

"Of course ; and you ? Just come, I perceive," he added, somewhat satirically, as linking his arm in his new found friend's, he glanced at the cut of that friend's coat collar.

"I have been here a fortnight," replied Alain.

"Hem ! I suppose you lodge in the old Hotel de Rochebriant. I passed it yesterday, admiring its vast *façade*, little thinking you were its inmate."

"Neither am I ; the hotel does not belong to me—it was sold some years ago by my father."

"Indeed ! I hope your father got a good price for it ; those grand hotels have trebled their value within the last five years. And how is your father ? Still the same polished *grand seigneur* ? I never saw him but once, you know ; and I shall never forget his smile, *style grand monarque*, when he patted me on the head and tipped me ten napoleons."

"My father is no more," said Alain, gravely ; "he has been dead nearly three years."

"*Ciel !* forgive me ; I am greatly shocked. Hem ! so you are now the Marquis de Rochebriant—a great historical name, worth a large sum in the market. Few such names left. Superb place your old chateau, is it not ?"

"A superb place, No—a venerable ruin, Yes !"

"Ah, a ruin ! so much the better. All the bankers are mad after ruins—so charming an amusement to restore them. You will restore yours, without doubt. I will introduce you to such an architect ! has the *moyen âge* at his fingers' ends. Dear—but a genius."

The young Marquis smiled—for since he had found a college friend, his face showed that it could smile—smiled, but not cheerfully, and answered.

"I have no intention to restore Rochebriant. The walls are solid ; they have weathered the storms of six centuries ; they will last my time, and with me the race perishes."

"Bah ! the race perish, indeed ! you will marry. *Parlez-moi de ça*—you could not come to a better man. I have a list of all the heiresses at Paris, bound in Russia leather. You may take your choice out of twenty. Ah, if I were but a Rochebriant ! It is an infernal thing to come into the world a Lemer cier. I am a democrat, of course. A Lemer cier would be in a false