

had an irresistible charm for him, and he maintained the hold of the corrupter over his pupil; besides, he held a position in the world through his connection with the Comtesse de Montcornet.

"Has an uncle left you a fortune?" said Finot, laughing at him.

"Like you, I have marked some fools for cutting down," replied Lucien in the same tone.

"Then Monsieur has a review—a newspaper of his own?" Andoche Finot retorted, with the impertinent presumption of a chief to a subordinate.

"I have something better," replied Lucien, whose vanity nettled by the assumed superiority of his editor, restored him to the sense of his new position.

"What is that, my dear boy?"

"I have a party."

"There is a Lucien party?" said Vernon, smiling.

"Finot, the boy has left you in the lurch; I told you he would. Lucien is a clever fellow, and you never were respectful to him. You used him as a hack. Repent, blockhead!" said Blondet.

Blondet, as sharp as a needle, could detect more than one secret in Lucien's air and manner; while stroking him down he contrived to tighten the curb. He meant to know the reasons of Lucien's return to Paris, his projects, and his means of living.

"On your knees to a superiority you can never attain to, albeit you are Finot!" he went on. "Admit this gentleman forthwith to be one of the great men to whom the future belongs; he is one of us! So witty and so handsome, can he fail to succeed by your *quibuscumque viis*? Here he stands in his good Milan armor, his strong sword half unsheathed and his pennon flying!—Bless me, Lucien, where did you steal that smart waistcoat? Love alone can find such stuff as that. Have you an address? At this moment I am anxious to know where my friends are domiciled; I don't know where to sleep. Finot has turned me out of doors for the night, under the vulgar pretext of 'a lady in the case.'"