

"My boy," said Lucien, "I put into practice a motto by which you may secure a quiet life: *Fuge, late, late*. I am off."

"But I am not off till you pay me a sacred debt—that little supper, you know, heli?" said Blondet, who was rather too much given to good cheer, and got himself treated when he was out of funds.

"What supper?" asked Lucien, with a little stamp of impatience.

"You don't remember? In that I recognize my prosperous friend; he has lost his memory."

"He knows what he owes us; I will go bail for his good heart," said Finot, taking up Blondet's joke.

"Rastignac," said Blondet, taking the young dandy by the arm as he came up the room to the column where the so-called friends were standing. "There is a supper in the wind; you will join us—unless," he added gravely, turning to Lucien, "Monsieur persists in ignoring a debt of honor. He can."

"Monsieur de Rubempré is incapable of such a thing; I will answer for him," said Rastignac, who never dreamed of a practical joke.

"And there is Bixiou, he will come too," cried Blondet; "there is no fun without him. Without him champagne cloyes my tongue, and I find everything insipid, even the pepper of satire."

"My friends," said Bixiou, "I see you have gathered round the wonder of the day. Our dear Lucien has revived the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. Just as the gods used to turn into strange vegetables and other things to seduce the ladies, he has turned the Chardon (the Thistle) into a gentleman to bewitch—whom? Charles X.!—My dear boy," he went on, holding Lucien by his coat button, "a journalist who apes the fine gentleman deserves rough music. In their place," said the merciless jester, as he pointed to Finot and Vernou, "I should take you up in my society paper; you would bring in a hundred francs for ten columns of fun."