# Chapter V

# The Marriage Feast

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

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

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

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

In fact, a moment later M. Morrel appeared and was saluted with an enthusiastic burst of applause from the crew of the *Pharaon*, who hailed the visit of the shipowner as a sure indication that the man whose wedding feast he thus delighted to honour would ere long be first in command

of the ship; and as Dantès was universally beloved on board his vessel, the sailors put no restraint on their tumultuous joy at finding that the opinion and choice of their superiors so exactly coincided with their own.

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

Danglars and Caderousse set off upon their errand at full speed; but ere they had gone many steps they perceived a group advancing towards them, composed of the betrothed pair, a party of young girls in attendance on the bride, by whose side walked Dantès' father; the whole brought up by Fernand, whose lips wore their usual sinister smile.

Neither Mercédès nor Edmond observed the strange expression of his countenance; they were so happy that they were conscious only of the sunshine and the presence of each other.

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

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

Beside him glided Caderousse, whose desire to partake of the good things provided for the wedding party had induced him to become reconciled to the Dantès, father and son, although there still lingered in his mind a faint and unperfect recollection of the events of the preceding night; just as the brain retains on waking in the morning the dim and misty outline of a dream. As Danglars approached the disappointed lover, he cast on him a look of deep meaning, while Fernand, as he slowly paced behind the happy pair, who seemed, in their own unmixed content, to have entirely





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

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

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

'Oh, you don't see straight,' said Danglars; 'he's gone right by the road to the Vieilles Infirmeries.'

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

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

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

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

'All right!' said Caderousse. 'Dantès is my friend, and I won't have him ill-used.'

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

'In this case,' replied Caderousse, 'let's have some more wine. I wish to drink to the health of Edmond and the lovely Mercédès.'

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

'I?' said Caderousse, rising with all the offended dignity of a drunken man, 'I can't keep on my legs? Why, I'll wager I can go up into the belfry of the Accoules, and without staggering, too!'

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

'Very well, let us go,' said Caderousse; 'but I don't want your arm at all. Come, Fernand, won't you return to Marseilles with us?'

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

'You're wrong. Come with us to Marseilles—come along.'

'I will not.'

'What do you mean? you will not? Well, just as you like, my prince; there's liberty for all the world. Come along, Danglars, and let the young gentleman return to the Catalans if he chooses.'





forgotten that such a being as himself existed, was pale and abstracted; occasionally, however, a deep flush would overspread his countenance, and a nervous contraction distort his features, while, with an agitated and restless gaze, he would glance in the direction of Marseilles, like one who either anticipated or foresaw some great and important event.

Dantès himself was simply, but becomingly, clad in the dress peculiar to the merchant service—a costume somewhat between a military and a civil garb; and with his fine countenance, radiant with joy and happiness, a more perfect specimen of manly beauty could scarcely be imagined.

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

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

'Father,' said Mercédès, stopping when she had reached the centre of the table, 'sit, I pray you, on my right hand; on my left I will place him who has ever been as a brother to me,' pointing with a soft and gentle smile to Fernand; but her words and look seemed to inflict the direst torture on him, for his lips became ghastly pale, and even beneath the dark hue of his complexion the blood might be seen retreating as though some sudden pang drove it back to the heart.

During this time, Dantès, at the opposite side of the table, had been occupied in similarly placing his most honoured guests. M. Morrel was

seated at his right hand, Danglars at his left; while, at a sign from Edmond, the rest of the company ranged themselves as they found it most agreeable.

Then they began to pass around the dusky, piquant, Arlesian sausages, and lobsters in their dazzling red cuirasses, prawns of large size and brilliant colour, the echinus with its prickly outside and dainty morsel within, the clovis, esteemed by the epicures of the South as more than rivalling the exquisite flavour of the oyster, North. All the delicacies, in fact, that are cast up by the wash of waters on the sandy beach, and styled by the grateful fishermen 'fruits of the sea.'

'A pretty silence truly!' said the old father of the bridegroom, as he carried to his lips a glass of wine of the hue and brightness of the topaz, and which had just been placed before Mercédès herself. 'Now, would anybody think that this room contained a happy, merry party, who desire nothing better than to laugh and dance the hours away?'

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

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

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

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

'And that is the very thing that alarms me,' returned Dantès. 'Man does not appear to me to be intended to enjoy felicity so unmixed; happiness is like the enchanted palaces we read of in our childhood, where fierce, fiery dragons defend the entrance and approach; and monsters of all shapes and kinds, requiring to be overcome ere victory is ours. I own that I am lost in wonder to find myself promoted to an honour of which I feel myself unworthy—that of being the husband of Mercédès.'

'Nay, nay!' cried Caderousse, smiling, 'you have not attained that honour yet. Mercédès is not yet your wife. Just assume the tone and manner of a husband, and see how she will remind you that your hour is not yet come!'





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

'I will denounce him!' exclaimed the young man hastily.

'Yes, but they will make you then sign your declaration, and confront you with him you have denounced; I will supply you with the means of supporting your accusation, for I know the fact well. But Dantès cannot remain forever in prison, and one day or other he will leave it, and the day when he comes out, woe betide him who was the cause of his incarceration!'

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

'Yes, and Mercédès! Mercédès, who will detest you if you have only the misfortune to scratch the skin of her dearly beloved Edmond!'

'True!' said Fernand.

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

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

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

Caderousse, who had let his head drop on the table, now raised it, and looking at Fernand with his dull and fishy eyes, he said, 'Kill Dantès! who talks of killing Dantès? I won't have him killed—I won't! He's my friend, and this morning offered to share his money with me, as I shared mine with him. I won't have Dantès killed—I won't!'

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

'Yes, yes, Dantès' good health!' said Caderousse, emptying his glass, 'here's to his health! his health—hurrah!'

'But the means—the means?' said Fernand.

'Have you not hit upon any?' asked Danglars.

'No!—you undertook to do so.'

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

'Do you invent, then,' said Fernand impatiently.

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

'Pen, ink, and paper,' muttered Fernand.

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

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

'There's what you want on that table,' said the waiter.

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

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

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

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





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

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

A general exclamation of surprise ran round the table, with the exception of the elder Dantès, whose laugh displayed the still perfect beauty of his large white teeth. Mercédès looked pleased and gratified, while Fernand grasped the handle of his knife with a convulsive clutch.

'In an hour?' inquired Danglars, turning pale. 'How is that, my friend?'

'Why, thus it is,' replied Dantès. 'Thanks to the influence of M. Morrel, to whom, next to my father, I owe every blessing I enjoy, every difficulty has been removed. We have purchased permission to waive the usual delay; and at half-past two o'clock the Mayor of Marseilles will be waiting for us at the city hall. Now, as a quarter-past one has already struck, I do not consider I have asserted too much in saying, that, in another hour and thirty minutes Mercédès will have become Madame Dantès.' Fernand closed his eyes, a burning sensation passed across his brow, and he was compelled to support himself by the table to prevent his falling from his chair; but in spite of all his efforts, he could not refrain from uttering a deep groan, which, however, was lost amid the noisy felicitations of the company.

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

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

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

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

'No, no,' answered Dantès; 'don't imagine I am going to put you off in that shabby manner. Tomorrow morning I start for Paris; four days to go, and the same to return, with one day to discharge the commission entrusted to me, is all the time I shall be absent. I shall be back here by the first of March, and on the second I give my real marriage feast.'

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

Dantès, perceiving the affectionate eagerness of his father, responded by a look of grateful pleasure; while Mercédès glanced at the clock and made an expressive gesture to Edmond.

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

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

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

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

'Oh, there was no harm meant,' answered Danglars; 'at first I certainly did feel somewhat uneasy as to what Fernand might be tempted to do;





is no need why Dantès should die; it would, indeed, be a pity he should. Dantès is a good fellow; I like Dantès. Dantès, your health.'

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

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

'What matters that?' muttered Fernand.

'And why, I should like to know,' persisted Caderousse, 'should they put Dantès in prison? he has neither robbed, nor killed, nor murdered.'

'Hold your tongue!' said Danglars.

'I won't hold my tongue!' replied Caderousse; 'I say I want to know why they should put Dantès in prison; I like Dantès; Dantès, your health!' and he swallowed another glass of wine. Danglars saw in the muddled look of the tailor the progress of his intoxication, and turning towards Fernand, said, 'Well, you understand there is no need to kill him.'

'Certainly not, if, as you said just now, you have the means of having Dantès arrested. Have you that means?'

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

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

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

'No, no,' said Fernand, restraining him, 'stay! It is of very little consequence to me at the end of the matter whether you have any angry feeling or not against Dantès. I hate him! I confess it openly. Do you find the means, I will execute it, provided it is not to kill the man, for Mercédès has declared she will kill herself if Dantès is killed.'

'Before Mercédès should die,' replied Fernand, with the accents of unshaken resolution, 'I would die myself!'

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

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

'Yes,' said Caderousse, 'but how?'

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

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

And Caderousse rattled his glass upon the table.

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

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

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

> 'Tous les méchants sont buveurs d'eau;
> C'est bien prouvé par le déluge.[1]'

'You said, sir, you would like to help me, but— '

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

'Death alone can separate them,' remarked Fernand.

'You talk like a noodle, my friend,' said Caderousse; 'and here is Danglars, who is a wide-awake, clever, deep fellow, who will prove to you that you are wrong. Prove it, Danglars. I have answered for you. Say there

[1] 'The wicked are great drinkers of water; As the flood proved once for all.'





but when I saw how completely he had mastered his feelings, even so far as to become one of his rival's attendants, I knew there was no further cause for apprehension.' Caderousse looked full at Fernand—he was ghastly pale.

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

'Shall we not set forth?' asked the sweet, silvery voice of Mercédès; 'two o'clock has just struck, and you know we are expected in a quarter of an hour.'

'To be sure!—to be sure!' cried Dantès, eagerly quitting the table; 'let us go directly!'

His words were re-echoed by the whole party, with vociferous cheers.

At this moment Danglars, who had been incessantly observing every change in Fernand's look and manner, saw him stagger and fall back, with an almost convulsive spasm, against a seat placed near one of the open windows. At the same instant his ear caught a sort of indistinct sound on the stairs, followed by the measured tread of soldiery, with the clanking of swords and military accoutrements; then came a hum and buzz as of many voices, so as to deaden even the noisy mirth of the bridal party, among whom a vague feeling of curiosity and apprehension quelled every disposition to talk, and almost instantaneously the most deathlike stillness prevailed.

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

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

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

'If it be so,' replied the magistrate, 'rely upon every reparation being made; meanwhile, I am the bearer of an order of arrest, and although I most reluctantly perform the task assigned me, it must, nevertheless, be

fulfilled. Who among the persons here assembled answers to the name of Edmond Dantès?'

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

'I am he; what is your pleasure with me?'

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

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

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

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

'What is the meaning of all this?' inquired Caderousse, frowningly, of Danglars, who had assumed an air of utter surprise. 'How can I tell you?' replied he; 'I am, like yourself, utterly bewildered at all that is going on, and cannot in the least make out what it is about.' Caderousse then looked around for Fernand, but he had disappeared.

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

'So, so,' said he, in a hoarse and choking voice, to Danglars, 'this, then, I suppose, is a part of the trick you were concerting yesterday? All I can



# Chapter IV

# Conspiracy

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

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

'It drives me to despair,' said Fernand.

'Do you, then, love Mercédès?'

'I adore her!'

'For long?'

'As long as I have known her—always.'

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

'What would you have me do?' said Fernand.

'How do I know? Is it my affair? I am not in love with Mademoiselle Mercédès; but for you—in the words of the gospel, seek, and you shall find.'

'I have found already.'

'What?'

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

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

'You do not know Mercédès; what she threatens she will do.'

'Idiot!' muttered Danglars; 'whether she kill herself or not, what matter, provided Dantès is not captain?'