'*Ma foi*,' said Danglars, 'it would not be a bad speculation, I fancy, and you know I am a speculator.'

'You are not thinking of Mademoiselle Danglars, I hope; you would not like poor Andrea to have his throat cut by Albert?'

'Albert,' repeated Danglars, shrugging his shoulders; 'ah, well; he would care very little about it, I think.'

'But he is betrothed to your daughter, I believe?'

'Well, M. de Morcerf and I have talked about this marriage, but Madame de Morcerf and Albert— '

'You do not mean to say that it would not be a good match?'

'Indeed, I imagine that Mademoiselle Danglars is as good as M. de Morcerf.'

'Mademoiselle Danglars' fortune will be great, no doubt, especially if the telegraph should not make any more mistakes.'

'Oh, I do not mean her fortune only; but tell me— '

'What?'

'Why did you not invite M. and Madame de Morcerf to your dinner?'

'I did so, but he excused himself on account of Madame de Morcerf being obliged to go to Dieppe for the benefit of sea air.'

'Yes, yes,' said Danglars, laughing, 'it would do her a great deal of good.'

'Why so?'

'Because it is the air she always breathed in her youth.'

Monte Cristo took no notice of this ill-natured remark.

'But still, if Albert be not so rich as Mademoiselle Danglars,' said the count, 'you must allow that he has a fine name?'

'So he has; but I like mine as well.'

'Certainly; your name is popular, and does honour to the title they have adorned it with; but you are too intelligent not to know that according to a prejudice, too firmly rooted to be exterminated, a nobility which dates back five centuries is worth more than one that can only reckon twenty years.'

'And for this very reason,' said Danglars with a smile, which he tried to make sardonic, 'I prefer M. Andrea Cavalcanti to M. Albert de Morcerf.'

'Still, I should not think the Morcerfs would yield to the Cavalcanti?'

'The Morcerfs!—Stay, my dear count,' said Danglars; 'you are a man of the world, are you not?'

'I think so.'

'And you understand heraldry?'

'A little.'

'Well, look at my coat-of-arms, it is worth more than Morcerf's.'

'Why so?'

'Because, though I am not a baron by birth, my real name is, at least, Danglars.'

'Well, what then?'

'While his name is not Morcerf.'

'How?—not Morcerf?'

'Not the least in the world.'

'Go on.'

'I have been made a baron, so that I actually am one; he made himself a count, so that he is not one at all.'

'Impossible!'

'Listen my dear count; M. de Morcerf has been my friend, or rather my acquaintance, during the last thirty years. You know I have made the most of my arms, though I never forgot my origin.'

'A proof of great humility or great pride,' said Monte Cristo.

'Well, when I was a clerk, Morcerf was a mere fisherman.'

'And then he was called— '

'Fernand.'

'Only Fernand?'

'Fernand Mondego.'

'You are sure?'

'*Pardieu!* I have bought enough fish of him to know his name.'

'Then, why did you think of giving your daughter to him?'

'Because Fernand and Danglars, being both parvenus, both having become noble, both rich, are about equal in worth, excepting that there have been certain things mentioned of him that were never said of me.'

'What?'

'Oh, nothing!'

'Ah, yes; what you tell me recalls to mind something about the name of Fernand Mondego. I have heard that name in Greece.'

'In conjunction with the affairs of Ali Pasha?'

'Exactly so.'

'This is the mystery,' said Danglars. 'I acknowledge I would have given anything to find it out.'

'It would be very easy if you much wished it?'

'How so?'

'Probably you have some correspondent in Greece?'

'I should think so.'

'At Yanina?'

'Everywhere.'

'Well, write to your correspondent in Yanina, and ask him what part was played by a Frenchman named Fernand Mondego in the catastrophe of Ali Tepelini.'

'You are right,' exclaimed Danglars, rising quickly, 'I will write today.'

'Do so.'

'I will.'

'And if you should hear of anything very scandalous— '

'I will communicate it to you.'

'You will oblige me.'

Danglars rushed out of the room, and made but one leap into his *coupé*.

'Certainly,' said Danglars, 'and this is further supported by the fact of their not possessing an inch of land.'

'Very little, at least; I know of none which Cavalcanti possesses, excepting his palace in Lucca.'

'Ah, he has a palace?' said Danglars, laughing; 'come, that is something.'

'Yes; and more than that, he lets it to the Minister of Finance while he lives in a simple house. Oh, as I told you before, I think the old fellow is very close.'

'Come, you do not flatter him.'

'I scarcely know him; I think I have seen him three times in my life; all I know relating to him is through Busoni and himself. He was telling me this morning that, tired of letting his property lie dormant in Italy, which is a dead nation, he wished to find a method, either in France or England, of multiplying his millions, but remember, that though I place great confidence in Busoni, I am not responsible for this.'

'Never mind; accept my thanks for the client you have sent me. It is a fine name to inscribe on my ledgers, and my cashier was quite proud of it when I explained to him who the Cavalcanti were. By the way, this is merely a simple question, when this sort of people marry their sons, do they give them any fortune?'

'Oh, that depends upon circumstances. I know an Italian prince, rich as a gold mine, one of the noblest families in Tuscany, who, when his sons married according to his wish, gave them millions; and when they married against his consent, merely allowed them thirty crowns a month. Should Andrea marry according to his father's views, he will, perhaps, give him one, two, or three millions. For example, supposing it were the daughter of a banker, he might take an interest in the house of the father-in-law of his son; then again, if he disliked his choice, the major takes the key, double-locks his coffer, and Master Andrea would be obliged to live like the sons of a Parisian family, by shuffling cards or rattling the dice.'

'Ah, that boy will find out some Bavarian or Peruvian princess; he will want a crown, an El Dorado, and Potosí.'

'No; these grand lords on the other side of the Alps frequently marry into plain families; like Jupiter, they like to cross the race. But do you wish to marry Andrea, my dear M. Danglars, that you are asking so many questions?'

'And with all this, how unassuming he is! I should never have taken him for anything more than a mere major.'

'And you would have flattered him, for certainly, as you say, he has no manner. The first time I saw him he appeared to me like an old lieutenant who had grown mouldy under his epaulets. But all the Italians are the same; they are like old Jews when they are not glittering in Oriental splendour.'

'The young man is better,' said Danglars.

'Yes; a little nervous, perhaps, but, upon the whole, he appeared tolerable. I was uneasy about him.'

'Why?'

'Because you met him at my house, just after his introduction into the world, as they told me. He has been travelling with a very severe tutor, and had never been to Paris before.'

'Ah, I believe noblemen marry amongst themselves, do they not?' asked Danglars carelessly; 'they like to unite their fortunes.'

'It is usual, certainly; but Cavalcanti is an original who does nothing like other people. I cannot help thinking that he has brought his son to France to choose a wife.'

'Do you think so?'

'I am sure of it.'

'And you have heard his fortune mentioned?'

'Nothing else was talked of; only some said he was worth millions, and others that he did not possess a farthing.'

'And what is your opinion?'

'I ought not to influence you, because it is only my own personal impression.'

'Well, and it is that— '

'My opinion is, that all these old *podestàs*, these ancient *condottieri*,—for the Cavalcanti have commanded armies and governed provinces,—my opinion, I say, is, that they have buried their millions in corners, the secret of which they have transmitted only to their eldest sons, who have done the same from generation to generation; and the proof of this is seen in their yellow and dry appearance, like the florins of the republic, which, from being constantly gazed upon, have become reflected in them.'

Chapter LXVII

The Office of the King's Attorney

LET us leave the banker driving his horses at their fullest speed, and follow Madame Danglars in her morning excursion. We have said that at half-past twelve o'clock Madame Danglars had ordered her horses, and had left home in the carriage. She directed her course towards the Faubourg Saint Germain, went down the Rue Mazarine, and stopped at the Passage du Pont-Neuf. She descended, and went through the passage. She was very plainly dressed, as would be the case with a woman of taste walking in the morning. At the Rue Guénégaud she called a cab, and directed the driver to go to the Rue de Harlay. As soon as she was seated in the vehicle, she drew from her pocket a very thick black veil, which she tied on to her straw bonnet. She then replaced the bonnet, and saw with pleasure, in a little pocket-mirror, that her white complexion and brilliant eyes were alone visible. The cab crossed the Pont-Neuf and entered the Rue de Harlay by the Place Dauphine; the driver was paid as the door opened, and stepping lightly up the stairs Madame Danglars soon reached the Salle des Pas-Perdus.

There was a great deal going on that morning, and many business-like persons at the Palais; business-like persons pay very little attention to women, and Madame Danglars crossed the hall without exciting any more attention than any other woman calling upon her lawyer.

There was a great press of people in M. de Villefort's antechamber, but Madame Danglars had no occasion even to pronounce her name. The instant she appeared the door-keeper rose, came to her, and asked her whether she was not the person with whom the procureur had made an appointment; and on her affirmative answer being given, he conducted her by a private passage to M. de Villefort's office.

The magistrate was seated in an armchair, writing, with his back towards the door; he did not move as he heard it open, and the door-keeper pronounce the words, 'Walk in, madame,' and then reclose it; but no sooner had the man's footsteps ceased, than he started up, drew the bolts, closed the curtains, and examined every corner of the room. Then, when he had assured himself that he could neither be seen nor heard, and was consequently relieved of doubts, he said:

'Thanks, madame,—thanks for your punctuality;' and he offered a chair to Madame Danglars, which she accepted, for her heart beat so violently that she felt nearly suffocated. 'It is a long time, madame,' said the procureur, describing a half-circle with his chair, so as to place himself exactly opposite to Madame Danglars,—'it is a long time since I had the pleasure of speaking alone with you, and I regret that we have only now met to enter upon a painful conversation.'

'Nevertheless, sir, you see I have answered your first appeal, although certainly the conversation must be much more painful for me than for you.' Villefort smiled bitterly.

'It is true, then,' he said, rather uttering his thoughts aloud than addressing his companion,—'it is true, then, that all our actions leave their traces—some sad, others bright—on our paths; it is true that every step in our lives is like the course of an insect on the sands;—it leaves its track! Alas, to many the path is traced by tears.'

'Sir,' said Madame Danglars, 'you can feel for my emotion, can you not? Spare me, then, I beseech you. When I look at this room,—whence so many guilty creatures have departed, trembling and ashamed, when I look at that chair before which I now sit trembling and ashamed,—oh, it requires all my reason to convince me that I am not a very guilty woman and you a menacing judge.'

Villefort dropped his head and sighed.

'And I,' he said, 'I feel that my place is not in the judge's seat, but on the prisoner's bench.'

'You?' said Madame Danglars.

'Yes, I.'

'I think, sir, you exaggerate your situation,' said Madame Danglars, whose beautiful eyes sparkled for a moment. 'The paths of which you were just

'Or, that the sea should become dry, as in the days of Pharaoh, and even then my vessels would become caravans.'

'So much the better. I congratulate you, my dear M. Danglars,' said Monte Cristo; 'I see I was deceived, and that you belong to the class of second-rate fortunes.'

'I think I may aspire to that honour,' said Danglars with a smile, which reminded Monte Cristo of the sickly moons which bad artists are so fond of daubing into their pictures of ruins. 'But, while we are speaking of business,' Danglars added, pleased to find an opportunity of changing the subject, 'tell me what I am to do for M. Cavalcanti.'

'Give him money, if he is recommended to you, and the recommendation seems good.'

'Excellent; he presented himself this morning with a bond of 40,000 francs, payable at sight, on you, signed by Busoni, and returned by you to me, with your endorsement—of course, I immediately counted him over the forty bank-notes.'

Monte Cristo nodded his head in token of assent.

'But that is not all,' continued Danglars; 'he has opened an account with my house for his son.'

'May I ask how much he allows the young man?'

'Five thousand francs per month.'

'Sixty thousand francs per year. I thought I was right in believing that Cavalcanti to be a stingy fellow. How can a young man live upon 5,000 francs a month?'

'But you understand that if the young man should want a few thousands more— '

'Do not advance it; the father will never repay it. You do not know these ultramontane millionaires; they are regular misers. And by whom were they recommended to you?'

'Oh, by the house of Fenzi, one of the best in Florence.'

'I do not mean to say you will lose, but, nevertheless, mind you hold to the terms of the agreement.'

'Would you not trust the Cavalcanti?'

'I? oh, I would advance ten millions on his signature. I was only speaking in reference to the second-rate fortunes we were mentioning just now.'

'Confound it, yes!' replied Danglars.

'The result, then, of six more such months as this would be to reduce the third-rate house to despair.'

'Oh,' said Danglars, becoming very pale, how you are running on!"

'Let us imagine seven such months,' continued Monte Cristo, in the same tone. 'Tell me, have you ever thought that seven times 1,700,000 francs make nearly twelve millions? No, you have not;—well, you are right, for if you indulged in such reflections, you would never risk your principal, which is to the speculator what the skin is to civilized man. We have our clothes, some more splendid than others,—this is our credit; but when a man dies he has only his skin; in the same way, on retiring from business, you have nothing but your real principal of about five or six millions, at the most; for third-rate fortunes are never more than a fourth of what they appear to be, like the locomotive on a railway, the size of which is magnified by the smoke and steam surrounding it. Well, out of the five or six millions which form your real capital, you have just lost nearly two millions, which must, of course, in the same degree diminish your credit and fictitious fortune; to follow out my simile, your skin has been opened by bleeding, and this if repeated three or four times will cause death—so pay attention to it, my dear Monsieur Danglars. Do you want money? Do you wish me to lend you some?'

'What a bad calculator you are!' exclaimed Danglars, calling to his assistance all his philosophy and dissimulation. 'I have made money at the same time by speculations which have succeeded. I have made up the loss of blood by nutrition. I lost a battle in Spain, I have been defeated in Trieste, but my naval army in India will have taken some galleons, and my Mexican pioneers will have discovered some mine.'

'Very good, very good! But the wound remains and will reopen at the first loss.'

'No, for I am only embarked in certainties,' replied Danglars, with the air of a mountebank sounding his own praises; 'to involve me, three governments must crumble to dust.'

'Well, such things have been.'

'That there should be a famine!'

'Recollect the seven fat and the seven lean kine.'

speaking have been traced by all young men of ardent imaginations. Besides the pleasure, there is always remorse from the indulgence of our passions, and, after all, what have you men to fear from all this? the world excuses, and notoriety ennobles you.'

'Madame,' replied Villefort, 'you know that I am no hypocrite, or, at least, that I never deceive without a reason. If my brow be severe, it is because many misfortunes have clouded it; if my heart be petrified, it is that it might sustain the blows it has received. I was not so in my youth, I was not so on the night of the betrothal, when we were all seated around a table in the Rue du Cours at Marseilles. But since then everything has changed in and about me; I am accustomed to brave difficulties, and, in the conflict to crush those who, by their own free will, or by chance, voluntarily or involuntarily, interfere with me in my career. It is generally the case that what we most ardently desire is as ardently withheld from us by those who wish to obtain it, or from whom we attempt to snatch it. Thus, the greater number of a man's errors come before him disguised under the specious form of necessity; then, after error has been committed in a moment of excitement, of delirium, or of fear, we see that we might have avoided and escaped it. The means we might have used, which we in our blindness could not see, then seem simple and easy, and we say, "Why did I not do this, instead of that?' Women, on the contrary, are rarely tormented with remorse; for the decision does not come from you,—your misfortunes are generally imposed upon you, and your faults the results of others" crimes.'

'In any case, sir, you will allow,' replied Madame Danglars, 'that, even if the fault were alone mine, I last night received a severe punishment for it.'

'Poor thing,' said Villefort, pressing her hand, 'it was too severe for your strength, for you were twice overwhelmed, and yet— '

'Well?'

'Well, I must tell you. Collect all your courage, for you have not yet heard all.'

'Ah,' exclaimed Madame Danglars, alarmed, 'what is there more to hear?'

'You only look back to the past, and it is, indeed, bad enough. Well, picture to yourself a future more gloomy still—certainly frightful, perhaps sanguinary!'

The baroness knew how calm Villefort naturally was, and his present excitement frightened her so much that she opened her mouth to scream, but the sound died in her throat.

'How has this terrible past been recalled?' cried Villefort; 'how is it that it has escaped from the depths of the tomb and the recesses of our hearts, where it was buried, to visit us now, like a phantom, whitening our cheeks and flushing our brows with shame?'

'Alas,' said Hermine, 'doubtless it is chance.'

'Chance?' replied Villefort; 'No, no, madame, there is no such thing as chance.'

'Oh, yes; has not a fatal chance revealed all this? Was it not by chance the Count of Monte Cristo bought that house? Was it not by chance he caused the earth to be dug up? Is it not by chance that the unfortunate child was disinterred under the trees?—that poor innocent offspring of mine, which I never even kissed, but for whom I wept many, many tears. Ah, my heart clung to the count when he mentioned the dear spoil found beneath the flowers.'

'Well, no, madame,—this is the terrible news I have to tell you,' said Villefort in a hollow voice—'no, nothing was found beneath the flowers; there was no child disinterred—no. You must not weep, no, you must not groan, you must tremble!'

'What can you mean?' asked Madame Danglars, shuddering.

'I mean that M. de Monte Cristo, digging underneath these trees, found neither skeleton nor chest, because neither of them was there!'

'Neither of them there?' repeated Madame Danglars, her staring, wide-open eyes expressing her alarm. 'Neither of them there!' she again said, as though striving to impress herself with the meaning of the words which escaped her.

'No,' said Villefort, burying his face in his hands, 'no, a hundred times no!'

'Then you did not bury the poor child there, sir? Why did you deceive me? Where did you place it? tell me—where?'

'There! But listen to me—listen—and you will pity me who has for twenty years alone borne the heavy burden of grief I am about to reveal, without casting the least portion upon you.'

'Oh, you frighten me! But speak; I will listen.'

'You recollect that sad night, when you were half-expiring on that bed in the red damask room, while I, scarcely less agitated than you, awaited your delivery.

out. But do you mean to say you have not heard of this? Why, the thing has made a tremendous noise.'

'Yes, I heard it spoken of, but I did not know the details, and then no one can be more ignorant than I am of the affairs in the Bourse.'

'Then you do not speculate?'

'I?—How could I speculate when I already have so much trouble in regulating my income? I should be obliged, besides my steward, to keep a clerk and a boy. But touching these Spanish affairs, I think that the baroness did not dream the whole of the Don Carlos matter. The papers said something about it, did they not?'

'Then you believe the papers?'

'I?—not the least in the world; only I fancied that the honest *Messager* was an exception to the rule, and that it only announced telegraphic despatches.'

'Well, that's what puzzles me,' replied Danglars; 'the news of the return of Don Carlos was brought by telegraph.'

'So that,' said Monte Cristo, 'you have lost nearly 1,700,000 francs this month.'

'Not nearly, indeed; that is exactly my loss.'

'*Diable!*' said Monte Cristo compassionately, 'it is a hard blow for a third-rate fortune.'

'Third-rate,' said Danglars, rather humble, 'what do you mean by that?'

'Certainly,' continued Monte Cristo, 'I make three assortments in fortune—first-rate, second-rate, and third-rate fortunes. I call those first-rate which are composed of treasures one possesses under one's hand, such as mines, lands, and funded property, in such states as France, Austria, and England, provided these treasures and property form a total of about a hundred millions; I call those second-rate fortunes, that are gained by manufacturing enterprises, joint-stock companies, viceroyalties, and principalities, not drawing more than 1,500,000 francs, the whole forming a capital of about fifty millions; finally, I call those third-rate fortunes, which are composed of a fluctuating capital, dependent upon the will of others, or upon chances which a bankruptcy involves or a false telegram shakes, such as banks, speculations of the day—in fact, all operations under the influence of greater or less mischances, the whole bringing in a real or fictitious capital of about fifteen millions. I think this is about your position, is it not?'

'Pardon me,' said he, 'my dear baron, but one of my friends, the Abbé Busoni, whom you perhaps saw pass by, has just arrived in Paris; not having seen him for a long time, I could not make up my mind to leave him sooner, so I hope this will be sufficient reason for my having made you wait.'

'Nay,' said Danglars, 'it is my fault; I have chosen my visit at a wrong time, and will retire.'

'Not at all; on the contrary, be seated; but what is the matter with you? You look careworn; really, you alarm me. Melancholy in a capitalist, like the appearance of a comet, presages some misfortune to the world.'

'I have been in ill-luck for several days,' said Danglars, 'and I have heard nothing but bad news.'

'Ah, indeed?' said Monte Cristo. 'Have you had another fall at the Bourse?'

'No; I am safe for a few days at least. I am only annoyed about a bankrupt of Trieste.'

'Really? Does it happen to be Jacopo Manfredi?'

'Exactly so. Imagine a man who has transacted business with me for I don't know how long, to the amount of 800,000 or 900,000 francs during the year. Never a mistake or delay—a fellow who paid like a prince. Well, I was a million in advance with him, and now my fine Jacopo Manfredi suspends payment!'

'Really?'

'It is an unheard-of fatality. I draw upon him for 600,000 francs, my bills are returned unpaid, and, more than that, I hold bills of exchange signed by him to the value of 400,000 francs, payable at his correspondent's in Paris at the end of this month. Today is the 30th. I present them; but my correspondent has disappeared. This, with my Spanish affairs, made a pretty end to the month.'

'Then you really lost by that affair in Spain?'

'Yes; only 700,000 francs out of my cash box—nothing more!'

'Why, how could you make such a mistake—such an old stager?'

'Oh, it is all my wife's fault. She dreamed Don Carlos had returned to Spain; she believes in dreams. It is magnetism, she says, and when she dreams a thing it is sure to happen, she assures me. On this conviction I allow her to speculate, she having her bank and her stockbroker; she speculated and lost. It is true she speculates with her own money, not mine; nevertheless, you can understand that when 700,000 francs leave the wife's pocket, the husband always finds it

The child was born, was given to me—motionless, breathless, voiceless; we thought it dead.'

Madame Danglars moved rapidly, as though she would spring from her chair, but Villefort stopped, and clasped his hands as if to implore her attention.

'We thought it dead,' he repeated; 'I placed it in the chest, which was to take the place of a coffin; I descended to the garden, I dug a hole, and then flung it down in haste. Scarcely had I covered it with earth, when the arm of the Corsican was stretched towards me; I saw a shadow rise, and, at the same time, a flash of light. I felt pain; I wished to cry out, but an icy shiver ran through my veins and stifled my voice; I fell lifeless, and fancied myself killed. Never shall I forget your sublime courage, when, having returned to consciousness, I dragged myself to the foot of the stairs, and you, almost dying yourself, came to meet me. We were obliged to keep silent upon the dreadful catastrophe. You had the fortitude to regain the house, assisted by your nurse. A duel was the pretext for my wound. Though we scarcely expected it, our secret remained in our own keeping alone. I was taken to Versailles; for three months I struggled with death; at last, as I seemed to cling to life, I was ordered to the South. Four men carried me from Paris to Châlons, walking six leagues a day; Madame de Villefort followed the litter in her carriage. At Châlons I was put upon the Saône, thence I passed on to the Rhône, whence I descended, merely with the current, to Arles; at Arles I was again placed on my litter, and continued my journey to Marseilles. My recovery lasted six months. I never heard you mentioned, and I did not dare inquire for you. When I returned to Paris, I learned that you, the widow of M. de Nargonne, had married M. Danglars.

What was the subject of my thoughts from the time consciousness returned to me? Always the same—always the child's corpse, coming every night in my dreams, rising from the earth, and hovering over the grave with menacing look and gesture. I inquired immediately on my return to Paris; the house had not been inhabited since we left it, but it had just been let for nine years. I found the tenant. I pretended that I disliked the idea that a house belonging to my wife's father and mother should pass into the hands of strangers. I offered to pay them for cancelling the lease; they demanded 6,000 francs. I would have given 10,000—I would have given 20,000. I had the money with me; I made

the tenant sign the deed of resilition, and when I had obtained what I so much wanted, I galloped to Auteuil. No one had entered the house since I had left it.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon; I ascended into the red room, and waited for night. There all the thoughts which had disturbed me during my year of constant agony came back with double force. The Corsican, who had declared the vendetta against me, who had followed me from Nîmes to Paris, who had hid himself in the garden, who had struck me, had seen me dig the grave, had seen me inter the child,—he might become acquainted with your person,—nay, he might even then have known it. Would he not one day make you pay for keeping this terrible secret? Would it not be a sweet revenge for him when he found that I had not died from the blow of his dagger? It was therefore necessary, before everything else, and at all risks, that I should cause all traces of the past to disappear—that I should destroy every material vestige; too much reality would always remain in my recollection. It was for this I had annulled the lease—it was for this I had come—it was for this I was waiting.

Night arrived; I allowed it to become quite dark. I was without a light in that room; when the wind shook all the doors, behind which I continually expected to see some spy concealed, I trembled. I seemed everywhere to hear your moans behind me in the bed, and I dared not turn around. My heart beat so violently that I feared my wound would open. At length, one by one, all the noises in the neighbourhood ceased. I understood that I had nothing to fear, that I should neither be seen nor heard, so I decided upon descending to the garden.

Listen, Hermine; I consider myself as brave as most men, but when I drew from my breast the little key of the staircase, which I had found in my coat—that little key we both used to cherish so much, which you wished to have fastened to a golden ring—when I opened the door, and saw the pale moon shedding a long stream of white light on the spiral staircase like a spectre, I leaned against the wall, and nearly shrieked. I seemed to be going mad. At last I mastered my agitation. I descended the staircase step by step; the only thing I could not conquer was a strange trembling in my knees. I grasped the railings; if I had relaxed my hold for a moment, I should have fallen. I reached the lower door. Outside this door a spade was placed against the wall; I took it,

Chapter LXVI

Matrimonial Projects

The day following this scene, at the hour Debray usually chose to pay a visit to Madame Danglars on his way to his office, his *coupé* did not appear. At this time, that is, about half-past twelve, Madame Danglars ordered her carriage, and went out. Danglars, hidden behind a curtain, watched the departure he had been waiting for. He gave orders that he should be informed as soon as Madame Danglars appeared; but at two o'clock she had not returned. He then called for his horses, drove to the Chamber, and inscribed his name to speak against the budget. From twelve to two o'clock Danglars had remained in his study, unsealing his dispatches, and becoming more and more sad every minute, heaping figure upon figure, and receiving, among other visits, one from Major Cavalcanti, who, as stiff and exact as ever, presented himself precisely at the hour named the night before, to terminate his business with the banker.

On leaving the Chamber, Danglars, who had shown violent marks of agitation during the sitting, and been more bitter than ever against the ministry, re-entered his carriage, and told the coachman to drive to the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, № 30.

Monte Cristo was at home; only he was engaged with someone and begged Danglars to wait for a moment in the drawing-room. While the banker was waiting in the anteroom, the door opened, and a man dressed as an abbé and doubtless more familiar with the house than he was, came in and instead of waiting, merely bowed, passed on to the farther apartments, and disappeared.

A minute after the door by which the priest had entered reopened, and Monte Cristo appeared.