

s not my name, and in my country it bodes ill fortune, they say, to call a young girl by the name of her betrothed before he becomes her husband. So call me MercÃ©dÃ©s, if you please.

We must excuse our worthy neighbor, Caderousse, said DantÃ©s, he is so easily mistaken.

So, then, the wedding is to take place immediately, M. DantÃ©s, said Danglars, bowing to the young couple.

As soon as possible, M. Danglars; today all preliminaries will be arranged at my fathers, and tomorrow, or next day at latest, the wedding festival here at La RÃ©serve. My friends will be there, I hope; that is to say, you are invited, M. Danglars, and you, Caderousse. And Fernand, said Caderousse with a chuckle; Fernand, too, is invited!

My wives brother is my brother, said Edmond; and we, MercÃ©dÃ©s and I, should be very sorry if he were absent at such a time.

Fernand opened his mouth to reply, but his voice died on his lips, and he could not utter a word.

Today the preliminaries, tomorrow or next day the ceremony! You are in a hurry, captain!

Danglars, said Edmond, smiling, I will say to you as MercÃ©dÃ©s said just now to Caderousse, ~Do not give me a title which does not belong to me; that may bring me bad luck.

Your pardon, replied Danglars, I merely said you seemed in a hurry, and we have lots of time; the \_Pharaon\_ cannot be under weigh again in less than three months.

We are always in a hurry to be happy, M. Danglars; for when we have suffered a long time, we have great difficulty in believing in good fortune. But it is not selfishness alone that makes me thus in haste; I must go to Paris.

Ah, really?"to Paris! and will it be the first time you have ever been there, DantÃ©s?

Yes.

Have you business there?

Not of my own; the last commission of poor Captain Leclere; you know to what I allude, Danglars"it is sacred. Besides, I shall only take the time to go and return.

Yes, yes, I understand, said Danglars, and then in a low tone, he added, To Paris, no doubt to deliver the letter which the grand marshal gave him. Ah, this letter gives me an idea"a capital idea! Ah; DantÃ©s, my friend, you are not yet registered number one on board the good ship \_Pharaon\_; then turning towards Edmond, who was walking away, A pleasant journey, he cried.

Thank you, said Edmond with a friendly nod, and the two lovers continued on their way, as calm and joyous as if they were the very elect of heaven.

#### Chapter 4. Conspiracy

Danglars followed Edmond and MercÃ©dÃ©s with his eyes until the two lovers disappeared behind one of the angles of Fort Saint Nicolas; then, turning round, he perceived Fernand, who had fallen, pale and trembling, into his chair, while Caderousse stammered out the words of a drinking-song.

Well, my dear sir, said Danglars to Fernand, here is a marriage which does not appear to make everybody happy.

It drives me to despair, said Fernand.

Do you, then, love MercÃ©dÃ©s?

I adore her!

For long?

As long as I have known her"always.

And you sit there, tearing your hair, instead of seeking to remedy your condition; I did not think that was the way of your people.

What would you have me do? said Fernand.

How do I know? Is it my affair? I am not in love with Mademoiselle

MercÃ©dÃ©s; but for you" in the words of the gospel, seek, and you shall find.

I have found already.

What?

I would stab the man, but the woman told me that if any misfortune happened to her betrothed, she would kill herself.

Pooh! Women say those things, but never do them.

You do not know MercÃ©dÃ©s; what she threatens she will do.

Idiot! muttered Danglars; whether she kill herself or not, what matter, provided DantÃ©s is not captain?

Before MercÃ©dÃ©s should die, replied Fernand, with the accents of unshaken resolution, I would die myself!

That's what I call love! said Caderousse with a voice more tipsy than ever. That's love, or I don't know what love is.

Come, said Danglars, you appear to me a good sort of fellow, and hang me, I should like to help you, but""

Yes, said Caderousse, but how?

My dear fellow, replied Danglars, you are three parts drunk; finish the bottle, and you will be completely so. Drink then, and do not meddle with what we are discussing, for that requires all one's wit and cool judgment.

I'm drunk! said Caderousse; well that's a good one! I could drink four more such bottles; they are no bigger than cologne flasks. PÃ©re Pamphile, more wine!

And Caderousse rattled his glass upon the table.

You were saying, sir"" said Fernand, awaiting with great anxiety the end of this interrupted remark.

What was I saying? I forget. This drunken Caderousse has made me lose the thread of my sentence.

Drunk, if you like; so much the worse for those who fear wine, for it is because they have bad thoughts which they are afraid the liquor will extract from their hearts; and Caderousse began to sing the two last lines of a song very popular at the time:

~Tous les mÃ©chants sont buveurs deau;

C'est bien prouvÃ© par le dÃ©luge.1

You said, sir, you would like to help me, but""

Yes; but I added, to help you it would be sufficient that DantÃ©s did not marry her you love; and the marriage may easily be thwarted, methinks, and yet DantÃ©s need not die.

Death alone can separate them, remarked Fernand.

You talk like a noodle, my friend, said Caderousse; and here is Danglars, who is a wide-awake, clever, deep fellow, who will prove to you that you are wrong. Prove it, Danglars. I have answered for you. Say there is no need why DantÃ©s should die; it would, indeed, be a pity he should. DantÃ©s is a good fellow; I like DantÃ©s. DantÃ©s, your health.

Fernand rose impatiently. Let him run on, said Danglars, restraining the young man; drunk as he is, he is not much out in what he says. Absence severs as well as death, and if the walls of a prison were between Edmond and MercÃ©dÃ©s they would be as effectually separated as if he lay under a tombstone.

0056m

Yes; but one gets out of prison, said Caderousse, who, with what sense was left him, listened eagerly to the conversation, and when one gets out and one's name is Edmond DantÃ©s, one seeks revenge""

What matters that? muttered Fernand.

And why, I should like to know, persisted Caderousse, should they put DantÃ©s in prison? he has neither robbed, nor killed, nor murdered. Hold your tongue! said Danglars.

I won't hold my tongue! replied Caderousse; I say I want to know why they should put DantÃ©s in prison; I like DantÃ©s; DantÃ©s, your health! and he swallowed another glass of wine.

0057m

Danglars saw in the muddled look of the tailor the progress of his intoxication, and turning towards Fernand, said, Well, you understand there is no need to kill him.

Certainly not, if, as you said just now, you have the means of having Dant s arrested. Have you that means?

It is to be found for the searching. But why should I meddle in the matter? it is no affair of mine.

I know not why you meddle, said Fernand, seizing his arm; but this I know, you have some motive of personal hatred against Dant s, for he who himself hates is never mistaken in the sentiments of others.

I! motives of hatred against Dant s? None, on my word! I saw you were unhappy, and your unhappiness interested me; thats all; but since you believe I act for my own account, adieu, my dear friend, get out of the affair as best you may; and Danglars rose as if he meant to depart.

No, no, said Fernand, restraining him, stay! It is of very little consequence to me at the end of the matter whether you have any angry feeling or not against Dant s. I hate him! I confess it openly. Do you find the means, I will execute it, provided it is not to kill the man, for Merc d s has declared she will kill herself if Dant s is killed. Caderousse, who had let his head drop on the table, now raised it, and looking at Fernand with his dull and fishy eyes, he said, Kill Dant s! who talks of killing Dant s? I wont have him killed"I wont! Hes my friend, and this morning offered to share his money with me, as I shared mine with him. I wont have Dant s killed"I wont!

And who has said a word about killing him, muddlehead? replied Danglars. We were merely joking; drink to his health, he added, filling Caderousses glass, and do not interfere with us.

Yes, yes, Dant s good health! said Caderousse, emptying his glass, heres to his health! his health"hurrah!

But the means"the means? said Fernand.

Have you not hit upon any? asked Danglars.

No!"you undertook to do so.

True, replied Danglars; the French have the superiority over the Spaniards, that the Spaniards ruminate, while the French invent.

Do you invent, then, said Fernand impatiently.

Waiter, said Danglars, pen, ink, and paper.

Pen, ink, and paper, muttered Fernand.

Yes; I am a supercargo; pen, ink, and paper are my tools, and without my tools I am fit for nothing.

Pen, ink, and paper, then, called Fernand loudly.

Theres what you want on that table, said the waiter.

Bring them here. The waiter did as he was desired.

0059m

When one thinks, said Caderousse, letting his hand drop on the paper, there is here wherewithal to kill a man more sure than if we waited at the corner of a wood to assassinate him! I have always had more dread of a pen, a bottle of ink, and a sheet of paper, than of a sword or pistol.

The fellow is not so drunk as he appears to be, said Danglars. Give him some more wine, Fernand. Fernand filled Caderousses glass, who, like the confirmed toper he was, lifted his hand from the paper and seized the glass.

The Catalan watched him until Caderousse, almost overcome by this fresh assault on his senses, rested, or rather dropped, his glass upon the table.

Well! resumed the Catalan, as he saw the final glimmer of Caderousses reason vanishing before the last glass of wine.

Well, then, I should say, for instance, resumed Danglars, that if after a voyage such as Dant s has just made, in which he touched at the Island of Elba, someone were to denounce him to the kings procureur as a Bonapartist agent""

I will denounce him! exclaimed the young man hastily.

Yes, but they will make you then sign your declaration, and confront

you with him you have denounced; I will supply you with the means of supporting your accusation, for I know the fact well. But Dant s cannot remain forever in prison, and one day or other he will leave it, and the day when he comes out, woe betide him who was the cause of his incarceration!

Oh, I should wish nothing better than that he would come and seek a quarrel with me.

Yes, and Merc d s! Merc d s, who will detest you if you have only the misfortune to scratch the skin of her dearly beloved Edmond!

True! said Fernand.

No, no, continued Danglars; if we resolve on such a step, it would be much better to take, as I now do, this pen, dip it into this ink, and write with the left hand (that the writing may not be recognized) the denunciation we propose. And Danglars, uniting practice with theory, wrote with his left hand, and in a writing reversed from his usual style, and totally unlike it, the following lines, which he handed to Fernand, and which Fernand read in an undertone:

The honorable, the kings attorney, is informed by a friend of the throne and religion, that one Edmond Dant s, mate of the ship Pharaon, arrived this morning from Smyrna, after having touched at Naples and Porto-Ferrajo, has been intrusted by Murat with a letter for the usurper, and by the usurper with a letter for the Bonapartist committee in Paris. Proof of this crime will be found on arresting him, for the letter will be found upon him, or at his fathers, or in his cabin on board the Pharaon.

Very good, resumed Danglars; now your revenge looks like common sense, for in no way can it revert to yourself, and the matter will thus work its own way; there is nothing to do now but fold the letter as I am doing, and write upon it, ~To the kings attorney, and thats all settled. And Danglars wrote the address as he spoke.

Yes, and thats all settled! exclaimed Caderousse, who, by a last effort of intellect, had followed the reading of the letter, and instinctively comprehended all the misery which such a denunciation must entail. Yes, and thats all settled; only it will be an infamous shame; and he stretched out his hand to reach the letter.

Yes, said Danglars, taking it from beyond his reach; and as what I say and do is merely in jest, and I, amongst the first and foremost, should be sorry if anything happened to Dant s"the worthy Dant s"look here! And taking the letter, he squeezed it up in his hands and threw it into a corner of the arbor.

All right! said Caderousse. Dant s is my friend, and I wont have him ill-used.

And who thinks of using him ill? Certainly neither I nor Fernand, said Danglars, rising and looking at the young man, who still remained seated, but whose eye was fixed on the denunciatory sheet of paper flung into the corner.

In this case, replied Caderousse, lets have some more wine. I wish to drink to the health of Edmond and the lovely Merc d s.

You have had too much already, drunkard, said Danglars; and if you continue, you will be compelled to sleep here, because unable to stand on your legs.

I? said Caderousse, rising with all the offended dignity of a drunken man, I cant keep on my legs? Why, Ill wager I can go up into the belfry of the Accoules, and without staggering, too!

Done! said Danglars, Ill take your bet; but tomorrow"today it is time to return. Give me your arm, and let us go.

Very well, let us go, said Caderousse; but I dont want your arm at all. Come, Fernand, wont you return to Marseilles with us?

No, said Fernand; I shall return to the Catalans.

Youre wrong. Come with us to Marseilles"come along.

I will not.

What do you mean? you will not? Well, just as you like, my prince; theres liberty for all the world. Come along, Danglars, and let the

young gentleman return to the Catalans if he chooses.

Danglars took advantage of Caderousses temper at the moment, to take him off towards Marseilles by the Porte Saint-Victor, staggering as he went.

When they had advanced about twenty yards, Danglars looked back and saw Fernand stoop, pick up the crumpled paper, and putting it into his pocket then rush out of the arbor towards Pillon.

Well, said Caderousse, why, what a lie he told! He said he was going to the Catalans, and he is going to the city. Hallo, Fernand! You are coming, my boy!

Oh, you dont see straight, said Danglars; hes gone right by the road to the Vieilles Infirmeries.

Well, said Caderousse, I should have sworn that he turned to the right"how treacherous wine is!

Come, come, said Danglars to himself, now the thing is at work and it will effect its purpose unassisted.

#### Chapter 5. The Marriage Feast

The mornings sun rose clear and resplendent, touching the foamy waves into a network of ruby-tinted light.

The feast had been made ready on the second floor at La RÃ©serve, with whose arbor the reader is already familiar. The apartment destined for the purpose was spacious and lighted by a number of windows, over each of which was written in golden letters for some inexplicable reason the name of one of the principal cities of France; beneath these windows a wooden balcony extended the entire length of the house. And although the entertainment was fixed for twelve oclock, an hour previous to that time the balcony was filled with impatient and expectant guests, consisting of the favored part of the crew of the \_Pharaon\_, and other personal friends of the bridegroom, the whole of whom had arrayed themselves in their choicest costumes, in order to do greater honor to the occasion.

Various rumors were afloat to the effect that the owners of the \_Pharaon\_ had promised to attend the nuptial feast; but all seemed unanimous in doubting that an act of such rare and exceeding condescension could possibly be intended.

Danglars, however, who now made his appearance, accompanied by Caderousse, effectually confirmed the report, stating that he had recently conversed with M. Morrel, who had himself assured him of his intention to dine at La RÃ©serve.

In fact, a moment later M. Morrel appeared and was saluted with an enthusiastic burst of applause from the crew of the \_Pharaon\_, who hailed the visit of the shipowner as a sure indication that the man whose wedding feast he thus delighted to honor would ere long be first in command of the ship; and as DantÃ©s was universally beloved on board his vessel, the sailors put no restraint on their tumultuous joy at finding that the opinion and choice of their superiors so exactly coincided with their own.

With the entrance of M. Morrel, Danglars and Caderousse were despatched in search of the bridegroom to convey to him the intelligence of the arrival of the important personage whose coming had created such a lively sensation, and to beseech him to make haste.

Danglars and Caderousse set off upon their errand at full speed; but ere they had gone many steps they perceived a group advancing towards them, composed of the betrothed pair, a party of young girls in attendance on the bride, by whose side walked DantÃ©s father; the whole brought up by Fernand, whose lips wore their usual sinister smile. Neither MercÃ©dÃ©s nor Edmond observed the strange expression of his countenance; they were so happy that they were conscious only of the sunshine and the presence of each other.

Having acquitted themselves of their errand, and exchanged a hearty shake of the hand with Edmond, Danglars and Caderousse took their places beside Fernand and old DantÃ©s,"the latter of whom attracted universal notice.

The old man was attired in a suit of glistening watered silk, trimmed with steel buttons, beautifully cut and polished. His thin but wiry legs were arrayed in a pair of richly embroidered clocked stockings, evidently of English manufacture, while from his three-cornered hat depended a long streaming knot of white and blue ribbons. Thus he came along, supporting himself on a curiously carved stick, his aged countenance lit up with happiness, looking for all the world like one of the aged dandies of 1796, parading the newly opened gardens of the Luxembourg and Tuileries.

Beside him glided Caderousse, whose desire to partake of the good things provided for the wedding party had induced him to become reconciled to the Dant s, father and son, although there still lingered in his mind a faint and unperfect recollection of the events of the preceding night; just as the brain retains on waking in the morning the dim and misty outline of a dream.

0065m

As Danglars approached the disappointed lover, he cast on him a look of deep meaning, while Fernand, as he slowly paced behind the happy pair, who seemed, in their own unmixed content, to have entirely forgotten that such a being as himself existed, was pale and abstracted; occasionally, however, a deep flush would overspread his countenance, and a nervous contraction distort his features, while, with an agitated and restless gaze, he would glance in the direction of Marseilles, like one who either anticipated or foresaw some great and important event. Dant s himself was simply, but becomingly, clad in the dress peculiar to the merchant service—a costume somewhat between a military and a civil garb; and with his fine countenance, radiant with joy and happiness, a more perfect specimen of manly beauty could scarcely be imagined.

Lovely as the Greek girls of Cyprus or Chios, Merc d s boasted the same bright flashing eyes of jet, and ripe, round, coral lips. She moved with the light, free step of an Arlesienne or an Andalusian. One more practiced in the arts of great cities would have hid her blushes beneath a veil, or, at least, have cast down her thickly fringed lashes, so as to have concealed the liquid lustre of her animated eyes; but, on the contrary, the delighted girl looked around her with a smile that seemed to say: If you are my friends, rejoice with me, for I am very happy.

As soon as the bridal party came in sight of La R serve, M. Morrel descended and came forth to meet it, followed by the soldiers and sailors there assembled, to whom he had repeated the promise already given, that Dant s should be the successor to the late Captain Leclere. Edmond, at the approach of his patron, respectfully placed the arm of his affianced bride within that of M. Morrel, who, forthwith conducting her up the flight of wooden steps leading to the chamber in which the feast was prepared, was gayly followed by the guests, beneath whose heavy tread the slight structure creaked and groaned for the space of several minutes.

Father, said Merc d s, stopping when she had reached the centre of the table, sit, I pray you, on my right hand; on my left I will place him who has ever been as a brother to me, pointing with a soft and gentle smile to Fernand; but her words and look seemed to inflict the direst torture on him, for his lips became ghastly pale, and even beneath the dark hue of his complexion the blood might be seen retreating as though some sudden pang drove it back to the heart. During this time, Dant s, at the opposite side of the table, had been occupied in similarly placing his most honored guests. M. Morrel was seated at his right hand, Danglars at his left; while, at a sign from Edmond, the rest of the company ranged themselves as they found it most agreeable.

Then they began to pass around the dusky, piquant, Arlesian sausages, and lobsters in their dazzling red cuirasses, prawns of large size and brilliant color, the echinus with its prickly outside and dainty morsel

within, the clovis, esteemed by the epicures of the South as more than rivalling the exquisite flavor of the oyster, North. All the delicacies, in fact, that are cast up by the wash of waters on the sandy beach, and styled by the grateful fishermen fruits of the sea. A pretty silence truly! said the old father of the bridegroom, as he carried to his lips a glass of wine of the hue and brightness of the topaz, and which had just been placed before MercÃ©dÃ©s herself. Now, would anybody think that this room contained a happy, merry party, who desire nothing better than to laugh and dance the hours away?

Ah, sighed Caderousse, a man cannot always feel happy because he is about to be married.

The truth is, replied DantÃ©s, that I am too happy for noisy mirth; if that is what you meant by your observation, my worthy friend, you are right; joy takes a strange effect at times, it seems to oppress us almost the same as sorrow.

Danglars looked towards Fernand, whose excitable nature received and betrayed each fresh impression.

Why, what ails you? asked he of Edmond. Do you fear any approaching evil? I should say that you were the happiest man alive at this instant.

And that is the very thing that alarms me, returned DantÃ©s. Man does not appear to me to be intended to enjoy felicity so unmixed; happiness is like the enchanted palaces we read of in our childhood, where fierce, fiery dragons defend the entrance and approach; and monsters of all shapes and kinds, requiring to be overcome ere victory is ours. I own that I am lost in wonder to find myself promoted to an honor of which I feel myself unworthy—that of being the husband of MercÃ©dÃ©s. Nay, nay! cried Caderousse, smiling, you have not attained that honor yet. MercÃ©dÃ©s is not yet your wife. Just assume the tone and manner of a husband, and see how she will remind you that your hour is not yet come!

The bride blushed, while Fernand, restless and uneasy, seemed to start at every fresh sound, and from time to time wiped away the large drops of perspiration that gathered on his brow.

Well, never mind that, neighbor Caderousse; it is not worthwhile to contradict me for such a trifle as that. Tis true that MercÃ©dÃ©s is not actually my wife; but, added he, drawing out his watch, in an hour and a half she will be.

A general exclamation of surprise ran round the table, with the exception of the elder DantÃ©s, whose laugh displayed the still perfect beauty of his large white teeth. MercÃ©dÃ©s looked pleased and gratified, while Fernand grasped the handle of his knife with a convulsive clutch. In an hour? inquired Danglars, turning pale. How is that, my friend?

Why, thus it is, replied DantÃ©s. Thanks to the influence of M. Morrel, to whom, next to my father, I owe every blessing I enjoy, every difficulty has been removed. We have purchased permission to waive the usual delay; and at half-past two o'clock the Mayor of Marseilles will be waiting for us at the city hall. Now, as a quarter-past one has already struck, I do not consider I have asserted too much in saying, that, in another hour and thirty minutes MercÃ©dÃ©s will have become Madame DantÃ©s.

0069m

Fernand closed his eyes, a burning sensation passed across his brow, and he was compelled to support himself by the table to prevent his falling from his chair; but in spite of all his efforts, he could not refrain from uttering a deep groan, which, however, was lost amid the noisy felicitations of the company.

Upon my word, cried the old man, you make short work of this kind of affair. Arrived here only yesterday morning, and married today at three o'clock! Commend me to a sailor for going the quick way to work!

But, asked Danglars, in a timid tone, how did you manage about the other formalities—the contract—the settlement?

The contract, answered Dant s, laughingly, it didnt take long to fix that. Merc d s has no fortune; I have none to settle on her. So, you see, our papers were quickly written out, and certainly do not come very expensive. This joke elicited a fresh burst of applause.

So that what we presumed to be merely the betrothal feast turns out to be the actual wedding dinner! said Danglars.

No, no, answered Dant s; dont imagine I am going to put you off in that shabby manner. Tomorrow morning I start for Paris; four days to go, and the same to return, with one day to discharge the commission entrusted to me, is all the time I shall be absent. I shall be back here by the first of March, and on the second I give my real marriage feast.

This prospect of fresh festivity redoubled the hilarity of the guests to such a degree, that the elder Dant s, who, at the commencement of the repast, had commented upon the silence that prevailed, now found it difficult, amid the general din of voices, to obtain a moments tranquillity in which to drink to the health and prosperity of the bride and bridegroom.

Dant s, perceiving the affectionate eagerness of his father, responded by a look of grateful pleasure; while Merc d s glanced at the clock and made an expressive gesture to Edmond.

Around the table reigned that noisy hilarity which usually prevails at such a time among people sufficiently free from the demands of social position not to feel the trammels of etiquette. Such as at the commencement of the repast had not been able to seat themselves according to their inclination rose unceremoniously, and sought out more agreeable companions. Everybody talked at once, without waiting for a reply and each one seemed to be contented with expressing his or her own thoughts.

Fernands paleness appeared to have communicated itself to Danglars. As for Fernand himself, he seemed to be enduring the tortures of the damned; unable to rest, he was among the first to quit the table, and, as though seeking to avoid the hilarious mirth that rose in such deafening sounds, he continued, in utter silence, to pace the farther end of the salon.

Caderousse approached him just as Danglars, whom Fernand seemed most anxious to avoid, had joined him in a corner of the room.

Upon my word, said Caderousse, from whose mind the friendly treatment of Dant s, united with the effect of the excellent wine he had partaken of, had effaced every feeling of envy or jealousy at Dant s good fortune,"upon my word, Dant s is a downright good fellow, and when I see him sitting there beside his pretty wife that is so soon to be. I cannot help thinking it would have been a great pity to have served him that trick you were planning yesterday.

Oh, there was no harm meant, answered Danglars; at first I certainly did feel somewhat uneasy as to what Fernand might be tempted to do; but when I saw how completely he had mastered his feelings, even so far as to become one of his rivals attendants, I knew there was no further cause for apprehension. Caderousse looked full at Fernand"he was ghastly pale.

Certainly, continued Danglars, the sacrifice was no trifling one, when the beauty of the bride is concerned. Upon my soul, that future captain of mine is a lucky dog! Gad! I only wish he would let me take his place.

Shall we not set forth? asked the sweet, silvery voice of Merc d s; two oclock has just struck, and you know we are expected in a quarter of an hour.

0071m

To be sure!"to be sure! cried Dant s, eagerly quitting the table; let us go directly!

His words were re-echoed by the whole party, with vociferous cheers. At this moment Danglars, who had been incessantly observing every change in Fernands look and manner, saw him stagger and fall back,



with an almost convulsive spasm, against a seat placed near one of the open windows. At the same instant his ear caught a sort of indistinct sound on the stairs, followed by the measured tread of soldiery, with the clanking of swords and military accoutrements; then came a hum and buzz as of many voices, so as to deaden even the noisy mirth of the bridal party, among whom a vague feeling of curiosity and apprehension quelled every disposition to talk, and almost instantaneously the most deathlike stillness prevailed.

The sounds drew nearer. Three blows were struck upon the panel of the door. The company looked at each other in consternation.

I demand admittance, said a loud voice outside the room, in the name of the law! As no attempt was made to prevent it, the door was opened, and a magistrate, wearing his official scarf, presented himself, followed by four soldiers and a corporal. Uneasiness now yielded to the most extreme dread on the part of those present.

May I venture to inquire the reason of this unexpected visit? said M. Morrel, addressing the magistrate, whom he evidently knew; there is doubtless some mistake easily explained.

If it be so, replied the magistrate, rely upon every reparation being made; meanwhile, I am the bearer of an order of arrest, and although I most reluctantly perform the task assigned me, it must, nevertheless, be fulfilled. Who among the persons here assembled answers to the name of Edmond Dantès?

Every eye was turned towards the young man who, spite of the agitation he could not but feel, advanced with dignity, and said, in a firm voice:

I am he; what is your pleasure with me?

Edmond Dantès, replied the magistrate, I arrest you in the name of the law!

Me! repeated Edmond, slightly changing color, and wherefore, I pray?

I cannot inform you, but you will be duly acquainted with the reasons that have rendered such a step necessary at the preliminary examination.

M. Morrel felt that further resistance or remonstrance was useless. He saw before him an officer delegated to enforce the law, and perfectly well knew that it would be as unavailing to seek pity from a magistrate decked with his official scarf, as to address a petition to some cold marble effigy. Old Dantès, however, sprang forward. There are situations which the heart of a father or a mother cannot be made to understand. He prayed and supplicated in terms so moving, that even the officer was touched, and, although firm in his duty, he kindly said, My worthy friend, let me beg of you to calm your apprehensions. Your son has probably neglected some prescribed form or attention in registering his cargo, and it is more than probable he will be set at liberty directly he has given the information required, whether touching the health of his crew, or the value of his freight.

What is the meaning of all this? inquired Caderousse, frowningly, of Danglars, who had assumed an air of utter surprise.

0073m

How can I tell you? replied he; I am, like yourself, utterly bewildered at all that is going on, and cannot in the least make out what it is about. Caderousse then looked around for Fernand, but he had disappeared.

The scene of the previous night now came back to his mind with startling clearness. The painful catastrophe he had just witnessed appeared effectually to have rent away the veil which the intoxication of the evening before had raised between himself and his memory.

So, so, said he, in a hoarse and choking voice, to Danglars, this, then, I suppose, is a part of the trick you were concerting yesterday? All I can say is, that if it be so, tis an ill turn, and well deserves to bring double evil on those who have projected it.

Nonsense, returned Danglars, I tell you again I have nothing

whatever to do with it; besides, you know very well that I tore the paper to pieces.

No, you did not! answered Caderousse, you merely threw it by" I saw it lying in a corner.

Hold your tongue, you fool!" what should you know about it?" why, you were drunk!

Where is Fernand? inquired Caderousse.

How do I know? replied Danglars; gone, as every prudent man ought to be, to look after his own affairs, most likely. Never mind where he is, let you and I go and see what is to be done for our poor friends.

During this conversation, Dant s, after having exchanged a cheerful shake of the hand with all his sympathizing friends, had surrendered himself to the officer sent to arrest him, merely saying, Make yourselves quite easy, my good fellows, there is some little mistake to clear up, thats all, depend upon it; and very likely I may not have to go so far as the prison to effect that.

0075m

Oh, to be sure! responded Danglars, who had now approached the group, nothing more than a mistake, I feel quite certain.

Dant s descended the staircase, preceded by the magistrate, and followed by the soldiers. A carriage awaited him at the door; he got in, followed by two soldiers and the magistrate, and the vehicle drove off towards Marseilles.

Adieu, adieu, dearest Edmond! cried Merc d s, stretching out her arms to him from the balcony.

The prisoner heard the cry, which sounded like the sob of a broken heart, and leaning from the coach he called out, Good-bye, Merc d s" we shall soon meet again! Then the vehicle disappeared round one of the turnings of Fort Saint Nicholas.

Wait for me here, all of you! cried M. Morrel; I will take the first conveyance I find, and hurry to Marseilles, whence I will bring you word how all is going on.

Thats right! exclaimed a multitude of voices, go, and return as quickly as you can!

This second departure was followed by a long and fearful state of terrified silence on the part of those who were left behind. The old father and Merc d s remained for some time apart, each absorbed in grief; but at length the two poor victims of the same blow raised their eyes, and with a simultaneous burst of feeling rushed into each others arms.

Meanwhile Fernand made his appearance, poured out for himself a glass of water with a trembling hand; then hastily swallowing it, went to sit down at the first vacant place, and this was, by mere chance, placed next to the seat on which poor Merc d s had fallen half fainting, when released from the warm and affectionate embrace of old Dant s.

Instinctively Fernand drew back his chair.

He is the cause of all this misery" I am quite sure of it, whispered Caderousse, who had never taken his eyes off Fernand, to Danglars.

I dont think so, answered the other; hes too stupid to imagine such a scheme. I only hope the mischief will fall upon the head of whoever wrought it.

You dont mention those who aided and abetted the deed, said Caderousse.

Surely, answered Danglars, one cannot be held responsible for every chance arrow shot into the air.

You can, indeed, when the arrow lights point downward on somebodys head.

Meantime the subject of the arrest was being canvassed in every different form.

What think you, Danglars, said one of the party, turning towards him, of this event?

Why, replied he, I think it just possible Dant s may have been detected with some trifling article on board ship considered here as

contraband.

But how could he have done so without your knowledge, Danglars, since you are the ships supercargo?

Why, as for that, I could only know what I was told respecting the merchandise with which the vessel was laden. I know she was loaded with cotton, and that she took in her freight at Alexandria from Pastrets warehouse, and at Smyrna from Pascals; that is all I was obliged to know, and I beg I may not be asked for any further particulars.

Now I recollect, said the afflicted old father; my poor boy told me yesterday he had got a small case of coffee, and another of tobacco for me!

There, you see, exclaimed Danglars. Now the mischief is out; depend upon it the custom-house people went rummaging about the ship in our absence, and discovered poor Dant s hidden treasures.

Merc d s, however, paid no heed to this explanation of her lovers arrest. Her grief, which she had hitherto tried to restrain, now burst out in a violent fit of hysterical sobbing.

Come, come, said the old man, be comforted, my poor child; there is still hope!

Hope! repeated Danglars.

Hope! faintly murmured Fernand, but the word seemed to die away on his pale agitated lips, and a convulsive spasm passed over his countenance.

Good news! good news! shouted forth one of the party stationed in the balcony on the lookout. Here comes M. Morrel back. No doubt, now, we shall hear that our friend is released!

Merc d s and the old man rushed to meet the shipowner and greeted him at the door. He was very pale.

What news? exclaimed a general burst of voices.

Alas, my friends, replied M. Morrel, with a mournful shake of his head, the thing has assumed a more serious aspect than I expected.

Oh, indeed"indeed, sir, he is innocent! sobbed forth Merc d s.

That I believe! answered M. Morrel; but still he is charged"

With what? inquired the elder Dant s.

With being an agent of the Bonapartist faction! Many of our readers may be able to recollect how formidable such an accusation became in the period at which our story is dated.

A despairing cry escaped the pale lips of Merc d s; the old man sank into a chair.

Ah, Danglars! whispered Caderousse, you have deceived me"the trick you spoke of last night has been played; but I cannot suffer a poor old man or an innocent girl to die of grief through your fault. I am determined to tell them all about it.

Be silent, you simpleton! cried Danglars, grasping him by the arm, or I will not answer even for your own safety. Who can tell whether Dant s be innocent or guilty? The vessel did touch at Elba, where he quitted it, and passed a whole day in the island. Now, should any letters or other documents of a compromising character be found upon him, will it not be taken for granted that all who uphold him are his accomplices?

With the rapid instinct of selfishness, Caderousse readily perceived the solidity of this mode of reasoning; he gazed, doubtfully, wistfully, on Danglars, and then caution supplanted generosity.

Suppose we wait a while, and see what comes of it, said he, casting a bewildered look on his companion.

To be sure! answered Danglars. Let us wait, by all means. If he be innocent, of course he will be set at liberty; if guilty, why, it is no use involving ourselves in a conspiracy.

Let us go, then. I cannot stay here any longer.

With all my heart! replied Danglars, pleased to find the other so tractable. Let us take ourselves out of the way, and leave things for the present to take their course.

After their departure, Fernand, who had now again become the friend and

protector of Mercédès, led the girl to her home, while some friends of Dantès conducted his father, nearly lifeless, to the Allées de Meilhan. The rumor of Edmonds arrest as a Bonapartist agent was not slow in circulating throughout the city.

Could you ever have credited such a thing, my dear Danglars? asked M. Morrel, as, on his return to the port for the purpose of gleaning fresh tidings of Dantès, from M. de Villefort, the assistant procureur, he overtook his supercargo and Caderousse. Could you have believed such a thing possible?

Why, you know I told you, replied Danglars, that I considered the circumstance of his having anchored at the Island of Elba as a very suspicious circumstance.

And did you mention these suspicions to any person beside myself?

0079m

Certainly not! returned Danglars. Then added in a low whisper, You understand that, on account of your uncle, M. Policar Morrel, who served under the \_other\_ government, and who does not altogether conceal what he thinks on the subject, you are strongly suspected of regretting the abdication of Napoleon. I should have feared to injure both Edmond and yourself, had I divulged my own apprehensions to a soul. I am too well aware that though a subordinate, like myself, is bound to acquaint the shipowner with everything that occurs, there are many things he ought most carefully to conceal from all else.

Tis well, Danglars"tis well! replied M. Morrel. You are a worthy fellow; and I had already thought of your interests in the event of poor Edmond having become captain of the \_Pharaon\_.

Is it possible you were so kind?

Yes, indeed; I had previously inquired of Dantès what was his opinion of you, and if he should have any reluctance to continue you in your post, for somehow I have perceived a sort of coolness between you.

And what was his reply?

That he certainly did think he had given you offence in an affair which he merely referred to without entering into particulars, but that whoever possessed the good opinion and confidence of the ships owners would have his preference also.

The hypocrite! murmured Danglars.

Poor Dantès! said Caderousse. No one can deny his being a noble-hearted young fellow.

But meanwhile, continued M. Morrel, here is the \_Pharaon\_ without a captain.

Oh, replied Danglars, since we cannot leave this port for the next three months, let us hope that ere the expiration of that period Dantès will be set at liberty.

No doubt; but in the meantime?

I am entirely at your service, M. Morrel, answered Danglars. You know that I am as capable of managing a ship as the most experienced captain in the service; and it will be so far advantageous to you to accept my services, that upon Edmonds release from prison no further change will be requisite on board the \_Pharaon\_ than for Dantès and myself each to resume our respective posts.

Thanks, Danglars"that will smooth over all difficulties. I fully authorize you at once to assume the command of the \_Pharaon\_, and look carefully to the unloading of her freight. Private misfortunes must never be allowed to interfere with business.

Be easy on that score, M. Morrel; but do you think we shall be permitted to see our poor Edmond?

I will let you know that directly I have seen M. de Villefort, whom I shall endeavor to interest in Edmonds favor. I am aware he is a furious royalist; but, in spite of that, and of his being kings attorney, he is a man like ourselves, and I fancy not a bad sort of one.

Perhaps not, replied Danglars; but I hear that he is ambitious, and thats rather against him.

Well, well, returned M. Morrel, we shall see. But now hasten on board, I will join you there ere long.

So saying, the worthy shipowner quitted the two allies, and proceeded in the direction of the Palais de Justice.

0081m

You see, said Danglars, addressing Caderousse, the turn things have taken. Do you still feel any desire to stand up in his defence?

Not the slightest, but yet it seems to me a shocking thing that a mere joke should lead to such consequences.

But who perpetrated that joke, let me ask? neither you nor myself, but Fernand; you knew very well that I threw the paper into a corner of the room"indeed, I fancied I had destroyed it.

Oh, no, replied Caderousse, that I can answer for, you did not. I only wish I could see it now as plainly as I saw it lying all crushed and crumpled in a corner of the arbor.

Well, then, if you did, depend upon it, Fernand picked it up, and either copied it or caused it to be copied; perhaps, even, he did not take the trouble of recopying it. And now I think of it, by Heavens, he may have sent the letter itself! Fortunately, for me, the handwriting was disguised.

Then you were aware of Dant s being engaged in a conspiracy?

Not I. As I before said, I thought the whole thing was a joke, nothing more. It seems, however, that I have unconsciously stumbled upon the truth.

Still, argued Caderousse, I would give a great deal if nothing of the kind had happened; or, at least, that I had had no hand in it. You will see, Danglars, that it will turn out an unlucky job for both of us.

Nonsense! If any harm come of it, it should fall on the guilty person; and that, you know, is Fernand. How can we be implicated in any way? All we have got to do is, to keep our own counsel, and remain perfectly quiet, not breathing a word to any living soul; and you will see that the storm will pass away without in the least affecting us.

Amen! responded Caderousse, waving his hand in token of adieu to Danglars, and bending his steps towards the All es de Meilhan, moving his head to and fro, and muttering as he went, after the manner of one whose mind was overcharged with one absorbing idea.

So far, then, said Danglars, mentally, all has gone as I would have it. I am, temporarily, commander of the \_Pharaon\_, with the certainty of being permanently so, if that fool of a Caderousse can be persuaded to hold his tongue. My only fear is the chance of Dant s being released. But, there, he is in the hands of Justice; and, added he with a smile, she will take her own. So saying, he leaped into a boat, desiring to be rowed on board the \_Pharaon\_, where M. Morrel had agreed to meet him.

Chapter 6. The Deputy Procureur du Roi

In one of the aristocratic mansions built by Puget in the Rue du Grand Cours opposite the Medusa fountain, a second marriage feast was being celebrated, almost at the same hour with the nuptial repast given by Dant s. In this case, however, although the occasion of the entertainment was similar, the company was strikingly dissimilar.

Instead of a rude mixture of sailors, soldiers, and those belonging to the humblest grade of life, the present assembly was composed of the very flower of Marseilles society,"magistrates who had resigned their office during the usurpers reign; officers who had deserted from the imperial army and joined forces with Cond ; and younger members of families, brought up to hate and execrate the man whom five years of exile would convert into a martyr, and fifteen of restoration elevate to the rank of a god.

The guests were still at table, and the heated and energetic conversation that prevailed betrayed the violent and vindictive passions that then agitated each dweller of the South, where unhappily, for five centuries religious strife had long given increased bitterness

to the violence of party feeling.

The emperor, now king of the petty Island of Elba, after having held sovereign sway over one-half of the world, counting as his subjects a small population of five or six thousand souls,"after having been accustomed to hear the \_Vive Napoléon\_ of a hundred and twenty millions of human beings, uttered in ten different languages,"was looked upon here as a ruined man, separated forever from any fresh connection with France or claim to her throne.

The magistrates freely discussed their political views; the military part of the company talked unreservedly of Moscow and Leipsic, while the women commented on the divorce of Josephine. It was not over the downfall of the man, but over the defeat of the Napoleonic idea, that they rejoiced, and in this they foresaw for themselves the bright and cheering prospect of a revived political existence.

An old man, decorated with the cross of Saint Louis, now rose and proposed the health of King Louis XVIII. It was the Marquis de Saint-Méran. This toast, recalling at once the patient exile of Hartwell and the peace-loving King of France, excited universal enthusiasm; glasses were elevated in the air \_À l'Anglaise\_, and the ladies, snatching their bouquets from their fair bosoms, strewed the table with their floral treasures. In a word, an almost poetical fervor prevailed.

Ah, said the Marquise de Saint-Méran, a woman with a stern, forbidding eye, though still noble and distinguished in appearance, despite her fifty years"ah, these revolutionists, who have driven us from those very possessions they afterwards purchased for a mere trifle during the Reign of Terror, would be compelled to own, were they here, that all true devotion was on our side, since we were content to follow the fortunes of a falling monarch, while they, on the contrary, made their fortune by worshipping the rising sun; yes, yes, they could not help admitting that the king, for whom we sacrificed rank, wealth, and station was truly our ~Louis the well-beloved, while their wretched usurper has been, and ever will be, to them their evil genius, their ~Napoleon the accursed. Am I not right, Villefort?

I beg your pardon, madame. I really must pray you to excuse me, but"truth"I was not attending to the conversation.

Marquise, marquise! interposed the old nobleman who had proposed the