

the line that indicates the constant presence of bitter thoughts; he had the fiery eyes that seem to penetrate to the very soul, and the haughty and disdainful upper lip that gives to the words it utters a peculiar character that impresses them on the minds of those to whom they are addressed.

The count was no longer young. He was at least forty; and yet it was easy to understand that he was formed to rule the young men with whom he associated at present. And, to complete his resemblance with the fantastic heroes of the English poet, the count seemed to have the power of fascination. Albert was constantly expatiating on their good fortune in meeting such a man. Franz was less enthusiastic; but the count exercised over him also the ascendancy a strong mind always acquires over a mind less dominating. He thought several times of the project the count had of visiting Paris; and he had no doubt but that, with his eccentric character, his characteristic face, and his colossal fortune, he would produce a great effect there. And yet he did not wish to be at Paris when the count was there.

The evening passed as evenings mostly pass at Italian theatres; that is, not in listening to the music, but in paying visits and conversing. The Countess G— wished to revive the subject of the count, but Franz announced he had something far newer to tell her, and, in spite of Albert's demonstrations of false modesty, he informed the countess of the great event which had preoccupied them for the last three days. As similar intrigues are not uncommon in Italy, if we may credit travellers, the countess did not manifest the least incredulity, but congratulated Albert on his success. They promised, upon separating, to meet at the Duke of Bracciano's ball, to which all Rome was invited.

The heroine of the bouquet kept her word; she gave Albert no sign of her existence the morrow or the day after.

At length Tuesday came, the last and most tumultuous day of the Carnival. On Tuesday, the theatres open at ten o'clock in the morning, as Lent begins after eight at night. On Tuesday, all those who through want of money, time, or enthusiasm, have not been to see the Carnival before, mingle in the gayety, and contribute to the noise and excitement. From two o'clock till five Franz and Albert followed in the *fête*, exchanging handfuls of *confetti* with the other carriages and the pedestrians, who crowded amongst the horses' feet and the carriage wheels without a single accident, a single dispute, or a single fight.

The *fêtes* are veritable pleasure days to the Italians. The author of this history, who has resided five or six years in Italy, does not recollect to have ever seen a ceremony interrupted by one of those events so common in other countries. Albert was triumphant in his harlequin costume. A knot of rose-coloured ribbons fell from his shoulder almost to the ground. In order that there might be no confusion, Franz wore his peasant's costume.

As the day advanced, the tumult became greater. There was not on the pavement, in the carriages, at the windows, a single tongue that was silent, a single arm that did not move. It was a human storm, made up of a thunder of cries, and a hail of sweetmeats, flowers, eggs, oranges, and nosegays.

At three o'clock the sound of fireworks, let off on the Piazza del Popolo and the Piazza di Venezia (heard with difficulty amid the din and confusion) announced that the races were about to begin.

The races, like the *maccoli*, are one of the episodes peculiar to the last days of the Carnival. At the sound of the fireworks the carriages instantly broke ranks, and retired by the adjacent streets. All these evolutions are executed with an inconceivable address and marvellous rapidity, without the police interfering in the matter. The pedestrians ranged themselves against the walls; then the trampling of horses and the clashing of steel were heard. A detachment of cabineers, fifteen abreast, galloped up the Corso in order to clear it for the *barberi*. When the detachment arrived at the Piazza di Venezia, a second volley of fireworks was discharged, to announce that the street was clear.

Almost instantly, in the midst of a tremendous and general outcry, seven or eight horses, excited by the shouts of three hundred thousand spectators, passed by like lightning. Then the Castle of Saint Angelo fired three cannon to indicate that number three had won.

Immediately, without any other signal, the carriages moved on, flowing on towards the Corso, down all the streets, like torrents pent up for a while, which again flow into the parent river; and the immense stream again continued its course between its two granite banks.

A new source of noise and movement was added to the crowd. The sellers of *maccolitti* entered on the scene. The *maccoli*, or *maccoletti*, are candles which vary in size from the pascal taper to the rushlight, and which give to each actor in the great final scene of the Carnival two very serious problems to grapple with,—first, how to keep his own *macoletto* alight; and secondly,

how to extinguish the *moccoletti* of others. The *moccoletto* is like life: man has found but one means of transmitting it, and that one comes from God. But he has discovered a thousand means of taking it away, and the devil has somewhat aided him. The *moccoletto* is kindled by approaching it to a light. But who can describe the thousand means of extinguishing the *moccoletto*?—the gigantic bellows, the monstrous extinguishers, the superhuman fans. Everyone hastened to purchase *moccoletti*—Franz and Albert among the rest.

The night was rapidly approaching; and already, at the cry of ‘*Moccoletti*!’ repeated by the shrill voices of a thousand vendors, two or three stars began to burn among the crowd. It was a signal. At the end of ten minutes fifty thousand lights glittered, descending from the Palazzo di Venezia to the Piazza del Popolo, and mounting from the Piazza del Popolo to the Palazzo di Venezia. It seemed like the *fête* of Jack-o’-lanterns.

It is impossible to form any idea of it without having seen it. Suppose that all the stars had descended from the sky and mingled in a wild dance on the face of the earth; the whole accompanied by cries that were never heard in any other part of the world. The *facchino* follows the prince, the Transverin the citizen, everyone blowing, extinguishing, relighting. Had old Æolus appeared at this moment, he would have been proclaimed king of the *mocoli*, and Aquilo the heir-presumptive to the throne.

This battle of folly and flame continued for two hours; the Corso was light as day; the features of the spectators on the third and fourth stories were visible. Every five minutes Albert took out his watch; at length it pointed to seven.

The two friends were in the Via dei Pontefici. Albert sprang out, bearing his *moccoletto* in his hand. Two or three masks strove to knock his *moccoletto* out of his hand; but Albert, a first-rate pugilist, sent them rolling in the street, one after the other, and continued his course towards the church of San Giacomo.

The steps were crowded with masks, who strove to snatch each other’s torches. Franz followed Albert with his eyes, and saw him mount the first step.

Instantly a mask, wearing the well-known costume of a peasant woman, snatched his *moccoletto* from him without his offering any resistance. Franz was too far off to hear what they said; but, without doubt, nothing hostile passed, for he saw Albert disappear arm-in-arm with the peasant girl. He watched them pass through the crowd for some time, but at length he lost sight of them in the Via Macello.

‘You alarm me,’ cried Franz. ‘I see that I shall not only go alone to the Duke of Bracciano’s, but also return to Florence alone.’

‘If my unknown be as amiable as she is beautiful,’ said Albert, ‘I shall fix myself at Rome for six weeks, at least. I adore Rome, and I have always had a great taste for archæology.’ ‘Come, two or three more such adventures, and I do not despair of seeing you a member of the Academy.’

Doubtless Albert was about to discuss seriously his right to the academic chair when they were informed that dinner was ready. Albert’s love had not taken away his appetite. He hastened with Franz to seat himself, free to recommence the discussion after dinner. After dinner, the Count of Monte Cristo was announced. They had not seen him for two days. Signor Pastriani informed them that business had called him to Civita Vecchia. He had started the previous evening, and had only returned an hour since. He was charming. Whether he kept a watch over himself, or whether by accident he did not sound the acrimonious chords that in other circumstances had been touched, he was tonight like everybody else.

The man was an enigma to Franz. The count must feel sure that Franz recognized him; and yet he had not let fall a single word indicating any previous acquaintance between them. On his side, however great Franz’s desire was to allude to their former interview, the fear of being disagreeable to the man who had loaded him and his friend with kindness prevented him from mentioning it.

The count had learned that the two friends had sent to secure a box at the Argentina Theatre, and were told they were all set. In consequence, he brought them the key of his own—at least such was the apparent motive of his visit. Franz and Albert made some difficulty, alleging their fear of depriving him of it; but the count replied that, as he was going to the Palli Theatre, the box at the Argentina Theatre would be lost if they did not profit by it. This assurance determined the two friends to accept it.

Franz had by degrees become accustomed to the count’s pallor, which had so forcibly struck him at their first meeting. He could not refrain from admiring the severe beauty of his features, the only defect, or rather the principal quality of which was the pallor. Truly, a Byronic hero! Franz could not, we will not say see him, but even think of him without imagining his stern head upon Manfred’s shoulders, or beneath Lara’s helmet. His forehead was marked with

day in writing and looking over his journal. Albert was not deceived, for the next evening Franz saw him enter triumphantly shaking a folded paper which he held by one corner.

‘Well,’ said he, ‘was I mistaken?’

‘She has answered you!’ cried Franz.

‘Read.’

This word was pronounced in a manner impossible to describe. Franz took the letter, and read:

‘Tuesday evening, at seven o’clock, descend from your carriage opposite the Via dei Pontefici, and follow the Roman peasant who snatches your torch from you. When you arrive at the first step of the church of San Giacomo, be sure to fasten a knot of rose-coloured ribbons to the shoulder of your harlequin costume, in order that you may be recognized. Until then you will not see me.—Constancy and Discretion.’

‘Well,’ asked he, when Franz had finished, ‘what do you think of that?’

‘I think that the adventure is assuming a very agreeable appearance.’

‘I think so, also,’ replied Albert; ‘and I very much fear you will go alone to the Duke of Bracciano’s ball.’

Franz and Albert had received that morning an invitation from the celebrated Roman banker.

‘Take care, Albert,’ said Franz. ‘All the nobility of Rome will be present, and if your fair *incognita* belong to the higher class of society, she must go there.’

‘Whether she goes there or not, my opinion is still the same,’ returned Albert. ‘You have read the letter?’

‘Yes.’

‘You know how imperfectly the women of the *mezzo cito* are educated in Italy?’ (This is the name of the lower class.)

‘Yes.’

‘Well, read the letter again. Look at the writing, and find if you can, any blemish in the language or orthography.’ The writing was, in reality, charming, and the orthography irreproachable.

‘You are born to good fortune,’ said Franz, as he returned the letter.

‘Laugh as much as you will,’ replied Albert, ‘I am in love.’

Suddenly the bell that gives the signal for the end of the Carnival sounded, and at the same instant all the *mocholetti* were extinguished as if by enchantment. It seemed as though one immense blast of the wind had extinguished everyone.

Franz found himself in utter darkness. No sound was audible save that of the carriages that were carrying the maskers home; nothing was visible save a few lights that burnt behind the windows.

The Carnival was over.

one's self without awe before the venerable and noble old man called Gregory XVI.

On his return from the Vatican, Franz carefully avoided the Corso; he brought away with him a treasure of pious thoughts, to which the mad gayety of the maskers would have been profanation.

At ten minutes past five Albert entered overjoyed. The harlequin had reassumed her peasant's costume, and as she passed she raised her mask. She was charming. Franz congratulated Albert, who received his congratulations with the air of a man conscious that they are merited. He had recognized by certain unmistakable signs, that his fair *incognita* belonged to the aristocracy. He had made up his mind to write to her the next day.

Franz remarked, while he gave these details, that Albert seemed to have something to ask of him, but that he was unwilling to ask it. He insisted upon it, declaring beforehand that he was willing to make any sacrifice the other wished.

Albert let himself be pressed just as long as friendship required, and then avowed to Franz that he would do him a great favour by allowing him to occupy the carriage alone the next day. Albert attributed to Franz's absence the extreme kindness of the fair peasant in raising her mask. Franz was not sufficiently egotistical to stop Albert in the middle of an adventure that promised to prove so agreeable to his curiosity and so flattering to his vanity. He felt assured that the perfect indiscretion of his friend would duly inform him of all that happened; and as, during three years that he had travelled all over Italy, a similar piece of good fortune had never fallen to his share, Franz was by no means sorry to learn how to act on such an occasion. He therefore promised Albert that he would content himself the morrow with witnessing the Carnival from the windows of the Rospoli Palace.

The next morning he saw Albert pass and repass, holding an enormous bouquet, which he doubtless meant to make the bearer of his amorous epistle. This belief was changed into certainty when Franz saw the bouquet (conspicuous by a circle of white camellias) in the hand of a charming harlequin dressed in rose-coloured satin.

The evening was no longer joy, but delirium. Albert nothing doubted but that the fair unknown would reply in the same manner. Franz anticipated his wishes by saying that the noise fatigued him, and that he should pass the next

count the breakfast he had given them; it would have been too absurd to offer him in exchange for his excellent table the very inferior one of Signor Pastriani. They told him so frankly, and he received their excuses with the air of a man who appreciated their delicacy. Albert was charmed with the count's manners, and he was only prevented from recognizing him for a perfect gentleman by reason of his varied knowledge.

The permission to do what he liked with the carriage pleased him above all, for the fair peasants had appeared in a most elegant carriage the preceding evening, and Albert was not sorry to be upon an equal footing with them. At half-past one they descended, the coachman and footman had put on their livery over their disguises, which gave them a more ridiculous appearance than ever, and which gained them the applause of Franz and Albert. Albert had fastened the faded bunch of violets to his button-hole. At the first sound of the bell they hastened into the Corso by the Via Vittoria.

At the second turn, a bunch of fresh violets, thrown from a carriage filled with harlequins, indicated to Albert that, like himself and his friend, the peasants had changed their costume also; and whether it was the result of chance, or whether a similar feeling had possessed them both, while he had donned their costume, they had assumed his.

Albert placed the fresh bouquet in his button-hole, but he kept the faded one in his hand; and when he again met the calash, he raised it to his lips, an action which seemed greatly to amuse not only the fair lady who had thrown it, but her joyous companions also. The day was as gay as the preceding one, perhaps even more animated and noisy; the count appeared for an instant at his window, but when they again passed he had disappeared. It is almost needless to say that the flirtation between Albert and the fair peasant continued all day.

In the evening, on his return, Franz found a letter from the embassy, informing him that he would have the honour of being received by his holiness the next day. At each previous visit he had made to Rome, he had solicited and obtained the same favour; and incited as much by a religious feeling as by gratitude, he was unwilling to quit the capital of the Christian world without laying his respectful homage at the feet of one of St. Peter's successors who has set the rare example of all the virtues. He did not then think of the Carnival, for in spite of his condescension and touching kindness, one cannot incline

## Chapter XXXVII

### The Catacombs of Saint Sebastian



IN his whole life, perhaps, Franz had never before experienced so sudden an impression, so rapid a transition from gaiety to sadness, as in this moment. It seemed as though Rome, under the magic breath of some demon of the night, had suddenly changed into a vast tomb. By a chance, which added yet more to the intensity of the darkness, the moon, which was on the wane, did not rise until eleven o'clock, and the streets which the young man traversed were plunged in the deepest obscurity.

The distance was short, and at the end of ten minutes his carriage, or rather the count's, stopped before the Hôtel de Londres.

Dinner was waiting, but as Albert had told him that he should not return so soon, Franz sat down without him. Signor Pastriani, who had been accustomed to see them dine together, inquired into the cause of his absence, but Franz merely replied that Albert had received on the previous evening an invitation which he had accepted.

The sudden extinction of the *mocchetti*, the darkness which had replaced the light, and the silence which had succeeded the turmoil, had left in Franz's mind a certain depression which was not free from uneasiness. He therefore dined very silently, in spite of the officious attention of his host, who presented himself two or three times to inquire if he wanted anything.

Franz resolved to wait for Albert as late as possible. He ordered the carriage, therefore, for eleven o'clock, desiring Signor Pastriani to inform him the moment that Albert returned to the hotel.

At eleven o'clock Albert had not come back. Franz dressed himself, and went out, telling his host that he was going to pass the night at the Duke of Bracciano's. The house of the Duke of Bracciano is one of the most delightful

in Rome, the duchess, one of the last heiresses of the Colonnas, does its honours with the most consummate grace, and thus their *fêtes* have a European celebrity.

Franz and Albert had brought to Rome letters of introduction to them, and their first question on his arrival was to inquire the whereabouts of his travelling companion. Franz replied that he had left him at the moment they were about to extinguish the *maccoli*, and that he had lost sight of him in the Via Macello.

'Then he has not returned?' said the duke.

'I waited for him until this hour,' replied Franz.

'And do you know whither he went?'

'No, not precisely; however, I think it was something very like a rendezvous,' *'Diavolo!'* said the duke, 'this is a bad day, or rather a bad night, to be out late; is it not, countess?'

These words were addressed to the Countess G—, who had just arrived, and was leaning on the arm of Signor Tortonina, the duke's brother.

'I think, on the contrary, that it is a charming night,' replied the countess, 'and those who are here will complain of but one thing, that of its too rapid flight.'

'I am not speaking,' said the duke with a smile, 'of the persons who are here; the men run no other danger than that of falling in love with you, and the women of falling ill of jealousy at seeing you so lovely; I meant persons who were out in the streets of Rome.'

'Ah,' asked the countess, 'who is out in the streets of Rome at this hour, unless it be to go to a ball?'

'Our friend, Albert de Morcerf, countess, whom I left in pursuit of his unknown about seven o'clock this evening,' said Franz, 'and whom I have not seen since.'

'And don't you know where he is?'

'Not at all.'

'Is he armed?'

'He is in masquerade.'

'You should not have allowed him to go,' said the duke to Franz, 'you, who know Rome better than he does.'

At this moment a fresh visitor entered, and, according to custom, Franz gave up his seat to him. This circumstance had, moreover, the effect of changing the conversation; an hour afterwards the two friends returned to their hotel. Signor Pastriani had already set about procuring their disguises for the morrow; and he assured them that they would be perfectly satisfied. The next morning, at nine o'clock, he entered Franz's room, followed by a tailor, who had eight or ten Roman peasant costumes on his arm; they selected two exactly alike, and charged the tailor to sew on each of their hats about twenty yards of ribbon, and to procure them two of the long silk sashes of different colours with which the lower orders decorate themselves on fête days.

Albert was impatient to see how he looked in his new dress—a jacket and breeches of blue velvet, silk stockings with clocks, shoes with buckles, and a silk waistcoat. This picturesque attire set him off to great advantage; and when he had bound the scarf around his waist, and when his hat, placed coquettishly on one side, let fall on his shoulder a stream of ribbons, Franz was forced to confess that costume has much to do with the physical superiority we accord to certain nations. The Turks used to be so picturesque with their long and flowing robes, but are they not now hideous with their blue frocks buttoned up to the chin, and their red caps, which make them look like a bottle of wine with a red seal? Franz complimented Albert, who looked at himself in the glass with an unequivocal smile of satisfaction. They were thus engaged when the Count of Monte Cristo entered. 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'although a companion is agreeable, perfect freedom is sometimes still more agreeable. I come to say that today, and for the remainder of the Carnival, I leave the carriage entirely at your disposal. The host will tell you I have three or four more, so that you will not inconvenience me in any way. Make use of it, I pray you, for your pleasure or your business.'

The young men wished to decline, but they could find no good reason for refusing an offer which was so agreeable to them. The Count of Monte Cristo remained a quarter of an hour with them, conversing on all subjects with the greatest ease. He was, as we have already said, perfectly well acquainted with the literature of all countries. A glance at the walls of his salon proved to Franz and Albert that he was a connoisseur of pictures. A few words he let fall showed them that he was no stranger to the sciences, and he seemed much occupied with chemistry. The two friends did not venture to return the

'Ask the Vicomte de Morcerf.'

'You hear, M. de Morcerf, I am referred to you,' said the countess.

'We should be very hard to please, madam,' returned Albert, 'did we not think him delightful. A friend of ten years' standing could not have done more for us, or with a more perfect courtesy.'

'Come,' observed the countess, smiling, 'I see my vampire is only some millionaire, who has taken the appearance of Lara in order to avoid being confounded with M. de Rothschild; and you have seen her?'

'Her?' 'The beautiful Greek of yesterday.'

'No; we heard, I think, the sound of her *guzla*, but she remained perfectly invisible.'

'When you say invisible,' interrupted Albert, 'it is only to keep up the mystery, for whom do you take the blue domino at the window with the white curtains?'

'Where was this window with white hangings?' asked the countess.

'At the Rospoli Palace.'

'The count had three windows at the Rospoli Palace?'

'Yes. Did you pass through the Corso?'

'Yes.'

'Well, did you notice two windows hung with yellow damask, and one with white damask with a red cross? Those were the count's windows.'

'Why, he must be a nabob. Do you know what those three windows were worth?'

'Two or three hundred Roman crowns?'

'Two or three thousand.'

'The deuce!'

'Does his island produce him such a revenue?'

'It does not bring him a bajocco.'

'Then why did he purchase it?'

'For a whim.'

'He is an original, then?'

'In reality,' observed Albert, 'he seemed to me somewhat eccentric; were he at Paris, and a frequenter of the theatres, I should say he was a poor devil literally mad. This morning he made two or three exits worthy of Didier or Anthony.'

'You might as well have tried to stop number three of the *barberi*, who gained the prize in the race today,' replied Franz, 'and then moreover, what could happen to him?'

'Who can tell? The night is gloomy, and the Tiber is very near the Via Maello.' Franz felt a shudder run through his veins at observing that the feeling of the duke and the countess was so much in unison with his own personal disquietude.

'I informed them at the hotel that I had the honour of passing the night here, duke,' said Franz, 'and desired them to come and inform me of his return.'

'Ah,' replied the duke, 'here I think, is one of my servants who is seeking you.'

The duke was not mistaken; when he saw Franz, the servant came up to him.

'Your excellency,' he said, 'the master of the Hôtel de Londres has sent to let you know that a man is waiting for you with a letter from the Viscount of Morcerf.'

'A letter from the viscount!' exclaimed Franz.

'Yes.'

'And who is the man?'

'I do not know.'

'Why did he not bring it to me here?'

'The messenger did not say.'

'And where is the messenger?'

'He went away directly he saw me enter the ball-room to find you.'

'Oh,' said the countess to Franz, 'go with all speed—poor young man! Perhaps some accident has happened to him.'

'I will hasten,' replied Franz.

'Shall we see you again to give us any information?' inquired the countess.

'Yes, if it is not any serious affair, otherwise I cannot answer as to what I may do myself.'

'Be prudent, in any event,' said the countess.

'Oh! pray be assured of that.'

Franz took his hat and went away in haste. He had sent away his carriage with orders for it to fetch him at two o'clock; fortunately the Palazzo Bracciano,

which is on one side in the Corso, and on the other in the Square of the Holy Apostles, is hardly ten minutes' walk from the Hôtel de Londres.

As he came near the hotel, Franz saw a man in the middle of the street. He had no doubt that it was the messenger from Albert. The man was wrapped up in a large cloak. He went up to him, but, to his extreme astonishment, the stranger first addressed him.

'What wants your excellency of me?' inquired the man, retreating a step or two, as if to keep on his guard.

'Are not you the person who brought me a letter,' inquired Franz, 'from the Viscount of Morcerf?'

'Your excellency lodges at Pastriani's hotel?'

'I do.'

'Your excellency is the travelling companion of the viscount?'

'I am.'

'Your excellency's name—'

'Is the Baron Franz d'Épinay.' 'Then it is to your excellency that this letter is addressed.'

'Is there any answer?' inquired Franz, taking the letter from him.

'Yes—your friend at least hopes so.'

'Come upstairs with me, and I will give it to you.'

'I prefer waiting here,' said the messenger, with a smile.

'And why?'

'Your excellency will know when you have read the letter.'

'Shall I find you here, then?'

'Certainly.'

Franz entered the hotel. On the staircase he met Signor Pastriani. 'Well?' said the landlord.

'Well—what?' responded Franz.

'You have seen the man who desired to speak with you from your friend?' he asked of Franz.

'Yes, I have seen him,' he replied, 'and he has handed this letter to me. Light the candles in my apartment, if you please.'

The innkeeper gave orders to a servant to go before Franz with a light. The young man had found Signor Pastriani looking very much alarmed, and this had only made him the more anxious to read Albert's letter; and so he went

she motioned to Franz to assume the seat of honour. Albert, in his turn, sat behind.

'Well,' said she, hardly giving Franz time to sit down, 'it seems you have nothing better to do than to make the acquaintance of this new Lord Ruthven, and you are already the best friends in the world.'

'Without being so far advanced as that, my dear countess,' returned Franz, 'I cannot deny that we have abused his good nature all day.'

'All day?'

'Yes; this morning we breakfasted with him; we rode in his carriage all day, and now we have taken possession of his box.'

'You know him, then?'

'Yes, and no.'

'How so?'

'It is a long story.'

'Tell it to me.'

'It would frighten you too much.'

'So much the more reason.'

'At least wait until the story has a conclusion.'

'Very well; I prefer complete histories; but tell me how you made his acquaintance? Did anyone introduce you to him?'

'No; it was he who introduced himself to us.'

'When?'

'Last night, after we left you.'

'Through what medium?'

'The very prosaic one of our landlord.'

'He is staying, then, at the Hôtel de Londres with you?'

'Not only in the same hotel, but on the same floor.'

'What is his name; for, of course, you know?'

'The Count of Monte Cristo.'

'That is not a family name?'

'No, it is the name of the island he has purchased.'

'And he is a count?'

'A Tuscan count.'

'Well, we must put up with that,' said the countess, who was herself from one of the oldest Venetian families. 'What sort of a man is he?'