

POETRY.

THE LESSER MINISTRIES.

A flower upon my threshold laid,
A little kindness wrought unseen;
I know not who love's tribute paid,
I only know that it has come.

SELECT STORY.

COUNT OF MONTE-CRISTO;

REVENGE OF EDMOND DANTES.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE CEMETERY OF PIERRE LACHAISE.
Monte-Cristo concealed himself behind a large tomb, and waited the arrival of Morrel, who by degrees, approached the tomb now abandoned by gesticulators and workmen.

"Leave me to pray," the count without opposition, but it was only to place himself in a situation where he could watch every movement of Morrel, who at length rose, brushed the dust from his knees, and turned towards Paris, without once looking back.

"Ab, count!" she exclaimed, with the delight manifested by every member of the family whenever he visited the Rue Meslay. "Maximilian has just returned, has he not, madame?"

"Yes, I think I saw him pass; but pray call Emmanuel."
"Excuse me, madam, but I must go up to Maximilian's room this instant. I have something of the greatest importance to tell him."

"Go, then," she said, with a charming smile, which accompanied him until he had disappeared. Monte-Cristo soon ran up the staircase conducting from the ground-floor to Maximilian's room; when he reached the landing he listened attentively, but all was still. Like many old houses occupied by a single family, the room door was panelled with glass. But it was locked, Maximilian was shut in, and it was impossible to see what was passing in the room.

"What shall I do?" uttered the count, "shall I ring? No, the sound of a bell announcing a visitor, will but accelerate the resolution of one in Maximilian's situation, and then the bell would be followed by a louder noise." Monte-Cristo trembled from head to foot, and as if his determination had been taken with the rapidity of lightning, he struck one of the panes of glass with his elbow; the glass was shattered to atoms, then withdrawing the curtain, he saw Morrel, who had been writing at his desk, bound from his seat at the noise of the broken window.

"I beg a thousand pardons," said the count, there is nothing the matter, but I slipped down and broke one of your panes of glass with my elbow. Since it is open, I will take advantage of it to enter your room; do not disturb yourself! And passing his hand through the broken glass, the count opened the door. Morrel, evidently decomposed, came to meet Monte-Cristo, less with the intention of resisting him than to exclaim, "What enters?"

"Pistol," said Monte-Cristo, rubbing his elbow, "it's all your servant's fault; your stairs are so polished, it is like walking on glass."
"Are you hurt, sir?" coldly asked Morrel.
"I believe not. But what are you about, there? you were writing."

"Your fingers are stained with ink."
"Ah, true, I was writing. I do sometimes, soldier though I am."
Monte-Cristo advanced to the room; Maximilian was obliged to let him pass, though he followed him. "You were writing?" said Monte-Cristo, with a searching look.
"I have already had the honor of telling you I was," said Morrel.
The count looked at him. "Your pistols are locked under your desk," said Monte-Cristo.
"I am on the point of starting on a journey," replied Morrel.
"Your friend!" exclaimed Monte-Cristo, in a tone of exquisite sweetness.
"Sir?"
"Your friend, my dear Maximilian, do not make a hasty resolution, I entreat you."

my life is a burden; earth has become distasteful to me, and human voices distract me. It is a mercy to let me die, for if I live I shall lose my reason and become mad. When, sir, I tell you all this with tears of heartfelt anguish, can you reply that I am wrong, can you prevent my putting an end to my miserable existence? Tell me, sir, could you have the courage to do so?"

"Yes, Morrel," said Monte-Cristo, "I would do so."
"Then," exclaimed Morrel, with increasing anger and reproach—"you, who have deceived me with false hopes, who have cheered and soothed me with vain promises, when I might, if not have saved her, at least have seen her die in my arms; you, who pretend to understand everything, even the hidden sources of knowledge; you, who exact the part of a guardian angel upon earth, and could not even find an antidote to a poison administered to a girl! Ah, sir, indeed you would inspire me with pity, were you not haughty in my eyes."

"Morrel!"
"Yes; you will tell me to lay aside the mask and I will do so, be satisfied! When you spoke to me at the cemetery, I answered you—my heart was softened; when you arrived here I allowed you to enter. But since you abuse my confidence, then, Count of Monte-Cristo, my pretended benefactor—then, Count of Monte-Cristo, the universal guardian, be satisfied, you shall witness the death of your friend; and Morrel, with a maniacal laugh, again rushed towards the pistols.

"And I again repeat, you shall not commit suicide!"
"Prevent me, then!" replied Morrel.
"I will prevent you."
"Who are you, then, that arrogate to yourself this tyrannical right over free and rational beings?"

"Listen; I am the only man in the world having the right to say to you, 'Morrel, your father's son shall not die to-day.'"
"Who do you mention my father?"
"Who do you mention my father? why do you mingle a recollection of him with the affairs of to-day?"

"Because I am he who saved your father's life when he wished to destroy himself, as you do to-day—because I am the man who sent the purse to your young sister, and the Pharoah to old Morrel, because I am Edmond Dantes, who dandled you, a child, on my knees." Morrel made another step back, staggering, breathless, crushed; then all his strength gave way and he fell prostrate at the feet of Monte-Cristo. Then his admirable nature underwent a complete and sudden revolution; he rose, bounded out of the room, and rushed to the stairs, exclaiming energetically, "Julie, Julie! Emmanuel, Emmanuel!"

Monte-Cristo endeavored also to leave, but Maximilian would have died rather than let his hold of the handle of the door, which he closed upon the count. Julie, Emmanuel, and some of the servants, ran up in alarm on hearing the cries of Maximilian. Morrel seized their hands, and opening the door, exclaimed, "In a voice choked with sobs, 'On your knees! on your knees! be to our benefactor—the saviour of our father. He is—'"

He would have added Edmond Dantes, but the count seized his arm and prevented him. Julie threw herself into the arms of the count; Emmanuel embraced him as a guardian angel; Morrel again fell on his knees, and struck the ground with his forehead. Then the iron hearted man felt his heart swell in his breast; a flame seemed to rush from his throat to his eyes; he bent his head and wept. Julie had scarcely recovered from her deep emotion when she rushed out of the room, descended to the next floor, ran into the drawing-room, with child-like joy, and raised the crystal globe which covered the nurse given by the unknown of the Allee de Mellan. Meanwhile Emmanuel, in a broken voice, said to the count, "Oh, count, how could you, hearing us so often speak of your unknown benefactor, seeing us pay such homage of gratitude and adoration to his memory, how could you continue long without discovering yourself to us? Oh, it was cruel to us, and—dare I say it—to you also."

"Listen, my friends," said the count—"I may call you so, since we have really been friends for the last eleven years; the discovery of this secret has been occasioned by a great event which you must never know. I wish to bury it during my whole life in my own bosom, and your brother Maximilian wrested it from me by a violence he repents of now I am sure." Then turning round, and seeing that Morrel, still on his knees, had thrown himself into an arm-chair, he added in a low voice, pressing Emmanuel's hand significantly, "Watch over him."

"Why do?" asked the young man surprised.
"I cannot explain myself; but watch over him." Emmanuel looked round the room, and caught sight of the pistols; his eyes rested on the arms, and he pointed to them. Monte-Cristo bent his head. Emmanuel went towards the pistols. "Leave them," said Monte-Cristo. Then walking towards Morrel, he took his hand; the tumultuous agitation of the young man was succeeded by a profound sleep. Julie returned, holding in her hands the silken purse, white tears of joy rolled down her cheeks, like dew drops on the rose.

"Here is the relic," she said; "do not think it will be less dear to us now we are acquainted with our benefactor!"
"Your child," said Monte-Cristo, coloring, "allow me to take back that purse; since you now know my face, I wish to be remembered alone through the affection I hope you will grant me."
"Oh," said Julie, pressing the purse to her bosom, "no, no, I beseech you not to take it, for some unhappy day you will leave us, will you not?"

"You have guessed rightly, madame, said Monte-Cristo smiling; 'in a week I shall have left this country, where so many persons who merit the vengeance of Heaven lived happily, while my father perished of hunger and grief.' While announcing his departure; the count fixed his eyes on Morrel, and remarked that the words, 'I shall have left the country,' had failed to rouse him from his lethargy. He then saw that he must have another struggle against the grief of his friend, and he said to Emmanuel and Julie, 'My kind friends, leave me alone with Maximilian.'
Julie drew her husband to the door. 'Let me leave then, she said.'
The count was alone with Morrel, who remained motionless as a statue.
'Come,' said Monte-Cristo, touching his shoulder with his finger, 'are you a man again, Maximilian?'"

tion, I like you, wished to kill myself; one day your father, equally desperate, wished to kill himself too. If any one had said to your father, at the moment he raised the pistol to his head—if any one had told me, when in my prison I pushed back the food I had not tasted for three days—if any one had said to either of us then, 'Live! the day will come when you will be happy, and will be like I!'—no matter whose voice had spoken, we should have heard him with the smile of doubt, or the anguish of incredulity; and yet how many times has your father often while embracing you! how often have I myself!"

"Ah!" exclaimed Morrel, interrupting the count, "you had only lost his liberty, my father had only lost his fortune, but I had only lost Valentine."
"Look at me," said Monte-Cristo, with that expression which sometimes made him so eloquent and persuasive—"look at me: there are no tears in my eyes, nor is there fever in my veins, yet I see you suffer—yes, Maximilian, whom I love as my son. Now, if I order you to live, Morrel, it is in the conviction that one day you will thank me for having saved your life."

"Oh, Heaven!" said the young man, "what are you saying, count? Take care. But perhaps you have never loved!"
"Child!" replied the count.
"I mean, as I love. You see, I have been a soldier ever since I attained manhood; I reached the age of twenty-nine without loving; well, at twenty-nine I saw Valentine; during two years I have seen written in her heart all the virtues of a daughter and a wife. Count, possess Valentine would have been a happiness to infinite, too ecstatic, too complete, too divine for this world, since it has been denied me, but without Valentine the life is desolate?"

"I tell you, Morrel, because I have a method of curing you."
"Count, you render me sadder than before if it is possible."
"I feel as much pity towards you, Maximilian, that if I do not cure you in a month, to the day, to the very hour, mark my words, Morrel, I will place loaded pistols before you, and a cup full of the deadliest Italian poison."
"Will you promise me?"

"Yes; for I am a man, and have suffered like myself, and also contemplated suicide; indeed, often since my fortune has left me, I have longed for the delights of an eternal sleep."
"But you are sure you will promise me this?"
"I do not promise, but swear it," said Monte-Cristo, and he rose, bounded out of the room, to the very hour and the day is a sacred one, Maximilian. I do not know whether you remember that this is the 5th of September; it is ten years to-day since I saved your father's life, who wished to die." Morrel seized the count's hand and kissed it; the count allowed him to pay the homage he felt due to him.

"And now," he said, "after to-day, you will come and live with me; you can occupy Haydee's apartment, and my daughter will at least be replaced by my son."
"Haydee?" said Morrel, "what has become of her?"
"She departed last night."
"Where?"
"To leave you."
"Where?"
"Join me at the Champ-Elysees, and lead me out of this house without any one seeing my departure." Maximilian hung his head, and obeyed with child-like reverence.

CHAPTER L.
THE DUNGEON.
This first floor of the house in the Rue Saint-Germain-des-Près, chosen by Albert and Madame de Morcerf for their residence, consisting of one room, was let to a very mysterious person. His visits were tolerably regular, though occasionally he appeared a little before or after the time, but generally, both in summer and winter, he took possession of his apartment about four o'clock, though he never spent the night there.

Twenty minutes after that hour a carriage stopped at the house, a lady alighted in a black or dark blue dress and always thickly veiled; she passed like a shadow through the lodge, and ran upstairs without a sound excepting under the touch of her light foot. No one ever asked her where she was going. Her face, therefore, like that of the gentleman, was perfectly unknown to the two porters, who were, perhaps, unequalled throughout the capital for discretion. We need not say she stopped at the first floor. Then she tapped at a door in a peculiar manner, which, after being opened to admit her, was again fastened, and she was done. The same precautions were used on leaving as on entering the house. The lady always left first; and stepping into her carriage, it drove away; then, about twenty minutes afterwards, the gentleman would also leave, buried in his cravat or concealed by his handkerchief.

The day after Monte-Cristo had called on Danglars, the mysterious lodger entered at ten o'clock in the morning, instead of four o'clock in the afternoon. Almost directly afterwards, without the usual interval of time, the veiled lady ran hastily upstairs. The door opened, but before it could be closed, the lady exclaimed, "Oh, Lucien! oh, my friend!"
The janitor, therefore, heard for the first time that the lodger's name was Lucien; still, as he was the very perfection of a door-keeper, he made up his mind not to tell his wife.

"Well, what is the matter, my dear?" asked the gentleman whose name the lady's agitation had revealed; "tell me what is the matter."
"Oh, Lucien! can I confide in you?"
"Of course you know you can do so."
"Lucien! a great event has happened!" said the lady, glancing inquiringly at Lucien. "M. Danglars left last night!"
"Left!—M. Danglars left! Where is he gone to?"
"I do not know. He left a letter for me."
And the baronet took from her pocket a letter which she gave to Debray, which ran as follows:

"Madame and most faithful wife,
Debray mechanically stopped and looked at the baronet, whose face became covered with blushes. "Read," she said. Debray continued:
"When you receive this, you will no longer have a husband! Oh! you need not be alarmed; you will only have lost him as you have lost your daughter; I mean that I shall be travelling on one of the thirty or forty roads leading out of France. I owe you some explanation for my conduct, and as you are a woman that can perfectly understand me, I will give them. Listen, then: I this morning received five millions which I paid away; almost directly afterwards another demand for the same sum was presented to me; I postponed this creditor till to-morrow, and I intend leaving to-day, to escape that to-morrow which would be rather too unpleasant for me to endure. You understand this, do you not, my most precious wife? Have you admired the rapidity of my fall? I confess I never sent nothing but the fire; let us hope you have found some gold amongst the ashes. With this consoling idea, I leave you,

madame, and most prudent wife, without any conscientious reproach for abandoning you; you have friends left and the ashes I already mentioned, and, above all, the liberty I hasten to restore to you. So long as I hoped you were working for the good of our house and for the fortune of our daughter, I philosophically closed my eyes; but as you have transformed that house into a vast ruin, I will not be the foundation of another man's fortune. You were rich when I married you, but little respected. Excuse me for speaking so very candidly; but as this is intended only for your ears, I do not see why I should weigh my words. I have augmented our fortune, and it has continued to increase during the past fifteen years, till extraordinary and unexpected catastrophes have suddenly overturned it, without any fault of mine, I can honestly declare. I leave you, therefore, as I took you, rich, but little respected. Adieu! I also intend from this time to work on my own account. Accept my acknowledgments for the example you have set me, and which I intend following.

"Your very devoted husband,
"BARON DANGLARS."
The baronet had watched Debray while reading his long and painful letter, and saw him, notwithstanding his self-control, change color once or twice. When he had ended the perusal, he folded the letter and resumed his pensive attitude. "Well," said Madame Danglars, with an anxiety easy to be understood, "what do you intend to do?"
"I was going to ask you," replied the baronet with a beating heart.
"Ah! then, you wish to ask advice of me?"

"Yes; I do wish to ask your advice," said Madame Danglars.
"I will tell you, but first let me advise, I would recommend you to travel."
"Travel!" she murmured.
"Certainly," as M. Danglars says, you are rich and perfectly free. In my opinion, a withdrawal from Paris is absolutely necessary after the discovery of the baronet's broken contract and M. Danglars' disappearance. The world will think you abandoned and poor; for the wife of a bankrupt would never be forgiven, were she to keep up the appearance of opulence. They will know you are deserted, and think you also poor; for I alone know your real financial position, and am quite ready to give up my accounts as an honest partner."

"Deserted!" repeated the baronet; "ah, yes, I am, indeed, deserted! You are right, sir, and no one can doubt my position."
"But then you are rich—very rich indeed," continued Debray, taking out some papers from his pocket-book, which he spread upon the table. Madame Danglars saw them not; she was fully engaged in stilling the beatings of her heart, and restraining the tears which were ready to gush forth. At length a sense of dignity prevailed.

"Madame," said Debray, "it is nearly six months since we were associated. There are 1,240,000 francs for your share of the business, and I have longed for the moment to begin with, making in all 1,240,000 francs for your portion. Now, madame, I took the precaution of drawing out your money the day before yesterday; it is not long ago, you see, and I might be suspected of continually expecting to be called upon to deliver up my accounts. There is your money, half in bank notes, the other half in cheques payable to the bearer." Mme. Danglars mechanically took the cheques, the dividend, and the heap of bank-notes. There are 1,240,000 francs for your share of the business, and I have longed for the moment to begin with, making in all 1,240,000 francs for your portion. Now, madame, I took the precaution of drawing out your money the day before yesterday; it is not long ago, you see, and I might be suspected of continually expecting to be called upon to deliver up my accounts. 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