

POETRY.

LETTING DOWN THE BARS.

Twilight falls from out the sky,
And the moon-beam, sad and lone,
Sobs aloft her dismal cry...

SELECT STORY.

COUNT OF MONTE-CRISTO.

REVENGE OF EDMUND DANTES.

CHAPTER XI.

A CONJUGAL SCENE.

Cornelia obeyed; and the next minute
Madame Danglars left her room in a
charming low dress, and came and sat
down close to Debray. Then, thoughtful,

barones, trying to disguise the agitation
of her voice and the flush of her face.

"You understand me perfectly, on the
contrary," said Danglars; "but if you will
permit, I will tell you that I have just
lost 700,000 francs upon the Spanish loan."

"And pray," asked the barones, "am I
responsible for this loss?"

"Why not?"

"Is it my fault that you have lost 700,000
francs?"

"Certainly it is not mine."

"Once for all," replied the barones
sharply, "I tell you I will not bear cash
named; it is a style of language I never
heard in the house of my parents or in
the house of my first husband."

"Oh! I can well believe that, for neither
of them was worth a penny."

"The better reason for my not being
concerned with the slang of the bank, which
is here dining in my ears from morning
till night; that noise of crowns jingling,
which are constantly being counted and
recounted, is odious to me. I only know
one thing I dislike more, which is the
sound of your voice."

"Well this
surprised me, for I thought you took the
liveliest interest in my affairs!"

"I! What could put such an idea into
your head?"

"Youself, assuredly."

"I should like to know upon what
occasion?"

"Ah! that is very easy done! Last
February you were the first who told me
of the Haytian funds. You had dreamt
that a ship had entered the harbor at
Havre, that this ship brought news that a
payment had been made upon the loan
which was to be made. I know how clear-
sighted your dreams are; I therefore pur-
chased immediately as many shares as I
could of the Haytian debt, and I gained
400,000 francs by it, of which 100,000 have
honestly been paid to you. You spent it
as you pleased, that was your business.
In March there was a question about a
grant to a railway. Three companies pre-
sented themselves, each offering equal
security. You told me that your instinc-
tive, and although you pretend to
know nothing about speculations, I think,
on the contrary, that your comprehension
is very clear upon certain affairs,—well,
you told me that your instinct led you to
believe the grant would be given to the
company; as you had foreseen, the shares
became of triple value, and I picked up
a million from which 250,000 francs were
paid to you as pin-money. How have you
spent this 250,000 francs?—it is no
business of mine."

"When are you coming to the point?"

"I cried the barones, shivering with anger
and impatience.

"Patience, madame, I am coming to it."

"That's unfortunate!"

"In April you went to dine at the minis-
ter's. You heard a private conversation
respecting the affairs of Spain,—on the
expulsion of Don Carlos. The explosion took
place and I pocketed 600,000 francs the day
Charles V. recrossed the Bidasoa. Of
these 600,000 francs you took 50,000
crowns. They were yours, you disposed
of them according to your fancy, and I
asked no questions; but it is none the less
the fact that you have this year received
50,000 francs."

"Well, sir, and what then?"

"Ah, yes, it was just after that that you
spoiled everything!"

"Really, your manner of speaking—"

"I mean, your meaning, and that is all
I want. Well, three days after that you
and you fancied from his words that Don
Carlos had returned to Spain. Well, I
sold my shares, the news was spread, and
I lost 100,000 francs; but that is not the
fact. I find the news was false, and by this
false report I have lost 700,000 francs."

"Well?"

"I will think you owe me a fourth of my
losses; the fourth of 700,000 francs is 175,000
francs."

"What you say is absurd, and I cannot
see why M. Debray's name is mixed up
in this affair."

"Because if you do not possess the 175,000
francs I reclaim, you must have lent
them to some friends, and Debray is one
of your friends."

"For shame!" exclaimed the barones.

"Oh! let us have no gestures, no scowls,
no theatricals, or you will oblige me by
telling you that I see Debray leave here
pocketing nearly the whole of the 500,000
francs you have handed over to him this
year; while he smiles to himself, saying
that he has found that which the most
skillful players have never discovered—
that is a roulette, where he wins without
playing, and is no loser when he loses."

"The barones became enraged.

"Wretch!" she cried, "will you dare to
tell me you did not know that which you
now reproach me?"

"I did not say that I did not know it,
and I do not say that I did not know it. I
merely tell you to look into my conduct
during the past four years that we have
lived together, and you will see that I
did not know it. But to-day I find you are drawing
on mine, and that your apprenticeship
may cost me 700,000 francs per month.
Stop there, madame! Do as you like
with your own, but do not fill or empty
mine. Besides, how do I know that this
was not a political trick; that the minis-
ter, engaged at seeing me in the opposition
and jealous of the popular sympathy I
excite, had not concerted with M. Debray
to ruin me?"

"A probable thing!"

"Why not? Who ever heard of such
an occurrence?—but it is almost impossi-
ble for signals to have been made different to those
of the two last telegrams. It was done
on purpose for me I am sure of it."

"Sir," said the barones humbly, "are
you not aware that the man employed
there was dismissed, that they talked of
going to law with him, that orders were
issued to arrest him, and that this order
would have been put into execution if he
had not escaped their researches by a
flight which proves either his madness or
culpability? It was a mistake!"

"Yes, which makes me laugh, and
caused the minister to have a sleepless
night, and the minister's secretary to
blacken several sheets of paper, but which
has cost me 700,000 francs."

"But sir," said Hermine, suddenly, "if
all this is, as you say, caused by M. De-
bray, why, instead of going direct to him,
do you come and tell me of it? Why do
you accuse the man do you address the
woman?"

"Do I know M. Debray?—do I wish to
know him?—do I wish to know that he
gives advice?—do I wish to follow it?"

do I speculate? No; you do all this, not
I."

"Still it seems to me that, as you profit
by it—"

Danglars shrugged his shoulders. "Fool-
ish creature!" he exclaimed. "Women-
fancy they have talent because they have
managed two or three intrigues without
being the talk of Paris! But know that
if you had ever hidden your irregularities
from your husband, which is but the com-
mon-sense of the art—for generally hus-
bands will not see—your would then have
been but a faint imitation of most of your
friends among the women of the world.
But it has been so with me,—I see, and
always have seen, during the past thirty
years. You may, perhaps, have hidden a
thought; but not a step, not an action,
not a fault has escaped me; while you
flattered yourself upon your address, and
firmly believed you had deceived me.
What has been the result?—that, thanks
to my pretended ignorance, there are none
of your friends from M. de Villefort to
Debray, who have not trembled before
me. There is not one who has not treated
you as the master of the house,—the
only title I desire with respect to you;
there is not one, in fact, who would have
to speak of me as I have spoken of them
this day. I will allow you to make me
hateful; but I will prevent your render-
ing me ridiculous, and, above all, I forbid
you to ruin me."

The barones had been tolerably com-
posed until the name of Villefort had
been pronounced; but then she became
pale, and, rising as if touched by a spring,
she stretched out her hands as though
conjecturing an apparition; she then took
two or three steps towards her husband,
as though to tear the secret from him, of
which he was ignorant, of which he with-
held from some odious calculation, as all
his calculations were. "M. de Villefort!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that M. de Nargonne, your
first husband, being neither a philosopher
nor a banker, or perhaps being both, and
seeing there was nothing to get out of a
professor, died of grief or anger at finding
after an absence of nine months, that you
had been enacting six. I am blunt,—I
only allow it but boast of it; it is one
of the reasons of my success in commer-
cial business. Why did he kill him-
self instead of you? Because he had no
cash to save. My life belongs to my wife;
Debray has made me lose 700,000 francs;
let him bear his share of the loss, and we
will go on as before; if not let him become
bankrupt for the 250,000 francs, and do
as all bankrupts do, disappear. He is a
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