Chapter CXI

Expiation

NOTWITHSTANDING the density of the crowd, M. de Villefort saw it open before him. There is something so awe-inspiring in great afflictions that even in the worst times the first emotion of a crowd has generally been to sympathize with the sufferer in a great catastrophe. Many people have been assassinated in a tumult, but even criminals have rarely been insulted during trial. Thus Villefort passed through the mass of spectators and officers of the Palais, and withdrew. Though he had acknowledged his guilt, he was protected by his grief. There are some situations which men understand by instinct, but which reason is powerless to explain; in such cases the greatest poet is he who gives utterance to the most natural and vehement outburst of sorrow. Those who hear the bitter cry are as much impressed as if they listened to an entire poem, and when the sufferer is sincere they are right in regarding his outburst as sublime.

It would be difficult to describe the state of stupor in which Villefort left the Palais. Every pulse beat with feverish excitement, every nerve was strained, every vein swollen, and every part of his body seemed to suffer distinctly from the rest, thus multiplying his agony a thousand-fold. He made his way along the corridors through force of habit; he threw aside his magisterial robe, not out of deference to etiquette, but because it was an unbearable burden, a veritable garb of Nessus, insatiate in torture. Having staggered as far as the Rue Dauphine, he perceived his carriage, awoke his sleeping coachman by opening the door himself, threw himself on the cushions, and pointed towards the Faubourg Saint-Honoré; the carriage drove on.

All the weight of his fallen fortune seemed suddenly to crush him; he could not foresee the consequences; he could not contemplate the future with the indifference of the hardened criminal who merely faces a contingency already familiar.

God was still in his heart. 'God,' he murmured, not knowing what he said,—'God—God!' Behind the event that had overwhelmed him he saw the hand of God. The carriage rolled rapidly onward. Villefort, while turning restlessly on the cushions, felt something press against him. He put out his hand to remove the object; it was a fan which Madame de Villefort had left in the carriage; this fan awakened a recollection which darted through his mind like lightning. He thought of his wife. 'Oh!' he exclaimed, as though a red-hot iron were piercing his heart.

During the last hour his own crime had alone been presented to his mind; now another object, not less terrible, suddenly presented itself. His wife! He had just acted the inexorable judge with her, he had condemned her to death, and she, crushed by remorse, struck with terror, covered with the shame inspired by the eloquence of *his* irreproachable virtue,—she, a poor, weak woman, without help or the power of defending herself against his absolute and supreme will,—she might at that very moment, perhaps, be preparing to die!

An hour had elapsed since her condemnation; at that moment, doubtless, she was recalling all her crimes to her memory; she was asking pardon for her sins; perhaps she was even writing a letter imploring forgiveness from her virtuous husband—a forgiveness she was purchasing with her death! Villefort again groaned with anguish and despair.

'Ah,' he exclaimed, 'that woman became criminal only from associating with me! I carried the infection of crime with me, and she has caught it as she would the typhus fever, the cholera, the plague! And yet I have punished her—I have dared to tell her—*I* have—"Repent and die!" But no, she must not die; she shall live, and with me. We will flee from Paris and go as far as the earth reaches. I told her of the scaffold; oh, Heavens, I forgot that it awaits me also! How could I pronounce that word? Yes, we will fly; I will confess all to her,—I will tell her daily that I also have committed a crime!—Oh, what an alliance—the tiger and the serpent; worthy wife of such as I am! She *must* live that my infamy may diminish hers.'

'I mean that I feel it impossible to struggle against this deadly weight which crushes me. Gentlemen, I know I am in the hands of an avenging God! We need no proofs; everything relating to this young man is true.'

A dull, gloomy silence, like that which precedes some awful phenomenon of nature, pervaded the assembly, who shuddered in dismay.

'What, M. de Villefort,' cried the president, 'do you yield to an hallucination? What, are you no longer in possession of your senses? This strange, unexpected, terrible accusation has disordered your reason. Come, recover.'

The procureur dropped his head; his teeth chattered like those of a man under a violent attack of fever, and yet he was deadly pale.

'I am in possession of all my senses, sir,' he said; 'my body alone suffers, as you may suppose. I acknowledge myself guilty of all the young man has brought against me, and from this hour hold myself under the authority of the procureur who will succeed me.'

And as he spoke these words with a hoarse, choking voice, he staggered towards the door, which was mechanically opened by a door-keeper. The whole assembly were dumb with astonishment at the revelation and confession which had produced a catastrophe so different from that which had been expected during the last fortnight by the Parisian world.

'Well,' said Beauchamp, 'let them now say that drama is unnatural!'

'*Ma foi!*' said Château-Renaud, 'I would rather end my career like M. de Morcerf; a pistol-shot seems quite delightful compared with this catastrophe.'

'And moreover, it kills,' said Beauchamp.

'And to think that I had an idea of marrying his daughter,' said Debray. 'She did well to die, poor girl!'

'The sitting is adjourned, gentlemen,' said the president; 'fresh inquiries will be made, and the case will be tried next session by another magistrate.'

As for Andrea, who was calm and more interesting than ever, he left the hall, escorted by gendarmes, who involuntarily paid him some attention.

'Well, what do you think of this, my fine fellow?' asked Debray of the sergeant-at-arms, slipping a louis into his hand.

'There will be extenuating circumstances,' he replied.

my adopted mother endeavoured to instil into my heart. I increased in wickedness till I committed crime. One day when I cursed Providence for making me so wicked, and ordaining me to such a fate, my adopted father said to me, "Do not blaspheme, unhappy child, the crime is that of your father, not yours,—of your father, who consigned you to hell if you died, and to misery if a miracle preserved you alive." After that I ceased to blaspheme, but I cursed my father. That is why I have uttered the words for which you blame me; that is why I have filled this whole assembly with horror. If I have committed an additional crime, punish me, but if you will allow that ever since the day of my birth my fate has been sad, bitter, and lamentable, then pity me.'

'But your mother?' asked the president.

'My mother thought me dead; she is not guilty. I did not even wish to know her name, nor do I know it.'

Just then a piercing cry, ending in a sob, burst from the centre of the crowd, who encircled the lady who had before fainted, and who now fell into a violent fit of hysterics. She was carried out of the hall, the thick veil which concealed her face dropped off, and Madame Danglars was recognized. Notwithstanding his shattered nerves, the ringing sensation in his ears, and the madness which turned his brain, Villefort rose as he perceived her.

'The proofs, the proofs!' said the president; 'remember this tissue of horrors must be supported by the clearest proofs.'

'The proofs?' said Benedetto, laughing; 'do you want proofs?'

'Yes.'

'Well, then, look at M. de Villefort, and then ask me for proofs.'

Everyone turned towards the procureur, who, unable to bear the universal gaze now riveted on him alone, advanced staggering into the midst of the tribunal, with his hair dishevelled and his face indented with the mark of his nails. The whole assembly uttered a long murmur of astonishment.

'Father,' said Benedetto, 'I am asked for proofs, do you wish me to give them?'

'No, no, it is useless,' stammered M. de Villefort in a hoarse voice; 'no, it is useless!'

'How useless?' cried the president, 'what do you mean?'

And Villefort dashed open the window in front of the carriage.

'Faster, faster!' he cried, in a tone which electrified the coachman. The horses, impelled by fear, flew towards the house.

'Yes, yes,' repeated Villefort, as he approached his home—'yes, that woman must live; she must repent, and educate my son, the sole survivor, with the exception of the indestructible old man, of the wreck of my house. She loves him; it was for his sake she has committed these crimes. We ought never to despair of softening the heart of a mother who loves her child. She will repent, and no one will know that she has been guilty. The events which have taken place in my house, though they now occupy the public mind, will be forgotten in time, or if, indeed, a few enemies should persist in remembering them, why then I will add them to my list of crimes. What will it signify if one, two, or three more are added? My wife and child shall escape from this gulf, carrying treasures with them; she will live and may yet be happy, since her child, in whom all her love is centred, will be with her. I shall have performed a good action, and my heart will be lighter.'

And the procureur breathed more freely than he had done for some time. The carriage stopped at the door of the house. Villefort leaped out of the carriage, and saw that his servants were surprised at his early return; he could read no other expression on their features. Neither of them spoke to him; they merely stood aside to let him pass by, as usual, nothing more. As he passed by M. Noirtier's room, he perceived two figures through the half-open door; but he experienced no curiosity to know who was visiting his father; anxiety carried him on further.

'Come,' he said, as he ascended the stairs leading to his wife's room, 'nothing is changed here.'

He then closed the door of the landing.

'No one must disturb us,' he said; 'I must speak freely to her, accuse myself, and say'—he approached the door, touched the crystal handle, which yielded to his hand. 'Not locked,' he cried; 'that is well.'

And he entered the little room in which Edward slept; for though the child went to school during the day, his mother could not allow him to be separated from her at night. With a single glance Villefort's eye ran through the room.

'Not here,' he said; 'doubtless she is in her bedroom.' He rushed towards the door, found it bolted, and stopped, shuddering.

'Héloïse!' he cried. He fancied he heard the sound of a piece of furniture being removed.

'Héloïse!' he repeated.

'Who is there?' answered the voice of her he sought. He thought that voice more feeble than usual.

'Open the door!' cried Villefort. 'Open; it is I.'

But notwithstanding this request, notwithstanding the tone of anguish in which it was uttered, the door remained closed. Villefort burst it open with a violent blow. At the entrance of the room which led to her boudoir, Madame de Villefort was standing erect, pale, her features contracted, and her eyes glaring horribly.

'Héloïse, Héloïse!' he said, 'what is the matter? Speak!' The young woman extended her stiff white hands towards him.

'It is done, monsieur,' she said with a rattling noise which seemed to tear her throat. 'What more do you want?' and she fell full length on the floor.

Villefort ran to her and seized her hand, which convulsively clasped a crystal bottle with a golden stopper. Madame de Villefort was dead. Villefort, maddened with horror, stepped back to the threshhold of the door, fixing his eyes on the corpse.

'My son!' he exclaimed suddenly, 'where is my son?—Edward, Edward!' and he rushed out of the room, still crying, 'Edward, Edward!' The name was pronounced in such a tone of anguish that the servants ran up.

'Where is my son?' asked Villefort; 'let him be removed from the house, that he may not see— '

'Master Edward is not downstairs, sir,' replied the valet.

'Then he must be playing in the garden; go and see.'

'No, sir; Madame de Villefort sent for him half an hour ago; he went into her room, and has not been downstairs since.'

A cold perspiration burst out on Villefort's brow; his legs trembled, and his thoughts flew about madly in his brain like the wheels of a disordered watch.

'In Madame de Villefort's room?' he murmured and slowly returned, with one hand wiping his forehead, and with the other supporting himself

There was an energy, a conviction, and a sincerity in the manner of the young man, which silenced the tumult. All eyes were turned for a moment towards the procureur, who sat as motionless as though a thunderbolt had changed him into a corpse.

'Gentlemen,' said Andrea, commanding silence by his voice and manner; 'I owe you the proofs and explanations of what I have said.'

'But,' said the irritated president, 'you called yourself Benedetto, declared yourself an orphan, and claimed Corsica as your country.'

'I said anything I pleased, in order that the solemn declaration I have just made should not be withheld, which otherwise would certainly have been the case. I now repeat that I was born at Auteuil on the night of the 27th of September, 1817, and that I am the son of the procureur, M. de Villefort. Do you wish for any further details? I will give them. I was born in № 28, Rue de la Fontaine, in a room hung with red damask; my father took me in his arms, telling my mother I was dead, wrapped me in a napkin marked with an H and an N, and carried me into a garden, where he buried me alive.'

A shudder ran through the assembly when they saw that the confidence of the prisoner increased in proportion to the terror of M. de Villefort.

'But how have you become acquainted with all these details?' asked the president.

'I will tell you, Mr. President. A man who had sworn vengeance against my father, and had long watched his opportunity to kill him, had introduced himself that night into the garden in which my father buried me. He was concealed in a thicket; he saw my father bury something in the ground, and stabbed him; then thinking the deposit might contain some treasure he turned up the ground, and found me still living. The man carried me to the foundling asylum, where I was registered under the number 37. Three months afterwards, a woman travelled from Rogliano to Paris to fetch me, and having claimed me as her son, carried me away. Thus, you see, though born in Paris, I was brought up in Corsica.'

There was a moment's silence, during which one could have fancied the hall empty, so profound was the stillness.

'Proceed,' said the president.

'Certainly, I might have lived happily amongst those good people, who adored me, but my perverse disposition prevailed over the virtues which

'Repeat your father's name,' said the president.

Not a whisper, not a breath, was heard in that vast assembly; everyone waited anxiously.

'My father is king's attorney,' replied Andrea calmly. 'King's attorney?' said the president, stupefied, and without noticing the agitation which spread over the face of M. de Villefort; 'king's attorney?'

'Yes; and if you wish to know his name, I will tell it,—he is named Villefort.'

The explosion, which had been so long restrained from a feeling of respect to the court of justice, now burst forth like thunder from the breasts of all present; the court itself did not seek to restrain the feelings of the audience. The exclamations, the insults addressed to Benedetto, who remained perfectly unconcerned, the energetic gestures, the movement of the gendarmes, the sneers of the scum of the crowd always sure to rise to the surface in case of any disturbance—all this lasted five minutes, before the door-keepers and magistrates were able to restore silence. In the midst of this tumult the voice of the president was heard to exclaim:

'Are you playing with justice, accused, and do you dare set your fellow-citizens an example of disorder which even in these times has never been equalled?'

Several persons hurried up to M. de Villefort, who sat half bowed over in his chair, offering him consolation, encouragement, and protestations of zeal and sympathy. Order was re-established in the hall, except that a few people still moved about and whispered to one another. A lady, it was said, had just fainted; they had supplied her with a smelling-bottle, and she had recovered. During the scene of tumult, Andrea had turned his smiling face towards the assembly; then, leaning with one hand on the oaken rail of the dock, in the most graceful attitude possible, he said:

'Gentlemen, I assure you I had no idea of insulting the court, or of making a useless disturbance in the presence of this honourable assembly. They ask my age; I tell it. They ask where I was born; I answer. They ask my name, I cannot give it, since my parents abandoned me. But though I cannot give my own name, not possessing one, I can tell them my father's. Now I repeat, my father is named M. de Villefort, and I am ready to prove it.'

against the wall. To enter the room he must again see the body of his unfortunate wife. To call Edward he must reawaken the echo of that room which now appeared like a sepulchre; to speak seemed like violating the silence of the tomb. His tongue was paralysed in his mouth.

'Edward!' he stammered—'Edward!'

The child did not answer. Where, then, could he be, if he had entered his mother's room and not since returned? He stepped forward. The corpse of Madame de Villefort was stretched across the doorway leading to the room in which Edward must be; those glaring eyes seemed to watch over the threshold, and the lips bore the stamp of a terrible and mysterious irony. Through the open door was visible a portion of the boudoir, containing an upright piano and a blue satin couch. Villefort stepped forward two or three paces, and beheld his child lying—no doubt asleep—on the sofa. The unhappy man uttered an exclamation of joy; a ray of light seemed to penetrate the abyss of despair and darkness. He had only to step over the corpse, enter the boudoir, take the child in his arms, and flee far, far away.

Villefort was no longer the civilized man; he was a tiger hurt unto death, gnashing his teeth in his wound. He no longer feared realities, but phantoms. He leaped over the corpse as if it had been a burning brazier. He took the child in his arms, embraced him, shook him, called him, but the child made no response. He pressed his burning lips to the cheeks, but they were icy cold and pale; he felt the stiffened limbs; he pressed his hand upon the heart, but it no longer beat,—the child was dead.

A folded paper fell from Edward's breast. Villefort, thunderstruck, fell upon his knees; the child dropped from his arms, and rolled on the floor by the side of its mother. He picked up the paper, and, recognizing his wife's writing, ran his eyes rapidly over its contents; it ran as follows:

'You know that I was a good mother, since it was for my son's sake I became criminal. A good mother cannot depart without her son.'

Villefort could not believe his eyes,—he could not believe his reason; he dragged himself towards the child's body, and examined it as a lioness contemplates its dead cub. Then a piercing cry escaped from his breast, and he cried,

'Still the hand of God.'

The presence of the two victims alarmed him; he could not bear solitude shared only by two corpses. Until then he had been sustained by rage, by his strength of mind, by despair, by the supreme agony which led the Titans to scale the heavens, and Ajax to defy the gods. He now arose, his head bowed beneath the weight of grief, and, shaking his damp, dishevelled hair, he who had never felt compassion for anyone determined to seek his father, that he might have someone to whom he could relate his misfortunes,—someone by whose side he might weep. He descended the little staircase with which we are acquainted, and entered Noirtier's room. The old man appeared to be listening attentively and as affectionately as his infirmities would allow to the Abbé Busoni, who looked cold and calm, as usual. Villefort, perceiving the abbé, passed his hand across his brow. The past came to him like one of those waves whose wrath foams fiercer than the others.

He recollected the call he had made upon him after the dinner at Auteuil, and then the visit the abbé had himself paid to his house on the day of Valentine's death.

'You here, sir!' he exclaimed; 'do you, then, never appear but to act as an escort to death?'

Busoni turned around, and, perceiving the excitement depicted on the magistrate's face, the savage lustre of his eyes, he understood that the revelation had been made at the assizes; but beyond this he was ignorant.

'I came to pray over the body of your daughter.'

'And now why are you here?'

'I come to tell you that you have sufficiently repaid your debt, and that from this moment I will pray to God to forgive you, as I do.'

'Good heavens!' exclaimed Villefort, stepping back fearfully, 'surely that is not the voice of the Abbé Busoni!'

'No!' The abbé threw off his wig, shook his head, and his hair, no longer confined, fell in black masses around his manly face.

'It is the face of the Count of Monte Cristo!' exclaimed the procureur, with a haggard expression.

'You are not exactly right, M. Procureur; you must go farther back.'

'That voice, that voice!—where did I first hear it?'

M. de Villefort a second time raised his head, looked at Benedetto as if he had been gazing at the head of Medusa, and became livid. As for Benedetto, he gracefully wiped his lips with a fine cambric pocket-handkerchief.

'Your profession?'

'First I was a forger,' answered Andrea, as calmly as possible; 'then I became a thief, and lately have become an assassin.'

A murmur, or rather storm, of indignation burst from all parts of the assembly. The judges themselves appeared to be stupefied, and the jury manifested tokens of disgust for a cynicism so unexpected in a man of fashion. M. de Villefort pressed his hand upon his brow, which, at first pale, had become red and burning; then he suddenly arose and looked around as though he had lost his senses—he wanted air. 'Are you looking for anything, Mr. Procureur?' asked Benedetto, with his most ingratiating smile.

M. de Villefort answered nothing, but sat, or rather threw himself down again upon his chair.

'And now, prisoner, will you consent to tell your name?' said the president. 'The brutal affectation with which you have enumerated and classified your crimes calls for a severe reprimand on the part of the court, both in the name of morality, and for the respect due to humanity. You appear to consider this a point of honour, and it may be for this reason, that you have delayed acknowledging your name. You wished it to be preceded by all these titles.'

'It is quite wonderful, Mr. President, how entirely you have read my thoughts,' said Benedetto, in his softest voice and most polite manner. 'This is, indeed, the reason why I begged you to alter the order of the questions.'

The public astonishment had reached its height. There was no longer any deceit or bravado in the manner of the accused. The audience felt that a startling revelation was to follow this ominous prelude.

'Well,' said the president; 'your name?'

'I cannot tell you my name, since I do not know it; but I know my father's, and can tell it to you.'

A painful giddiness overwhelmed Villefort; great drops of acrid sweat fell from his face upon the papers which he held in his convulsed hand.

by the clever and implacable pen of Villefort. During the reading of this, which was long, the public attention was continually drawn towards Andrea, who bore the inspection with Spartan unconcern. Villefort had never been so concise and eloquent. The crime was depicted in the most vivid colours; the former life of the prisoner, his transformation, a review of his life from the earliest period, were set forth with all the talent that a knowledge of human life could furnish to a mind like that of the procureur. Benedetto was thus forever condemned in public opinion before the sentence of the law could be pronounced.

Andrea paid no attention to the successive charges which were brought against him. M. de Villefort, who examined him attentively, and who no doubt practised upon him all the psychological studies he was accustomed to use, in vain endeavoured to make him lower his eyes, notwithstanding the depth and profundity of his gaze. At length the reading of the indictment was ended.

'Accused,' said the president, 'your name and surname?'

Andrea arose.

'Excuse me, Mr. President,' he said, in a clear voice, 'but I see you are going to adopt a course of questions through which I cannot follow you. I have an idea, which I will explain by and by, of making an exception to the usual form of accusation. Allow me, then, if you please, to answer in different order, or I will not do so at all.'

The astonished president looked at the jury, who in turn looked at Villefort. The whole assembly manifested great surprise, but Andrea appeared quite unmoved.

'Your age?' said the president; 'will you answer that question?'

'I will answer that question, as well as the rest, Mr. President, but in its turn.'

'Your age?' repeated the president.

'I am twenty-one years old, or rather I shall be in a few days, as I was born the night of the 27th of September, 1817.'

M. de Villefort, who was busy taking down some notes, raised his head at the mention of this date.

'Where were you born?' continued the president.

'At Auteuil, near Paris.'

'You heard it for the first time at Marseilles, twenty-three years ago, the day of your marriage with Mademoiselle de Saint-Méran. Refer to your papers.'

'You are not Busoni?—you are not Monte Cristo? Oh, heavens! you are, then, some secret, implacable, and mortal enemy! I must have wronged you in some way at Marseilles. Oh, woe to me!'

'Yes; you are now on the right path,' said the count, crossing his arms over his broad chest; 'search—search!'

'But what have I done to you?' exclaimed Villefort, whose mind was balancing between reason and insanity, in that cloud which is neither a dream nor reality; 'what have I done to you? Tell me, then! Speak!'

'You condemned me to a horrible, tedious death; you killed my father; you deprived me of liberty, of love, and happiness.'

'Who are you, then? Who are you?'

'I am the spectre of a wretch you buried in the dungeons of the Château d'If. God gave that spectre the form of the Count of Monte Cristo when he at length issued from his tomb, enriched him with gold and diamonds, and led him to you!'

'Ah, I recognize you—I recognize you!' exclaimed the king's attorney; 'you are— '

'I am Edmond Dantès!'

'You are Edmond Dantès,' cried Villefort, seizing the count by the wrist; 'then come here!'

And up the stairs he dragged Monte Cristo; who, ignorant of what had happened, followed him in astonishment, foreseeing some new catastrophe.

'There, Edmond Dantès!' he said, pointing to the bodies of his wife and child, 'see, are you well avenged?'

Monte Cristo became pale at this horrible sight; he felt that he had passed beyond the bounds of vengeance, and that he could no longer say, 'God is for and with me.' With an expression of indescribable anguish he threw himself upon the body of the child, reopened its eyes, felt its pulse, and then rushed with him into Valentine's room, of which he double-locked the door.

'My child,' cried Villefort, 'he carries away the body of my child! Oh, curses, woe, death to you!'

He tried to follow Monte Cristo; but as though in a dream he was transfixed to the spot,—his eyes glared as though they were starting through the sockets; he griped the flesh on his chest until his nails were stained with blood; the veins of his temples swelled and boiled as though they would burst their narrow boundary, and deluge his brain with living fire. This lasted several minutes, until the frightful overturn of reason was accomplished; then uttering a loud cry followed by a burst of laughter, he rushed down the stairs.

A quarter of an hour afterwards the door of Valentine's room opened, and Monte Cristo reappeared. Pale, with a dull eye and heavy heart, all the noble features of that face, usually so calm and serene, were overcast by grief. In his arms he held the child, whom no skill had been able to recall to life. Bending on one knee, he placed it reverently by the side of its mother, with its head upon her breast. Then, rising, he went out, and meeting a servant on the stairs, he asked:

'Where is M. de Villefort?'

The servant, instead of answering, pointed to the garden. Monte Cristo ran down the steps, and advancing towards the spot designated beheld Villefort, encircled by his servants, with a spade in his hand, and digging the earth with fury.

'It is not here!' he cried. 'It is not here!' And then he moved farther on, and began again to dig.

Monte Cristo approached him, and said in a low voice, with an expression almost humble:

'Sir, you have indeed lost a son; but— '

Villefort interrupted him; he had neither listened nor heard.

'Oh, I *will* find it,' he cried; 'you may pretend he is not here, but I *will* find him, though I dig forever!'

Monte Cristo drew back in horror.

'Oh,' he said, 'he is mad!' And as though he feared that the walls of the accursed house would crumble around him, he rushed into the street, for the first time doubting whether he had the right to do as he had done. 'Oh, enough of this,—enough of this,' he cried; 'let me save the last.' On entering his house, he met Morrel, who wandered about like a ghost awaiting the heavenly mandate for return to the tomb.

Chapter CX

The Indictment

THE judges took their places in the midst of the most profound silence; the jury took their seats; M. de Villefort, the object of unusual attention, and we had almost said of general admiration, sat in the armchair and cast a tranquil glance around him. Everyone looked with astonishment on that grave and severe face, whose calm expression personal griefs had been unable to disturb, and the aspect of a man who was a stranger to all human emotions excited something very like terror.

'Gendarmes,' said the president, 'lead in the accused.'

At these words the public attention became more intense, and all eyes were turned towards the door through which Benedetto was to enter. The door soon opened and the accused appeared.

The same impression was experienced by all present, and no one was deceived by the expression of his countenance. His features bore no sign of that deep emotion which stops the beating of the heart and blanches the cheek. His hands, gracefully placed, one upon his hat, the other in the opening of his white waistcoat, were not at all tremulous; his eye was calm and even brilliant. Scarcely had he entered the hall when he glanced at the whole body of magistrates and assistants; his eye rested longer on the president, and still more so on the king's attorney.

By the side of Andrea was stationed the lawyer who was to conduct his defence, and who had been appointed by the court, for Andrea disdained to pay any attention to those details, to which he appeared to attach no importance. The lawyer was a young man with light hair whose face expressed a hundred times more emotion than that which characterized the prisoner. The president called for the indictment, revised as we know,