to withdraw the honour of Danglars from ignominious association with the disgraced young man they had presented to the world as their son-in-law. And since Villefort, the friend of Danglars, had acted in this way, no one could suppose that he had been previously acquainted with, or had lent himself to, any of Andrea's intrigues. Villefort's conduct, therefore, upon reflection, appeared to the baroness as if shaped for their mutual advantage. But the inflexibility of the procureur should stop there; she would see him the next day, and if she could not make him fail in his duties as a magistrate, she would, at least, obtain all the indulgence he could allow. She would invoke the past, recall old recollections; she would supplicate him by the remembrance of guilty, yet happy days. M. de Villefort would stifle the affair; he had only to turn his eyes on one side, and allow Andrea to fly, and follow up the crime under that shadow of guilt called contempt of court. And after this reasoning she slept easily.

At nine o'clock next morning she arose, and without ringing for her maid or giving the least sign of her activity, she dressed herself in the same simple style as on the previous night; then running downstairs, she left the hotel, walked to the Rue de Provence, called a cab, and drove to M. de Villefort's house.

For the last month this wretched house had presented the gloomy appearance of a lazaretto infected with the plague. Some of the apartments were closed within and without; the shutters were only opened to admit a minute's air, showing the scared face of a footman, and immediately afterwards the window would be closed, like a gravestone falling on a sepulchre, and the neighbours would say to each other in a low voice, 'Will there be another funeral today at the procureur's house?'

Madame Danglars involuntarily shuddered at the desolate aspect of the mansion; descending from the cab, she approached the door with trembling knees, and rang the bell. Three times did the bell ring with a dull, heavy sound, seeming to participate, in the general sadness, before the concierge appeared and peeped through the door, which he opened just wide enough to allow his words to be heard. He saw a lady, a fashionable, elegantly dressed lady, and yet the door remained almost closed.

'Do you intend opening the door?' said the baroness.

'First, madame, who are you?'

'Who am I? You know me well enough.'

'We no longer know anyone, madame.'

'You must be mad, my friend,' said the baroness.

'Where do you come from?'

'Oh, this is too much!'

'Madame, these are my orders; excuse me. Your name?'

'The baroness Danglars; you have seen me twenty times.'

'Possibly, madame. And now, what do you want?'

'Oh, how extraordinary! I shall complain to M. de Villefort of the impertinence of his servants.'

'Madame, this is precaution, not impertinence; no one enters here without an order from M. d'Avrigny, or without speaking to the procureur.'

'Well, I have business with the procureur.'

'Is it pressing business?'

'You can imagine so, since I have not even brought my carriage out yet. But enough of this—here is my card, take it to your master.'

'Madame will await my return?'

'Yes; go.'

The concierge closed the door, leaving Madame Danglars in the street. She had not long to wait; directly afterwards the door was opened wide enough to admit her, and when she had passed through, it was again shut. Without losing sight of her for an instant, the concierge took a whistle from his pocket as soon as they entered the court, and blew it. The valet de chambre appeared on the door-steps.

'You will excuse this poor fellow, madame,' he said, as he preceded the baroness, 'but his orders are precise, and M. de Villefort begged me to tell you that he could not act otherwise.'

In the court showing his merchandise, was a tradesman who had been admitted with the same precautions. The baroness ascended the steps; she felt herself strongly infected with the sadness which seemed to magnify her own, and still guided by the valet de chambre, who never lost sight of her for an instant, she was introduced to the magistrate's study.

Preoccupied as Madame Danglars had been with the object of her visit, the treatment she had received from these underlings appeared to her so insulting, that she began by complaining of it. But Villefort, raising his

head, bowed down by grief, looked up at her with so sad a smile that her complaints died upon her lips.

'Forgive my servants,' he said, 'for a terror I cannot blame them for; from being suspected they have become suspicious.'

Madame Danglars had often heard of the terror to which the magistrate alluded, but without the evidence of her own eyesight she could never have believed that the sentiment had been carried so far.

'You too, then, are unhappy?' she said.

'Yes, madame,' replied the magistrate.

'Then you pity me!'

'Sincerely, madame.'

'And you understand what brings me here?'

'You wish to speak to me about the circumstance which has just happened?'

'Yes, sir,—a fearful misfortune.'

'You mean a mischance.'

'A mischance?' repeated the baroness.

'Alas, madame,' said the procureur with his imperturbable calmness of manner, 'I consider those alone misfortunes which are irreparable.'

'And do you suppose this will be forgotten?'

'Everything will be forgotten, madame,' said Villefort. 'Your daughter will be married tomorrow, if not today—in a week, if not tomorrow; and I do not think you can regret the intended husband of your daughter.'

Madame Danglars gazed on Villefort, stupefied to find him so almost insultingly calm. 'Am I come to a friend?' she asked in a tone full of mournful dignity.

'You know that you are, madame,' said Villefort, whose pale cheeks became slightly flushed as he gave her the assurance. And truly this assurance carried him back to different events from those now occupying the baroness and him.

'Well, then, be more affectionate, my dear Villefort,' said the baroness. 'Speak to me not as a magistrate, but as a friend; and when I am in bitter anguish of spirit, do not tell me that I ought to be gay.' Villefort bowed.

'When I hear misfortunes named, madame,' he said, 'I have within the last few months contracted the bad habit of thinking of my own, and then I cannot help drawing up an egotistical parallel in my mind. That is the reason that by the side of my misfortunes yours appear to me

the evening, and had gone to bed and to sleep. She called the maid and questioned her.

'Mademoiselle Eugénie,' said the maid, 'retired to her apartment with Mademoiselle d'Armilly; they then took tea together, after which they desired me to leave, saying that they needed me no longer.'

Since then the maid had been below, and like everyone else she thought the young ladies were in their own room; Madame Danglars, therefore, went to bed without a shadow of suspicion, and began to muse over the recent events. In proportion as her memory became clearer, the occurrences of the evening were revealed in their true light; what she had taken for confusion was a tumult; what she had regarded as something distressing, was in reality a disgrace. And then the baroness remembered that she had felt no pity for poor Mercédès, who had been afflicted with as severe a blow through her husband and son.

'Eugénie,' she said to herself, 'is lost, and so are we. The affair, as it will be reported, will cover us with shame; for in a society such as ours satire inflicts a painful and incurable wound. How fortunate that Eugénie is possessed of that strange character which has so often made me tremble!'

And her glance was turned towards heaven, where a mysterious Providence disposes all things, and out of a fault, nay, even a vice, sometimes produces a blessing. And then her thoughts, cleaving through space like a bird in the air, rested on Cavalcanti. This Andrea was a wretch, a robber, an assassin, and yet his manners showed the effects of a sort of education, if not a complete one; he had been presented to the world with the appearance of an immense fortune, supported by an honourable name. How could she extricate herself from this labyrinth? To whom would she apply to help her out of this painful situation? Debray, to whom she had run, with the first instinct of a woman towards the man she loves, and who yet betrays her,—Debray could but give her advice, she must apply to someone more powerful than he.

The baroness then thought of M. de Villefort. It was M. de Villefort who had remorselessly brought misfortune into her family, as though they had been strangers. But, no; on reflection, the procureur was not a merciless man; and it was not the magistrate, slave to his duties, but the friend, the loyal friend, who roughly but firmly cut into the very core of the corruption; it was not the executioner, but the surgeon, who wished

others, and Madame Danglars, therefore, very much regretted that the marriage of Eugénie had not taken place, not only because the match was good, and likely to insure the happiness of her child, but because it would also set her at liberty. She ran therefore to Debray, who, after having, like the rest of Paris, witnessed the contract scene and the scandal attending it, had retired in haste to his club, where he was chatting with some friends upon the events which served as a subject of conversation for three-fourths of that city known as the capital of the world.

At the precise time when Madame Danglars, dressed in black and concealed in a long veil, was ascending the stairs leading to Debray's apartments, notwithstanding the assurances of the concierge that the young man was not at home, Debray was occupied in repelling the insinuations of a friend, who tried to persuade him that after the terrible scene which had just taken place he ought, as a friend of the family, to marry Mademoiselle Danglars and her two millions. Debray did not defend himself very warmly, for the idea had sometimes crossed his mind; still, when he recollected the independent, proud spirit of Eugénie, he positively rejected it as utterly impossible, though the same thought again continually recurred and found a resting-place in his heart. Tea, play, and the conversation, which had become interesting during the discussion of such serious affairs, lasted till one o'clock in the morning.

Meanwhile Madame Danglars, veiled and uneasy, awaited the return of Debray in the little green room, seated between two baskets of flowers, which she had that morning sent, and which, it must be confessed, Debray had himself arranged and watered with so much care that his absence was half excused in the eyes of the poor woman.

At twenty minutes to twelve, Madame Danglars, tired of waiting, returned home. Women of a certain grade are like prosperous grisettes in one respect, they seldom return home after twelve o'clock. The baroness returned to the hotel with as much caution as Eugénie used in leaving it; she ran lightly upstairs, and with an aching heart entered her apartment, contiguous, as we know, to that of Eugénie. She was fearful of exciting any remark, and believed firmly in her daughter's innocence and fidelity to the paternal roof. She listened at Eugénie's door, and hearing no sound tried to enter, but the bolts were in place. Madame Danglars then concluded that the young girl had been overcome with the terrible excitement of

mere mischances; that is why my dreadful position makes yours appear enviable. But this annoys you; let us change the subject. You were saying, madame— '

'I came to ask you, my friend,' said the baroness, 'what will be done with this impostor?'

'Impostor,' repeated Villefort; 'certainly, madame, you appear to extenuate some cases, and exaggerate others. Impostor, indeed!—M. Andrea Cavalcanti, or rather M. Benedetto, is nothing more nor less than an assassin!'

'Sir, I do not deny the justice of your correction, but the more severely you arm yourself against that unfortunate man, the more deeply will you strike our family. Come, forget him for a moment, and instead of pursuing him, let him go.'

'You are too late, madame; the orders are issued.'

'Well, should he be arrested—do they think they will arrest him?'

'I hope so.'

'If they should arrest him (I know that sometimes prisons afford means of escape), will you leave him in prison?'

The procureur shook his head.

'At least keep him there till my daughter be married.'

'Impossible, madame; justice has its formalities.'

'What, even for me?' said the baroness, half jesting, half in earnest.

'For all, even for myself among the rest,' replied Villefort. 'Ah!' exclaimed the baroness, without expressing the ideas which the exclamation betrayed. Villefort looked at her with that piercing glance which reads the secrets of the heart.

'Yes, I know what you mean,' he said; 'you refer to the terrible rumours spread abroad in the world, that the deaths which have kept me in mourning for the last three months, and from which Valentine has only escaped by a miracle, have not happened by natural means.'

'I was not thinking of that,' replied Madame Danglars quickly.

'Yes, you were thinking of it, and with justice. You could not help thinking of it, and saying to yourself, "you, who pursue crime so vindictively, answer now, why are there unpunished crimes in your dwelling?"' The baroness became pale. 'You were saying this, were you not?'

'Well, I own it.'

'I will answer you.'

Villefort drew his armchair nearer to Madame Danglars; then resting both hands upon his desk he said in a voice more hollow than usual:

'There are crimes which remain unpunished because the criminals are unknown, and we might strike the innocent instead of the guilty; but when the culprits are discovered' (Villefort here extended his hand toward a large crucifix placed opposite to his desk)—'when they are discovered, I swear to you, by all I hold most sacred, that whoever they may be they shall die. Now, after the oath I have just taken, and which I will keep, madame, dare you ask for mercy for that wretch!'

'But, sir, are you sure he is as guilty as they say?'

'Listen; this is his description: "Benedetto, condemned, at the age of sixteen, for five years to the galleys for forgery." He promised well, as you see—first a runaway, then an assassin.'

'And who is this wretch?'

'Who can tell?—a vagabond, a Corsican.'

'Has no one owned him?'

'No one; his parents are unknown.'

'But who was the man who brought him from Lucca?'

'Another rascal like himself, perhaps his accomplice.' The baroness clasped her hands.

'Villefort,' she exclaimed in her softest and most captivating manner.

'For Heaven's sake, madame,' said Villefort, with a firmness of expression not altogether free from harshness—'for Heaven's sake, do not ask pardon of me for a guilty wretch! What am I?—the law. Has the law any eyes to witness your grief? Has the law ears to be melted by your sweet voice? Has the law a memory for all those soft recollections you endeavour to recall? No, madame; the law has commanded, and when it commands it strikes. You will tell me that I am a living being, and not a code—a man, and not a volume. Look at me, madame—look around me. Has mankind treated me as a brother? Have men loved me? Have they spared me? Has anyone shown the mercy towards me that you now ask at my hands? No, madame, they struck me, always struck me!

Woman, siren that you are, do you persist in fixing on me that fascinating eye, which reminds me that I ought to blush? Well, be it so; let me blush for the faults you know, and perhaps—perhaps for even more than

Chapter XCIX

The Law

We have seen how quietly Mademoiselle Danglars and Mademoiselle d'Armilly accomplished their transformation and flight; the fact being that everyone was too much occupied in his or her own affairs to think of theirs.

We will leave the banker contemplating the enormous magnitude of his debt before the phantom of bankruptcy, and follow the baroness, who after being momentarily crushed under the weight of the blow which had struck her, had gone to seek her usual adviser, Lucien Debray. The baroness had looked forward to this marriage as a means of ridding her of a guardianship which, over a girl of Eugénie's character, could not fail to be rather a troublesome undertaking; for in the tacit relations which maintain the bond of family union, the mother, to maintain her ascendancy over her daughter, must never fail to be a model of wisdom and a type of perfection.

Now, Madame Danglars feared Eugénie's sagacity and the influence of Mademoiselle d'Armilly; she had frequently observed the contemptuous expression with which her daughter looked upon Debray,—an expression which seemed to imply that she understood all her mother's amorous and pecuniary relationships with the intimate secretary; moreover, she saw that Eugénie detested Debray, not only because he was a source of dissension and scandal under the paternal roof, but because she had at once classed him in that catalogue of bipeds whom Plato endeavors to withdraw from the appellation of men, and whom Diogenes designated as animals upon two legs without feathers.

Unfortunately, in this world of ours, each person views things through a certain medium, and so is prevented from seeing in the same light as

shame, and to the comments of the crowd. An hour after they stepped into their calash, both dressed in feminine attire. The gate of the hotel had been closed to screen them from sight, but they were forced, when the door was open, to pass through a throng of curious glances and whispering voices.

Eugénie closed her eyes; but though she could not see, she could hear, and the sneers of the crowd reached her in the carriage.

'Oh, why is not the world a wilderness?' she exclaimed, throwing herself into the arms of Mademoiselle d'Armilly, her eyes sparkling with the same kind of rage which made Nero wish that the Roman world had but one neck, that he might sever it at a single blow.

The next day they stopped at the Hôtel de Flandre, at Brussels. The same evening Andrea was incarcerated in the Conciergerie.

those! But having sinned myself,—it may be more deeply than others,—I never rest till I have torn the disguises from my fellow-creatures, and found out their weaknesses. I have always found them; and more,—I repeat it with joy, with triumph,—I have always found some proof of human perversity or error. Every criminal I condemn seems to me living evidence that I am not a hideous exception to the rest. Alas, alas, alas; all the world is wicked; let us therefore strike at wickedness!'

Villefort pronounced these last words with a feverish rage, which gave a ferocious eloquence to his words.

'But' said Madame Danglars, resolving to make a last effort, 'this young man, though a murderer, is an orphan, abandoned by everybody.'

'So much the worse, or rather, so much the better; it has been so ordained that he may have none to weep his fate.'

'But this is trampling on the weak, sir.'

'The weakness of a murderer!'

'His dishonor reflects upon us.'

'Is not death in my house?'

'Oh, sir,' exclaimed the baroness, 'you are without pity for others, well, then, I tell you they will have no mercy on you!'

'Be it so!' said Villefort, raising his arms to heaven with a threatening gesture.

'At least, delay the trial till the next assizes; we shall then have six months before us.'

'No, madame,' said Villefort; 'instructions have been given. There are yet five days left; five days are more than I require. Do you not think that I also long for forgetfulness? While working night and day, I sometimes lose all recollection of the past, and then I experience the same sort of happiness I can imagine the dead feel; still, it is better than suffering.'

'But, sir, he has fled; let him escape—inaction is a pardonable offence.'

'I tell you it is too late; early this morning the telegraph was employed, and at this very minute— '

'Sir,' said the valet de chambre, entering the room, 'a dragoon has brought this despatch from the Minister of the Interior.'

Villefort seized the letter, and hastily broke the seal. Madame Danglars trembled with fear; Villefort started with joy.

'Arrested!' he exclaimed; 'he was taken at Compiègne, and all is over.'

Madame Danglars rose from her seat, pale and cold.

'Adieu, sir,' she said.

'Adieu, madame,' replied the king's attorney, as in an almost joyful manner he conducted her to the door. Then, turning to his desk, he said, striking the letter with the back of his right hand:

'Come, I had a forgery, three robberies, and two cases of arson, I only wanted a murder, and here it is. It will be a splendid session!'

remained silent to this supplicating voice, repugnance and fear taking possession of their minds.

'Well, be it so,' at length said Eugénie; 'return by the same road you came, and we will say nothing about you, unhappy wretch.'

'Here he is, here he is!' cried a voice from the landing; 'here he is! I see him!'

The brigadier had put his eye to the keyhole, and had discovered Andrea in a posture of entreaty. A violent blow from the butt end of the musket burst open the lock, two more forced out the bolts, and the broken door fell in. Andrea ran to the other door, leading to the gallery, ready to rush out; but he was stopped short, and he stood with his body a little thrown back, pale, and with the useless knife in his clenched hand.

'Fly, then!' cried Mademoiselle d'Armilly, whose pity returned as her fears diminished; 'fly!'

'Or kill yourself!' said Eugénie (in a tone which a Vestal in the amphitheatre would have used, when urging the victorious gladiator to finish his vanquished adversary). Andrea shuddered, and looked on the young girl with an expression which proved how little he understood such ferocious honour.

'Kill myself?' he cried, throwing down his knife; 'why should I do so?'

'Why, you said,' answered Mademoiselle Danglars, 'that you would be condemned to die like the worst criminals.'

'Bah,' said Cavalcanti, crossing his arms, 'one has friends.'

The brigadier advanced to him, sword in hand.

'Come, come,' said Andrea, 'sheathe your sword, my fine fellow; there is no occasion to make such a fuss, since I give myself up;' and he held out his hands to be manacled.

The two girls looked with horror upon this shameful metamorphosis, the man of the world shaking off his covering and appearing as a galley-slave. Andrea turned towards them, and with an impertinent smile asked, 'Have you any message for your father, Mademoiselle Danglars, for in all probability I shall return to Paris?'

Eugénie covered her face with her hands.

'Oh, oh!' said Andrea, 'you need not be ashamed, even though you did post after me. Was I not nearly your husband?' And with this raillery Andrea went out, leaving the two girls a prey to their own feelings of

The bell here rang for the third time, with another shriek of anguish.

'Follow me, Mr. Commissary!' said the brigadier; 'tread in my steps.'

'Wait an instant,' said the host; 'Number 3 has two staircases,—inside and outside.'

'Good,' said the brigadier. 'I will take charge of the inside one. Are the carbines loaded?'

'Yes, brigadier.'

'Well, you guard the exterior, and if he attempts to fly, fire upon him; he must be a great criminal, from what the telegraph says.'

The brigadier, followed by the commissary, disappeared by the inside staircase, accompanied by the noise which his assertions respecting Andrea had excited in the crowd.

This is what had happened: Andrea had very cleverly managed to descend two-thirds of the chimney, but then his foot slipped, and notwithstanding his endeavors, he came into the room with more speed and noise than he intended. It would have signified little had the room been empty, but unfortunately it was occupied. Two ladies, sleeping in one bed, were awakened by the noise, and fixing their eyes upon the spot whence the sound proceeded, they saw a man. One of these ladies, the fair one, uttered those terrible shrieks which resounded through the house, while the other, rushing to the bell-rope, rang with all her strength. Andrea, as we can see, was surrounded by misfortune.

'For pity's sake,' he cried, pale and bewildered, without seeing whom he was addressing,—'for pity's sake do not call assistance! Save me!—I will not harm you.'

'Andrea, the murderer!' cried one of the ladies.

'Eugénie! Mademoiselle Danglars!' exclaimed Andrea, stupefied.

'Help, help!' cried Mademoiselle d'Armilly, taking the bell from her companion's hand, and ringing it yet more violently.

'Save me, I am pursued!' said Andrea, clasping his hands. 'For pity, for mercy's sake do not deliver me up!'

'It is too late, they are coming,' said Eugénie.

'Well, conceal me somewhere; you can say you were needlessly alarmed; you can turn their suspicions and save my life!' The two ladies, pressing closely to one another, and drawing the bedclothes tightly around them,

Chapter C

The Apparition

As the procureur had told Madame Danglars, Valentine was not yet recovered. Bowed down with fatigue, she was indeed confined to her bed; and it was in her own room, and from the lips of Madame de Villefort, that she heard all the strange events we have related; we mean the flight of Eugénie and the arrest of Andrea Cavalcanti, or rather Benedetto, together with the accusation of murder pronounced against him. But Valentine was so weak that this recital scarcely produced the same effect it would have done had she been in her usual state of health. Indeed, her brain was only the seat of vague ideas, and confused forms, mingled with strange fancies, alone presented themselves before her eyes.

During the daytime Valentine's perceptions remained tolerably clear, owing to the constant presence of M. Noirtier, who caused himself to be carried to his granddaughter's room, and watched her with his paternal tenderness; Villefort also, on his return from the law courts, frequently passed an hour or two with his father and child.

At six o'clock Villefort retired to his study, at eight M. d'Avrigny himself arrived, bringing the night draught prepared for the young girl, and then M. Noirtier was carried away. A nurse of the doctor's choice succeeded them, and never left till about ten or eleven o'clock, when Valentine was asleep. As she went downstairs she gave the keys of Valentine's room to M. de Villefort, so that no one could reach the sick-room excepting through that of Madame de Villefort and little Edward.

Every morning Morrel called on Noirtier to receive news of Valentine, and, extraordinary as it seemed, each day found him less uneasy. Certainly, though Valentine still laboured under dreadful nervous excitement, she

was better; and moreover, Monte Cristo had told him when, half distracted, he had rushed to the count's house, that if she were not dead in two hours she would be saved. Now four days had elapsed, and Valentine still lived.

The nervous excitement of which we speak pursued Valentine even in her sleep, or rather in that state of somnolence which succeeded her waking hours; it was then, in the silence of night, in the dim light shed from the alabaster lamp on the chimney-piece, that she saw the shadows pass and repass which hover over the bed of sickness, and fan the fever with their trembling wings. First she fancied she saw her stepmother threatening her, then Morrel stretched his arms towards her; sometimes mere strangers, like the Count of Monte Cristo came to visit her; even the very furniture, in these moments of delirium, seemed to move, and this state lasted till about three o'clock in the morning, when a deep, heavy slumber overcame the young girl, from which she did not awake till daylight.

On the evening of the day on which Valentine had learned of the flight of Eugénie and the arrest of Benedetto,—Villefort having retired as well as Noirtier and d'Avrigny,—her thoughts wandered in a confused maze, alternately reviewing her own situation and the events she had just heard.

Eleven o'clock had struck. The nurse, having placed the beverage prepared by the doctor within reach of the patient, and locked the door, was listening with terror to the comments of the servants in the kitchen, and storing her memory with all the horrible stories which had for some months past amused the occupants of the antechambers in the house of the king's attorney. Meanwhile an unexpected scene was passing in the room which had been so carefully locked.

Ten minutes had elapsed since the nurse had left; Valentine, who for the last hour had been suffering from the fever which returned nightly, incapable of controlling her ideas, was forced to yield to the excitement which exhausted itself in producing and reproducing a succession and recurrence of the same fancies and images. The night-lamp threw out countless rays, each resolving itself into some strange form to her disordered imagination, when suddenly by its flickering light Valentine thought she saw the door of her library, which was in the recess by the chimney-piece, open slowly, though she in vain listened for the sound of the hinges on which it turned.

It was now his turn to look about him; the Hôtel de Ville, a massive sixteenth century building, was on his right; anyone could descend from the openings in the tower, and examine every corner of the roof below, and Andrea expected momentarily to see the head of a gendarme appear at one of these openings. If once discovered, he knew he would be lost, for the roof afforded no chance of escape; he therefore resolved to descend, not through the same chimney by which he had come up, but by a similar one conducting to another room.

He looked around for a chimney from which no smoke issued, and having reached it, he disappeared through the orifice without being seen by anyone. At the same minute, one of the little windows of the Hôtel de Ville was thrown open, and the head of a gendarme appeared. For an instant it remained motionless as one of the stone decorations of the building, then after a long sigh of disappointment the head disappeared. The brigadier, calm and dignified as the law he represented, passed through the crowd, without answering the thousand questions addressed to him, and re-entered the hotel.

'Well?' asked the two gendarmes.

'Well, my boys,' said the brigadier, 'the brigand must really have escaped early this morning; but we will send to the Villers-Coterets and Noyon roads, and search the forest, when we shall catch him, no doubt.'

The honourable functionary had scarcely expressed himself thus, in that intonation which is peculiar to brigadiers of the gendarmerie, when a loud scream, accompanied by the violent ringing of a bell, resounded through the court of the hotel.

'Ah, what is that?' cried the brigadier.

'Some traveller seems impatient,' said the host. 'What number was it that rang?'

'Number 3.'

'Run, waiter!'

At this moment the screams and ringing were redoubled.

'Aha!' said the brigadier, stopping the servant, 'the person who is ringing appears to want something more than a waiter; we will attend upon him with a gendarme. Who occupies Number 3?'

'The little fellow who arrived last night in a post-chaise with his sister, and who asked for an apartment with two beds.'