

Mrs. C. L. Anderson.

THE SON OF MONTE-CRISTO

THE WORKS OF
ALEXANDRE DUMAS

IN THIRTY VOLUMES



THE SON OF MONTE-
CRISTO

VOLUME ONE



ILLUSTRATED WITH DRAWINGS ON WOOD BY
EMINENT FRENCH AND AMERICAN ARTISTS



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THE SON OF MONTE-CRISTO

CHAPTER I

A MARRIAGE CONTRACT AND ITS END

IN THE month of July of the year 1829, a man created a great sensation in Paris, and even attracted the attention of the lions of society. Where he came from—who he was—what was his past life—none knew; and the mystery surrounding him only tended to make the hero of the season more interesting.

The Count of Monte-Cristo, from Italy—from Malta—no one knew whence—had unlimited credit with the banking house of Danglars, one of the largest in Paris; owned the finest mansion—a superb villa—at Auteuil, and the handsomest turnout on the road, which he presented to a banker's wife, without letting any one know his reason for doing so; all this was sufficient to make him the central point around which revolved the social gossip of the day. But, besides this, the handsome stranger makes his appearance at the theatres in the company of a lady in Grecian dress, whose transcendent beauty and countless diamonds awake alike admiration and cupidity. Like moths around the flame, society flutters about the legendary count, and it is principally the golden youth who find in him their centre of attrac-

tion. Among the latter were more especially Albert Morcerf, the son of a general, Debray, a young and talented attaché at the Foreign Office, Beauchamp, and Chateau-Renaud, who served as the asteroids of the new star in the Parisian sky.

Sometimes they were joined at those famous dinners which only a Monte-Cristo understood how to give, by a Count Andrea Cavalcanti, who at first appeared there with his father, Major Cavalcanti. Although he was a stranger, he was received in society through his acquaintance with Monte-Cristo and with Baron Danglars, in whose banking house he had a large sum on deposit.

The young count, a perfect Apollo, with classically-cut features, did not fail to produce an impression upon Eugenie, a proud, black-eyed brunette, the only daughter of the millionaire Danglars; and as the millions of the father, in conjunction with the peculiar beauty of the daughter, began to interest the count, it was not long before they thought of marriage. Danglars, who had been a heavy loser in certain speculations of which the public was ignorant, hoped to rehabilitate himself with the millions of his prospective son-in-law, and therefore there was nothing to prevent the marriage of the proud Eugenie and the handsome Andrea.

One July evening, representatives of the high financial society, and a few members of the aristocracy, were invited to Danglars' house to witness the signing of the marriage contract of the only daughter of the house with the Italian, Count Andrea Cavalcanti, of the princely house of Cavalcanti. At five o'clock, when the guests arrived, they found all the rooms in the mansion brilliant with wax-lights.

The bride was simply yet tastefully attired: a white satin dress trimmed with lace of the same color; a single white rose, which was half hidden in her raven black hair, formed the only ornament of the young lady, whose jewels, it was well known, represented a fortune. The young count was surrounded by representatives of the gilded youth, who give the tone in the Jockey Club, and are the recognized authorities for all Europe in questions of taste, fashion, and sport.

Baron Danglars was the centre of a group of bankers, to whom he developed his celebrated projects which had increased his millions, taking good care, however, not to mention his losses. Madame Danglars, the handsome mother of the pretty Eugenie, was surrounded by a circle of young and old cavaliers, who paid court to her with the greatest ceremony, and whose adorations were accepted by the lady as a tribute due her, although it could not be denied that she favored the young attaché Debray.

The lawyers were already there, yet the ceremony appeared to be purposely delayed, as if they were waiting for the arrival of a missing guest. And this was indeed the case.

When the footman announced the Count of Monte-Cristo a stir was created among the guests. The star of the evening was overwhelmed with questions, which he paid no attention to, but quietly busied himself with the three representatives of the Danglars family.

The way he observed the young Count Cavalcanti was very strange, though very few noticed it, as the Count of Monte-Cristo was relating a robbery which had been committed in his house, in which one of the thieves

had been murdered, most probably by his own comrade. No one noticed the pallor of Count Cavalcanti, as they were too much interested in Monte-Cristo's story. When he had finished, the ceremony was proceeded with.

The marriage contract between Mademoiselle Eugenie and Count Andrea Cavalcanti was read, the millions mentioned therein causing a sensation even among the cream of the financial and aristocratic world, and the signing of the paper was next in order. This circumstance recalled to Madame Danglars the absence of a friend of the house, the procureur du roi Villefort, and she asked Monte-Cristo whether he knew where he was.

"I am indirectly the cause of the absence of the procureur du roi," said the count, as if to apologize. "The man who was murdered in my house was recognized as a former galley-slave named Caderousse, and a letter was found in his pocket which bore a remarkable address."

Every one crowded around the count, while the young bridegroom slowly walked toward a neighboring room.

"Could you tell us the address?" asked Madame Danglars.

"Certainly," replied the count. "You will all laugh over it. It was none other than that of the hero of our reunion to-night—Count Andrea Cavalcanti."

The surprised guests turned around as if to exact an explanation from the latter. He had, however, already left the room. The servants were searching all over the house for him, when a new commotion was heard.

The dazed servants returned from their search, and behind them appeared a detective accompanied by several policemen.

"I am looking for a man named Andrea Cavalcanti,"

said the detective, in the well-known monotonous way which never fails to make an impression even upon those who are not principals.

"By what right?" asked Danglars, who could not suppress his uneasiness.

"Andrea Cavalcanti is charged with having murdered the galley-slave Caderousse, with whom he was formerly chained in the galleys."

Like lightning from a clear sky this announcement fell upon the aristocratic assembly. Madame Danglars fainted, the policemen searched the house, but could not find the culprit, the guests ran here and there like a flock of sheep surprised by a fox, the servants stood motionless with dazed faces, consternation and confusion reigned supreme.

CHAPTER II

A CALM BRIDE

NONE among all the company in Danglars' house possessed their self-possession so much as just the one who was the least expected to do so.

Two days after the catastrophe, when Eugenie's most intimate friend, the music teacher, Louise d'Armilly, came to condole with her, the proud daughter of the banker repulsed her with a disdainful laugh.

"I am not made for marriage," she said; "at first I was engaged to Monsieur de Morcerf, whose father shot himself a few days ago, in a fit of remorse at having acquired his wealth by dishonorable means; then I was to be married to Prince Cavalcanti, to add to the millions which my father possesses, or which he perhaps does not call his own, the imaginary wealth of a—jail-bird."

"What should be done now?" asked her modest friend in an anxious tone.

"Fate shows my path," answered Eugenie, firmly. "I am not intended to become the slave of a hypocritical and egotistical man. You are aware that my inclination pushes me toward the stage, where my voice, my beauty, and my independent spirit will assure me success. The time has now arrived when I must decide:

here, the scandal and contempt of the crowd; there, applause, fame, and honor. I foresaw it all, though I did not think it would come in such a shameful way. I have fifty thousand francs pin-money, and my jewels are worth as much more. Order a carriage; I have passports for both of us; in an hour we depart for Belgium."

Louise listened to her friend speechless with astonishment; although she knew the firmness of her character, she was not prepared for so much independence.

"But we two girls alone," she hesitatingly said, "cannot—"

"I have looked out for that, too," replied Eugenie, calmly; "the passport is made out in the name of Monsieur Leon d'Armilly and sister; while you go for the carriage I will pack the trunks, and change myself into Monsieur Leon d'Armilly."

Louise mechanically left the room to order the carriage to come to Danglars' house. When she came back an elegant young man stood near the trunks, whom no one would have recognized at the first glance as the proud and courted beauty, Eugenie Danglars. With great difficulty the two girls carried the trunk through a side door of the house and deposited it at the next street corner. There the coachman awaited them, and in a quarter of an hour they had left Paris.

Let us now return to Prince Cavalcanti, *alias* Benedetto, the hero of the interrupted party at the banker Danglars' house.

With that cunning peculiar to criminals who scent danger from afar, he had made his exit at the right time. After he had pocketed the diamonds which

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