there was everything in the enclosure of Montlhéry, even a sun-dial), and having ten minutes before me, and my strawberries being ripe, when a day longer"by-the-by, sir, do you think dormice eat them?

Indeed, I should think not, replied Monte Cristo; dormice are bad neighbors for us who do not eat them preserved, as the Romans did.

What? Did the Romans eat them? said the gardener"ate dormice?

I have read so in Petronius, said the count.

Really? They cant be nice, though they do say ~as fat as a dormouse.

It is not a wonder they are fat, sleeping all day, and only waking to eat all night. Listen. Last year I had four apricots"they stole one, I had one nectarine, only one"well, sir, they ate half of it on the wall; a splendid nectarine"I never ate a better.

You ate it?

That is to say, the half that was left"you understand; it was exquisite, sir. Ah, those gentlemen never choose the worst morsels; like M^r de Simons son, who has not chosen the worst strawberries. But this year, continued the horticulturist, Ill take care it shall not happen, even if I should be forced to sit by the whole night to watch when the strawberries are ripe.

Monte Cristo had seen enough. Every man has a devouring passion in his heart, as every fruit has its worm; that of the telegraph man was horticulture. He began gathering the grape-leaves which screened the sun from the grapes, and won the heart of the gardener.

Did you come here, sir, to see the telegraph? he said.

Yes, if it isnt contrary to the rules.

Oh, no, said the gardener; not in the least, since there is no danger that anyone can possibly understand what we are saying.

I have been told, said the count, that you do not always yourselves understand the signals you repeat.

That is true, sir, and that is what I like best, said the man, smiling.

Why do you like that best?

Because then I have no responsibility. I am a machine then, and nothing else, and so long as I work, nothing more is required of me.

Is it possible, said Monte Cristo to himself, that I can have met with a man that has no ambition? That would spoil my plans.

Sir, said the gardener, glancing at the sun-dial, the ten minutes are almost up; I must return to my post. Will you go up with me?

I follow you.

Monte Cristo entered the tower, which was divided into three stories. The tower contained implements, such as spades, rakes, watering-pots, hung against the wall; this was all the furniture. The second was the mans conventional abode, or rather sleeping-place; it contained a few poor articles of household furniture"a bed, a table, two chairs, a stone pitcher"and some dry herbs, hung up to the ceiling, which the count recognized as sweet peas, and of which the good man was

preserving the seeds; he had labelled them with as much care as if he had been master botanist in the Jardin des Plantes.

Does it require much study to learn the art of telegraphing? asked Monte Cristo.

The study does not take long; it was acting as a supernumerary that was so tedious.

And what is the pay?

A thousand francs, sir.

It is nothing.

No; but then we are lodged, as you perceive.

Monte Cristo looked at the room. They passed to the third story; it was the telegraph room. Monte Cristo looked in turn at the two iron handles by which the machine was worked. It is very interesting, he said, but it must be very tedious for a lifetime.

Yes. At first my neck was cramped with looking at it, but at the end of a year I became used to it; and then we have our hours of recreation, and our holidays.

Holidays?

Yes.

When?

When we have a fog.

Ah, to be sure.

Those are indeed holidays to me; I go into the garden, I plant, I prune, I trim, I kill the insects all day long.

How long have you been here?

Ten years, and five as a supernumerary make fifteen.

You are""

Fifty-five years old.

How long must you have served to claim the pension?

Oh, sir, twenty-five years.

And how much is the pension?

A hundred crowns.

Poor humanity! murmured Monte Cristo.

What did you say, sir? asked the man.

I was saying it was very interesting.

What was?

All you were showing me. And you really understand none of these signals?

None at all.

And have you never tried to understand them?

Never. Why should I?

But still there are some signals only addressed to you.

Certainly.

And do you understand them?

They are always the same.

And they mean""

~_Nothing new; You have an hour;_ or ~_Tomorrow_.

This is simple enough, said the count; but look, is not your correspondent putting itself in motion?

Ah, yes; thank you, sir.

And what is it saying"anything you understand?

Yes; it asks if I am ready.

And you reply?

By the same sign, which, at the same time, tells my right-hand correspondent that I am ready, while it gives notice to my left-hand correspondent to prepare in his turn.

It is very ingenious, said the count.

You will see, said the man proudly; in five minutes he will speak.

I have, then, five minutes, said Monte Cristo to himself; it is more time than I require. My dear sir, will you allow me to ask you a question?

What is it, sir?

You are fond of gardening?

Passionately.

And you would be pleased to have, instead of this terrace of twenty feet, an enclosure of two acres?

Sir, I should make a terrestrial paradise of it.

You live badly on your thousand francs?

Badly enough; but yet I do live.

Yes; but you have a wretchedly small garden.

True, the garden is not large.

And, then, such as it is, it is filled with dormice, who eat everything.

Ah, they are my scourges.

Tell me, should you have the misfortune to turn your head while your right-hand correspondent was telegraphing?"

I should not see him.

Then what would happen?

I could not repeat the signals.

And then?

Not having repeated them, through negligence, I should be fined.

How much?

A hundred francs.

The tenth of your income"that would be fine work.

Ah! said the man.

Has it ever happened to you? said Monte Cristo.

Once, sir, when I was grafting a rose-tree.

Well, suppose you were to alter a signal, and substitute another?

Ah, that is another case; I should be turned off, and lose my pension.

Three hundred francs?

A hundred crowns, yes, sir; so you see that I am not likely to do any of these things.

Not even for fifteen years wages? Come, it is worth thinking about?

For fifteen thousand francs?

Yes.

Sir, you alarm me.

Nonsense.

Sir, you are tempting me?

Just so; fifteen thousand francs, do you understand?

Sir, let me see my right-hand correspondent.

On the contrary, do not look at him, but at this.

What is it?

What? Do you not know these bits of paper?

Bank-notes!

Exactly; there are fifteen of them.

And whose are they?

Yours, if you like.

Mine? exclaimed the man, half-suffocated.

Yes; yours"your own property.

Sir, my right-hand correspondent is signalling.

Let him signal.

Sir, you have distracted me; I shall be fined.

That will cost you a hundred francs; you see it is your interest to take my bank-notes.

Sir, my right-hand correspondent redoubles his signals; he is impatient.

Never mind"take these; and the count placed the packet in the mans hands. Now this is not all, he said; you cannot live upon your fifteen thousand francs.

I shall still have my place.

No, you will lose it, for you are going to alter your correspondents message.

Oh, sir, what are you proposing?

A jest.

Sir, unless you force me""

I think I can effectually force you; and Monte Cristo drew another packet from his pocket. Here are ten thousand more francs, he said, with the fifteen thousand already in your pocket, they will make twenty-five thousand. With five thousand you can buy a pretty little house with two acres of land; the remaining twenty thousand will bring you in a thousand francs a year.

A garden with two acres of land!

And a thousand francs a year.

Oh, heavens!

Come, take them, and Monte Cristo forced the bank-notes into his hand.

What am I to do?

Nothing very difficult.

But what is it?

To repeat these signs. Monte Cristo took a paper from his pocket, upon which were drawn three signs, with numbers to indicate the order in which they were to be worked.

There, you see it will not take long.

Yes; but""

Do this, and you will have nectarines and all the rest.

The shot told; red with fever, while the large drops fell from his brow, the man executed, one after the other, the three signs given by the count, in spite of the frightful contortions of the right-hand correspondent, who, not understanding the change, began to think the gardener had gone mad. As to the left-hand one, he conscientiously repeated the same signals, which were finally transmitted to the Minister of the Interior.

Now you are rich, said Monte Cristo.

Yes, replied the man, but at what a price!

Listen, friend, said Monte Cristo. I do not wish to cause you any remorse; believe me, then, when I swear to you that you have wronged no man, but on the contrary have benefited mankind.

The man looked at the bank-notes, felt them, counted them, turned pale, then red, then rushed into his room to drink a glass of water, but he had no time to reach the water-jug, and fainted in the midst of his dried herbs. Five minutes after the new telegram reached the minister, Debray had the horses put to his carriage, and drove to Danglars house.

Has your husband any Spanish bonds? he asked of the baroness.

I think so, indeed! He has six millions worth.

He must sell them at whatever price.

Why?

Because Don Carlos has fled from Bourges, and has returned to Spain.

30203m

How do you know? Debray shrugged his shoulders.

The idea of asking how I hear the news, he said.

The baroness did not wait for a repetition; she ran to her husband, who immediately hastened to his agent, and ordered him to sell at any price. When it was seen that Danglars sold, the Spanish funds fell directly. Danglars lost five hundred thousand francs; but he rid himself of all his Spanish shares. The same evening the following was read in Le Messenger:

[By telegraph.] The king, Don Carlos, has escaped the vigilance of his guardians at Bourges, and has returned to Spain by the Catalanian frontier. Barcelona has risen in his favor.

All that evening nothing was spoken of but the foresight of Danglars, who had sold his shares, and of the luck of the stock-jobber, who only lost five hundred thousand francs by such a blow. Those who had kept their shares, or bought those of Danglars, looked upon themselves as ruined, and passed a very bad night. Next morning Le Moniteur contained the following:

It was without any foundation that Le Messenger yesterday announced the flight of Don Carlos and the revolt of Barcelona. The king (Don

Carlos) has not left Bourges, and the peninsula is in the enjoyment of profound peace. A telegraphic signal, improperly interpreted, owing to the fog, was the cause of this error.

The funds rose one per cent higher than before they had fallen. This, reckoning his loss, and what he had missed gaining, made the difference of a million to Danglars.

Good, said Monte Cristo to Morrel, who was at his house when the news arrived of the strange reverse of fortune of which Danglars had been the victim, I have just made a discovery for twenty-five thousand francs, for which I would have paid a hundred thousand.

What have you discovered? asked Morrel.

I have just discovered how a gardener may get rid of the dormice that eat his peaches.

Chapter 62. Ghosts

At first sight, the exterior of the house at Auteuil gave no indications of splendor, nothing one would expect from the destined residence of the magnificent Count of Monte Cristo; but this simplicity was according to the will of its master, who positively ordered nothing to be altered outside. The splendor was within. Indeed, almost before the door opened, the scene changed.

M. Bertuccio had outdone himself in the taste displayed in furnishing, and in the rapidity with which it was executed. It is told that the Duc d'Antin removed in a single night a whole avenue of trees that annoyed Louis XIV.; in three days M. Bertuccio planted an entirely bare court with poplars, large spreading sycamores to shade the different parts of the house, and in the foreground, instead of the usual paving-stones, half hidden by the grass, there extended a lawn but that morning laid down, and upon which the water was yet glistening. For the rest, the orders had been issued by the count; he himself had given a plan to Bertuccio, marking the spot where each tree was to be planted, and the shape and extent of the lawn which was to take the place of the paving-stones.

Thus the house had become unrecognizable, and Bertuccio himself declared that he scarcely knew it, encircled as it was by a framework of trees. The overseer would not have objected, while he was about it, to have made some improvements in the garden, but the count had positively forbidden it to be touched. Bertuccio made amends, however, by loading the antechambers, staircases, and mantle-pieces with flowers.

What, above all, manifested the shrewdness of the steward, and the profound science of the master, the one in carrying out the ideas of the other, was that this house which appeared only the night before so sad and gloomy, impregnated with that sickly smell one can almost fancy to be the smell of time, had in a single day acquired the aspect of life, was scented with its masters favorite perfumes, and had the very light regulated according to his wish. When the count arrived, he had under his touch his books and arms, his eyes rested upon his favorite pictures; his dogs, whose caresses he loved, welcomed him in the antechamber; the birds, whose songs delighted him, cheered him with their music; and the house, awakened from its long sleep, like the sleeping beauty in the wood, lived, sang, and bloomed like the houses we have long cherished, and in which, when we are forced to leave them, we leave a part of our souls.

The servants passed gayly along the fine courtyard; some, belonging to the kitchens, gliding down the stairs, restored but the previous day, as if they had always inhabited the house; others filling the coach-houses, where the equipages, encased and numbered, appeared to have been installed for the last fifty years; and in the stables the horses replied with neighs to the grooms, who spoke to them with much more respect than many servants pay their masters.

The library was divided into two parts on either side of the wall, and contained upwards of two thousand volumes; one division was entirely devoted to novels, and even the volume which had been published but the

day before was to be seen in its place in all the dignity of its red and gold binding.

On the other side of the house, to match with the library, was the conservatory, ornamented with rare flowers, that bloomed in china jars; and in the midst of the greenhouse, marvellous alike to sight and smell, was a billiard-table which looked as if it had been abandoned during the past hour by players who had left the balls on the cloth. One chamber alone had been respected by the magnificent Bertuccio. Before this room, to which you could ascend by the grand, and go out by the back staircase, the servants passed with curiosity, and Bertuccio with terror.

At five oclock precisely, the count arrived before the house at Auteuil, followed by Ali. Bertuccio was awaiting this arrival with impatience, mingled with uneasiness; he hoped for some compliments, while, at the same time, he feared to have frowns. Monte Cristo descended into the courtyard, walked all over the house, without giving any sign of approbation or pleasure, until he entered his bedroom, situated on the opposite side to the closed room; then he approached a little piece of furniture, made of rosewood, which he had noticed at a previous visit.

That can only be to hold gloves, he said.

Will your excellency deign to open it? said the delighted Bertuccio, and you will find gloves in it.

Elsewhere the count found everything he required"smelling-bottles, cigars, knick-knacks.

30207m

Good, he said; and M. Bertuccio left enraptured, so great, so powerful, and real was the influence exercised by this man over all who surrounded him.

At precisely six oclock the clatter of horses hoofs was heard at the entrance door; it was our captain of Spahis, who had arrived on MÃ©dÃ©ah. I am sure I am the first, cried Morrel; I did it on purpose to have you a minute to myself, before everyone came. Julie and Emmanuel have a thousand things to tell you. Ah, really this is magnificent! But tell me, count, will your people take care of my horse?

Do not alarm yourself, my dear Maximilian"they understand.

I mean, because he wants petting. If you had seen at what a pace he came"like the wind!

I should think so,"a horse that cost 5,000 francs! said Monte Cristo, in the tone which a father would use towards a son.

Do you regret them? asked Morrel, with his open laugh.

I? Certainly not, replied the count. No; I should only regret if the horse had not proved good.

It is so good, that I have distanced M. de ChÃ©teau-Renaud, one of the best riders in France, and M. Debray, who both mount the ministers Arabians; and close on their heels are the horses of Madame Danglars, who always go at six leagues an hour.

Then they follow you? asked Monte Cristo.

See, they are here. And at the same minute a carriage with smoking horses, accompanied by two mounted gentlemen, arrived at the gate, which opened before them. The carriage drove round, and stopped at the steps, followed by the horsemen.

The instant Debray had touched the ground, he was at the carriage-door. He offered his hand to the baroness, who, descending, took it with a peculiarity of manner imperceptible to everyone but Monte Cristo. But nothing escaped the counts notice, and he observed a little note, passed with the facility that indicates frequent practice, from the hand of Madame Danglars to that of the ministers secretary.

After his wife the banker descended, as pale as though he had issued from his tomb instead of his carriage.

Madame Danglars threw a rapid and inquiring glance which could only be interpreted by Monte Cristo, around the courtyard, over the peristyle, and across the front of the house, then, repressing a slight emotion,

which must have been seen on her countenance if she had not kept her color, she ascended the steps, saying to Morrel:

Sir, if you were a friend of mine, I should ask you if you would sell your horse.

Morrel smiled with an expression very like a grimace, and then turned round to Monte Cristo, as if to ask him to extricate him from his embarrassment. The count understood him.

Ah, madame, he said, why did you not make that request of me?

With you, sir, replied the baroness, one can wish for nothing, one is so sure to obtain it. If it were so with M. Morrel""

Unfortunately, replied the count, I am witness that M. Morrel cannot give up his horse, his honor being engaged in keeping it.

How so?

He laid a wager he would tame MÃ©dÃ©ah in the space of six months. You understand now that if he were to get rid of the animal before the time named, he would not only lose his bet, but people would say he was afraid; and a brave captain of Spahis cannot risk this, even to gratify a pretty woman, which is, in my opinion, one of the most sacred obligations in the world.

You see my position, madame, said Morrel, bestowing a grateful smile on Monte Cristo.

It seems to me, said Danglars, in his coarse tone, ill-concealed by a forced smile, that you have already got horses enough.

Madame Danglars seldom allowed remarks of this kind to pass unnoticed, but, to the surprise of the young people, she pretended not to hear it, and said nothing. Monte Cristo smiled at her unusual humility, and showed her two immense porcelain jars, over which wound marine plants, of a size and delicacy that nature alone could produce. The baroness was astonished.

Why, said she, you could plant one of the chestnut-trees in the Tuileries inside! How can such enormous jars have been manufactured?

Ah! madame, replied Monte Cristo, you must not ask of us, the manufacturers of fine porcelain, such a question. It is the work of another age, constructed by the genii of earth and water.

How so?"at what period can that have been?

I do not know; I have only heard that an emperor of China had an oven built expressly, and that in this oven twelve jars like this were successively baked. Two broke, from the heat of the fire; the other ten were sunk three hundred fathoms deep into the sea. The sea, knowing what was required of her, threw over them her weeds, encircled them with coral, and encrusted them with shells; the whole was cemented by two hundred years beneath these almost impervious depths, for a revolution carried away the emperor who wished to make the trial, and only left the documents proving the manufacture of the jars and their descent into the sea. At the end of two hundred years the documents were found, and they thought of bringing up the jars. Divers descended in machines, made expressly on the discovery, into the bay where they were thrown; but of ten three only remained, the rest having been broken by the waves. I am fond of these jars, upon which, perhaps, misshapen, frightful monsters have fixed their cold, dull eyes, and in which myriads of small fish have slept, seeking a refuge from the pursuit of their enemies.

Meanwhile, Danglars, who had cared little for curiosities, was mechanically tearing off the blossoms of a splendid orange-tree, one after another. When he had finished with the orange-tree, he began at the cactus; but this, not being so easily plucked as the orange-tree, pricked him dreadfully. He shuddered, and rubbed his eyes as though awaking from a dream.

Sir, said Monte Cristo to him, I do not recommend my pictures to you, who possess such splendid paintings; but, nevertheless, here are two by Hobbema, a Paul Potter, a Mieris, two by Gerard Douw, a Raphael, a Van Dyck, a Zurbaran, and two or three by Murillo, worth looking at. Stay, said Debray; I recognize this Hobbema.

Ah, indeed!

Yes; it was proposed for the Museum.

Which, I believe, does not contain one? said Monte Cristo.

No; and yet they refused to buy it.

Why? said Châteaufort-Renaud.

You pretend not to know,"because government was not rich enough.

Ah, pardon me, said Châteaufort-Renaud; I have heard of these things every day during the last eight years, and I cannot understand them yet.

You will, by and by, said Debray.

I think not, replied Châteaufort-Renaud.

Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti and Count Andrea Cavalcanti, announced Baptistin.

A black satin stock, fresh from the makers hands, gray moustaches, a bold eye, a majors uniform, ornamented with three medals and five crosses" in fact, the thorough bearing of an old soldier" such was the appearance of Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, that tender father with whom we are already acquainted. Close to him, dressed in entirely new clothes, advanced smilingly Count Andrea Cavalcanti, the dutiful son, whom we also know. The three young people were talking together. On the entrance of the new-comers, their eyes glanced from father to son, and then, naturally enough, rested on the latter, whom they began criticising.

Cavalcanti! said Debray.

A fine name, said Morrel.

Yes, said Châteaufort-Renaud, these Italians are well named and badly dressed.

You are fastidious, Châteaufort-Renaud, replied Debray; those clothes are well cut and quite new.

That is just what I find fault with. That gentleman appears to be well dressed for the first time in his life.

Who are those gentlemen? asked Danglars of Monte Cristo.

You heard" Cavalcanti.

That tells me their name, and nothing else.

Ah! true. You do not know the Italian nobility; the Cavalcanti are all descended from princes.

Have they any fortune?

An enormous one.

What do they do?

Try to spend it all. They have some business with you, I think, from what they told me the day before yesterday. I, indeed, invited them here today on your account. I will introduce you to them.

But they appear to speak French with a very pure accent, said Danglars.

The son has been educated in a college in the south; I believe near Marseilles. You will find him quite enthusiastic.

Upon what subject? asked Madame Danglars.

The French ladies, madame. He has made up his mind to take a wife from Paris.

A fine idea that of his, said Danglars, shrugging his shoulders.

Madame Danglars looked at her husband with an expression which, at any other time, would have indicated a storm, but for the second time she controlled herself.

The baron appears thoughtful today, said Monte Cristo to her; are they going to put him in the ministry?

Not yet, I think. More likely he has been speculating on the Bourse, and has lost money.

M. and Madame de Villefort, cried Baptistin.

They entered. M. de Villefort, notwithstanding his self-control, was visibly affected, and when Monte Cristo touched his hand, he felt it tremble.

Certainly, women alone know how to dissimulate, said Monte Cristo to himself, glancing at Madame Danglars, who was smiling on the procureur,

and embracing his wife.

After a short time, the count saw Bertuccio, who, until then, had been occupied on the other side of the house, glide into an adjoining room. He went to him.

What do you want, M. Bertuccio? said he.

Your excellency has not stated the number of guests.

Ah, true.

How many covers?

Count for yourself.

Is everyone here, your excellency?

Yes.

Bertuccio glanced through the door, which was ajar. The count watched him. Good heavens! he exclaimed.

What is the matter? said the count.

That woman—that woman!

Which?

The one with a white dress and so many diamonds—the fair one.

Madame Danglars?

I do not know her name; but it is she, sir, it is she!

Whom do you mean?

The woman of the garden!—she that was _enceinte_—she who was walking while she waited for—

Bertuccio stood at the open door, with his eyes starting and his hair on end.

Waiting for whom? Bertuccio, without answering, pointed to Villefort with something of the gesture Macbeth uses to point out Banquo.

Oh, oh! he at length muttered, do you see?

What? Who?

Him!

Him!—M. de Villefort, the king's attorney? Certainly I see him.

Then I did not kill him?

Really, I think you are going mad, good Bertuccio, said the count.

Then he is not dead?

30213m

No; you see plainly he is not dead. Instead of striking between the sixth and seventh left ribs, as your countrymen do, you must have struck higher or lower, and life is very tenacious in these lawyers, or rather there is no truth in anything you have told me—it was a fright of the imagination, a dream of your fancy. You went to sleep full of thoughts of vengeance; they weighed heavily upon your stomach; you had