no farther. They used the same precautions in leaving as in entering the house. The lady always left first, and as soon as she had stepped into her carriage, it drove away, sometimes towards the right hand, sometimes to the left; then about twenty minutes afterwards the gentleman would also leave, buried in his cravat or concealed by his handkerchief.

The day after Monte Cristo had called upon Danglars, the mysterious lodger entered at ten o'clock in the morning instead of four in the afternoon. Almost directly afterwards, without the usual interval of time, a cab arrived, and the veiled lady ran hastily upstairs. The door opened, but before it could be closed, the lady exclaimed:

'Oh, Lucien—oh, my friend!'

The concierge therefore heard for the first time that the lodger's name was Lucien; still, as he was the very perfection of a door-keeper, he made up his mind not to tell his wife.

'Well, what is the matter, my dear?' asked the gentleman whose name the lady's agitation revealed; 'tell me what is the matter.'

'Oh, Lucien, can I confide in you?'

'Of course, you know you can do so. But what can be the matter? Your note of this morning has completely bewildered me. This precipitation—this unusual appointment. Come, ease me of my anxiety, or else frighten me at once.'

'Lucien, a great event has happened!' said the lady, glancing inquiringly at Lucien,—'M. Danglars left last night!'

'Left?—M. Danglars left? Where has he gone?'

'I do not know.'

'What do you mean? Has he gone intending not to return?'

'Undoubtedly;—at ten o'clock at night his horses took him to the barrier of Charenton; there a post-chaise was waiting for him—he entered it with his valet de chambre, saying that he was going to Fontainebleau.'

'Then what did you mean— '

'Stay—he left a letter for me.'

'A letter?'

'Yes; read it.'

And the baroness took from her pocket a letter which she gave to Debray. Debray paused a moment before reading, as if trying to guess its contents, or perhaps while making up his mind how to act, whatever it

might contain. No doubt his ideas were arranged in a few minutes, for he began reading the letter which caused so much uneasiness in the heart of the baroness, and which ran as follows:

> Madame and most faithful wife.

Debray mechanically stopped and looked at the baroness, whose face became covered with blushes.

'Read,' she said.

Debray continued:

> When you receive this, you will no longer have a husband. Oh, you need not be alarmed, you will only have lost him as you have lost your daughter; I mean that I shall be travelling on one of the thirty or forty roads leading out of France.
>
> I owe you some explanations for my conduct, and as you are a woman that can perfectly understand me, I will give them.
>
> Listen, then. I received this morning five millions which I paid away; almost directly afterwards another demand for the same sum was presented to me; I put this creditor off till tomorrow and I intend leaving today, to escape that tomorrow, which would be rather too unpleasant for me to endure.
>
> You understand this, do you not, my most precious wife?
>
> I say you understand this, because you are as conversant with my affairs as I am; indeed, I think you understand them better, since I am ignorant of what has become of a considerable portion of my fortune, once very tolerable, while I am sure, madame, that you know perfectly well.
>
> For women have infallible instincts; they can even explain the marvellous by an algebraic calculation they have invented; but I, who only understand my own figures, know nothing more than that one day these figures deceived me.
>
> Have you admired the rapidity of my fall?

Have you been slightly dazzled at the sudden fusion of my ingots?

I confess I have seen nothing but the fire; let us hope you have found some gold among the ashes.

With this consoling idea, I leave you, madame, and most prudent wife, without any conscientious reproach for abandoning you; you have friends left, and the ashes I have already mentioned, and above all the liberty I hasten to restore to you.

And here, madame, I must add another word of explanation. So long as I hoped you were working for the good of our house and for the fortune of our daughter, I philosophically closed my eyes; but as you have transformed that house into a vast ruin I will not be the foundation of another man's fortune.

You were rich when I married you, but little respected. Excuse me for speaking so very candidly, but as this is intended only for ourselves, I do not see why I should weigh my words. I have augmented our fortune, and it has continued to increase during the last fifteen years, till extraordinary and unexpected catastrophes have suddenly overturned it,—without any fault of mine, I can honestly declare.

You, madame, have only sought to increase your own, and I am convinced that you have succeeded. I leave you, therefore, as I took you,—rich, but little respected. Adieu! I also intend from this time to work on my own account. Accept my acknowledgments for the example you have set me, and which I intend following.

Your very devoted husband,

Baron Danglars.

The baroness had watched Debray while he read this long and painful letter, and saw him, notwithstanding his self-control, change colour once or twice. When he had ended the perusal, he folded the letter and resumed his pensive attitude.

Chapter CVI

Dividing the Proceeds

The apartment on the first floor of the house in the Rue Saint-Germain-des-Prés, where Albert de Morcerf had selected a home for his mother, was let to a very mysterious person. This was a man whose face the concierge himself had never seen, for in the winter his chin was buried in one of the large red handkerchiefs worn by gentlemen's coachmen on a cold night, and in the summer he made a point of always blowing his nose just as he approached the door. Contrary to custom, this gentleman had not been watched, for as the report ran that he was a person of high rank, and one who would allow no impertinent interference, his *incognito* was strictly respected.

His visits were tolerably regular, though occasionally he appeared a little before or after his time, but generally, both in summer and winter, he took possession of his apartment about four o'clock, though he never spent the night there. At half-past three in the winter the fire was lighted by the discreet servant, who had the superintendence of the little apartment, and in the summer ices were placed on the table at the same hour. At four o'clock, as we have already stated, the mysterious personage arrived.

Twenty minutes afterwards a carriage stopped at the house, a lady alighted in a black or dark blue dress, and always thickly veiled; she passed like a shadow through the lodge, and ran upstairs without a sound escaping under the touch of her light foot. No one ever asked her where she was going. Her face, therefore, like that of the gentleman, was perfectly unknown to the two concierges, who were perhaps unequalled throughout the capital for discretion. We need not say she stopped at the first floor. Then she tapped in a peculiar manner at a door, which after being opened to admit her was again fastened, and curiosity penetrated

'Well?' asked Madame Danglars, with an anxiety easy to be understood.

'Well, madame?' unhesitatingly repeated Debray.

'With what ideas does that letter inspire you?'

'Oh, it is simple enough, madame; it inspires me with the idea that M. Danglars has left suspiciously.'

'Certainly; but is this all you have to say to me?'

'I do not understand you,' said Debray with freezing coldness.

'He is gone! Gone, never to return!'

'Oh, madame, do not think that!'

'I tell you he will never return. I know his character; he is inflexible in any resolutions formed for his own interests. If he could have made any use of me, he would have taken me with him; he leaves me in Paris, as our separation will conduce to his benefit;—therefore he has gone, and I am free forever,' added Madame Danglars, in the same supplicating tone.

Debray, instead of answering, allowed her to remain in an attitude of nervous inquiry.

'Well?' she said at length, 'do you not answer me?'

'I have but one question to ask you,—what do you intend to do?'

'I was going to ask you,' replied the baroness with a beating heart.

'Ah, then, you wish to ask advice of me?'

'Yes; I do wish to ask your advice,' said Madame Danglars with anxious expectation.

'Then if you wish to take my advice,' said the young man coldly, 'I would recommend you to travel.'

'To travel!' she murmured.

'Certainly; as M. Danglars says, you are rich, and perfectly free. In my opinion, a withdrawal from Paris is absolutely necessary after the double catastrophe of Mademoiselle Danglars' broken contract and M. Danglars' disappearance. The world will think you abandoned and poor, for the wife of a bankrupt would never be forgiven, were she to keep up an appearance of opulence. You have only to remain in Paris for about a fortnight, telling the world you are abandoned, and relating the details of this desertion to your best friends, who will soon spread the report. Then you can quit your house, leaving your jewels and giving up your jointure, and everyone's mouth will be filled with praises of your disinterestedness. They will know you are deserted, and think you also poor, for I alone know

your real financial position, and am quite ready to give up my accounts as an honest partner.'

The dread with which the pale and motionless baroness listened to this, was equalled by the calm indifference with which Debray had spoken.

'Deserted?' she repeated; 'ah, yes, I am, indeed, deserted! You are right, sir, and no one can doubt my position.'

These were the only words that this proud and violently enamoured woman could utter in response to Debray. 'But then you are rich,—very rich, indeed,' continued Debray, taking out some papers from his pocket-book, which he spread upon the table. Madame Danglars did not see them; she was engaged in stilling the beatings of her heart, and restraining the tears which were ready to gush forth. At length a sense of dignity prevailed, and if she did not entirely master her agitation, she at least succeeded in preventing the fall of a single tear.

'Madame,' said Debray, 'it is nearly six months since we have been associated. You furnished a principal of 100,000 francs. Our partnership began in the month of April. In May we commenced operations, and in the course of the month gained 450,000 francs. In June the profit amounted to 900,000. In July we added 1,700,000 francs,—it was, you know, the month of the Spanish bonds. In August we lost 300,000 francs at the beginning of the month, but on the 13th we made up for it, and we now find that our accounts, reckoning from the first day of partnership up to yesterday, when I closed them, showed a capital of 2,400,000 francs, that is, 1,200,000 for each of us. Now, madame,' said Debray, delivering up his accounts in the methodical manner of a stockbroker, 'there are still 80,000 francs, the interest of this money, in my hands.'

'But,' said the baroness, 'I thought you never put the money out to interest.'

'Excuse me, madame,' said Debray coldly, 'I had your permission to do so, and I have made use of it. There are, then, 40,000 francs for your share, besides the 100,000 you furnished me to begin with, making in all 1,340,000 francs for your portion. Now, madame, I took the precaution of drawing out your money the day before yesterday; it is not long ago, you see, and I was in continual expectation of being called on to deliver up my accounts. There is your money,—half in bank-notes, the other half in checks payable to bearer. I say *there*, for as I did not consider my house

'To wait for me. Hold yourself ready then to join me at the Champs-Élysées, and lead me out of this house without anyone seeing my departure.'

Maximilian hung his head, and obeyed with childlike reverence.

'Or, take care, Morrel, lest I call you ungrateful.'

'Have pity on me, count!'

'I feel so much pity towards you, Maximilian, that—listen to me attentively—if I do not cure you in a month, to the day, to the very hour, mark my words, Morrel, I will place loaded pistols before you, and a cup of the deadliest Italian poison—a poison more sure and prompt than that which has killed Valentine.'

'Will you promise me?'

'Yes; for I am a man, and have suffered like yourself, and also contemplated suicide; indeed, often since misfortune has left me I have longed for the delights of an eternal sleep.'

'But you are sure you will promise me this?' said Morrel, intoxicated.

'I not only promise, but swear it!' said Monte Cristo extending his hand.

'In a month, then, on your honour, if I am not consoled, you will let me take my life into my own hands, and whatever may happen you will not call me ungrateful?'

'In a month, to the day, the very hour and the date is a sacred one, Maximilian. I do not know whether you remember that this is the 5th of September; it is ten years today since I saved your father's life, who wished to die.'

Morrel seized the count's hand and kissed it; the count allowed him to pay the homage he felt due to him.

'In a month you will find on the table, at which we shall be then sitting, good pistols and a delicious draught; but, on the other hand, you must promise me not to attempt your life before that time.'

'Oh, I also swear it!'

Monte Cristo drew the young man towards him, and pressed him for some time to his heart. 'And now,' he said, 'after today, you will come and live with me; you can occupy Haydée's apartment, and my daughter will at least be replaced by my son.'

'Haydée?' said Morrel, 'what has become of her?'

'She departed last night.'

'To leave you?'

safe enough, or lawyers sufficiently discreet, and as landed property carries evidence with it, and moreover since you have no right to possess anything independent of your husband, I have kept this sum, now your whole fortune, in a chest concealed under that closet, and for greater security I myself concealed it there.

Now, madame,' continued Debray, first opening the closet, then the chest;—'now, madame, here are 800 notes of 1,000 francs each, resembling, as you see, a large book bound in iron; to this I add a certificate in the funds of 25,000 francs; then, for the odd cash, making I think about 110,000 francs, here is a check upon my banker, who, not being M. Danglars, will pay you the amount, you may rest assured.'

Madame Danglars mechanically took the check, the bond, and the heap of bank-notes. This enormous fortune made no great appearance on the table. Madame Danglars, with tearless eyes, but with her breast heaving with concealed emotion, placed the bank-notes in her bag, put the certificate and check into her pocket-book, and then, standing pale and mute, awaited one kind word of consolation.

But she waited in vain.

'Now, madame,' said Debray, 'you have a splendid fortune, an income of about 60,000 livres a year, which is enormous for a woman who cannot keep an establishment here for a year, at least. You will be able to indulge all your fancies; besides, should you find your income insufficient, you can, for the sake of the past, madame, make use of mine; and I am ready to offer you all I possess, on loan.'

'Thank you, sir—thank you,' replied the baroness; 'you forget that what you have just paid me is much more than a poor woman requires, who intends for some time, at least, to retire from the world.'

Debray was, for a moment, surprised, but immediately recovering himself, he bowed with an air which seemed to say, 'As you please, madame.'

Madame Danglars had until then, perhaps, hoped for something; but when she saw the careless bow of Debray, and the glance by which it was accompanied, together with his significant silence, she raised her head, and without passion or violence or even hesitation, ran downstairs, disdaining to address a last farewell to one who could thus part from her.

'Bah,' said Debray, when she had left, 'these are fine projects! She will remain at home, read novels, and speculate at cards, since she can no longer do so on the Bourse.'

Then taking up his account book, he cancelled with the greatest care all the entries of the amounts he had just paid away.

'I have 1,060,000 francs remaining,' he said. 'What a pity Mademoiselle de Villefort is dead! She suited me in every respect, and I would have married her.'

And he calmly waited until the twenty minutes had elapsed after Madame Danglars' departure before he left the house. During this time he occupied himself in making figures, with his watch by his side.

Asmodeus—that diabolical personage, who would have been created by every fertile imagination if Le Sage had not acquired the priority in his great masterpiece—would have enjoyed a singular spectacle, if he had lifted up the roof of the little house in the Rue Saint-Germain-des-Prés, while Debray was casting up his figures.

Above the room in which Debray had been dividing two millions and a half with Madame Danglars was another, inhabited by persons who have played too prominent a part in the incidents we have related for their appearance not to create some interest.

Mercédès and Albert were in that room.

Mercédès was much changed within the last few days; not that even in her days of fortune she had ever dressed with the magnificent display which makes us no longer able to recognize a woman when she appears in a plain and simple attire; nor indeed, had she fallen into that state of depression where it is impossible to conceal the garb of misery; no, the change in Mercédès was that her eye no longer sparkled, her lips no longer smiled, and there was now a hesitation in uttering the words which formerly sprang so fluently from her ready wit.

It was not poverty which had broken her spirit; it was not a want of courage which rendered her poverty burdensome. Mercédès, although deposed from the exalted position she had occupied, lost in the sphere she had now chosen, like a person passing from a room splendidly lighted into utter darkness, appeared like a queen, fallen from her palace to a hovel, and who, reduced to strict necessity, could neither become reconciled to

'Then have a care, I repeat, for you seek to persuade me, and if you succeed I should lose my reason, for I should hope that I could again behold Valentine.'

The count smiled.

'My friend, my father,' said Morrel with excitement, 'have a care, I again repeat, for the power you wield over me alarms me. Weigh your words before you speak, for my eyes have already become brighter, and my heart beats strongly; be cautious, or you will make me believe in supernatural agencies. I must obey you, though you bade me call forth the dead or walk upon the water.'

'Hope, my friend,' repeated the count.

'Ah,' said Morrel, falling from the height of excitement to the abyss of despair—'ah, you are playing with me, like those good, or rather selfish mothers who soothe their children with honeyed words, because their screams annoy them. No, my friend, I was wrong to caution you; do not fear, I will bury my grief so deep in my heart, I will disguise it so, that you shall not even care to sympathize with me. Adieu, my friend, adieu!'

'On the contrary,' said the count, 'after this time you must live with me—you must not leave me, and in a week we shall have left France behind us.'

'And you still bid me hope?'

'I tell you to hope, because I have a method of curing you.'

'Count, you render me sadder than before, if it be possible. You think the result of this blow has been to produce an ordinary grief, and you would cure it by an ordinary remedy—change of scene.' And Morrel dropped his head with disdainful incredulity.

'What can I say more?' asked Monte Cristo. 'I have confidence in the remedy I propose, and only ask you to permit me to assure you of its efficacy.'

'Count, you prolong my agony.'

'Then,' said the count, 'your feeble spirit will not even grant me the trial I request? Come—do you know of what the Count of Monte Cristo is capable? do you know that he holds terrestrial beings under his control? nay, that he can almost work a miracle? Well, wait for the miracle I hope to accomplish, or— '

'Or?' repeated Morrel.

'No; I have found a better remedy for my grief than either a bullet or a knife.'

'Poor fellow, what is it?'

'My grief will kill me of itself.'

'My friend,' said Monte Cristo, with an expression of melancholy equal to his own, 'listen to me. One day, in a moment of despair like yours, since it led to a similar resolution, I also wished to kill myself; one day your father, equally desperate, wished to kill himself too. If anyone had said to your father, at the moment he raised the pistol to his head—if anyone had told me, when in my prison I pushed back the food I had not tasted for three days—if anyone had said to either of us then, "Live—the day will come when you will be happy, and will bless life!"—no matter whose voice had spoken, we should have heard him with the smile of doubt, or the anguish of incredulity,—and yet how many times has your father blessed life while embracing you—how often have I myself— '

'Ah,' exclaimed Morrel, interrupting the count, 'you had only lost your liberty, my father had only lost his fortune, but I have lost Valentine.'

'Look at me,' said Monte Cristo, with that expression which sometimes made him so eloquent and persuasive—'look at me. There are no tears in my eyes, nor is there fever in my veins, yet I see you suffer—you, Maximilian, whom I love as my own son. Well, does not this tell you that in grief, as in life, there is always something to look forward to beyond? Now, if I entreat, if I order you to live, Morrel, it is in the conviction that one day you will thank me for having preserved your life.'

'Oh, heavens,' said the young man, 'oh, heavens—what are you saying, count? Take care. But perhaps you have never loved!'

'Child!' replied the count.

'I mean, as I love. You see, I have been a soldier ever since I attained manhood. I reached the age of twenty-nine without loving, for none of the feelings I before then experienced merit the appellation of love. Well, at twenty-nine I saw Valentine; for two years I have loved her, for two years I have seen written in her heart, as in a book, all the virtues of a daughter and wife. Count, to possess Valentine would have been a happiness too infinite, too ecstatic, too complete, too divine for this world, since it has been denied me; but without Valentine the earth is desolate.'

'I have told you to hope,' said the count.

the earthen vessels she was herself forced to place upon the table, nor to the humble pallet which had become her bed.

The beautiful Catalane and noble countess had lost both her proud glance and charming smile, because she saw nothing but misery around her; the walls were hung with one of the gray papers which economical landlords choose as not likely to show the dirt; the floor was uncarpeted; the furniture attracted the attention to the poor attempt at luxury; indeed, everything offended eyes accustomed to refinement and elegance.

Madame de Morcerf had lived there since leaving her house; the continual silence of the spot oppressed her; still, seeing that Albert continually watched her countenance to judge the state of her feelings, she constrained herself to assume a monotonous smile of the lips alone, which, contrasted with the sweet and beaming expression that usually shone from her eyes, seemed like 'moonlight on a statue,'—yielding light without warmth.

Albert, too, was ill at ease; the remains of luxury prevented him from sinking into his actual position. If he wished to go out without gloves, his hands appeared too white; if he wished to walk through the town, his boots seemed too highly polished. Yet these two noble and intelligent creatures, united by the indissoluble ties of maternal and filial love, had succeeded in tacitly understanding one another, and economizing their stores, and Albert had been able to tell his mother without extorting a change of countenance:

'Mother, we have no more money.' Mercédès had never known misery; she had often, in her youth, spoken of poverty, but between want and necessity, those synonymous words, there is a wide difference.

Amongst the Catalans, Mercédès wished for a thousand things, but still she never really wanted any. So long as the nets were good, they caught fish; and so long as they sold their fish, they were able to buy twine for new nets. And then, shut out from friendship, having but one affection, which could not be mixed up with her ordinary pursuits, she thought of herself—of no one but herself. Upon the little she earned she lived as well as she could; now there were two to be supported, and nothing to live upon.

Winter approached. Mercédès had no fire in that cold and naked room—she, who was accustomed to stoves which heated the house from the hall to the boudoir; she had not even one little flower—she whose

apartment had been a conservatory of costly exotics. But she had her son. Hitherto the excitement of fulfilling a duty had sustained them. Excitement, like enthusiasm, sometimes renders us unconscious to the things of earth. But the excitement had calmed down, and they felt themselves obliged to descend from dreams to reality; after having exhausted the ideal, they found they must talk of the actual.

'Mother,' exclaimed Albert, just as Madame Danglars was descending the stairs, 'let us reckon our riches, if you please; I want capital to build my plans upon.'

'Capital—nothing!' replied Mercédès with a mournful smile.

'No, mother,—capital 3,000 francs. And I have an idea of our leading a delightful life upon this 3,000 francs.'

'Child!' sighed Mercédès.

'Alas, dear mother,' said the young man, 'I have unhappily spent too much of your money not to know the value of it. These 3,000 francs are enormous, and I intend building upon this foundation a miraculous certainty for the future.'

'You say this, my dear boy; but do you think we ought to accept these 3,000 francs?' said Mercédès, coloring.

'I think so,' answered Albert in a firm tone. 'We will accept them the more readily, since we have them not here; you know they are buried in the garden of the little house in the Allées de Meilhan, at Marseilles. With 200 francs we can reach Marseilles.'

'With 200 francs?—are you sure, Albert?'

'Oh, as for that, I have made inquiries respecting the diligences and steamboats, and my calculations are made. You will take your place in the *coupé* to Châlons. You see, mother, I treat you handsomely for thirty-five francs.'

Albert then took a pen, and wrote:

	Frs.
Coupé, thirty-five francs	35.
From Châlons to Lyons you will go on by the steamboat	6.
From Lyons to Avignon (still by steamboat)	16.
From Avignon to Marseilles, seven francs	7.
Expenses on the road, about fifty francs	50.
Total	114 frs.

'Leave them,' said Monte Cristo. Then walking towards Morrel, he took his hand; the tumultuous agitation of the young man was succeeded by a profound stupor. Julie returned, holding the silken purse in her hands, while tears of joy rolled down her cheeks, like dewdrops on the rose.

'Here is the relic,' she said; 'do not think it will be less dear to us now we are acquainted with our benefactor!'

'My child,' said Monte Cristo, coloring, 'allow me to take back that purse? Since you now know my face, I wish to be remembered alone through the affection I hope you will grant me.'

'Oh,' said Julie, pressing the purse to her heart, 'no, no, I beseech you do not take it, for some unhappy day you will leave us, will you not?'

'You have guessed rightly, madame,' replied Monte Cristo, smiling; 'in a week I shall have left this country, where so many persons who merit the vengeance of Heaven lived happily, while my father perished of hunger and grief.'

While announcing his departure, the count fixed his eyes on Morrel, and remarked that the words, 'I shall have left this country,' had failed to rouse him from his lethargy. He then saw that he must make another struggle against the grief of his friend, and taking the hands of Emmanuel and Julie, which he pressed within his own, he said with the mild authority of a father:

'My kind friends, leave me alone with Maximilian.'

Julie saw the means offered of carrying off her precious relic, which Monte Cristo had forgotten. She drew her husband to the door. 'Let us leave them,' she said.

The count was alone with Morrel, who remained motionless as a statue.

'Come,' said Monte-Cristo, touching his shoulder with his finger, 'are you a man again, Maximilian?'

'Yes; for I begin to suffer again.'

The count frowned, apparently in gloomy hesitation.

'Maximilian, Maximilian,' he said, 'the ideas you yield to are unworthy of a Christian.'

'Oh, do not fear, my friend,' said Morrel, raising his head, and smiling with a sweet expression on the count; 'I shall no longer attempt my life.'

'Then we are to have no more pistols—no more despair?'