

astern fashion, and seemed to have made for herself, as it were, a kind of nest in the rich Indian silks which enveloped her. Near her was the instrument on which she had just been playing; it was elegantly fashioned, and worthy of its mistress. On perceiving Monte Cristo, she arose and welcomed him with a smile peculiar to herself, expressive at once of the most implicit obedience and also of the deepest love. Monte Cristo advanced towards her and extended his hand, which she as usual raised to her lips.

40064m

Albert had proceeded no farther than the door, where he remained rooted to the spot, being completely fascinated by the sight of such surpassing beauty, beheld as it was for the first time, and of which an inhabitant of more northern climes could form no adequate idea.

Whom do you bring? asked the young girl in Romaic, of Monte Cristo; is it a friend, a brother, a simple acquaintance, or an enemy.

A friend, said Monte Cristo in the same language.

What is his name?

Count Albert; it is the same man whom I rescued from the hands of the banditti at Rome.

In what language would you like me to converse with him?

Monte Cristo turned to Albert. Do you know modern Greek, asked he.

Alas! no, said Albert; nor even ancient Greek, my dear count; never had Homer or Plato a more unworthy scholar than myself.

Then, said HaydÃ©, proving by her remark that she had quite understood Monte Cristos question and Alberts answer, then I will speak either in French or Italian, if my lord so wills it.

Monte Cristo reflected one instant. You will speak in Italian, said he.

Then, turning towards Albert, "It is a pity you do not understand either ancient or modern Greek, both of which HaydÃ© speaks so fluently; the poor child will be obliged to talk to you in Italian, which will give you but a very false idea of her powers of conversation.

The count made a sign to HaydÃ© to address his visitor. Sir, she said to Morcerf, you are most welcome as the friend of my lord and master. This was said in excellent Tuscan, and with that soft Roman accent which makes the language of Dante as sonorous as that of Homer. Then, turning to Ali, she directed him to bring coffee and pipes, and when he had left the room to execute the orders of his young mistress she beckoned Albert to approach nearer to her. Monte Cristo and Morcerf drew their seats towards a small table, on which were arranged music, drawings, and vases of flowers. Ali then entered bringing coffee and chibouques; as to M. Baptistin, this portion of the building was interdicted to him. Albert refused the pipe which the Nubian offered him.

Oh, take it"take it, said the count; HaydÃ© is almost as civilized as a Parisian; the smell of a Havana is disagreeable to her, but the tobacco of the East is a most delicious perfume, you know.

Ali left the room. The cups of coffee were all prepared, with the addition of sugar, which had been brought for Albert. Monte Cristo and HaydÃ© took the beverage in the original Arabian manner, that is to say, without sugar. HaydÃ© took the porcelain cup in her little slender fingers and conveyed it to her mouth with all the innocent artlessness of a child when eating or drinking something which it likes. At this moment two women entered, bringing salvers filled with ices and sherbet, which they placed on two small tables appropriated to that purpose.

My dear host, and you, signora, said Albert, in Italian, excuse my apparent stupidity. I am quite bewildered, and it is natural that it should be so. Here I am in the heart of Paris; but a moment ago I heard the rumbling of the omnibuses and the tinkling of the bells of the lemonade-sellers, and now I feel as if I were suddenly transported to the East; not such as I have seen it, but such as my dreams have



I paid no attention, but which he always answered in the same tone of voice, either "Kill, or Pardon.

It is very strange, said Albert, to hear such words proceed from the mouth of anyone but an actress on the stage, and one needs constantly to be saying to ones self, "This is no fiction, it is all reality, in order to believe it. And how does France appear in your eyes, accustomed as they have been to gaze on such enchanted scenes?

I think it is a fine country, said Haydée, but I see France as it really is, because I look on it with the eyes of a woman; whereas my own country, which I can only judge of from the impression produced on my childish mind, always seems enveloped in a vague atmosphere, which is luminous or otherwise, according as my remembrances of it are sad or joyous.

So young, said Albert, forgetting at the moment the Counts command that he should ask no questions of the slave herself, is it possible that you can have known what suffering is except by name?

Haydée turned her eyes towards Monte Cristo, who, making at the same time some imperceptible sign, murmured:

"Speak.

Nothing is ever so firmly impressed on the mind as the memory of our early childhood, and with the exception of the two scenes I have just described to you, all my earliest reminiscences are fraught with deepest sadness.

40068m

Speak, speak, signora, said Albert, I am listening with the most intense delight and interest to all you say.

Haydée answered his remark with a melancholy smile. You wish me, then, to relate the history of my past sorrows? said she.

I beg you to do so, replied Albert.

Well, I was but four years old when one night I was suddenly awakened by my mother. We were in the palace of Yanina; she snatched me from the cushions on which I was sleeping, and on opening my eyes I saw hers filled with tears. She took me away without speaking. When I saw her weeping I began to cry too. "Hush, child! said she. At other times in spite of maternal endearments or threats, I had with a childs caprice been accustomed to indulge my feelings of sorrow or anger by crying as much as I felt inclined; but on this occasion there was an intonation of such extreme terror in my mothers voice when she enjoined me to silence, that I ceased crying as soon as her command was given. She bore me rapidly away.

I saw then that we were descending a large staircase; around us were all my mothers servants carrying trunks, bags, ornaments, jewels, purses of gold, with which they were hurrying away in the greatest distraction.

Behind the women came a guard of twenty men armed with long guns and pistols, and dressed in the costume which the Greeks have assumed since they have again become a nation. You may imagine there was something startling and ominous, said Haydée, shaking her head and turning pale at the mere remembrance of the scene, in this long file of slaves and women only half-aroused from sleep, or at least so they appeared to me, who was myself scarcely awake. Here and there on the walls of the staircase, were reflected gigantic shadows, which trembled in the flickering light of the pine-torches till they seemed to reach to the vaulted roof above.

"Quick! said a voice at the end of the gallery. This voice made everyone bow before it, resembling in its effect the wind passing over a field of wheat, by its superior strength forcing every ear to yield obeisance. As for me, it made me tremble. This voice was that of my father. He came last, clothed in his splendid robes and holding in his hand the carbine which your emperor presented him. He was leaning on the shoulder of his favorite Selim, and he drove us all before him, as a shepherd would his straggling flock. My father, said Haydée, raising her head, was that illustrious man known in Europe under the name of

Ali Tepelini, pasha of Yanina, and before whom Turkey trembled. Albert, without knowing why, started on hearing these words pronounced with such a haughty and dignified accent; it appeared to him as if there was something supernaturally gloomy and terrible in the expression which gleamed from the brilliant eyes of Haydée at this moment; she appeared like a Pythoness evoking a spectre, as she recalled to his mind the remembrance of the fearful death of this man, to the news of which all Europe had listened with horror. Soon, said Haydée, we halted on our march, and found ourselves on the borders of a lake. My mother pressed me to her throbbing heart, and at the distance of a few paces I saw my father, who was glancing anxiously around. Four marble steps led down to the waters edge, and below them was a boat floating on the tide.

40070m

From where we stood I could see in the middle of the lake a large blank mass; it was the kiosk to which we were going. This kiosk appeared to me to be at a considerable distance, perhaps on account of the darkness of the night, which prevented any object from being more than partially discerned. We stepped into the boat. I remember well that the oars made no noise whatever in striking the water, and when I leaned over to ascertain the cause I saw that they were muffled with the sashes of our Palikares.<sup>14</sup> Besides the rowers, the boat contained only the women, my father, mother, Selim, and myself. The Palikares had remained on the shore of the lake, ready to cover our retreat; they were kneeling on the lowest of the marble steps, and in that manner intended making a rampart of the three others, in case of pursuit. Our bark flew before the wind. ~Why does the boat go so fast? asked I of my mother.

~Silence, child! Hush, we are flying! I did not understand. Why should my father fly?"he, the all-powerful"he, before whom others were accustomed to fly"he, who had taken for his device, ~They hate me; then they fear me!

It was, indeed, a flight which my father was trying to effect. I have been told since that the garrison of the castle of Yanina, fatigued with long service""

Here Haydée cast a significant glance at Monte Cristo, whose eyes had been riveted on her countenance during the whole course of her narrative. The young girl then continued, speaking slowly, like a person who is either inventing or suppressing some feature of the history which he is relating.

You were saying, signora, said Albert, who was paying the most implicit attention to the recital, that the garrison of Yanina, fatigued with long service""

Had treated with the Seraskier<sup>15</sup>Kourchid, who had been sent by the sultan to gain possession of the person of my father; it was then that Ali Tepelini"after having sent to the sultan a French officer in whom he reposed great confidence"resolved to retire to the asylum which he had long before prepared for himself, and which he called \_kataphygion\_, or the refuge.

And this officer, asked Albert, do you remember his name, signora? Monte Cristo exchanged a rapid glance with the young girl, which was quite unperceived by Albert.

No, said she, I do not remember it just at this moment; but if it should occur to me presently, I will tell you.

Albert was on the point of pronouncing his fathers name, when Monte Cristo gently held up his finger in token of reproach; the young man recollected his promise, and was silent.

It was towards this kiosk that we were rowing. A ground floor, ornamented with arabesques, bathing its terraces in the water, and another floor, looking on the lake, was all which was visible to the eye. But beneath the ground floor, stretching out into the island, was a large subterranean cavern, to which my mother, myself, and the women were conducted. In this place were together 60,000 pouches and 200

barrels; the pouches contained 25,000,000 of money in gold, and the barrels were filled with 30,000 pounds of gunpowder.

Near the barrels stood Selim, my fathers favorite, whom I mentioned to you just now. He stood watch day and night with a lance provided with a lighted slowmatch in his hand, and he had orders to blow up everything" kiosk, guards, women, gold, and Ali Tepelini himself" at the first signal given by my father. I remember well that the slaves, convinced of the precarious tenure on which they held their lives, passed whole days and nights in praying, crying, and groaning. As for me, I can never forget the pale complexion and black eyes of the young soldier, and whenever the angel of death summons me to another world, I am quite sure I shall recognize Selim. I cannot tell you how long we remained in this state; at that period I did not even know what time meant. Sometimes, but very rarely, my father summoned me and my mother to the terrace of the palace; these were hours of recreation for me, as I never saw anything in the dismal cavern but the gloomy countenances of the slaves and Selims fiery lance. My father was endeavoring to pierce with his eager looks the remotest verge of the horizon, examining attentively every black speck which appeared on the lake, while my mother, reclining by his side, rested her head on his shoulder, and I played at his feet, admiring everything I saw with that unsophisticated innocence of childhood which throws a charm round objects insignificant in themselves, but which in its eyes are invested with the greatest importance. The heights of Pindus towered above us; the castle of Yanina rose white and angular from the blue waters of the lake, and the immense masses of black vegetation which, viewed in the distance, gave the idea of lichens clinging to the rocks, were in reality gigantic fir-trees and myrtles.

One morning my father sent for us; my mother had been crying all the night, and was very wretched; we found the pasha calm, but paler than usual. ~Take courage, Vasiliki, said he; ~today arrives the firman of the master, and my fate will be decided. If my pardon be complete, we shall return triumphant to Yanina; if the news be inauspicious, we must fly this night." ~But supposing our enemy should not allow us to do so? said my mother. ~Oh, make yourself easy on that head, said Ali, smiling; ~Selim and his flaming lance will settle that matter. They would be glad to see me dead, but they would not like themselves to die with me.

My mother only answered by sighs to consolations which she knew did not come from my fathers heart. She prepared the iced water which he was in the habit of constantly drinking, "for since his sojourn at the kiosk he had been parched by the most violent fever," after which she anointed his white beard with perfumed oil, and lighted his chibouque, which he sometimes smoked for hours together, quietly watching the wreaths of vapor that ascended in spiral clouds and gradually melted away in the surrounding atmosphere. Presently he made such a sudden movement that I was paralyzed with fear. Then, without taking his eyes from the object which had first attracted his attention, he asked for his telescope. My mother gave it him, and as she did so, looked whiter than the marble against which she leaned. I saw my fathers hand tremble. ~A boat!" two!" three! murmured my father; ~four! He then arose, seizing his arms and priming his pistols. ~Vasiliki, said he to my mother, trembling perceptibly, ~the instant approaches which will decide everything. In the space of half an hour we shall know the emperors answer. Go into the cavern with HaydÃ©e." ~I will not quit you, said Vasiliki; ~if you die, my lord, I will die with you." ~Go to Selim! cried my father. ~Adieu, my lord, murmured my mother, determining quietly to await the approach of death. ~Take away Vasiliki! said my father to his Palikares.

As for me, I had been forgotten in the general confusion; I ran toward Ali Tepelini; he saw me hold out my arms to him, and he stooped down and pressed my forehead with his lips. Oh, how distinctly I remember that kiss!" it was the last he ever gave me, and I feel as if it were

still warm on my forehead. On descending, we saw through the lattice-work several boats which were gradually becoming more distinct to our view. At first they appeared like black specks, and now they looked like birds skimming the surface of the waves. During this time, in the kiosk at my fathers feet, were seated twenty Palikares, concealed from view by an angle of the wall and watching with eager eyes the arrival of the boats. They were armed with their long guns inlaid with mother-of-pearl and silver, and cartridges in great numbers were lying scattered on the floor. My father looked at his watch, and paced up and down with a countenance expressive of the greatest anguish. This was the scene which presented itself to my view as I quitted my father after that last kiss.

My mother and I traversed the gloomy passage leading to the cavern. Selim was still at his post, and smiled sadly on us as we entered. We fetched our cushions from the other end of the cavern, and sat down by Selim. In great dangers the devoted ones cling to each other; and, young as I was, I quite understood that some imminent danger was hanging over our heads.

Albert had often heard "not from his father, for he never spoke on the subject, but from strangers" the description of the last moments of the vizier of Yanina; he had read different accounts of his death, but the story seemed to acquire fresh meaning from the voice and expression of the young girl, and her sympathetic accent and the melancholy expression of her countenance at once charmed and horrified him.

As to Haydäe, these terrible reminiscences seemed to have overpowered her for a moment, for she ceased speaking, her head leaning on her hand like a beautiful flower bowing beneath the violence of the storm; and her eyes gazing on vacancy indicated that she was mentally contemplating the green summit of the Pindus and the blue waters of the lake of Yanina, which, like a magic mirror, seemed to reflect the sombre picture which she sketched. Monte Cristo looked at her with an indescribable expression of interest and pity.

Go on, my child, said the count in the Romaic language.

40074m

Haydäe looked up abruptly, as if the sonorous tones of Monte Cristos voice had awakened her from a dream; and she resumed her narrative. It was about four oclock in the afternoon, and although the day was brilliant out-of-doors, we were enveloped in the gloomy darkness of the cavern. One single, solitary light was burning there, and it appeared like a star set in a heaven of blackness; it was Selims flaming lance. My mother was a Christian, and she prayed. Selim repeated from time to time the sacred words: ~God is great! However, my mother had still some hope. As she was coming down, she thought she recognized the French officer who had been sent to Constantinople, and in whom my father placed so much confidence; for he knew that all the soldiers of the French emperor were naturally noble and generous. She advanced some steps towards the staircase, and listened. ~They are approaching, said she; ~perhaps they bring us peace and liberty!

~What do you fear, Vasiliki? said Selim, in a voice at once so gentle and yet so proud. ~If they do not bring us peace, we will give them war; if they do not bring life, we will give them death. And he renewed the flame of his lance with a gesture which made one think of Dionysus of old Crete.<sup>16</sup> But I, being only a little child, was terrified by this undaunted courage, which appeared to me both ferocious and senseless, and I recoiled with horror from the idea of the frightful death amidst fire and flames which probably awaited us. My mother experienced the same sensations, for I felt her tremble.

~Mamma, mamma, said I, ~are we really to be killed? And at the sound of my voice the slaves redoubled their cries and prayers and lamentations. ~My child, said Vasiliki, ~may God preserve you from ever wishing for that death which today you so much dread! Then, whispering to Selim, she asked what were her masters orders. ~If he send me his poniard, it will signify that the emperors intentions are

not favorable, and I am to set fire to the powder; if, on the contrary, he send me his ring, it will be a sign that the emperor pardons him, and I am to extinguish the match and leave the magazine untouched."~My friend, said my mother, ~when your masters orders arrive, if it is the poniard which he sends, instead of despatching us by that horrible death which we both so much dread, you will mercifully kill us with this same poniard, will you not?"~Yes, Vasiliki, replied Selim tranquilly.

Suddenly we heard loud cries; and, listening, discerned that they were cries of joy. The name of the French officer who had been sent to Constantinople resounded on all sides amongst our Palikares; it was evident that he brought the answer of the emperor, and that it was favorable.

And do you not remember the Frenchmans name? said Morcerf, quite ready to aid the memory of the narrator. Monte Cristo made a sign to him to be silent.

I do not recollect it, said HaydÃ©e.

The noise increased; steps were heard approaching nearer and nearer; they were descending the steps leading to the cavern. Selim made ready his lance. Soon a figure appeared in the gray twilight at the entrance of the cave, formed by the reflection of the few rays of daylight which had found their way into this gloomy retreat. ~Who are you? cried Selim. ~But whoever you may be, I charge you not to advance another step."~Long live the emperor! said the figure. ~He grants a full pardon to the Vizier Ali, and not only gives him his life, but restores to him his fortune and his possessions. My mother uttered a cry of joy, and clasped me to her bosom. ~Stop, said Selim, seeing that she was about to go out; ~you see I have not yet received the ring,"~True, said my mother. And she fell on her knees, at the same time holding me up towards heaven, as if she desired, while praying to God in my behalf, to raise me actually to his presence.

And for the second time HaydÃ©e stopped, overcome by such violent emotion that the perspiration stood upon her pale brow, and her stifled voice seemed hardly able to find utterance, so parched and dry were her throat and lips.

40076m

Monte Cristo poured a little iced water into a glass, and presented it to her, saying with a mildness in which was also a shade of command,"Courage.

HaydÃ©e dried her eyes, and continued:

By this time our eyes, habituated to the darkness, had recognized the messenger of the pasha,"it was a friend. Selim had also recognized him, but the brave young man only acknowledged one duty, which was to obey. ~In whose name do you come? said he to him. ~I come in the name of our master, Ali Tepelini."~If you come from Ali himself, said Selim, ~you know what you were charged to remit to me?"~Yes, said the messenger, ~and I bring you his ring. At these words he raised his hand above his head, to show the token; but it was too far off, and there was not light enough to enable Selim, where he was standing, to distinguish and recognize the object presented to his view. ~I do not see what you have in your hand, said Selim. ~Approach then, said the messenger, ~or I will come nearer to you, if you prefer it."~I will agree to neither one nor the other, replied the young soldier; ~place the object which I desire to see in the ray of light which shines there, and retire while I examine it."~Be it so, said the envoy; and he retired, after having first deposited the token agreed on in the place pointed out to him by Selim.

Oh, how our hearts palpitated; for it did, indeed, seem to be a ring which was placed there. But was it my fathers ring? that was the question. Selim, still holding in his hand the lighted match, walked towards the opening in the cavern, and, aided by the faint light which streamed in through the mouth of the cave, picked up the token.

~It is well, said he, kissing it; ~it is my masters ring! And

throwing the match on the ground, he trampled on it and extinguished it. The messenger uttered a cry of joy and clapped his hands. At this signal four soldiers of the Seraskier Kourchid suddenly appeared, and Selim fell, pierced by five blows. Each man had stabbed him separately, and, intoxicated by their crime, though still pale with fear, they sought all over the cavern to discover if there was any fear of fire, after which they amused themselves by rolling on the bags of gold. At this moment my mother seized me in her arms, and hurrying noiselessly along numerous turnings and windings known only to ourselves, she arrived at a private staircase of the kiosk, where was a scene of frightful tumult and confusion. The lower rooms were entirely filled with Kourchids troops; that is to say, with our enemies. Just as my mother was on the point of pushing open a small door, we heard the voice of the pasha sounding in a loud and threatening tone. My mother applied her eye to the crack between the boards; I luckily found a small opening which afforded me a view of the apartment and what was passing within. "What do you want?" said my father to some people who were holding a paper inscribed with characters of gold. "What we want," replied one, "is to communicate to you the will of his highness. Do you see this firman?" "I do," said my father. "Well, read it; he demands your head."

40078m

My father answered with a loud laugh, which was more frightful than even threats would have been, and he had not ceased when two reports of a pistol were heard; he had fired them himself, and had killed two men. The Palikares, who were prostrated at my fathers feet, now sprang up and fired, and the room was filled with fire and smoke. At the same instant the firing began on the other side, and the balls penetrated the boards all round us. Oh, how noble did the grand vizier my father look at that moment, in the midst of the flying bullets, his scimitar in his hand, and his face blackened with the powder of his enemies! and how he terrified them, even then, and made them fly before him! "Selim, Selim!" cried he, "guardian of the fire, do your duty!" "Selim is dead," replied a voice which seemed to come from the depths of the earth, "and you are lost, Ali! At the same moment an explosion was heard, and the flooring of the room in which my father was sitting was suddenly torn up and shivered to atoms"the troops were firing from underneath. Three or four Palikares fell with their bodies literally ploughed with wounds.

My father howled aloud, plunged his fingers into the holes which the balls had made, and tore up one of the planks entire. But immediately through this opening twenty more shots were fired, and the flame, rushing up like fire from the crater of a volcano, soon reached the tapestry, which it quickly devoured. In the midst of all this frightful tumult and these terrific cries, two reports, fearfully distinct, followed by two shrieks more heartrending than all, froze me with terror. These two shots had mortally wounded my father, and it was he who had given utterance to these frightful cries. However, he remained standing, clinging to a window. My mother tried to force the door, that she might go and die with him, but it was fastened on the inside. All around him were lying the Palikares, writhing in convulsive agonies, while two or three who were only slightly wounded were trying to escape by springing from the windows. At this crisis the whole flooring suddenly gave way, my father fell on one knee, and at the same moment twenty hands were thrust forth, armed with sabres, pistols, and poniards"twenty blows were instantaneously directed against one man, and my father disappeared in a whirlwind of fire and smoke kindled by these demons, and which seemed like hell itself opening beneath his feet. I felt myself fall to the ground, my mother had fainted.

HaydÄ's arms fell by her side, and she uttered a deep groan, at the same time looking towards the count as if to ask if he were satisfied with her obedience to his commands.

Monte Cristo arose and approached her, took her hand, and said to her



in Romaic:

Calm yourself, my dear child, and take courage in remembering that there is a God who will punish traitors.

It is a frightful story, count, said Albert, terrified at the paleness of HaydÃ©es countenance, and I reproach myself now for having been so cruel and thoughtless in my request.

Oh, it is nothing, said Monte Cristo. Then, patting the young girl on the head, he continued, HaydÃ©e is very courageous, and she sometimes even finds consolation in the recital of her misfortunes.

Because, my lord, said HaydÃ©e eagerly, my miseries recall to me the remembrance of your goodness.

Albert looked at her with curiosity, for she had not yet related what he most desired to know, "how she had become the slave of the count. HaydÃ©e saw at a glance the same expression pervading the countenances of her two auditors; she continued:

When my mother recovered her senses we were before the seraskier.

"Kill, said she, "but spare the honor of the widow of Ali." "It is not to me to whom you must address yourself, said Kourchid.

"To whom, then?" "To your new master.

"Who and where is he?" "He is here.

And Kourchid pointed out one who had more than any contributed to the death of my father, said HaydÃ©e, in a tone of chastened anger.

Then, said Albert, you became the property of this man?

40080m

No, replied HaydÃ©e, he did not dare to keep us, so we were sold to some slave-merchants who were going to Constantinople. We traversed Greece, and arrived half dead at the imperial gates. They were surrounded by a crowd of people, who opened a way for us to pass, when suddenly my mother, having looked closely at an object which was attracting their attention, uttered a piercing cry and fell to the ground, pointing as she did so to a head which was placed over the gates, and beneath which were inscribed these words:

"\_This is the head of Ali Tepelini, Pasha of Yanina.\_

I cried bitterly, and tried to raise my mother from the earth, but she was dead! I was taken to the slave-market, and was purchased by a rich Armenian. He caused me to be instructed, gave me masters, and when I was thirteen years of age he sold me to the Sultan Mahmoud.

Of whom I bought her, said Monte Cristo, as I told you, Albert, with the emerald which formed a match to the one I had made into a box for the purpose of holding my hashish pills.

Oh, you are good, you are great, my lord! said HaydÃ©e, kissing the counts hand, and I am very fortunate in belonging to such a master!

Albert remained quite bewildered with all that he had seen and heard. Come, finish your cup of coffee, said Monte Cristo; the history is ended.

Chapter 78. We hear From Yanina

If Valentine could have seen the trembling step and agitated countenance of Franz when he quitted the chamber of M. Noirtier, even she would have been constrained to pity him. Villefort had only just given utterance to a few incoherent sentences, and then retired to his study, where he received about two hours afterwards the following letter:

After all the disclosures which were made this morning, M. Noirtier de Villefort must see the utter impossibility of any alliance being formed between his family and that of M. Franz dÃ©pinay. M. dÃ©pinay must say that he is shocked and astonished that M. de Villefort, who appeared to be aware of all the circumstances detailed this morning, should not have anticipated him in this announcement.

No one who had seen the magistrate at this moment, so thoroughly unnerved by the recent inauspicious combination of circumstances, would have supposed for an instant that he had anticipated the annoyance; although it certainly never had occurred to him that his father would carry candor, or rather rudeness, so far as to relate such a history.

And in justice to Villefort, it must be understood that M. Noirtier, who never cared for the opinion of his son on any subject, had always omitted to explain the affair to Villefort, so that he had all his life entertained the belief that General de Quesnel, or the Baron d'Espinay, as he was alternately styled, according as the speaker wished to identify him by his own family name, or by the title which had been conferred on him, fell the victim of assassination, and not that he was killed fairly in a duel. This harsh letter, coming as it did from a man generally so polite and respectful, struck a mortal blow at the pride of Villefort.

Hardly had he read the letter, when his wife entered. The sudden departure of Franz, after being summoned by M. Noirtier, had so much astonished everyone, that the position of Madame de Villefort, left alone with the notary and the witnesses, became every moment more embarrassing. Determined to bear it no longer, she arose and left the room; saying she would go and make some inquiries into the cause of his sudden disappearance.

M. de Villefort's communications on the subject were very limited and concise; he told her, in fact, that an explanation had taken place between M. Noirtier, M. d'Espinay, and himself, and that the marriage of Valentine and Franz would consequently be broken off. This was an awkward and unpleasant thing to have to report to those who were waiting. She therefore contented herself with saying that M. Noirtier having at the commencement of the discussion been attacked by a sort of apoplectic fit, the affair would necessarily be deferred for some days longer. This news, false as it was following so singularly in the train of the two similar misfortunes which had so recently occurred, evidently astonished the auditors, and they retired without a word. During this time Valentine, at once terrified and happy, after having embraced and thanked the feeble old man for thus breaking with a single blow the chain which she had been accustomed to consider as irrefragable, asked leave to retire to her own room, in order to recover her composure. Noirtier looked the permission which she solicited. But instead of going to her own room, Valentine, having once gained her liberty, entered the gallery, and, opening a small door at the end of it, found herself at once in the garden.

In the midst of all the strange events which had crowded one on the other, an indefinable sentiment of dread had taken possession of Valentine's mind. She expected every moment that she should see Morrel appear, pale and trembling, to forbid the signing of the contract, like the Laird of Ravenswood in *The Bride of Lammermoor*.

It was high time for her to make her appearance at the gate, for Maximilian had long awaited her coming. He had half guessed what was going on when he saw Franz quit the cemetery with M. de Villefort. He followed M. d'Espinay, saw him enter, afterwards go out, and then re-enter with Albert and Châteaufort-Renaud. He had no longer any doubts as to the nature of the conference; he therefore quickly went to the gate in the clover-patch, prepared to hear the result of the proceedings, and very certain that Valentine would hasten to him the first moment she should be set at liberty. He was not mistaken; peering through the crevices of the wooden partition, he soon discovered the young girl, who cast aside all her usual precautions and walked at once to the barrier. The first glance which Maximilian directed towards her entirely reassured him, and the first words she spoke made his heart bound with delight.

We are saved! said Valentine.

Saved? repeated Morrel, not being able to conceive such intense happiness; by whom?

By my grandfather. Oh, Morrel, pray love him for all his goodness to us!

Morrel swore to love him with all his soul; and at that moment he could safely promise to do so, for he felt as though it were not enough to love him merely as a friend or even as a father, he worshiped him as a

god.

But tell me, Valentine, how has it all been effected? What strange means has he used to compass this blessed end?

Valentine was on the point of relating all that had passed, but she suddenly remembered that in doing so she must reveal a terrible secret which concerned others as well as her grandfather, and she said:

At some future time I will tell you all about it.

But when will that be?

When I am your wife.

The conversation had now turned upon a topic so pleasing to Morrel, that he was ready to accede to anything that Valentine thought fit to propose, and he likewise felt that a piece of intelligence such as he just heard ought to be more than sufficient to content him for one day. However, he would not leave without the promise of seeing Valentine again the next night. Valentine promised all that Morrel required of her, and certainly it was less difficult now for her to believe that she should marry Maximilian than it was an hour ago to assure herself that she should not marry Franz.

During the time occupied by the interview we have just detailed, Madame de Villefort had gone to visit M. Noirtier. The old man looked at her with that stern and forbidding expression with which he was accustomed to receive her.

Sir, said she, it is superfluous for me to tell you that Valentines marriage is broken off, since it was here that the affair was concluded.

Noirtiers countenance remained immovable.

But one thing I can tell you, of which I do not think you are aware; that is, that I have always been opposed to this marriage, and that the contract was entered into entirely without my consent or approbation. Noirtier regarded his daughter-in-law with the look of a man desiring an explanation.

Now that this marriage, which I know you so much disliked, is done away with, I come to you on an errand which neither M. de Villefort nor Valentine could consistently undertake.

Noirtiers eyes demanded the nature of her mission.

I come to entreat you, sir, continued Madame de Villefort, as the only one who has the right of doing so, inasmuch as I am the only one who will receive no personal benefit from the transaction, "I come to entreat you to restore, not your love, for that she has always possessed, but to restore your fortune to your granddaughter.

There was a doubtful expression in Noirtiers eyes; he was evidently trying to discover the motive of this proceeding, and he could not succeed in doing so.

May I hope, sir, said Madame de Villefort, that your intentions accord with my request?

Noirtier made a sign that they did.

In that case, sir, rejoined Madame de Villefort, I will leave you overwhelmed with gratitude and happiness at your prompt acquiescence to my wishes. She then bowed to M. Noirtier and retired.

The next day M. Noirtier sent for the notary; the first will was torn up and a second made, in which he left the whole of his fortune to Valentine, on condition that she should never be separated from him. It was then generally reported that Mademoiselle de Villefort, the heiress of the marquis and marchioness of Saint-MÃ©ran, had regained the good graces of her grandfather, and that she would ultimately be in possession of an income of 300,000 livres.

While all the proceedings relative to the dissolution of the marriage-contract were being carried on at the house of M. de Villefort, Monte Cristo had paid his visit to the Count of Morcerf, who, in order to lose no time in responding to M. Danglars wishes, and at the same time to pay all due deference to his position in society, donned his uniform of lieutenant-general, which he ornamented with all his crosses, and thus attired, ordered his finest horses and drove to

the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin.

Danglars was balancing his monthly accounts, and it was perhaps not the most favorable moment for finding him in his best humor. At the first sight of his old friend, Danglars assumed his majestic air, and settled himself in his easy-chair.

Morcerf, usually so stiff and formal, accosted the banker in an affable and smiling manner, and, feeling sure that the overture he was about to make would be well received, he did not consider it necessary to adopt any manœuvres in order to gain his end, but went at once straight to the point.

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Well, baron, said he, here I am at last; some time has elapsed since our plans were formed, and they are not yet executed.

Morcerf paused at these words, quietly waiting till the cloud should have dispersed which had gathered on the brow of Danglars, and which he attributed to his silence; but, on the contrary, to his great surprise, it grew darker and darker.

To what do you allude, monsieur? said Danglars; as if he were trying in vain to guess at the possible meaning of the general's words.

Ah, said Morcerf, I see you are a stickler for forms, my dear sir, and you would remind me that the ceremonial rites should not be omitted. \_Ma foi\_, I beg your pardon, but as I have but one son, and it is the first time I have ever thought of marrying him, I am still serving my apprenticeship, you know; come, I will reform.

And Morcerf with a forced smile arose, and, making a low bow to M. Danglars, said:

Baron, I have the honor of asking of you the hand of Mademoiselle Eugénie Danglars for my son, the Vicomte Albert de Morcerf.

But Danglars, instead of receiving this address in the favorable manner which Morcerf had expected, knit his brow, and without inviting the count, who was still standing, to take a seat, he said:

Monsieur, it will be necessary to reflect before I give you an answer.

To reflect? said Morcerf, more and more astonished; have you not had enough time for reflection during the eight years which have elapsed since this marriage was first discussed between us?

Count, said the banker, things are constantly occurring in the world to induce us to lay aside our most established opinions, or at all events to cause us to remodel them according to the change of circumstances, which may have placed affairs in a totally different light to that in which we at first viewed them.

I do not understand you, baron, said Morcerf.

What I mean to say is this, sir, "that during the last fortnight unforeseen circumstances have occurred"

Excuse me, said Morcerf, but is it a play we are acting?

A play?

Yes, for it is like one; pray let us come more to the point, and endeavor thoroughly to understand each other.

That is quite my desire.

You have seen M. de Monte Cristo have you not?

I see him very often, said Danglars, drawing himself up; he is a particular friend of mine.

Well, in one of your late conversations with him, you said that I appeared to be forgetful and irresolute concerning this marriage, did you not?

I did say so.

Well, here I am, proving at once that I am really neither the one nor the other, by entreating you to keep your promise on that score.

Danglars did not answer.

Have you so soon changed your mind, added Morcerf, or have you only provoked my request that you may have the pleasure of seeing me humbled?

Danglars, seeing that if he continued the conversation in the same tone

in which he had begun it, the whole thing might turn out to his own disadvantage, turned to Morcerf, and said:

Count, you must doubtless be surprised at my reserve, and I assure you it costs me much to act in such a manner towards you; but, believe me when I say that imperative necessity has imposed the painful task upon me.

These are all so many empty words, my dear sir, said Morcerf: they might satisfy a new acquaintance, but the Comte de Morcerf does not rank in that list; and when a man like him comes to another, recalls to him his plighted word, and this man fails to redeem the pledge, he has at least a right to exact from him a good reason for so doing.

Danglars was a coward, but did not wish to appear so; he was piqued at the tone which Morcerf had just assumed.

I am not without a good reason for my conduct, replied the banker.

What do you mean to say?

I mean to say that I have a good reason, but that it is difficult to explain.

You must be aware, at all events, that it is impossible for me to understand motives before they are explained to me; but one thing at least is clear, which is, that you decline allying yourself with my family.

No, sir, said Danglars; I merely suspend my decision, that is all.

And do you really flatter yourself that I shall yield to all your caprices, and quietly and humbly await the time of again being received into your good graces?

Then, count, if you will not wait, we must look upon these projects as if they had never been entertained.

The count bit his lips till the blood almost started, to prevent the ebullition of anger which his proud and irritable temper scarcely allowed him to restrain; understanding, however, that in the present state of things the laugh would decidedly be against him, he turned from the door, towards which he had been directing his steps, and again confronted the banker. A cloud settled on his brow, evincing decided anxiety and uneasiness, instead of the expression of offended pride which had lately reigned there.

My dear Danglars, said Morcerf, we have been acquainted for many years, and consequently we ought to make some allowance for each others failings. You owe me an explanation, and really it is but fair that I should know what circumstance has occurred to deprive my son of your favor.

It is from no personal ill-feeling towards the viscount, that is all I can say, sir, replied Danglars, who resumed his insolent manner as soon as he perceived that Morcerf was a little softened and calmed down.

And towards whom do you bear this personal ill-feeling, then? said Morcerf, turning pale with anger. The expression of the counts face had not remained unperceived by the banker; he fixed on him a look of greater assurance than before, and said:

You may, perhaps, be better satisfied that I should not go farther into particulars.

A tremor of suppressed rage shook the whole frame of the count, and making a violent effort over himself, he said: I have a right to insist on your giving me an explanation. Is it Madame de Morcerf who has displeased you? Is it my fortune which you find insufficient? Is it because my opinions differ from yours?

Nothing of the kind, sir, replied Danglars: if such had been the