"Indeed I do!" cried Haydée. "Oh, my mother, it was you who said, 'You were free, you had a beloved father, you were destined to be almost a queen. Look well at that man; it is he who raised your father's head on the point of a spear; it is he who sold us; it is he who forsook us! Look well at his right hand, on which he has a large wound; if you forgot his features, you would know him by that hand, into which fell, one by one, the gold pieces of the merchant El-Kobbir!' I know him! Ah, let him say now if he does not recognize me!" Each word fell like a dagger on Morcerf, and deprived him of a portion of his energy; as she uttered the last, he hid his mutilated hand hastily in his bosom, and fell back on his seat, overwhelmed by wretchedness and despair. This scene completely changed the opinion of the assembly respecting the accused count.

"Count of Morcerf," said the president, "do not allow yourself to be cast down; answer. The justice of the court is supreme and impartial as that of God; it will not suffer you to be trampled on by your enemies without giving you an opportunity of defending yourself. Shall further inquiries be made? Shall two members of the House be sent to Yanina? Speak!"

Morcerf did not reply. Then all the members looked at each other with terror. They knew the count's energetic and violent temper; it must be, indeed, a dreadful blow which would deprive him of courage to defend himself. They expected that his stupefied silence would be followed by a fiery outburst.

"Well," asked the president, "what is your decision?"

"I have no reply to make," said the count in a low tone.

"Has the daughter of Ali Tepelini spoken the truth?" said the president. "Is she, then, the terrible witness to whose charge you dare not plead 'Not guilty'? Have you really committed the crimes of which you are accused?" The count looked around him with an expression which might have softened tigers, but which could not disarm his judges. Then he raised his eyes towards the ceiling, but withdrew then, immediately, as if he feared the roof would open and reveal to his distressed view that second tribunal called heaven, and that other judge named God. Then, with a hasty movement, he tore open his coat, which seemed to stifle him, and flew from the room like a madman; his footstep was heard one moment

in the corridor, then the rattling of his carriage-wheels as he was driven rapidly away.

"Gentlemen," said the president, when silence was restored, "is the Count of Morcerf convicted of felony, treason, and conduct unbecoming a member of this House?"

"Yes," replied all the members of the committee of inquiry with a unanimous voice.

Haydée had remained until the close of the meeting. She heard the count's sentence pronounced without betraying an expression of joy or pity; then drawing her veil over her face she bowed majestically to the councillors, and left with that dignified step which Virgil attributes to his goddesses.'

with every paternal care, and I am ignorant of nothing which passes in the world. I learn all in the silence of my apartments,—for instance, I see all the newspapers, every periodical, as well as every new piece of music; and by thus watching the course of the life of others, I learned what had transpired this morning in the House of Peers, and what was to take place this evening; then I wrote."

"Then," remarked the president, "the Count of Monte Cristo knows nothing of your present proceedings?"

"He is quite unaware of them, and I have but one fear, which is that he should disapprove of what I have done. But it is a glorious day for me," continued the young girl, raising her ardent gaze to heaven, "that on which I find at last an opportunity of avenging my father!"

The count had not uttered one word the whole of this time. His colleagues looked at him, and doubtless pitied his prospects, blighted under the perfumed breath of a woman. His misery was depicted in sinister lines on his countenance.

"M. de Morcerf," said the president, "do you recognize this lady as the daughter of Ali Tepelini, pasha of Yanina?"

"No," said Morcerf, attempting to rise, "it is a base plot, contrived by my enemies."

Haydée, whose eyes had been fixed on the door, as if expecting someone, turned hastily, and, seeing the count standing, shrieked, "You do not know me?" said she. "Well, I fortunately recognize you! You are Fernand Mondego, the French officer who led the troops of my noble father! It is you who surrendered the castle of Yanina! It is you who, sent by him to Constantinople, to treat with the emperor for the life or death of your benefactor, brought back a false mandate granting full pardon! It is you who, with that mandate, obtained the pasha's ring, which gave you authority over Selim, the fire-keeper! It is you who stabbed Selim. It is you who sold us, my mother and me, to the merchant, El-Kobbir! Assassin, assassin, assassin, you have still on your brow your master's blood! Look, gentlemen, all!"

These words had been pronounced with such enthusiasm and evident truth, that every eye was fixed on the count's forehead, and he himself passed his hand across it, as if he felt Ali's blood still lingering there.

"You positively recognize M. de Morcerf as the officer, Fernand Mondego?"

of eleven years of age, named Haydée, the acknowledged daughter of the late lord Ali Tepelini, pasha of Yanina, and of Vasiliki, his favourite; she having been sold to me seven years previously, with her mother, who had died on arriving at Constantinople, by a French colonel in the service of the Vizier Ali Tepelini, named Fernand Mondego. The above-mentioned purchase was made on his highness's account, whose mandate I had, for the sum of four hundred thousand francs.

Given at Constantinople, by authority of his highness, in the year 1247 of the Hegira.

Signed,

EL-KOBBIR.

"That this record should have all due authority, it shall bear the imperial seal, which the vendor is bound to have affixed to it."

Near the merchant's signature there was, indeed, the seal of the sublime emperor. A dreadful silence followed the reading of this document; the count could only stare, and his gaze, fixed as if unconsciously on Haydée, seemed one of fire and blood.

"Madame," said the president, "may reference be made to the Count of Monte Cristo, who is now, I believe, in Paris?"

"Sir," replied Haydée, "the Count of Monte Cristo, my foster-father, has been in Normandy the last three days."

"Who, then, has counselled you to take this step, one for which the court is deeply indebted to you, and which is perfectly natural, considering your birth and your misfortunes?"

"Sir," replied Haydée, "I have been led to take this step from a feeling of respect and grief. Although a Christian, may God forgive me, I have always sought to revenge my illustrious father. Since I set my foot in France, and knew the traitor lived in Paris, I have watched carefully. I live retired in the house of my noble protector, but I do it from choice. I love retirement and silence, because I can live with my thoughts and recollections of past days. But the Count of Monte Cristo surrounds me

Chapter LXXXVII

The Challenge

'THEN,' continued Beauchamp, 'I took advantage of the silence and the darkness to leave the house without being seen. The usher who had introduced me was waiting for me at the door, and he conducted me through the corridors to a private entrance opening into the Rue de Vaugirard. I left with mingled feelings of sorrow and delight. Excuse me, Albert,—sorrow on your account, and delight with that noble girl, thus pursuing paternal vengeance. Yes, Albert, from whatever source the blow may have proceeded—it may be from an enemy, but that enemy is only the agent of Providence.'

Albert held his head between his hands; he raised his face, red with shame and bathed in tears, and seizing Beauchamp's arm:

'My friend,' said he, 'my life is ended. I cannot calmly say with you, "Providence has struck the blow;" but I must discover who pursues me with this hatred, and when I have found him I shall kill him, or he will kill me. I rely on your friendship to assist me, Beauchamp, if contempt has not banished it from your heart.'

'Contempt, my friend? How does this misfortune affect you? No, happily that unjust prejudice is forgotten which made the son responsible for the father's actions. Review your life, Albert; although it is only just beginning, did a lovely summer's day ever dawn with greater purity than has marked the commencement of your career? No, Albert, take my advice. You are young and rich—leave Paris—all is soon forgotten in this great Babylon of excitement and changing tastes. You will return after three or four years with a Russian princess for a bride, and no one will think more of what occurred yesterday than if it had happened sixteen years ago.'

'Thank you, my dear Beauchamp, thank you for the excellent feeling which prompts your advice; but it cannot be. I have told you my wish, or rather my determination. You understand that, interested as I am in this affair, I cannot see it in the same light as you do. What appears to you to emanate from a celestial source, seems to me to proceed from one far less pure. Providence appears to me to have no share in this affair; and happily so, for instead of the invisible, impalpable agent of celestial rewards and punishments, I shall find one both palpable and visible, on whom I shall revenge myself, I assure you, for all I have suffered during the last month. Now, I repeat, Beauchamp, I wish to return to human and material existence, and if you are still the friend you profess to be, help me to discover the hand that struck the blow.'

'Be it so,' said Beauchamp; 'if you must have me descend to earth, I submit; and if you will seek your enemy, I will assist you, and I will engage to find him, my honour being almost as deeply interested as yours.'

'Well, then, you understand, Beauchamp, that we begin our search immediately. Each moment's delay is an eternity for me. The calumniator is not yet punished, and he may hope that he will not be; but, on my honour, if he thinks so, he deceives himself.'

'Well, listen, Morcerf.'

'Ah, Beauchamp, I see you know something already; you will restore me to life.'

'I do not say there is any truth in what I am going to tell you, but it is, at least, a ray of light in a dark night; by following it we may, perhaps, discover something more certain.'

'Tell me; satisfy my impatience.'

'Well, I will tell you what I did not like to mention on my return from Yanina.'

'Say on.'

'I went, of course, to the chief banker of the town to make inquiries. At the first word, before I had even mentioned your father's name—

"Ah," said he. "I guess what brings you here."

"How, and why?"

"Because a fortnight since I was questioned on the same subject."

"By whom?"

"By a banker of Paris, my correspondent."

The blush of mingled pride and modesty which suddenly suffused the cheeks of the young woman, the brilliancy of her eye, and her highly important communication, produced an indescribable effect on the assembly. As for the count, he could not have been more overwhelmed if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet and opened an immense gulf before him.

"Madame," replied the president, bowing with profound respect, "allow me to ask one question; it shall be the last: Can you prove the authenticity of what you have now stated?"

"I can, sir," said Haydée, drawing from under her veil a satin satchel highly perfumed; "for here is the register of my birth, signed by my father and his principal officers, and that of my baptism, my father having consented to my being brought up in my mother's faith,—this latter has been sealed by the grand primate of Macedonia and Epirus; and lastly (and perhaps the most important), the record of the sale of my person and that of my mother to the Armenian merchant El-Kobbir, by the French officer, who, in his infamous bargain with the Porte, had reserved as his part of the booty the wife and daughter of his benefactor, whom he sold for the sum of four hundred thousand francs." A greenish pallor spread over the count's cheeks, and his eyes became bloodshot at these terrible imputations, which were listened to by the assembly with ominous silence.

Haydée, still calm, but with a calmness more dreadful than the anger of another would have been, handed to the president the record of her sale, written in Arabic. It had been supposed some of the papers might be in the Arabian, Romaic, or Turkish language, and the interpreter of the House was in attendance. One of the noble peers, who was familiar with the Arabic language, having studied it during the famous Egyptian campaign, followed with his eye as the translator read aloud:

> I, El-Kobbir, a slave-merchant, and purveyor of the harem of his highness, acknowledge having received for transmission to the sublime emperor, from the French lord, the Count of Monte Cristo, an emerald valued at eight hundred thousand francs; as the ransom of a young Christian slave

"A woman, accompanied by a servant."

Everyone looked at his neighbour.

"Bring her in," said the president. Five minutes after the door-keeper again appeared; all eyes were fixed on the door, and I,' said Beauchamp, 'shared the general expectation and anxiety. Behind the door-keeper walked a woman enveloped in a large veil, which completely concealed her. It was evident, from her figure and the perfumes she had about her, that she was young and fastidious in her tastes, but that was all. The president requested her to throw aside her veil, and it was then seen that she was dressed in the Grecian costume, and was remarkably beautiful.'

'Ah,' said Albert, 'it was she.'

'Who?'

'Haydée.'

'Who told you that?'

'Alas, I guess it. But go on, Beauchamp. You see I am calm and strong. And yet we must be drawing near the disclosure.'

'M. de Morcerf,' continued Beauchamp, 'looked at this woman with surprise and terror. Her lips were about to pass his sentence of life or death. To the committee the adventure was so extraordinary and curious, that the interest they had felt for the count's safety became now quite a secondary matter. The president himself advanced to place a seat for the young lady; but she declined availing herself of it. As for the count, he had fallen on his chair; it was evident that his legs refused to support him.

"Madame," said the president, "you have engaged to furnish the committee with some important particulars respecting the affair at Yanina, and you have stated that you were an eyewitness of the event."

"I was, indeed," said the stranger, with a tone of sweet melancholy, and with the sonorous voice peculiar to the East.

"But allow me to say that you must have been very young then."

"I was four years old; but as those events deeply concerned me, not a single detail has escaped my memory."

"In what manner could these events concern you? and who are you, that they should have made so deep an impression on you?"

"On them depended my father's life," replied she. "I am Haydée, the daughter of Ali Tepelini, pasha of Yanina, and of Vasiliki, his beloved wife."

"Whose name is— "

"Danglars."'

'He!' cried Albert; 'yes, it is indeed he who has so long pursued my father with jealous hatred. He, the man who would be popular, cannot forgive the Count of Morcerf for being created a peer; and this marriage broken off without a reason being assigned—yes, it is all from the same cause.'

'Make inquiries, Albert, but do not be angry without reason; make inquiries, and if it be true— '

'Oh, yes, if it be true,' cried the young man, 'he shall pay me all I have suffered.'

'Beware, Morcerf, he is already an old man.'

'I will respect his age as he has respected the honour of my family; if my father had offended him, why did he not attack him personally? Oh, no, he was afraid to encounter him face to face.'

'I do not condemn you, Albert; I only restrain you. Act prudently.'

'Oh, do not fear; besides, you will accompany me. Beauchamp, solemn transactions should be sanctioned by a witness. Before this day closes, if M. Danglars is guilty, he shall cease to live, or I shall die. *Pardieu*, Beauchamp, mine shall be a splendid funeral!'

'When such resolutions are made, Albert, they should be promptly executed. Do you wish to go to M. Danglars? Let us go immediately.'

They sent for a cabriolet. On entering the banker's mansion, they perceived the phaeton and servant of M. Andrea Cavalcanti.

'Ah! *parbleu!* that's good,' said Albert, with a gloomy tone. 'If M. Danglars will not fight with me, I will kill his son-in-law; Cavalcanti will certainly fight.'

The servant announced the young man; but the banker, recollecting what had transpired the day before, did not wish him admitted. It was, however, too late; Albert had followed the footman, and, hearing the order given, forced the door open, and followed by Beauchamp found himself in the banker's study.

'Sir,' cried the latter, 'am I no longer at liberty to receive whom I choose in my house? You appear to forget yourself sadly.'

'No, sir,' said Albert, coldly; 'there are circumstances in which one cannot, except through cowardice,—I offer you that refuge,—refuse to admit certain persons at least.'

'What is your errand, then, with me, sir?'

'I mean,' said Albert, drawing near, and without apparently noticing Cavalcanti, who stood with his back towards the fireplace—'I mean to propose a meeting in some retired corner where no one will interrupt us for ten minutes; that will be sufficient—where two men having met, one of them will remain on the ground.'

Danglars turned pale; Cavalcanti moved a step forward, and Albert turned towards him.

'And you, too,' said he, 'come, if you like, monsieur; you have a claim, being almost one of the family, and I will give as many rendezvous of that kind as I can find persons willing to accept them.'

Cavalcanti looked at Danglars with a stupefied air, and the latter, making an effort, arose and stepped between the two young men. Albert's attack on Andrea had placed him on a different footing, and he hoped this visit had another cause than that he had at first supposed.

'Indeed, sir,' said he to Albert, 'if you are come to quarrel with this gentleman because I have preferred him to you, I shall resign the case to the king's attorney.'

'You mistake, sir,' said Morcerf with a gloomy smile; 'I am not referring in the least to matrimony, and I only addressed myself to M. Cavalcanti because he appeared disposed to interfere between us. In one respect you are right, for I am ready to quarrel with everyone today; but you have the first claim, M. Danglars.'

'Sir,' replied Danglars, pale with anger and fear, 'I warn you, when I have the misfortune to meet with a mad dog, I kill it; and far from thinking myself guilty of a crime, I believe I do society a kindness. Now, if you are mad and try to bite me, I will kill you without pity. Is it my fault that your father has dishonoured himself?'

'Yes, miserable wretch!' cried Morcerf, 'it is your fault.'

Danglars retreated a few steps. 'My fault?' said he; 'you must be mad! What do I know of the Grecian affair? Have I travelled in that country? Did I advise your father to sell the castle of Yanina—to betray— '

A murmur of approbation ran through the assembly; and at this moment, Albert, had nothing more transpired, your father's cause had been gained. It only remained to put it to the vote, when the president resumed: "Gentlemen and you, monsieur,—you will not be displeased, I presume, to listen to one who calls himself a very important witness, and who has just presented himself. He is, doubtless, come to prove the perfect innocence of our colleague. Here is a letter I have just received on the subject; shall it be read, or shall it be passed over? and shall we take no notice of this incident?"

M. de Morcerf turned pale, and clenched his hands on the papers he held. The committee decided to hear the letter; the count was thoughtful and silent. The president read:

> Mr. President,
>
> I can furnish the committee of inquiry into the conduct of the Lieutenant-General the Count of Morcerf in Epirus and in Macedonia with important particulars.

The president paused, and the count turned pale. The president looked at his auditors. "Proceed," was heard on all sides. The president resumed:

> I was on the spot at the death of Ali Pasha. I was present during his last moments. I know what is become of Vasiliki and Haydée. I am at the command of the committee, and even claim the honour of being heard. I shall be in the lobby when this note is delivered to you.

"And who is this witness, or rather this enemy?" asked the count, in a tone in which there was a visible alteration.

"We shall know, sir," replied the president. "Is the committee willing to hear this witness?"

"Yes, yes," they all said at once. The door-keeper was called.

"Is there anyone in the lobby?" said the president.

"Yes, sir."

"Who is it?"

his death-bed he resigned his favourite mistress and her daughter to my care."'

Albert started on hearing these words; the history of Haydée recurred to him, and he remembered what she had said of that message and the ring, and the manner in which she had been sold and made a slave.

'And what effect did this discourse produce?' anxiously inquired Albert.

'I acknowledge it affected me, and, indeed, all the committee also,' said Beauchamp.

'Meanwhile, the president carelessly opened the letter which had been brought to him; but the first lines aroused his attention; he read them again and again, and fixing his eyes on M. de Morcerf, "Count," said he, "you have said that the Vizier of Yanina confided his wife and daughter to your care?"

"Yes, sir," replied Morcerf; "but in that, like all the rest, misfortune pursued me. On my return, Vasiliki and her daughter Haydée had disappeared."

"Did you know them?"

"My intimacy with the pasha and his unlimited confidence had gained me an introduction to them, and I had seen them above twenty times."

"Have you any idea what became of them?"

"Yes, sir; I heard they had fallen victims to their sorrow, and, perhaps, to their poverty. I was not rich; my life was in constant danger; I could not seek them, to my great regret."

The president frowned imperceptibly. "Gentlemen," said he, "you have heard the Comte de Morcerf's defence. Can you, sir, produce any witnesses to the truth of what you have asserted?"

"Alas, no, monsieur," replied the count; "all those who surrounded the vizier, or who knew me at his court, are either dead or gone away, I know not where. I believe that I alone, of all my countrymen, survived that dreadful war. I have only the letters of Ali Tepelini, which I have placed before you; the ring, a token of his good-will, which is here; and, lastly, the most convincing proof I can offer, after an anonymous attack, and that is the absence of any witness against my veracity and the purity of my military life."

'Silence!' said Albert, with a thundering voice. 'No; it is not you who have directly made this exposure and brought this sorrow on us, but you hypocritically provoked it.'

'I?'

'Yes; you! How came it known?'

'I suppose you read it in the paper in the account from Yanina?'

'Who wrote to Yanina?'

'To Yanina?'

'Yes. Who wrote for particulars concerning my father?'

'I imagine anyone may write to Yanina.'

'But one person only wrote!'

'One only?'

'Yes; and that was you!'

'I, doubtless, wrote. It appears to me that when about to marry your daughter to a young man, it is right to make some inquiries respecting his family; it is not only a right, but a duty.'

'You wrote, sir, knowing what answer you would receive.'

'I, indeed? I assure you,' cried Danglars, with a confidence and security proceeding less from fear than from the interest he really felt for the young man, 'I solemnly declare to you, that I should never have thought of writing to Yanina, did I know anything of Ali Pasha's misfortunes.'

'Who, then, urged you to write? Tell me.'

'*Pardieu!* it was the most simple thing in the world. I was speaking of your father's past history. I said the origin of his fortune remained obscure. The person to whom I addressed my scruples asked me where your father had acquired his property? I answered, "In Greece."—"Then," said he, "write to Yanina."'

'And who thus advised you?'

'No other than your friend, Monte Cristo.'

'The Count of Monte Cristo told you to write to Yanina?'

'Yes; and I wrote, and will show you my correspondence, if you like.'

Albert and Beauchamp looked at each other.

'Sir,' said Beauchamp, who had not yet spoken, 'you appear to accuse the count, who is absent from Paris at this moment, and cannot justify himself.'

'I accuse no one, sir,' said Danglars; 'I relate, and I will repeat before the count what I have said to you.'

'Does the count know what answer you received?'

'Yes; I showed it to him.'

'Did he know my father's Christian name was Fernand, and his family name Mondego?'

'Yes, I had told him that long since, and I did only what any other would have done in my circumstances, and perhaps less. When, the day after the arrival of this answer, your father came by the advice of Monte Cristo to ask my daughter's hand for you, I decidedly refused him, but without any explanation or exposure. In short, why should I have any more to do with the affair? How did the honour or disgrace of M. de Morcerf affect me? It neither increased nor decreased my income.'

Albert felt the blood mounting to his brow; there was no doubt upon the subject. Danglars defended himself with the baseness, but at the same time with the assurance, of a man who speaks the truth, at least in part, if not wholly—not for conscience' sake, but through fear. Besides, what was Morcerf seeking? It was not whether Danglars or Monte Cristo was more or less guilty; it was a man who would answer for the offence, whether trifling or serious; it was a man who would fight, and it was evident Danglars would not fight.

In addition to this, everything forgotten or unperceived before presented itself now to his recollection. Monte Cristo knew everything, as he had bought the daughter of Ali Pasha; and, knowing everything, he had advised Danglars to write to Yanina. The answer known, he had yielded to Albert's wish to be introduced to Haydée, and allowed the conversation to turn on the death of Ali, and had not opposed Haydée's recital (but having, doubtless, warned the young girl, in the few Romaic words he spoke to her, not to implicate Morcerf's father). Besides, had he not begged of Morcerf not to mention his father's name before Haydée? Lastly, he had taken Albert to Normandy when he knew the final blow was near. There could be no doubt that all had been calculated and previously arranged; Monte Cristo then was in league with his father's enemies. Albert took Beauchamp aside, and communicated these ideas to him.

Albert passed his hand over his forehead, as if to try his strength, as a man who is preparing to defend his life proves his shield and bends his sword. He thought himself strong enough, for he mistook fever for energy. 'Go on,' said he.

'The evening arrived; all Paris was in expectation. Many said your father had only to show himself to crush the charge against him; many others said he would not appear; while some asserted that they had seen him start for Brussels; and others went to the police-office to inquire if he had taken out a passport. I used all my influence with one of the committee, a young peer of my acquaintance, to get admission to one of the galleries. He called for me at seven o'clock, and, before anyone had arrived, asked one of the door-keepers to place me in a box. I was concealed by a column, and might witness the whole of the terrible scene which was about to take place. At eight o'clock all were in their places, and M. de Morcerf entered at the last stroke. He held some papers in his hand; his countenance was calm, and his step firm, and he was dressed with great care in his military uniform, which was buttoned completely up to the chin. His presence produced a good effect. The committee was made up of Liberals, several of whom came forward to shake hands with him.'

Albert felt his heart bursting at these particulars, but gratitude mingled with his sorrow: he would gladly have embraced those who had given his father this proof of esteem at a moment when his honour was so powerfully attacked.

'At this moment one of the door-keepers brought in a letter for the president.

"You are at liberty to speak, M. de Morcerf," said the president, as he unsealed the letter; and the count began his defence, I assure you, Albert, in a most eloquent and skilful manner. He produced documents proving that the Vizier of Yanina had up to the last moment honoured him with his entire confidence, since he had interested him with a negotiation of life and death with the emperor. He produced the ring, his mark of authority, with which Ali Pasha generally sealed his letters, and which the latter had given him, that he might, on his return at any hour of the day or night, gain access to the presence, even in the harem. Unfortunately, the negotiation failed, and when he returned to defend his benefactor, he was dead. "But," said the count, "so great was Ali Pasha's confidence, that on