'No,' replied Beauchamp, 'I have not considered the question; a totally different subject interests me.'

'What is it?'

'The article relative to Morcerf.'

'Indeed? Is it not a curious affair?'

'So curious, that I think you are running a great risk of a prosecution for defamation of character.'

'Not at all; we have received with the information all the requisite proofs, and we are quite sure M. de Morcerf will not raise his voice against us; besides, it is rendering a service to one's country to denounce these wretched criminals who are unworthy of the honour bestowed on them.'

Beauchamp was thunderstruck.

'Who, then, has so correctly informed you?' asked he; 'for my paper, which gave the first information on the subject, has been obliged to stop for want of proof; and yet we are more interested than you in exposing M. de Morcerf, as he is a peer of France, and we are of the opposition.'

'Oh, that is very simple; we have not sought to scandalize. This news was brought to us. A man arrived yesterday from Yanina, bringing a formidable array of documents; and when we hesitated to publish the accusatory article, he told us it should be inserted in some other paper.'

Beauchamp understood that nothing remained but to submit, and left the office to despatch a courier to Morcerf. But he had been unable to send to Albert the following particulars, as the events had transpired after the messenger's departure; namely, that the same day a great agitation was manifest in the House of Peers among the usually calm members of that dignified assembly. Everyone had arrived almost before the usual hour, and was conversing on the melancholy event which was to attract the attention of the public towards one of their most illustrious colleagues. Some were perusing the article, others making comments and recalling circumstances which substantiated the charges still more.

The Count of Morcerf was no favourite with his colleagues. Like all upstarts, he had had recourse to a great deal of haughtiness to maintain his position. The true nobility laughed at him, the talented repelled him, and the honourable instinctively despised him. He was, in fact, in the unhappy position of the

victim marked for sacrifice; the finger of God once pointed at him, everyone was prepared to raise the hue and cry.

The Count of Morcerf alone was ignorant of the news. He did not take in the paper containing the defamatory article, and had passed the morning in writing letters and in trying a horse. He arrived at his usual hour, with a proud look and insolent demeanour; he alighted, passed through the corridors, and entered the house without observing the hesitation of the door-keepers or the coolness of his colleagues. Business had already been going on for half an hour when he entered. Everyone held the accusing paper, but, as usual, no one liked to take upon himself the responsibility of the attack. At length an honourable peer, Morcerf's acknowledged enemy, ascended the tribune with that solemnity which announced that the expected moment had arrived. There was an impressive silence; Morcerf alone knew not why such profound attention was given to an orator who was not always listened to with so much complacency.

The count did not notice the introduction, in which the speaker announced that his communication would be of that vital importance that it demanded the undivided attention of the House; but at the mention of Yanina and Colonel Fernand, he turned so frightfully pale that every member shuddered and fixed his eyes upon him. Moral wounds have this peculiarity,—they may be hidden, but they never close; always painful, always ready to bleed when touched, they remain fresh and open in the heart.

The article having been read during the painful hush that followed, a universal shudder pervaded the assembly, and immediately the closest attention was given to the orator as he resumed his remarks. He stated his scruples and the difficulties of the case; it was the honour of M. de Morcerf, and that of the whole House, he proposed to defend, by provoking a debate on personal questions, which are always such painful themes of discussion. He concluded by calling for an investigation, which might dispose of the calumnious report before it had time to spread, and restore M. de Morcerf to the position he had long held in public opinion.

Morcerf was so completely overwhelmed by this great and unexpected calamity that he could scarcely stammer a few words as he looked around on the assembly. This timidity, which might proceed from the astonishment of innocence as well as the shame of guilt, conciliated some in his favour; for men

who are truly generous are always ready to compassionate when the misfortune of their enemy surpasses the limits of their hatred.

The president put it to the vote, and it was decided that the investigation should take place. The count was asked what time he required to prepare his defence. Morcerf's courage had revived when he found himself alive after this horrible blow.

'My lords,' answered he, 'it is not by time I could repel the attack made on me by enemies unknown to me, and, doubtless, hidden in obscurity; it is immediately, and by a thunderbolt, that I must repel the flash of lightning which, for a moment, startled me. Oh, that I could, instead of taking up this defence, shed my last drop of blood to prove to my noble colleagues that I am their equal in worth.'

These words made a favourable impression on behalf of the accused.

'I demand, then, that the examination shall take place as soon as possible, and I will furnish the house with all necessary information.'

'What day do you fix?' asked the president.

'Today I am at your service,' replied the count.

The president rang the bell. 'Does the House approve that the examination should take place today?'

'Yes,' was the unanimous answer.

A committee of twelve members was chosen to examine the proofs brought forward by Morcerf. The investigation would begin at eight o'clock that evening in the committee-room, and if postponement were necessary, the proceedings would be resumed each evening at the same hour. Morcerf asked leave to retire; he had to collect the documents he had long been preparing against this storm, which his sagacity had foreseen.

Beauchamp related to the young man all the facts we have just narrated; his story, however, had over ours all the advantage of the animation of living things over the coldness of dead things.

Albert listened, trembling now with hope, then with anger, and then again with shame, for from Beauchamp's confidence he knew his father was guilty, and he asked himself how, since he was guilty, he could prove his innocence. Beauchamp hesitated to continue his narrative.

'What next?' asked Albert.

Chapter LXXXVI

The Trial

At eight o'clock in the morning Albert had arrived at Beauchamp's door. The valet de chambre had received orders to usher him in at once. Beauchamp was in his bath.

'Here I am,' Albert said.

'Well, my poor friend,' replied Beauchamp, 'I expected you.'

'I need not say I think you are too faithful and too kind to have spoken of that painful circumstance. Your having sent for me is another proof of your affection. So, without losing time, tell me, have you the slightest idea whence this terrible blow proceeds?'

'I think I have some clew.'

'But first tell me all the particulars of this shameful plot.'

Beauchamp proceeded to relate to the young man, who was overwhelmed with shame and grief, the following facts. Two days previously, the article had appeared in another paper besides *l'Impartial*, and, what was more serious, one that was well known as a government paper. Beauchamp was breakfasting when he read the paragraph. He sent immediately for a cabriolet, and hastened to the publisher's office. Although professing diametrically opposite principles from those of the editor of the other paper, Beauchamp—as it sometimes, we may say often, happens—was his intimate friend. The editor was reading, with apparent delight, a leading article in the same paper on beet-sugar, probably a composition of his own.

'Ah, *pardieu!*' said Beauchamp, 'with the paper in your hand, my friend, I need not tell you the cause of my visit.'

'Are you interested in the sugar question?' asked the editor of the ministerial paper.

Albert reeled as if he had been shot, and fell on a chair near the door. Monte Cristo did not see this second manifestation of physical exhaustion; he was at the window, calling:

'Ali, a horse for M. de Morcerf—quick! he is in a hurry!' These words restored Albert; he darted from the room, followed by the count.

'Thank you!' cried he, throwing himself on his horse.

'Return as soon as you can, Florentin. Must I use any password to procure a horse?'

'Only dismount; another will be immediately saddled.'

Albert hesitated a moment. 'You may think my departure strange and foolish,' said the young man; 'you do not know how a paragraph in a newspaper may exasperate one. Read that,' said he, 'when I am gone, that you may not be witness of my anger.'

While the count picked up the paper he put spurs to his horse, which leaped in astonishment at such an unusual stimulus, and shot away with the rapidity of an arrow. The count watched him with a feeling of compassion, and when he had completely disappeared, read as follows:

'The French officer in the service of Ali Pasha of Yanina alluded to three weeks since in *l'Impartial*, who not only surrendered the castle of Yanina, but sold his benefactor to the Turks, styled himself truly at that time Fernand, as our esteemed contemporary states; but he has since added to his Christian name a title of nobility and a family name. He now calls himself the Count of Morcerf, and ranks among the peers.'

Thus the terrible secret, which Beauchamp had so generously destroyed, appeared again like an armed phantom; and another paper, deriving its information from some malicious source, had published two days after Albert's departure for Normandy the few lines which had rendered the unfortunate young man almost crazy.

'What next? My friend, you impose a painful task on me. Must you know all?'

'Absolutely; and rather from your lips than another's.'

'Muster up all your courage, then, for never have you required it more.'

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 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."

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

'Yes, sir; he sent for me to his house, gave me money for my journey, procured a horse, and made me promise not to stop till I had reached you, I have come in fifteen hours.'

Albert opened the letter with fear, uttered a shriek on reading the first line, and seized the paper. His sight was dimmed, his legs sank under him, and he would have fallen had not Florentin supported him.

'Poor young man,' said Monte Cristo in a low voice; 'it is then true that the sin of the father shall fall on the children to the third and fourth generation.'

Meanwhile Albert had revived, and, continuing to read, he threw back his head, saying:

'Florentin, is your horse fit to return immediately?'

'It is a poor, lame post-horse.'

'In what state was the house when you left?'

'All was quiet, but on returning from M. Beauchamp's, I found madame in tears; she had sent for me to know when you would return. I told her my orders from M. Beauchamp; she first extended her arms to prevent me, but after a moment's reflection, "Yes, go, Florentin," said she, "and may he come quickly."'

'Yes, my mother,' said Albert, 'I will return, and woe to the infamous wretch! But first of all I must get there.'

He went back to the room where he had left Monte Cristo. Five minutes had sufficed to make a complete transformation in his appearance. His voice had become rough and hoarse; his face was furrowed with wrinkles; his eyes burned under the blue-veined lids, and he tottered like a drunken man.

'Count,' said he, 'I thank you for your hospitality, which I would gladly have enjoyed longer; but I must return to Paris.'

'What has happened?'

'A great misfortune, more important to me than life. Don't question me, I beg of you, but lend me a horse.'

'My stables are at your command, viscount; but you will kill yourself by riding on horseback. Take a post-chaise or a carriage.'

'No, it would delay me, and I need the fatigue you warn me of; it will do me good.'

opened on a terrace, having the sea in front, and at the back a pretty park bounded by a small forest.

In a creek lay a little sloop, with a narrow keel and high masts, bearing on its flag the Monte Cristo arms which were a mountain *or*, on a sea *azure*, with a cross *gules* in chief which might be an allusion to his name that recalled Calvary, the mount rendered by our Lord's passion more precious than gold, and to the degrading cross which his blood had rendered holy; or it might be some personal remembrance of suffering and regeneration buried in the night of this mysterious personage's past life.

Around the schooner lay a number of small fishing-boats belonging to the fishermen of the neighboring village, like humble subjects awaiting orders from their queen. There, as in every spot where Monte Cristo stopped, if but for two days, luxury abounded and life went on with the utmost ease.

Albert found in his anteroom two guns, with all the accoutrements for hunting; a lofty room on the ground floor containing all the ingenious instruments the English—eminent in piscatory pursuits, since they are patient and sluggish—have invented for fishing. The day passed in pursuing those exercises in which Monte Cristo excelled. They killed a dozen pheasants in the park, as many trout in the stream, dined in a summer-house overlooking the ocean, and took tea in the library.

Towards the evening of the third day. Albert, completely exhausted with the exercise which invigourated Monte Cristo, was sleeping in an armchair near the window, while the count was designing with his architect the plan of a conservatory in his house, when the sound of a horse at full speed on the high road made Albert look up. He was disagreeably surprised to see his own valet de chambre, whom he had not brought, that he might not inconvenience Monte Cristo. 'Florentin here!' cried he, starting up; 'is my mother ill?' And he hastened to the door. Monte Cristo watched and saw him approach the valet, who drew a small sealed parcel from his pocket, containing a newspaper and a letter.

'From whom is this?' said he eagerly.

'From M. Beauchamp,' replied Florentin.

'Did he send you?'

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?"

"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."

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

'Then he will sell them to some Eastern vizier, who will empty his coffers to purchase them, and refill them by applying the bastinado to his subjects.'

'Count, may I suggest one idea to you?'

'Certainly.'

'It is that, next to you, Bertuccio must be the richest gentleman in Europe.'

'You are mistaken, viscount; I believe he has not a franc in his possession.'

'Then he must be a wonder. My dear count, if you tell me many more marvellous things, I warn you I shall not believe them.'

'I countenance nothing that is marvellous, M. Albert. Tell me, why does a steward rob his master?'

'Because, I suppose, it is his nature to do so, for the love of robbing.'

'You are mistaken; it is because he has a wife and family, and ambitious desires for himself and them. Also because he is not sure of always retaining his situation, and wishes to provide for the future. Now, M. Bertuccio is alone in the world; he uses my property without accounting for the use he makes of it; he is sure never to leave my service.'

'Why?'

'Because I should never get a better.'

'Probabilities are deceptive.'

'But I deal in certainties; he is the best servant over whom one has the power of life and death.'

'Do you possess that right over Bertuccio?'

'Yes.'

There are words which close a conversation with an iron door; such was the count's 'yes.'

The whole journey was performed with equal rapidity; the thirty-two horses, dispersed over seven stages, brought them to their destination in eight hours. At midnight they arrived at the gate of a beautiful park. The porter was in attendance; he had been apprised by the groom of the last stage of the count's approach. At half past two in the morning Morcerf was conducted to his apartments, where a bath and supper were prepared. The servant who had travelled at the back of the carriage waited on him; Baptistin, who rode in front, attended the count.

Albert bathed, took his supper, and went to bed. All night he was lulled by the melancholy noise of the surf. On rising, he went to his window, which

despatch a messenger to apprise the grooms at the first station. M. de Morcerf will accompany me.'

Bertuccio obeyed and despatched a courier to Pontoise to say the travelling-carriage would arrive at six o'clock. From Pontoise another express was sent to the next stage, and in six hours all the horses stationed on the road were ready.

Before his departure, the count went to Haydée's apartments, told her his intention, and resigned everything to her care.

Albert was punctual. The journey soon became interesting from its rapidity, of which Morcerf had formed no previous idea.

'Truly,' said Monte Cristo, 'with your post-horses going at the rate of two leagues an hour, and that absurd law that one traveller shall not pass another without permission, so that an invalid or ill-tempered traveller may detain those who are well and active, it is impossible to move; I escape this annoyance by travelling with my own postilion and horses; do I not, Ali?'

The count put his head out of the window and whistled, and the horses appeared to fly. The carriage rolled with a thundering noise over the pavement, and everyone turned to notice the dazzling meteor. Ali, smiling, repeated the sound, grasped the reins with a firm hand, and spurred his horses, whose beautiful manes floated in the breeze. This child of the desert was in his element, and with his black face and sparkling eyes appeared, in the cloud of dust he raised, like the genius of the simoom and the god of the hurricane.

'I never knew till now the delight of speed,' said Morcerf, and the last cloud disappeared from his brow; 'but where the devil do you get such horses? Are they made to order?'

'Precisely,' said the count; 'six years since I bought a horse in Hungary remarkable for its swiftness. The thirty-two that we shall use tonight are its progeny; they are all entirely black, with the exception of a star upon the forehead.'

'That is perfectly admirable; but what do you do, count, with all these horses?'

'You see, I travel with them.'

'But you are not always travelling.'

'When I no longer require them, Bertuccio will sell them, and he expects to realize thirty or forty thousand francs by the sale.'

'But no monarch in Europe will be wealthy enough to purchase them.'

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 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 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,

'"Woman is fickle." said Francis I.; "woman is like a wave of the sea,' said Shakespeare; both the great king and the great poet ought to have known woman"s nature well.'

'Woman's, yes; my mother is not woman, but *a* woman.'

'As I am only a humble foreigner, you must pardon me if I do not understand all the subtle refinements of your language.'

'What I mean to say is, that my mother is not quick to give her confidence, but when she does she never changes.'

'Ah, yes, indeed,' said Monte Cristo with a sigh; 'and do you think she is in the least interested in me?'

'I repeat it, you must really be a very strange and superior man, for my mother is so absorbed by the interest you have excited, that when I am with her she speaks of no one else.'

'And does she try to make you dislike me?'

'On the contrary, she often says, "Morcerf, I believe the count has a noble nature; try to gain his esteem."'

'Indeed?' said Monte Cristo, sighing.

'You see, then,' said Albert, 'that instead of opposing, she will encourage me.'

'Adieu, then, until five o'clock; be punctual, and we shall arrive at twelve or one.'

'At Tréport?'

'Yes; or in the neighbourhood.'

'But can we travel forty-eight leagues in eight hours?'

'Easily,' said Monte Cristo.

'You are certainly a prodigy; you will soon not only surpass the railway, which would not be very difficult in France, but even the telegraph.'

'But, viscount, since we cannot perform the journey in less than seven or eight hours, do not keep me waiting.'

'Do not fear, I have little to prepare.'

Monte Cristo smiled as he nodded to Albert, then remained a moment absorbed in deep meditation. But passing his hand across his forehead as if to dispel his reverie, he rang the bell twice and Bertuccio entered.

'Bertuccio,' said he, 'I intend going this evening to Normandy, instead of tomorrow or the next day. You will have sufficient time before five o'clock;