

On his arrival in Paris, he called upon the Marquis of Crequi, and other of the high nobility with whom he was connected. He was received with great courtesy; but, as he brought no letters from his elder brother, the prince, and as various circumstances of his previous history had transpired, they did not receive him into their families nor introduce him to their ladies. Still they feted him in bachelor style, gave him gay and elegant suppers at their separate apartments, and took him to their boxes at the theaters. He was often noticed, too, at the doors of the most fashionable churches, taking his stand among the young men of fashion; and at such times his tall, elegant figure, his pale but handsome countenance, and his flashing eyes, distinguished him from among the crowd; and the ladies declared that it was almost impossible to support his ardent gaze.

The count did not afflict himself much at his limited circulation in the fastidious circles of the high aristocracy. He relished society of a wilder and less ceremonious cast; and meeting with loose companions to his taste, soon ran into all the excesses of the capital in that most licentious period. It is said that, in the course of his wild career, he had an intrigue with a lady of quality, a favorite of the regent; that he was surprised by that prince in one of his interviews; that sharp words passed between them; and that the jealousy and vengeance thus awakened ended only with his life.

About this time the famous Mississippi scheme of Law was at its height, or rather it began to threaten that disastrous catastrophe which convulsed the whole financial world. Every effort was making to keep the bubble inflated. The vagrant population of France was swept off from the streets at night, and conveyed to Havre de Grace, to be shipped to the projected colonies; even laboring people and mechanics were thus crimped and spirited away. As Count Antoine was in the habit of sallying forth at night, in disguise, in pursuit of his pleasures, he came near being carried off by a gang of crimps; it seemed, in fact, as if they had been lying in wait for him, as he had experienced very rough treatment at their hands. Complaint was made of his case by his relation, the Marquis de Crequi, who took much interest in the youth; but the marquis received mysterious intimations not to interfere in the matter, but to advise the count to quit Paris immediately: "If he lingers, he is lost!" This has been cited as a proof that vengeance was dogging