

he flower falls from the tree.

My lord, replied HaydÃ©e, I never will leave you, for I am sure I could not exist without you.

My poor girl, in ten years I shall be old, and you will be still young.

My father had a long white beard, but I loved him; he was sixty years old, but to me he was handsomer than all the fine youths I saw.

Then tell me, HaydÃ©e, do you believe you shall be able to accustom yourself to our present mode of life?

Shall I see you?

Every day.

Then what do you fear, my lord?

You might find it dull.

No, my lord. In the morning, I shall rejoice in the prospect of your coming, and in the evening dwell with delight on the happiness I have enjoyed in your presence; then too, when alone, I can call forth mighty pictures of the past, see vast horizons bounded only by the towering mountains of Pindus and Olympus. Oh, believe me, that when three great passions, such as sorrow, love, and gratitude fill the heart, _ennui_ can find no place.

You are a worthy daughter of Epirus, HaydÃ©e, and your charming and poetical ideas prove well your descent from that race of goddesses who claim your country as their birthplace. Depend on my care to see that your youth is not blighted, or suffered to pass away in ungenial solitude; and of this be well assured, that if you love me as a father, I love you as a child.

You are wrong, my lord. The love I have for you is very different from the love I had for my father. My father died, but I did not die. If you were to die, I should die too.

The count, with a smile of profound tenderness, extended his hand, and she carried it to her lips.

Monte Cristo, thus attuned to the interview he proposed to hold with Morrel and his family, departed, murmuring as he went these lines of Pindar, Youth is a flower of which love is the fruit; happy is he who, after having watched its silent growth, is permitted to gather and call it his own. The carriage was prepared according to orders, and stepping lightly into it, the count drove off at his usual rapid pace.

Chapter 50. The Morrel Family

In a very few minutes the count reached No. 7 in the Rue Meslay. The house was of white stone, and in a small court before it were two small beds full of beautiful flowers. In the concierge that opened the gate the count recognized Cocles; but as he had but one eye, and that eye had become somewhat dim in the course of nine years, Cocles did not recognize the count.

The carriages that drove up to the door were compelled to turn, to avoid a fountain that played in a basin of rockwork,"an ornament that had excited the jealousy of the whole quarter, and had gained for the place the appellation of _The Little Versailles_. It is needless to add that there were gold and silver fish in the basin. The house, with kitchens and cellars below, had above the ground floor, two stories and attics. The whole of the property, consisting of an immense workshop, two pavilions at the bottom of the garden, and the garden itself, had been purchased by Emmanuel, who had seen at a glance that he could make of it a profitable speculation. He had reserved the house and half the garden, and building a wall between the garden and the workshops, had let them upon lease with the pavilions at the bottom of the garden. So that for a trifling sum he was as well lodged, and as perfectly shut out from observation, as the inhabitants of the finest mansion in the Faubourg St. Germain.

The breakfast-room was finished in oak; the salon in mahogany, and the furnishings were of blue velvet; the bedroom was in citronwood and green damask. There was a study for Emmanuel, who never studied, and a music-room for Julie, who never played. The whole of the second story

was set apart for Maximilian; it was precisely similar to his sisters apartments, except that for the breakfast-parlor he had a billiard-room, where he received his friends. He was superintending the grooming of his horse, and smoking his cigar at the entrance of the garden, when the counts carriage stopped at the gate.

Cocles opened the gate, and Baptistin, springing from the box, inquired whether Monsieur and Madame Herbault and Monsieur Maximilian Morrel would see his excellency the Count of Monte Cristo.

The Count of Monte Cristo? cried Morrel, throwing away his cigar and hastening to the carriage; I should think we would see him. Ah, a thousand thanks, count, for not having forgotten your promise. And the young officer shook the counts hand so warmly, that Monte Cristo could not be mistaken as to the sincerity of his joy, and he saw that he had been expected with impatience, and was received with pleasure.

Come, come, said Maximilian, I will serve as your guide; such a man as you are ought not to be introduced by a servant. My sister is in the garden plucking the dead roses; my brother is reading his two papers, la Presse and les DÃ©bats, within six steps of her; for wherever you see Madame Herbault, you have only to look within a circle of four yards and you will find M. Emmanuel, and ~reciprocally, as they say at the Polytechnic School.

At the sound of their steps a young woman of twenty to five-and-twenty, dressed in a silk morning gown, and busily engaged in plucking the dead leaves off a noisette rose-tree, raised her head. This was Julie, who had become, as the clerk of the house of Thomson & French had predicted, Madame Emmanuel Herbault. She uttered a cry of surprise at the sight of a stranger, and Maximilian began to laugh.

Dont disturb yourself, Julie, said he. The count has only been two or three days in Paris, but he already knows what a fashionable woman of the Marais is, and if he does not, you will show him.

Ah, monsieur, returned Julie, it is treason in my brother to bring you thus, but he never has any regard for his poor sister. Penelon, Penelon!

An old man, who was digging busily at one of the beds, stuck his spade in the earth, and approached, cap in hand, striving to conceal a quid of tobacco he had just thrust into his cheek. A few locks of gray mingled with his hair, which was still thick and matted, while his bronzed features and determined glance well suited an old sailor who had braved the heat of the equator and the storms of the tropics.

I think you hailed me, Mademoiselle Julie? said he.

Penelon had still preserved the habit of calling his masters daughter Mademoiselle Julie, and had never been able to change the name to Madame Herbault.

Penelon, replied Julie, go and inform M. Emmanuel of this gentlemans visit, and Maximilian will conduct him to the salon.

Then, turning to Monte Cristo, "I hope you will permit me to leave you for a few minutes, continued she; and without awaiting any reply, disappeared behind a clump of trees, and escaped to the house by a lateral alley.

30041m

I am sorry to see, observed Monte Cristo to Morrel, that I cause no small disturbance in your house.

Look there, said Maximilian, laughing; there is her husband changing his jacket for a coat. I assure you, you are well known in the Rue Meslay.

Your family appears to be a very happy one, said the count, as if speaking to himself.

Oh, yes, I assure you, count, they want nothing that can render them happy; they are young and cheerful, they are tenderly attached to each other, and with twenty-five thousand francs a year they fancy themselves as rich as Rothschild.

Five-and-twenty thousand francs is not a large sum, however, replied

Monte Cristo, with a tone so sweet and gentle, that it went to Maximilian's heart like the voice of a father; but they will not be content with that. Your brother-in-law is a barrister? a doctor? He was a merchant, monsieur, and had succeeded to the business of my poor father. M. Morrel, at his death, left 500,000 francs, which were divided between my sister and myself, for we were his only children. Her husband, who, when he married her, had no other patrimony than his noble probity, his first-rate ability, and his spotless reputation, wished to possess as much as his wife. He labored and toiled until he had amassed 250,000 francs; six years sufficed to achieve this object. Oh, I assure you, sir, it was a touching spectacle to see these young creatures, destined by their talents for higher stations, toiling together, and through their unwillingness to change any of the customs of their paternal house, taking six years to accomplish what less scrupulous people would have effected in two or three. Marseilles resounded with their well-earned praises. At last, one day, Emmanuel came to his wife, who had just finished making up the accounts. "Julie," said he to her, "Cocles has just given me the last rouleau of a hundred francs; that completes the 250,000 francs we had fixed as the limits of our gains. Can you content yourself with the small fortune which we shall possess for the future? Listen to me. Our house transacts business to the amount of a million a year, from which we derive an income of 40,000 francs. We can dispose of the business, if we please, in an hour, for I have received a letter from M. Delaunay, in which he offers to purchase the good-will of the house, to unite with his own, for 300,000 francs. Advise me what I had better do." Emmanuel, returned my sister, "the house of Morrel can only be carried on by a Morrel. Is it not worth 300,000 francs to save our father's name from the chances of evil fortune and failure?" "I thought so," replied Emmanuel; "but I wished to have your advice." "This is my counsel: "Our accounts are made up and our bills paid; all we have to do is to stop the issue of any more, and close our office. This was done instantly. It was three o'clock; at a quarter past, a merchant presented himself to insure two ships; it was a clear profit of 15,000 francs."

"Monsieur," said Emmanuel, "have the goodness to address yourself to M. Delaunay. We have quitted business."

"How long?" inquired the astonished merchant.

30043m

"A quarter of an hour," was the reply.

And this is the reason, monsieur, continued Maximilian, of my sister and brother-in-law having only 25,000 francs a year. Maximilian had scarcely finished his story, during which the count's heart had swelled within him, when Emmanuel entered wearing a hat and coat. He saluted the count with the air of a man who is aware of the rank of his guest; then, after having led Monte Cristo around the little garden, he returned to the house. A large vase of Japan porcelain, filled with flowers that loaded the air with their perfume, stood in the salon. Julie, suitably dressed, and her hair arranged (she had accomplished this feat in less than ten minutes), received the count on his entrance. The songs of the birds were heard in an aviary hard by, and the branches of laburnums and rose acacias formed an exquisite framework to the blue velvet curtains. Everything in this charming retreat, from the warble of the birds to the smile of the mistress, breathed tranquillity and repose. The count had felt the influence of this happiness from the moment he entered the house, and he remained silent and pensive, forgetting that he was expected to renew the conversation, which had ceased after the first salutations had been exchanged. The silence became almost painful when, by a violent effort, tearing himself from his pleasing reverie: "Madame," said he at length, "I pray you to excuse my emotion, which must astonish you who are only accustomed to the happiness I meet here; but contentment is so new a sight to me, that I could never be weary of

looking at yourself and your husband.

We are very happy, monsieur, replied Julie; but we have also known unhappiness, and few have ever undergone more bitter sufferings than ourselves.

The count's features displayed an expression of the most intense curiosity.

Oh, all this is a family history, as Châteaufort-Renaud told you the other day, observed Maximilian. This humble picture would have but little interest for you, accustomed as you are to behold the pleasures and the misfortunes of the wealthy and industrious; but such as we are, we have experienced bitter sorrows.

And God has poured balm into your wounds, as he does into those of all who are in affliction? said Monte Cristo inquiringly.

Yes, count, returned Julie, we may indeed say he has, for he has done for us what he grants only to his chosen; he sent us one of his angels.

The count's cheeks became scarlet, and he coughed, in order to have an excuse for putting his handkerchief to his mouth.

Those born to wealth, and who have the means of gratifying every wish, said Emmanuel, know not what is the real happiness of life, just as those who have been tossed on the stormy waters of the ocean on a few frail planks can alone realize the blessings of fair weather.

Monte Cristo rose, and without making any answer (for the tremulousness of his voice would have betrayed his emotion) walked up and down the apartment with a slow step.

Our magnificence makes you smile, count, said Maximilian, who had followed him with his eyes.

No, no, returned Monte Cristo, pale as death, pressing one hand on his heart to still its throbbings, while with the other he pointed to a crystal cover, beneath which a silken purse lay on a black velvet cushion. I was wondering what could be the significance of this purse, with the paper at one end and the large diamond at the other.

Count, replied Maximilian, with an air of gravity, those are our most precious family treasures.

The stone seems very brilliant, answered the count.

Oh, my brother does not allude to its value, although it has been estimated at 100,000 francs; he means, that the articles contained in this purse are the relics of the angel I spoke of just now.

This I do not comprehend; and yet I may not ask for an explanation, madame, replied Monte Cristo bowing. Pardon me, I had no intention of committing an indiscretion.

Indiscretion,"oh, you make us happy by giving us an excuse for expatiating on this subject. If we wanted to conceal the noble action this purse commemorates, we should not expose it thus to view. Oh, would we could relate it everywhere, and to everyone, so that the emotion of our unknown benefactor might reveal his presence.

Ah, really, said Monte Cristo in a half-stifled voice.

Monsieur, returned Maximilian, raising the glass cover, and respectfully kissing the silken purse, this has touched the hand of a man who saved my father from suicide, us from ruin, and our name from shame and disgrace,"a man by whose matchless benevolence we poor children, doomed to want and wretchedness, can at present hear everyone envying our happy lot. This letter (as he spoke, Maximilian drew a letter from the purse and gave it to the count)"this letter was written by him the day that my father had taken a desperate resolution, and this diamond was given by the generous unknown to my sister as her dowry.

Monte Cristo opened the letter, and read it with an indescribable feeling of delight. It was the letter written (as our readers know) to Julie, and signed Sinbad the Sailor.

Unknown you say, is the man who rendered you this service"unknown to you?

Yes; we have never had the happiness of pressing his hand, continued

Maximilian. We have supplicated Heaven in vain to grant us this favor, but the whole affair has had a mysterious meaning that we cannot comprehend—we have been guided by an invisible hand," a hand as powerful as that of an enchanter.

Oh, cried Julie, I have not lost all hope of some day kissing that hand, as I now kiss the purse which he has touched. Four years ago, Penelon was at Trieste—Penelon, count, is the old sailor you saw in the garden, and who, from quartermaster, has become gardener—Penelon, when he was at Trieste, saw on the quay an Englishman, who was on the point of embarking on board a yacht, and he recognized him as the person who called on my father the fifth of June, 1829, and who wrote me this letter on the fifth of September. He felt convinced of his identity, but he did not venture to address him.

An Englishman, said Monte Cristo, who grew uneasy at the attention with which Julie looked at him. An Englishman you say?

Yes, replied Maximilian, an Englishman, who represented himself as the confidential clerk of the house of Thomson & French, at Rome. It was this that made me start when you said the other day, at M. de Morcerfs, that Messrs. Thomson & French were your bankers. That happened, as I told you, in 1829. For Gods sake, tell me, did you know this Englishman?

But you tell me, also, that the house of Thomson & French have constantly denied having rendered you this service?

Yes.

Then is it not probable that this Englishman may be someone who, grateful for a kindness your father had shown him, and which he himself had forgotten, has taken this method of requiting the obligation? Everything is possible in this affair, even a miracle.

What was his name? asked Monte Cristo.

He gave no other name, answered Julie, looking earnestly at the count, than that at the end of his letter—"Sinbad the Sailor.

Which is evidently not his real name, but a fictitious one.

Then, noticing that Julie was struck with the sound of his voice:

Tell me, continued he, was he not about my height, perhaps a little taller, with his chin imprisoned, as it were, in a high cravat; his coat closely buttoned up, and constantly taking out his pencil?

Oh, do you then know him? cried Julie, whose eyes sparkled with joy.

No, returned Monte Cristo I only guessed. I knew a Lord Wilmore, who was constantly doing actions of this kind.

Without revealing himself?

He was an eccentric being, and did not believe in the existence of gratitude.

Oh, Heaven, exclaimed Julie, clasping her hands, in what did he believe, then?

30047m

He did not credit it at the period which I knew him, said Monte Cristo, touched to the heart by the accents of Julies voice; but, perhaps, since then he has had proofs that gratitude does exist.

And do you know this gentleman, monsieur? inquired Emmanuel.

Oh, if you do know him, cried Julie, can you tell us where he is—where we can find him? Maximilian—Emmanuel—if we do but discover him, he must believe in the gratitude of the heart!

Monte Cristo felt tears start into his eyes, and he again walked hastily up and down the room.

In the name of Heaven, said Maximilian, if you know anything of him, tell us what it is.

Alas, cried Monte Cristo, striving to repress his emotion, if Lord Wilmore was your unknown benefactor, I fear you will never see him again. I parted from him two years ago at Palermo, and he was then on the point of setting out for the most remote regions; so that I fear he will never return.

Oh, monsieur, this is cruel of you, said Julie, much affected; and the young ladys eyes swam with tears.

Madame, replied Monte Cristo gravely, and gazing earnestly on the two liquid pearls that trickled down Julies cheeks, had Lord Wilmore seen what I now see, he would become attached to life, for the tears you shed would reconcile him to mankind; and he held out his hand to Julie, who gave him hers, carried away by the look and accent of the count.

But, continued she, Lord Wilmore had a family or friends, he must have known someone, can we not""

Oh, it is useless to inquire, returned the count; perhaps, after all, he was not the man you seek for. He was my friend: he had no secrets from me, and if this had been so he would have confided in me. And he told you nothing?

Not a word.

Nothing that would lead you to suppose?

Nothing.

And yet you spoke of him at once.

Ah, in such a case one supposes""

Sister, sister, said Maximilian, coming to the counts aid, monsieur is quite right. Recollect what our excellent father so often told us, ~It was no Englishman that thus saved us.

Monte Cristo started. What did your father tell you, M. Morrel? said he eagerly.

My father thought that this action had been miraculously performed"he believed that a benefactor had arisen from the grave to save us. Oh, it was a touching superstition, monsieur, and although I did not myself believe it, I would not for the world have destroyed my fathers faith. How often did he muse over it and pronounce the name of a dear friend"a friend lost to him forever; and on his death-bed, when the near approach of eternity seemed to have illumined his mind with supernatural light, this thought, which had until then been but a doubt, became a conviction, and his last words were, ~Maximilian, it was Edmond DantÃs!

At these words the counts paleness, which had for some time been increasing, became alarming; he could not speak; he looked at his watch like a man who has forgotten the hour, said a few hurried words to Madame Herbault, and pressing the hands of Emmanuel and

Maximilian,"Madame, said he, I trust you will allow me to visit you occasionally; I value your friendship, and feel grateful to you for your welcome, for this is the first time for many years that I have thus yielded to my feelings; and he hastily quitted the apartment.

This Count of Monte Cristo is a strange man, said Emmanuel.

Yes, answered Maximilian, but I feel sure he has an excellent heart, and that he likes us.

His voice went to my heart, observed Julie; and two or three times I fancied that I had heard it before.

Chapter 51. Pyramus and Thisbe

About two-thirds of the way along the Faubourg Saint-HonorÃ©, and in the rear of one of the most imposing mansions in this rich neighborhood, where the various houses vie with each other for elegance of design and magnificence of construction, extended a large garden, where the wide-spreading chestnut-trees raised their heads high above the walls in a solid rampart, and with the coming of every spring scattered a shower of delicate pink and white blossoms into the large stone vases that stood upon the two square pilasters of a curiously wrought iron gate, that dated from the time of Louis XIII.

This noble entrance, however, in spite of its striking appearance and the graceful effect of the geraniums planted in the two vases, as they waved their variegated leaves in the wind and charmed the eye with their scarlet bloom, had fallen into utter disuse. The proprietors of the mansion had many years before thought it best to confine themselves to the possession of the house itself, with its thickly planted courtyard, opening into the Faubourg Saint-HonorÃ©, and to the garden shut in by this gate, which formerly communicated with a fine

kitchen-garden of about an acre. For the demon of speculation drew a line, or in other words projected a street, at the farther side of the kitchen-garden. The street was laid out, a name was chosen and posted up on an iron plate, but before construction was begun, it occurred to the possessor of the property that a handsome sum might be obtained for the ground then devoted to fruits and vegetables, by building along the line of the proposed street, and so making it a branch of communication with the Faubourg Saint-Honoré itself, one of the most important thoroughfares in the city of Paris.

In matters of speculation, however, though man proposes, yet money disposes. From some such difficulty the newly named street died almost in birth, and the purchaser of the kitchen-garden, having paid a high price for it, and being quite unable to find anyone willing to take his bargain off his hands without a considerable loss, yet still clinging to the belief that at some future day he should obtain a sum for it that would repay him, not only for his past outlay, but also the interest upon the capital locked up in his new acquisition, contented himself with letting the ground temporarily to some market-gardeners, at a yearly rental of 500 francs.

And so, as we have said, the iron gate leading into the kitchen-garden had been closed up and left to the rust, which bade fair before long to eat off its hinges, while to prevent the ignoble glances of the diggers and delvers of the ground from presuming to sully the aristocratic enclosure belonging to the mansion, the gate had been boarded up to a height of six feet. True, the planks were not so closely adjusted but that a hasty peep might be obtained through their interstices; but the strict decorum and rigid propriety of the inhabitants of the house left no grounds for apprehending that advantage would be taken of that circumstance.

Horticulture seemed, however, to have been abandoned in the deserted kitchen-garden; and where cabbages, carrots, radishes, peas, and melons had once flourished, a scanty crop of lucern alone bore evidence of its being deemed worthy of cultivation. A small, low door gave egress from the walled space we have been describing into the projected street, the ground having been abandoned as unproductive by its various renters, and had now fallen so completely in general estimation as to return not even the one-half per cent it had originally paid. Towards the house the chestnut-trees we have before mentioned rose high above the wall, without in any way affecting the growth of other luxuriant shrubs and flowers that eagerly dressed forward to fill up the vacant spaces, as though asserting their right to enjoy the boon of light and air. At one corner, where the foliage became so thick as almost to shut out day, a large stone bench and sundry rustic seats indicated that this sheltered spot was either in general favor or particular use by some inhabitant of the house, which was faintly discernible through the dense mass of verdure that partially concealed it, though situated but a hundred paces off.

Whoever had selected this retired portion of the grounds as the boundary of a walk, or as a place for meditation, was abundantly justified in the choice by the absence of all glare, the cool, refreshing shade, the screen it afforded from the scorching rays of the sun, that found no entrance there even during the burning days of hottest summer, the incessant and melodious warbling of birds, and the entire removal from either the noise of the street or the bustle of the mansion. On the evening of one of the warmest days spring had yet bestowed on the inhabitants of Paris, might be seen negligently thrown upon the stone bench, a book, a parasol, and a work-basket, from which hung a partly embroidered cambric handkerchief, while at a little distance from these articles was a young woman, standing close to the iron gate, endeavoring to discern something on the other side by means of the openings in the planks, "the earnestness of her attitude and the fixed gaze with which she seemed to seek the object of her wishes, proving how much her feelings were interested in the matter.

At that instant the little side-gate leading from the waste ground to the street was noiselessly opened, and a tall, powerful young man appeared. He was dressed in a common gray blouse and velvet cap, but his carefully arranged hair, beard and moustache, all of the richest and glossiest black, ill accorded with his plebeian attire. After casting a rapid glance around him, in order to assure himself that he was unobserved, he entered by the small gate, and, carefully closing and securing it after him, proceeded with a hurried step towards the barrier.

At the sight of him she expected, though probably not in such a costume, the young woman started in terror, and was about to make a hasty retreat. But the eye of love had already seen, even through the narrow chinks of the wooden palisades, the movement of the white robe, and observed the fluttering of the blue sash. Pressing his lips close to the planks, he exclaimed:

Dont be alarmed, Valentine"it is I!

Again the timid girl found courage to return to the gate, saying, as she did so:

And why do you come so late today? It is almost dinner-time, and I had to use no little diplomacy to get rid of my watchful mother-in-law, my too-devoted maid, and my troublesome brother, who is always teasing me about coming to work at my embroidery, which I am in a fair way never to get done. So pray excuse yourself as well as you can for having made me wait, and, after that, tell me why I see you in a dress so singular that at first I did not recognize you.

Dearest Valentine, said the young man, the difference between our respective stations makes me fear to offend you by speaking of my love, but yet I cannot find myself in your presence without longing to pour forth my soul, and tell you how fondly I adore you. If it be but to carry away with me the recollection of such sweet moments, I could even thank you for chiding me, for it leaves me a gleam of hope, that if you did not expect me (and that indeed would be worse than vanity to suppose), at least I was in your thoughts. You asked me the cause of my being late, and why I come disguised. I will candidly explain the reason of both, and I trust to your goodness to pardon me. I have chosen a trade.

A trade? Oh, Maximilian, how can you jest at a time when we have such deep cause for uneasiness?

Heaven keep me from jesting with that which is far dearer to me than life itself! But listen to me, Valentine, and I will tell you all about it. I became weary of ranging fields and scaling walls, and seriously alarmed at the idea suggested by you, that if caught hovering about here your father would very likely have me sent to prison as a thief. That would compromise the honor of the French army, to say nothing of the fact that the continual presence of a captain of Spahis in a place where no warlike projects could be supposed to account for it might well create surprise; so I have become a gardener, and, consequently, adopted the costume of my calling.

What excessive nonsense you talk, Maximilian!

Nonsense? Pray do not call what I consider the wisest action of my life by such a name. Consider, by becoming a gardener I effectually screen our meetings from all suspicion or danger.

30053m

I beseech of you, Maximilian, to cease trifling, and tell me what you really mean.

Simply, that having ascertained that the piece of ground on which I stand was to let, I made application for it, was readily accepted by the proprietor, and am now master of this fine crop of lucern. Think of that, Valentine! There is nothing now to prevent my building myself a little hut on my plantation, and residing not twenty yards from you. Only imagine what happiness that would afford me. I can scarcely contain myself at the bare idea. Such felicity seems above all price"as a thing impossible and unattainable. But would you believe that I

purchase all this delight, joy, and happiness, for which I would cheerfully have surrendered ten years of my life, at the small cost of 500 francs per annum, paid quarterly? Henceforth we have nothing to fear. I am on my own ground, and have an undoubted right to place a ladder against the wall, and to look over when I please, without having any apprehensions of being taken off by the police as a suspicious character. I may also enjoy the precious privilege of assuring you of my fond, faithful, and unalterable affection, whenever you visit your favorite bower, unless, indeed, it offends your pride to listen to professions of love from the lips of a poor workingman, clad in a blouse and cap.

A faint cry of mingled pleasure and surprise escaped from the lips of Valentine, who almost instantly said, in a saddened tone, as though some envious cloud darkened the joy which illumined her heart:

Alas, no, Maximilian, this must not be, for many reasons. We should presume too much on our own strength, and, like others, perhaps, be led astray by our blind confidence in each others prudence.

How can you for an instant entertain so unworthy a thought, dear Valentine? Have I not, from the first blessed hour of our acquaintance, schooled all my words and actions to your sentiments and ideas? And you have, I am sure, the fullest confidence in my honor. When you spoke to me of experiencing a vague and indefinite sense of coming danger, I placed myself blindly and devotedly at your service, asking no other reward than the pleasure of being useful to you; and have I ever since, by word or look, given you cause of regret for having selected me from the numbers that would willingly have sacrificed their lives for you? You told me, my dear Valentine, that you were engaged to M. d'Espingay, and that your father was resolved upon completing the match, and that from his will there was no appeal, as M. de Villefort was never known to change a determination once formed. I kept in the background, as you wished, and waited, not for the decision of your heart or my own, but hoping that Providence would graciously interpose in our behalf, and order events in our favor. But what cared I for delays or difficulties, Valentine, as long as you confessed that you loved me, and took pity on me? If you will only repeat that avowal now and then, I can endure anything.

Ah, Maximilian, that is the very thing that makes you so bold, and which renders me at once so happy and unhappy, that I frequently ask myself whether it is better for me to endure the harshness of my mother-in-law, and her blind preference for her own child, or to be, as I now am, insensible to any pleasure save such as I find in these meetings, so fraught with danger to both.

I will not admit that word, returned the young man; it is at once cruel and unjust. Is it possible to find a more submissive slave than myself? You have permitted me to converse with you from time to time, Valentine, but forbidden my ever following you in your walks or elsewhere"have I not obeyed? And since I found means to enter this enclosure to exchange a few words with you through this gate"to be close to you without really seeing you"have I ever asked so much as to touch the hem of your gown or tried to pass this barrier which is but a trifle to one of my youth and strength? Never has a complaint or a murmur escaped me. I have been bound by my promises as rigidly as any knight of olden times. Come, come, dearest Valentine, confess that what I say is true, lest I be tempted to call you unjust.

30055m

It is true, said Valentine, as she passed the end of her slender fingers through a small opening in the planks, and permitted Maximilian to press his lips to them, and you are a true and faithful friend; but still you acted from motives of self-interest, my dear Maximilian, for you well knew that from the moment in which you had manifested an opposite spirit all would have been ended between us. You promised to bestow on me the friendly affection of a brother. For I have no friend but yourself upon earth, who am neglected and forgotten by my father,

harassed and persecuted by my mother-in-law, and left to the sole companionship of a paralyzed and speechless old man, whose withered hand can no longer press mine, and who can speak to me with the eye alone, although there still lingers in his heart the warmest tenderness for his poor grandchild. Oh, how bitter a fate is mine, to serve either as a victim or an enemy to all who are stronger than myself, while my only friend and supporter is a living corpse! Indeed, indeed, Maximilian, I am very miserable, and if you love me it must be out of pity.

Valentine, replied the young man, deeply affected, I will not say you are all I love in the world, for I dearly prize my sister and brother-in-law; but my affection for them is calm and tranquil, in no manner resembling what I feel for you. When I think of you my heart beats fast, the blood burns in my veins, and I can hardly breathe; but I solemnly promise you to restrain all this ardor, this fervor and intensity of feeling, until you yourself shall require me to render them available in serving or assisting you. M. Franz is not expected to return home for a year to come, I am told; in that time many favorable and unforeseen chances may befriend us. Let us, then, hope for the best; hope is so sweet a comforter. Meanwhile, Valentine, while reproaching me with selfishness, think a little what you have been to me—the beautiful but cold resemblance of a marble Venus. What promise of future reward have you made me for all the submission and obedience I have evinced?—none whatever. What granted me?—scarcely more. You tell me of M. Franz d'Alpinay, your betrothed lover, and you shrink from the idea of being his wife; but tell me, Valentine, is there no other sorrow in your heart? You see me devoted to you, body and soul, my life and each warm drop that circles round my heart are consecrated to your service; you know full well that my existence is bound up in yours—that were I to lose you I would not outlive the hour of such crushing misery; yet you speak with calmness of the prospect of your being the wife of another! Oh, Valentine, were I in your place, and did I feel conscious, as you do, of being worshipped, adored, with such a love as mine, a hundred times at least should I have passed my hand between these iron bars, and said, ~Take this hand, dearest Maximilian, and believe that, living or dead, I am yours—yours only, and forever! The poor girl made no reply, but her lover could plainly hear her sobs and tears. A rapid change took place in the young man's feelings. Dearest, dearest Valentine, exclaimed he, forgive me if I have offended you, and forget the words I spoke if they have unwittingly caused you pain.

No, Maximilian, I am not offended, answered she, but do you not see what a poor, helpless being I am, almost a stranger and an outcast in my father's house, where even he is seldom seen; whose will has been thwarted, and spirits broken, from the age of ten years, beneath the iron rod so sternly held over me; oppressed, mortified, and persecuted, day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, no person has cared for, even observed my sufferings, nor have I ever breathed one word on the subject save to yourself. Outwardly and in the eyes of the world, I am surrounded by kindness and affection; but the reverse is the case. The general remark is, ~Oh, it cannot be expected that one of so stern a character as M. Villefort could lavish the tenderness some fathers do on their daughters. What though she has lost her own mother at a tender age, she has had the happiness to find a second mother in Madame de Villefort. The world, however, is mistaken; my father abandons me from utter indifference, while my mother-in-law detests me with a hatred so much the more terrible because it is veiled beneath a continual smile. Hate you, sweet Valentine, exclaimed the young man; how is it possible for anyone to do that?

Alas, replied the weeping girl, I am obliged to own that my mother-in-law's aversion to me arises from a very natural source—her overweening love for her own child, my brother Edward. But why should it?

I do not know; but, though unwilling to introduce money matters into our present conversation, I will just say this much—that her extreme dislike to me has its origin there; and I much fear she envies me the fortune I enjoy in right of my mother, and which will be more than doubled at the death of M. and Mme. de Saint-MÃ©ran, whose sole heiress I am. Madame de Villefort has nothing of her own, and hates me for being so richly endowed. Alas, how gladly would I exchange the half of this wealth for the happiness of at least sharing my fathers love. God knows, I would prefer sacrificing the whole, so that it would obtain me a happy and affectionate home.

Poor Valentine!

I seem to myself as though living a life of bondage, yet at the same time am so conscious of my own weakness that I fear to break the restraint in which I am held, lest I fall utterly helpless. Then, too, my father is not a person whose orders may be infringed with impunity; protected as he is by his high position and firmly established reputation for talent and unswerving integrity, no one could oppose him; he is all-powerful even with the king; he would crush you at a word. Dear Maximilian, believe me when I assure you that if I do not attempt to resist my fathers commands it is more on your account than my own.

But why, Valentine, do you persist in anticipating the worst, “why picture so gloomy a future?

Because I judge it from the past.

Still, consider that although I may not be, strictly speaking, what is termed an illustrious match for you, I am, for many reasons, not altogether so much beneath your alliance. The days when such distinctions were so nicely weighed and considered no longer exist in France, and the first families of the monarchy have intermarried with those of the empire. The aristocracy of the lance has allied itself with the nobility of the cannon. Now I belong to this last-named class; and certainly my prospects of military preferment are most encouraging as well as certain. My fortune, though small, is free and unfettered, and the memory of my late father is respected in our country, Valentine, as that of the most upright and honorable merchant of the city; I say our country, because you were born not far from Marseilles.

Dont speak of Marseilles, I beg of you, Maximilian; that one word brings back my mother to my recollection—my angel mother, who died too soon for myself and all who knew her; but who, after watching over her child during the brief period allotted to her in this world, now, I fondly hope, watches from her home in heaven. Oh, if my mother were still living, there would be nothing to fear, Maximilian, for I would tell her that I loved you, and she would protect us.

I fear, Valentine, replied the lover, that were she living I should never have had the happiness of knowing you; you would then have been too happy to have stooped from your grandeur to bestow a thought on me.

Now it is you who are unjust, Maximilian, cried Valentine; but there is one thing I wish to know.

And what is that? inquired the young man, perceiving that Valentine hesitated.

Tell me truly, Maximilian, whether in former days, when our fathers dwelt at Marseilles, there was ever any misunderstanding between them? Not that I am aware of, replied the young man, unless, indeed, any ill-feeling might have arisen from their being of opposite parties—your father was, as you know, a zealous partisan of the Bourbons, while mine was wholly devoted to the emperor; there could not possibly be any other difference between them. But why do you ask?

I will tell you, replied the young girl, for it is but right you should know. Well, on the day when your appointment as an officer of the Legion of Honor was announced in the papers, we were all sitting with my grandfather, M. Noirtier; M. Danglars was there also—you

recollect M. Danglars, do you not, Maximilian, the banker, whose horses ran away with my mother-in-law and little brother, and very nearly killed them? While the rest of the company were discussing the approaching marriage of Mademoiselle Danglars, I was reading the paper to my grandfather; but when I came to the paragraph about you, although I had done nothing else but read it over to myself all the morning (you know you had told me all about it the previous evening), I felt so happy, and yet so nervous, at the idea of speaking your name aloud, and before so many people, that I really think I should have passed it over, but for the fear that my doing so might create suspicions as to the cause of my silence; so I summoned up all my courage, and read it as firmly and as steadily as I could.

30059m

Dear Valentine!

Well, would you believe it? directly my father caught the sound of your name he turned round quite hastily, and, like a poor silly thing, I was so persuaded that everyone must be as much affected as myself by the utterance of your name, that I was not surprised to see my father start, and almost tremble; but I even thought (though that surely must have been a mistake) that M. Danglars trembled too.

"Morrel, Morrel, cried my father, "stop a bit; then knitting his brows into a deep frown, he added, "surely this cannot be one of the Morrel family who lived at Marseilles, and gave us so much trouble from their violent Bonapartism!" I mean about the year 1815.

"Yes, replied M. Danglars, "I believe he is the son of the old shipowner.

Indeed, answered Maximilian; and what did your father say then, Valentine?

Oh, such a dreadful thing, that I don't dare to tell you.

Always tell me everything, said Maximilian with a smile.

"Ah, continued my father, still frowning, "their idolized emperor treated these madmen as they deserved; he called them "food for cannon, which was precisely all they were good for; and I am delighted to see that the present government have adopted this salutary principle with all its pristine vigor; if Algiers were good for nothing but to furnish the means of carrying so admirable an idea into practice, it would be an acquisition well worthy of struggling to obtain. Though it certainly does cost France somewhat dear to assert her rights in that uncivilized country.

Brutal politics, I must confess. said Maximilian; but don't attach any serious importance, dear, to what your father said. My father was not a bit behind yours in that sort of talk. "Why, said he, "does not the emperor, who has devised so many clever and efficient modes of improving the art of war, organize a regiment of lawyers, judges and legal practitioners, sending them in the hottest fire the enemy could maintain, and using them to save better men? You see, my dear, that for picturesque expression and generosity of spirit there is not much to choose between the language of either party. But what did M. Danglars say to this outburst on the part of the procureur?

Oh, he laughed, and in that singular manner so peculiar to himself "half-malicious, half-ferocious; he almost immediately got up and took his leave; then, for the first time, I observed the agitation of my grandfather, and I must tell you, Maximilian, that I am the only person capable of discerning emotion in his paralyzed frame. And I suspected that the conversation that had been carried on in his presence (for they always say and do what they like before the dear old man, without the smallest regard for his feelings) had made a strong impression on his mind; for, naturally enough, it must have pained him to hear the emperor he so devotedly loved and served spoken of in that depreciating manner.

The name of M. Noirtier, interposed Maximilian, is celebrated throughout Europe; he was a statesman of high standing, and you may or may not know, Valentine, that he took a leading part in every

Bonapartist conspiracy set on foot during the restoration of the Bourbons.

Oh, I have often heard whispers of things that seem to me most strange"the father a Bonapartist, the son a Royalist; what can have been the reason of so singular a difference in parties and politics? But to resume my story; I turned towards my grandfather, as though to question him as to the cause of his emotion; he looked expressively at the newspaper I had been reading. ~What is the matter, dear grandfather? said I, ~are you pleased? He gave me a sign in the affirmative. ~With what my father said just now? He returned a sign in the negative. ~Perhaps you liked what M. Danglars said? Another sign in the negative. ~Oh, then, you were glad to hear that M. Morrel (I didnt dare to say Maximilian) had been made an officer of the Legion of Honor? He signified assent; only think of the poor old mans being so pleased to think that you, who were a perfect stranger to him, had been made an officer of the Legion of Honor! Perhaps it was a mere whim on his part, for he is falling, they say, into second childhood, but I love him for showing so much interest in you.

How singular, murmured Maximilian; your father hates me, while your grandfather, on the contrary"What strange feelings are aroused by politics.

Hush, cried Valentine, suddenly; someone is coming! Maximilian leaped at one bound into his crop of lucern, which he began to pull up in the most ruthless way, under the pretext of being occupied in weeding it.

Mademoiselle, mademoiselle! exclaimed a voice from behind the trees. Madame is searching for you everywhere; there is a visitor in the drawing-room.

A visitor? inquired Valentine, much agitated; who is it?

Some grand personage"a prince I believe they said"the Count of Monte Cristo.

I will come directly, cried Valentine aloud.

The name of Monte Cristo sent an electric shock through the young man on the other side of the iron gate, to whom Valentines _I am coming_ was the customary signal of farewell.

Now, then, said Maximilian, leaning on the handle of his spade, I would give a good deal to know how it comes about that the Count of Monte Cristo is acquainted with M. de Villefort.

Chapter 52. Toxicology

It was really the Count of Monte Cristo who had just arrived at Madame de Villeforts for the purpose of returning the procureurs visit, and at his name, as may be easily imagined, the whole house was in confusion.

Madame de Villefort, who was alone in her drawing-room when the count was announced, desired that her son might be brought thither instantly to renew his thanks to the count; and Edward, who heard this great personage talked of for two whole days, made all possible haste to come to him, not from obedience to his mother, or out of any feeling of gratitude to the count, but from sheer curiosity, and that some chance remark might give him the opportunity for making one of the impertinent speeches which made his mother say:

Oh, that naughty child! But I cant be severe with him, he is really _so_ bright.

After the usual civilities, the count inquired after M. de Villefort. My husband dines with the chancellor, replied the young lady; he has just gone, and I am sure hell be exceedingly sorry not to have had the