

knight of all my orders, even had I been able to offer him the Golden Fleece and the Garter.’

‘Well, since we are not to sit down to table,’ said Debray, ‘take a glass of sherry, and tell us all about it.’

‘You all know that I had the fancy of going to Africa.’

‘It is a road your ancestors have traced for you,’ said Albert gallantly.

‘Yes? but I doubt that your object was like theirs—to rescue the Holy Sepulchre.’

‘You are quite right, Beauchamp,’ observed the young aristocrat. ‘It was only to fight as an amateur. I cannot bear duelling ever since two seconds, whom I had chosen to arrange an affair, forced me to break the arm of one of my best friends, one whom you all know—poor Franz d’Épinay.’

‘Ah, true,’ said Debray, ‘you did fight some time ago; about what?’

‘The devil take me, if I remember,’ returned Château-Renaud. ‘But I recollect perfectly one thing, that, being unwilling to let such talents as mine sleep, I wished to try upon the Arabs the new pistols that had been given to me. In consequence I embarked for Oran, and went from thence to Constantine, where I arrived just in time to witness the raising of the siege. I retreated with the rest, for eight-and-forty hours. I endured the rain during the day, and the cold during the night tolerably well, but the third morning my horse died of cold. Poor brute—accustomed to be covered up and to have a stove in the stable, the Arabian finds himself unable to bear ten degrees of cold in Arabia.’

‘That’s why you want to purchase my English horse,’ said Debray, ‘you think he will bear the cold better.’

‘You are mistaken, for I have made a vow never to return to Africa.’

‘You were very much frightened, then?’ asked Beauchamp.

‘Well, yes, and I had good reason to be so,’ replied Château-Renaud. ‘I was retreating on foot, for my horse was dead. Six Arabs came up, full gallop, to cut off my head. I shot two with my double-barrelled gun, and two more with my pistols, but I was then disarmed, and two were still left; one seized me by the hair (that is why I now wear it so short, for no one knows what may happen), the other swung a yataghan, and I already felt the cold steel on my neck, when this gentleman whom you see here charged them, shot the one who held me by the hair, and cleft the skull

of the other with his sabre. He had assigned himself the task of saving a man’s life that day; chance caused that man to be myself. When I am rich I will order a statue of Chance from Klagmann or Marochetti.’

‘Yes,’ said Morrel, smiling, ‘it was the 5th of September, the anniversary of the day on which my father was miraculously preserved; therefore, as far as it lies in my power, I endeavour to celebrate it by some—’ ‘Heroic action,’ interrupted Château-Renaud. ‘I was chosen. But that is not all—after rescuing me from the sword, he rescued me from the cold, not by sharing his cloak with me, like St. Martin, but by giving me the whole; then from hunger by sharing with me—guess what?’

‘A Strasbourg pie?’ asked Beauchamp.

‘No, his horse; of which we each of us ate a slice with a hearty appetite. It was very hard.’

‘The horse?’ said Morcerf, laughing.

‘No, the sacrifice,’ returned Château-Renaud; ‘ask Debray if he would sacrifice his English steed for a stranger?’

‘Not for a stranger,’ said Debray, ‘but for a friend I might, perhaps.’

‘I divined that you would become mine, count,’ replied Morrel; ‘besides, as I had the honour to tell you, heroism or not, sacrifice or not, that day I owed an offering to bad fortune in recompense for the favors good fortune had on other days granted to us.’

‘The history to which M. Morrel alludes,’ continued Château-Renaud, ‘is an admirable one, which he will tell you some day when you are better acquainted with him; today let us fill our stomachs, and not our memories. What time do you breakfast, Albert?’

‘At half-past ten.’

‘Precisely?’ asked Debray, taking out his watch.

‘Oh, you will give me five minutes’ grace,’ replied Morcerf, ‘for I also expect a preserver.’

‘Of whom?’

‘Of myself,’ cried Morcerf; ‘*parbleu!* do you think I cannot be saved as well as anyone else, and that there are only Arabs who cut off heads? Our breakfast is a philanthropic one, and we shall have at table—at least, I hope so—two benefactors of humanity.’

‘What shall we do?’ said Debray; ‘we have only one Monthyon prize.’

'Well, it will be given to someone who has done nothing to deserve it,' said Beauchamp; 'that is the way the Academy mostly escapes from the dilemma.'

'And where does he come from?' asked Debray. 'You have already answered the question once, but so vaguely that I venture to put it a second time.'

'Really,' said Albert, 'I do not know; when I invited him three months ago, he was then at Rome, but since that time who knows where he may have gone?'

'And you think him capable of being exact?' demanded Debray.

'I think him capable of everything.'

'Well, with the five minutes' grace, we have only ten left.'

'I will profit by them to tell you something about my guest.'

'I beg pardon,' interrupted Beauchamp; 'are there any materials for an article in what you are going to tell us?'

'Yes, and for a most curious one.'

'Go on, then, for I shall not get to the Chamber this morning, and I must make up for it.'

'I was at Rome during the last Carnival.'

'We know that,' said Beauchamp.

'Yes, but what you do not know is that I was carried off by bandits.'

'There are no bandits,' cried Debray.

'Yes there are, and most hideous, or rather most admirable ones, for I found them ugly enough to frighten me.'

'Come, my dear Albert,' said Debray, 'confess that your cook is behind-hand, that the oysters have not arrived from Ostend or Marennes, and that, like Madame de Maintenon, you are going to replace the dish by a story. Say so at once; we are sufficiently well-bred to excuse you, and to listen to your history, fabulous as it promises to be.'

'And I say to you, fabulous as it may seem, I tell it as a true one from beginning to end. The brigands had carried me off, and conducted me to a gloomy spot, called the Catcombs of Saint Sebastian.'

'I know it,' said Château-Renaud; 'I narrowly escaped catching a fever there.'

'And I did more than that,' replied Morcerf, 'for I caught one. I was informed that I was prisoner until I paid the sum of 4,000 Roman crowns—

'My dear Albert,' said he, 'let me introduce to you M. Maximilian Morrel, captain of Spahis, my friend; and what is more—however the man speaks for himself—my preserver. Salute my hero, viscount.'

And he stepped on one side to give place to a young man of refined and dignified bearing, with large and open brow, piercing eyes, and black moustache, whom our readers have already seen at Marseilles, under circumstances sufficiently dramatic not to be forgotten. A rich uniform, half French, half Oriental, set off his graceful and stalwart figure, and his broad chest was decorated with the order of the Legion of honour. The young officer bowed with easy and elegant politeness.

'Monsieur,' said Albert with affectionate courtesy, 'the count of Château-Renaud knew how much pleasure this introduction would give me; you are his friend, be ours also.'

'Well said,' interrupted Château-Renaud; 'and pray that, if you should ever be in a similar predicament, he may do as much for you as he did for me.'

'What has he done?' asked Albert.

'Oh, nothing worth speaking of,' said Morrel; 'M. de Château-Renaud exaggerates.'

'Not worth speaking of?' cried Château-Renaud; 'life is not worth speaking of—that is rather too philosophical, on my word, Morrel. It is very well for you, who risk your life every day, but for me, who only did so once—'

'We gather from all this, baron, that Captain Morrel saved your life.'

'Exactly so.'

'On what occasion?' asked Beauchamp.

'Beauchamp, my good fellow, you know I am starving,' said Debray; 'do not set him off on some long story.'

'Well, I do not prevent your sitting down to table,' replied Beauchamp, 'Château-Renaud can tell us while we eat our breakfast.'

'Gentlemen,' said Morcerf, 'it is only a quarter past ten, and I expect someone else.'

'Ah, true, a diplomatist!' observed Debray.

'Diplomat or not, I don't know; I only know that he charged himself on my account with a mission, which he terminated so entirely to my satisfaction, that had I been king, I should have instantly created him

and Mlle. Eugénie Danglars; I cannot in conscience, therefore, let you run down the speeches of a man who will one day say to me, "Viconte, you know I give my daughter two millions."

'Ah, this marriage will never take place,' said Beauchamp. 'The king has made him a baron, and can make him a peer, but he cannot make him a gentleman, and the Count of Morcerf is too aristocratic to consent, for the paltry sum of two million francs, to a *méalliance*. The Viscount of Morcerf can only wed a marchioness.'

'But two million francs make a nice little sum,' replied Morcerf.

'It is the social capital of a theatre on the boulevard, or a railroad from the Jardin des Plantes to La Râpée.'

'Never mind what he says, Morcerf,' said Debray, 'do you marry her. You marry a money-bag label, it is true; well, but what does that matter? It is better to have a blazon less and a figure more on it. You have seven martlets on your arms; give three to your wife, and you will still have four; that is one more than M. de Guise had, who so nearly became King of France, and whose cousin was Emperor of Germany.'

'On my word, I think you are right, Lucien,' said Albert absently.

'To be sure; besides, every millionaire is as noble as a bastard—that is, he can be.'

'Do not say that, Debray,' returned Beauchamp, laughing, 'for here is Château-Renaud, who, to cure you of your mania for paradoxes, will pass the sword of Renaud de Montauban, his ancestor, through your body.'

'He will sully it then,' returned Lucien; 'for I am low—very low.'

'Oh, heavens,' cried Beauchamp, 'the minister quotes Béranger, what shall we come to next?'

'M. de Château-Renaud—M. Maximilian Morrel,' said the servant, announcing two fresh guests.

'Now, then, to breakfast,' said Beauchamp; 'for, if I remember, you told me you only expected two persons, Albert.'

'Morrel,' muttered Albert—'Morrel—who is he?'

But before he had finished, M. de Château-Renaud, a handsome young man of thirty, gentleman all over,—that is, with the figure of a Guiche and the wit of a Morremart,—took Albert's hand.

about 24,000 francs. Unfortunately, I had not above 1,500. I was at the end of my journey and of my credit. I wrote to Franz—and were he here he would confirm every word—I wrote then to Franz that if he did not come with the four thousand crowns before six, at ten minutes past I should have gone to join the blessed saints and glorious martyrs in whose company I had the honour of being; and Signor Luigi Vampa, such was the name of the chief of these bandits, would have scrupulously kept his word.'

'But Franz did come with the four thousand crowns,' said Château-Renaud. 'A man whose name is Franz d'Épinay or Albert de Morcerf has not much difficulty in procuring them.'

'No, he arrived accompanied simply by the guest I am going to present to you.'

'Ah, this gentleman is a Hercules killing Cacus, a Perseus freeing Andromeda.'

'No, he is a man about my own size.'

'Armed to the teeth?'

'He had not even a knitting-needle.'

'But he paid your ransom?'

'He said two words to the chief and I was free.'

'And they apologized to him for having carried you off?' said Beauchamp.

'Just so.'

'Why, he is a second Ariosto.'

'No, his name is the Count of Monte Cristo.'

'There is no Count of Monte Cristo,' said Debray.

'I do not think so,' added Château-Renaud, with the air of a man who knows the whole of the European nobility perfectly.

'Does anyone know anything of a Count of Monte Cristo?'

'He comes possibly from the Holy Land, and one of his ancestors possessed Calvary, as the Morremarts did the Dead Sea.'

'I think I can assist your researches,' said Maximilian. 'Monte Cristo is a little island I have often heard spoken of by the old sailors my father employed—a grain of sand in the centre of the Mediterranean, an atom in the infinite.'

'Precisely!' cried Albert. 'Well, he of whom I speak is the lord and master of this grain of sand, of this atom; he has purchased the title of count somewhere in Tuscany.'

'He is rich, then?'

'I believe so.'

'But that ought to be visible.'

'That is what deceives you, Debray.'

'I do not understand you.'

'Have you read the *Arabian Nights*?'

'What a question!'

'Well, do you know if the persons you see there are rich or poor, if their sacks of wheat are not rubies or diamonds? They seem like poor fishermen, and suddenly they open some mysterious cavern filled with the wealth of the Indies.'

'Which means?'

'Which means that my Count of Monte Cristo is one of those fishermen. He has even a name taken from the book, since he calls himself Sinbad the Sailor, and has a cave filled with gold.'

'And you have seen this cavern, Morcerf? asked Beauchamp.

'No, but Franz has; for heaven's sake, not a word of this before him. Franz went in with his eyes blindfolded, and was waited on by mutes and by women to whom Cleopatra was a painted strumpet. Only he is not quite sure about the women, for they did not come in until after he had taken hashish, so that what he took for women might have been simply a row of statues.'

The two young men looked at Morcerf as if to say,—'Are you mad, or are you laughing at us?'

'And I also,' said Morrel thoughtfully, 'have heard something like this from an old sailor named Penelon.'

'Ah,' cried Albert, 'it is very lucky that M. Morrel comes to aid me; you are vexed, are you not, that he thus gives a clew to the labyrinth?'

'My dear Albert,' said Debray, 'what you tell us is so extraordinary.'

'Ah, because your ambassadors and your consuls do not tell you of them—they have no time. They are too much taken up with interfering in the affairs of their countrymen who travel.'

## Chapter XI

### The Breakfast

'AND what sort of persons do you expect to breakfast?' said Beauchamp.

man, and a diplomatist.'

Then we shall have to wait two hours for the gentleman, and three for the diplomatist. I shall come back to dessert; keep me some strawberries, coffee, and cigars. I shall take a cutler on my way to the Chamber.'

'Do not do anything of the sort; for were the gentleman a Montmorency, and the diplomatist a Metternich, we will breakfast at eleven, in the meantime, follow Debray's example, and take a glass of sherry and a biscuit.'

'Be it so; I will stay; I must do something to distract my thoughts.'

'You are like Debray, and yet it seems to me that when the minister is out of spirits, the opposition ought to be joyous.'

'Ah, you do not know with what I am threatened. I shall hear this morning that M. Danglars make a speech at the Chamber of Deputies, and at his wife's this evening I shall hear the tragedy of a peer of France. The devil take the constitutional government, and since we had our choice, as they say, at least, how could we choose that?'

'I understand; you must lay in a stock of hilarity.'

'Do not run down M. Danglars' speeches,' said Debray; 'he votes for you, for he belongs to the opposition.'

'*Pardieu*, that is exactly the worst of all. I am waiting until you send him to speak at the Luxembourg, to laugh at my ease.'

'My dear friend,' said Albert to Beauchamp, 'it is plain that the affairs of Spain are settled, for you are most desperately out of humor this morning. Recollect that Parisian gossip has spoken of a marriage between myself

'He is quite right,' returned Beauchamp; 'for I criticise him without knowing what he does. Good-day, commander!'

'Ah, you know that already,' said the private secretary, smiling and shaking hands with him.

'*Pardieu!*'

'And what do they say of it in the world?'

'In which world? we have so many worlds in the year of grace 1838.'

'In the entire political world, of which you are one of the leaders.'

'They say that it is quite fair, and that sowing so much red, you ought to reap a little blue.'

'Come, come, that is not bad!' said Lucien. 'Why do you not join our party, my dear Beauchamp? With your talents you would make your fortune in three or four years.'

'I only await one thing before following your advice; that is, a minister who will hold office for six months. My dear Albert, one word, for I must give poor Lucien a respite. Do we breakfast or dine? I must go to the Chamber, for our life is not an idle one.'

'You only breakfast; I await two persons, and the instant they arrive we shall sit down to table.'

'Now you get angry, and attack our poor agents. How will you have them protect you? The Chamber cuts down their salaries every day, so that now they have scarcely any. Will you be ambassador, Albert? I will send you to Constantinople.'

'No, lest on the first demonstration I make in favour of Mehemet Ali, the Sultan send me the bowstring, and make my secretaries strange me.'

'You say very true,' responded Debray.

'Yes,' said Albert, 'but this has nothing to do with the existence of the Count of Monte Cristo.'

'*Pardieu!* everyone exists.'

'Doubtless, but not in the same way; everyone has not black slaves, a princely retinue, an arsenal of weapons that would do credit to an Arabian fortress, horses that cost six thousand francs apiece, and Greek mistresses.'

'Have you seen the Greek mistress?'

'I have both seen and heard her. I saw her at the theatre, and heard her one morning when I breakfasted with the count.'

'He eats, then?'

'Yes; but so little, it can hardly be called eating.'

'He must be a vampire.'

'Laugh, if you will; the Countess G—, who knew Lord Ruthven, declared that the count was a vampire.'

'Ah, capital,' said Beauchamp. 'For a man not connected with newspapers, here is the pendant to the famous sea-serpent of the *Constitutionnel*.'

'Wild eyes, the iris of which contracts or dilates at pleasure,' said Debray; 'facial angle strongly developed, magnificent forehead, livid complexion, black beard, sharp and white teeth, politeness unexceptionable.'

'Just so, Lucien,' returned Morcerf; 'you have described him feature for feature. Yes, keen and cutting politeness. This man has often made me shudder; and one day when we were viewing an execution, I thought I should faint, more from hearing the cold and calm manner in which he spoke of every description of torture, than from the sight of the executioner and the culprit.'

'Did he not conduct you to the ruins of the Colosseum and suck your blood?' asked Beauchamp.

'Or, having delivered you, make you sign a flaming parchment, surrendering your soul to him as Esau did his birth-right?'

'Rail on, rail on at your ease, gentlemen,' said Morcerf, somewhat piqued. 'When I look at you Parisians, idlers on the Boulevard de Gand or the Bois de Boulogne, and think of this man, it seems to me we are not of the same race.'

'I am highly flattered,' returned Beauchamp.

'At the same time,' added Château-Renaud, 'your Count of Monte Cristo is a very fine fellow, always excepting his little arrangements with the Italian banditi.'

'There are no Italian banditi,' said Debray.

'No vampire,' cried Beauchamp.

'No Count of Monte Cristo' added Debray. 'There is half-past ten striking, Albert.' 'Confess you have dreamed this, and let us sit down to breakfast,' continued Beauchamp.

But the sound of the clock had not died away when Germain announced, 'His excellency the Count of Monte Cristo.' The involuntary start everyone gave proved how much Morcerf's narrative had impressed them, and Albert himself could not wholly refrain from manifesting sudden emotion. He had not heard a carriage stop in the street, or steps in the ante-chamber; the door had itself opened noiselessly. The count appeared, dressed with the greatest simplicity, but the most fastidious dandy could have found nothing to cavil at in his toilet. Every article of dress—hat, coat, gloves, and boots—was from the first makers. He seemed scarcely five-and-thirty. But what struck everybody was his extreme resemblance to the portrait Debray had drawn. The count advanced, smiling, into the centre of the room, and approached Albert, who hastened towards him holding out his hand in a ceremonial manner.

'Punctuality,' said Monte Cristo, 'is the politeness of kings, according to one of your sovereigns, I think; but it is not the same with travellers. However, I hope you will excuse the two or three seconds I am behind-hand; five hundred leagues are not to be accomplished without some trouble, and especially in France, where, it seems, it is forbidden to beat the postilions.'

'My dear count,' replied Albert, 'I was announcing your visit to some of my friends, whom I had invited in consequence of the promise you did me the honour to make, and whom I now present to you. They are the Count of Château-Renaud, whose nobility goes back to the twelve peers,

'A man.'

'I know so many men already.'

'But you do not know this man.'

'Where does he come from—the end of the world?'

'Farther still, perhaps.'

'The deuce! I hope he does not bring our breakfast with him.'

'Oh, no; our breakfast comes from my father's kitchen. Are you hungry?'

'Humiliating as such a confession is, I am. But I dined at M. de Villefort's, and lawyers always give you very bad dinners. You would think they felt some remorse; did you ever remark that?'

'Ah, depreciate other persons' dinners; you ministers give such splendours.'

'Yes; but we do not invite people of fashion. If we were not forced to entertain a parcel of country boobies because they think and vote with us, we should never dream of dining at home, I assure you.'

'Well, take another glass of sherry and another biscuit.'

'Willingly. Your Spanish wine is excellent. You see we were quite right to pacify that country.'

'Yes; but Don Carlos?'

'Well, Don Carlos will drink Bordeaux, and in ten years we will marry his son to the little queen.'

'You will then obtain the Golden Fleece, if you are still in the ministry.'

'I think, Albert, you have adopted the system of feeding me on smoke this morning.'

'Well, you must allow it is the best thing for the stomach; but I hear Beauchamp in the next room; you can dispute together, and that will pass away the time.'

'About what?'

'About the papers.'

'My dear friend,' said Lucien with an air of sovereign contempt, 'do I ever read the papers?'

'Then you will dispute the more.'

'M. Beauchamp,' announced the servant. 'Come in, come in,' said Albert, rising and advancing to meet the young man. 'Here is Debray, who detests you without reading you, so he says.'

'No, because I passed the night writing letters,—five-and-twenty despatches. I returned home at daybreak, and strove to sleep; but my head ached and I got up to have a ride for an hour. At the Bois de Boulogne, *en-mui* and hunger attacked me at once,—two enemies who rarely accompany each other, and who are yet leagued against me, a sort of Carlo-republican alliance. I then recollected you gave a breakfast this morning, and here I am. I am hungry, feed me; I am bored, amuse me.'

'It is my duty as your host,' returned Albert, ringing the bell, while Lucien turned over, with his gold-mounted cane, the papers that lay on the table. 'Germain, a glass of sherry and a biscuit. In the meantime, my dear Lucien, here are cigars—contraband, of course—try them, and persuade the minister to sell us such instead of poisoning us with cabbage leaves.'

'*Peste!* I will do nothing of the kind; the moment they come from government you would find them execrable. Besides, that does not concern the home but the financial department. Address yourself to M. Humann, section of the indirect contributions, corridor A., № 26.'

'On my word,' said Albert, 'you astonish me by the extent of your knowledge. Take a cigar.'

'Really, my dear Albert,' replied Lucien, lighting a manilla at a rose-coloured taper that burnt in a beautifully enamelled stand—'how happy you are to have nothing to do. You do not know your own good fortune!'

'And what would you do, my dear diplomatist,' replied Morcerf, with a slight degree of irony in his voice, 'if you did nothing? What? private secretary to a minister, plunged at once into European cabals and Parisian intrigues; having kings, and, better still, queens, to protect, parties to unite, elections to direct; making more use of your cabinet with your pen and your telegraph than Napoleon did of his battle-fields with his sword and his victories; possessing five-and-twenty thousand francs a year, besides your place; a horse, for which Châteaurenault offered you four hundred louis, and which you would not part with; a tailor who never disappoints you; with the opera, the jockey-club, and other diversions, can you not amuse yourself? Well, I will amuse you.'

'How?'

'By introducing to you a new acquaintance.'

'A man or a woman?'

and whose ancestors had a place at the Round Table; M. Lucien Debray, private secretary to the minister of the interior, M. Beauchamp, an editor of a paper, and the terror of the French government, but of whom, in spite of his national celebrity, you perhaps have not heard in Italy, since his paper is prohibited there; and M. Maximilian Morrel, captain of Spahis.'

At this name the count, who had hitherto saluted everyone with courtesy, but at the same time with coldness and formality, stepped a pace forward, and a slight tinge of red coloured his pale cheeks.

'You wear the uniform of the new French conquerors, monsieur,' said he; 'it is a handsome uniform.'

No one could have said what caused the count's voice to vibrate so deeply, and what made his eye flash, which was in general so clear, lustrous, and limpid when he pleased.

'You have never seen our Africans, count?' said Albert.

'Never,' replied the count, who was by this time perfectly master of himself again.

'Well, beneath this uniform beats one of the bravest and noblest hearts in the whole army.'

'Oh, M. de Morcerf,' interrupted Morrel.

'Let me go on, captain. And we have just heard,' continued Albert, 'of a new deed of his, and so heroic a one, that, although I have seen him today for the first time, I request you to allow me to introduce him as my friend.'

At these words it was still possible to observe in Monte Cristo the concentrated look, changing colour, and slight trembling of the eyelid that show emotion.

'Ah, you have a noble heart,' said the count; 'so much the better.'

This exclamation, which corresponded to the count's own thought rather than to what Albert was saying, surprised everybody, and especially Morrel, who looked at Monte Cristo with wonder. But, at the same time, the intonation was so soft that, however strange the speech might seem, it was impossible to be offended at it. 'Why should he doubt it?' said Beauchamp to Châteaurenault.

'In reality,' replied the latter, who, with his aristocratic glance and his knowledge of the world, had penetrated at once all that was penetrable in

Monte Cristo, 'Albert has not deceived us, for the count is a most singular being. What say you, Morrel!'

'*Ma foi*, he has an open look about him that pleases me, in spite of the singular remark he has made about me.'

'Gentlemen,' said Albert, 'Germain informs me that breakfast is ready. My dear count, allow me to show you the way.' They passed silently into the breakfast-room, and everyone took his place.

'Gentlemen,' said the count, seating himself, 'permit me to make a confession which must form my excuse for any improprieties I may commit. I am a stranger, and a stranger to such a degree, that this is the first time I have ever been at Paris. The French way of living is utterly unknown to me, and up to the present time I have followed the Eastern customs, which are entirely in contrast to the Parisian. I beg you, therefore, to excuse if you find anything in me too Turkish, too Italian, or too Arabian. Now, then, let us breakfast.'

'With what an air he says all this,' muttered Beauchamp; 'decidedly he is a great man.'

'A great man in his own country,' added Debray.

'A great man in every country, M. Debray,' said Château-Renaud.

The count was, it may be remembered, a most temperate guest. Albert remarked this, expressing his fears lest, at the outset, the Parisian mode of life should displease the traveller in the most essential point.

'My dear count,' said he, 'I fear one thing, and that is, that the fare of the Rue du Helder is not so much to your taste as that of the Piazza di Spagna. I ought to have consulted you on the point, and have had some dishes prepared expressly.'

'Did you know me better,' returned the count, smiling, 'you would not give one thought of such a thing for a traveller like myself, who has successively lived on macaroni at Naples, polenta at Milan, olla podrida at Valencia, pilau at Constantinople, curry in India, and swallows' nests in China. I eat everywhere, and of everything, only I eat but little; and today, that you reproach me with my want of appetite, is my day of appetite, for I have not eaten since yesterday morning.'

'What,' cried all the guests, 'you have not eaten for four-and-twenty hours?'

A moment after, a carriage stopped before the door, and the servant announced M. Lucien Debray. A tall young man, with light hair, clear gray eyes, and thin and compressed lips, dressed in a blue coat with beautifully carved gold buttons, a white neckcloth, and a tortoiseshell eye-glass suspended by a silken thread, and which, by an effort of the supercilious and zygomatic muscles, he fixed in his eye, entered, with a half-official air, without smiling or speaking.

'Good-morning, Lucien, good-morning,' said Albert; 'your punctuality really alarms me. What do I say? punctuality! You, whom I expected last, you arrive at five minutes to ten, when the time fixed was half-past! Has the ministry resigned?'

'No, my dear fellow,' returned the young man, seating himself on the divan; 'reassure yourself; we are tottering always, but we never fall, and I begin to believe that we shall pass into a state of immobility, and then the affairs of the Peninsula will completely consolidate us.'

'Ah, true; you drive Don Carlos out of Spain.'

'No, no, my dear fellow, do not confound our plans. We take him to the other side of the French frontier, and offer him hospitality at Bourges.'

'At Bourges?'

'Yes, he has not much to complain of; Bourges is the capital of Charles VII. Do you not know that all Paris knew it yesterday, and the day before it had already transpired on the Bourse, and M. Danglars (I do not know by what means that man contrives to obtain intelligence as soon as we do) made a million!'

'And you another order, for I see you have a blue ribbon at your button-hole.'

'Yes; they sent me the order of Charles III.,' returned Debray carelessly.

'Come, do not affect indifference, but confess you were pleased to have it.'

'Oh, it is very well as a finish to the toilet. It looks very neat on a black coat buttoned up.'

'And makes you resemble the Prince of Wales or the Duke of Reichstadt.'

'It is for that reason you see me so early.'

'Because you have the order of Charles III., and you wish to announce the good news to me?'