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基督山伯爵

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THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO

The name of ALEXANDRE DUMAS is synonymous with romance and adventure. His father, son of a French marquis and a Saint Domingo negress, was one of Napoleon's generals but died poor in 1806. Alexandre was brought up by his mother at Villers-Cotterêts, fifty miles from Paris, where he was born in 1802. In 1823, having found employment as a clerk, he settled in Paris, determined to make his name as an author. By 1829 he had achieved fame as one of the leaders of the new Romantic movement in literature. By 1840 he had turned his attention away from the theatre and embarked upon a series of historical romances which he hoped would make him the French Walter Scott. The *Three Musketeers* (1844) and its sequels, together with *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844-6), his most enduring novels, have not only delighted generations of readers but made history exciting. His output was prodigious and fills more than 300 volumes in the standard French edition. First serialized in the new, cheap newspapers before appearing in volume form, his books brought him enormous popularity and extraordinary wealth which he readily gave away to anyone who asked, or squandered on a succession of mistresses and on follies like the 'Château de Monte Cristo', his monument to his own grandeur at Marly. He was an inveterate traveller and a cook of genius. He courted princes and loved wearing medals (some of which he bought himself), but was at heart a republican with a strong sense of social justice. He took part in the July Revolution of 1830 and gave spirited support

to Garibaldi's efforts to create Italian independence in 1860. Many envied Dumas, some accused him of employing others to write the books he signed, but few ever spoke ill of this generous, open-handed, and disarming man. He lived just long enough to survive his talent and died of a stroke at Puy, near Dieppe, in 1870.

DAVID COWARD is Senior Fellow and Emeritus Professor of French Literature at the University of Leeds. He is the author of studies of Marivaux, Marguerite Duras, Marcel Pagnol, and Restif de la Bretonne. For Oxford World's Classics, he has edited eight novels by Alexandre Dumas, including the whole of the Musketeer saga, and translated Dumas *fils' La Dame aux Camélias*, two selections of Maupassant short stories, Sade's *Misfortunes of Virtue and Other Early Tales*, and Diderot's *Jacques the Fatalist*. Winner of the 1996 Scott-Moncrieff prize for translation, he reviews regularly for the *Times Literary Supplement*.

INTRODUCTION

Alexandre Dumas was a force of nature. A robust, roaring man of vast appetites and even vaster energies, he cries out to be measured in cubits rather than the feet and inches that are used for mere mortals. For forty years, sparks from his mighty anvil lit fires which inflamed the world and burn still. D'Artagnan and Edmond Dantès are the stuff of dreams.

He was born in 1802 at Villers-Cotterêts, about fifty miles north-east of Paris, the second child of an innkeeper's daughter and of one of Napoleon's most remarkable generals. Thomas-Alexandre Davy de la Pailleterie was born at Saint Domingo in 1762, the son of a French marquis and Marie-Cessette Dumas, a negress. Disowned by his father, he took his mother's name, enlisted as a private soldier in 1786 and rose rapidly through the ranks during the early Revolutionary campaigns. A courageous and dashing field officer, he usually had more to say for himself than was politic. In 1799, he quarrelled with Napoleon and never regained his favour, nor did he receive the army pay that was due to him. He died poor in 1806, leaving his wife and children to manage as they could.

At the schools which he attended with no great enthusiasm, young Alexandre, who inherited all his father's drive and (as caricaturists were later to emphasize) some of his negroid features, learned at least to write a good hand. It was for his handwriting rather than through his father's old friends that he found work as a none-too-diligent minor clerk in

1823. He had left Villers-Cotterêts for good and was determined to make his way in Paris as an author. While waiting for his hour to come, he set about laying the foundations of his future life. He spent more money than he earned, developed a habit of collaborating with other writers and kept up a steady stream of affairs: by Catherine Lebay, a seamstress, he had a son in 1824, also called Alexandre, who later became famous as the author of *La Dame aux Camélias* before turning into the self-appointed guardian of the nation's morality and censor of his father's excesses. Many plays and numerous mistresses later, Dumas scored an enormous success with *Henry III and His Court* (1829), a play which helped to inaugurate the new 'Romantic' drama which was a potent expression of the reaction against the ultra-conservative political, moral, and cultural climate of the Restoration. He threw himself unbidden into the July Revolution of 1830 and singlehandedly captured a powder magazine at Soissons. He persuaded Lafayette, the liberal hero of old Revolutionary struggles who had helped set the constitutionally-minded Louis-Philippe on the throne of France, to appoint him organizer of the National Guard in the Vendée, but Dumas, a natural republican, soon gave up when he encountered strong local Royalist opposition. He returned to Paris where he resumed his position as one of the age's leading theatrical lights.

Dumas tackled contemporary subjects in plays like *Antony* (1831), a lurid story of marital infidelity, but as a dramatist was always temperamentally attracted by historical anecdotes, which he unfailingly exploited for their melodramatic potential. He also

rewrote, with or without permission, plays by other hands and soon acquired a suspect reputation for his nonchalant attitude to literary property. By the mid-1830s, however, conscious of the inadequacy of his education, he began reading history seriously with a view to creating the French 'historical novel' which would be as respected and successful as the English historical novels of Walter Scott. In the meantime he accepted whatever commissions came his way. It was thus that he undertook a walking tour of the South of France in 1834 to collect material for a series of articles which he later published as the first of his books of travel impressions. As a travel writer, Dumas gave short historical and geographical measure, but always succeeded in interesting his reader with local lore coaxed out of chance acquaintances, and with amazing anecdotes of his personal perils and astounding adventures. (The Romantic poet Lamartine once remarked that while some men spent their lives looking for the secret of perpetual motion, Dumas had invented 'perpetual astonishment'.) His journeys were not always motivated by commissions—in 1832, when his republican sympathies had become dangerous, he prudently left Paris for Switzerland. Surrounded by mistresses, fending off creditors, and habitually working fourteen hours a day at his desk to meet his many commitments, he remained as yet a man of the theatre and consolidated his position with the triumph of *Kean* in 1836.

But by the late 1830s he was turning to the novel, partly because he was interested in the possibilities of fiction and partly because the market was favourable. The appearance in 1836 of *La Presse* and

Le Siècle, the first of a new breed of cheap newspapers financed almost entirely by advertising revenues, had revolutionized the newspaper industry. Editors found that they could increase circulation by running novels in serial form, though not all writers were able to provide the thrilling climax to each episode which ensured that readers would buy the next issue. Where Balzac failed, Eugène Sue succeeded: when *Le Constitutionnel* outbid its rivals for Sue's *Le Juif errant* (*The Wandering Few*) in 1834, the number of copies sold daily soared within three weeks from 4,000 to 24,000. Dumas's gift for melodrama and the speed at which he worked ensured that he made the most of his opportunities and on occasions was writing three or even four serial novels simultaneously. When the episodes were collected (as they at first were by opportunist Belgian publishers who paid no royalties) and sold in multi-volume sets, he became not merely France's best-known writer but also the most famous Frenchman of his day, a star who was recognized wherever he travelled.

He throve on fame and success and lived up to the image of extravagance, indestructibility, and recklessness which he himself encouraged. He married an actress in 1840 from whom he separated in 1844. By this time he was growing close to his son, Alexandre, whom he undertook to initiate into the literary and social life of the capital. With Alexandre, he set off for Spain in 1846—simply abandoning a number of novels he was writing on the grounds that he needed to rest—and thence travelled to Algeria, with an official commission to write one of his inimitable travel books which the government

hoped would make North Africa attractive to potential colonizers. In 1847 he moved to Marly, to the 'Chateau de Monte Cristo' which was to have been a modest residence but had grown into a costly palace which symbolized his success. The same year, he inaugurated the 'Théâtre historique' where he hoped to reap enormous financial rewards by staging mainly his own plays. Meanwhile the stream of historical romances continued to feed the presses of the Paris newspapers and he commanded huge fees, which he squandered. Dumas had no financial acumen and the horde of social and literary spongers took full advantage of his generosity.

Though he courted kings and princes, his democratic (or rather meritocratic) leanings prompted him to stand, unsuccessfully, as a republican candidate in the 1848 elections. But while he welcomed the change of regime, the Revolution which ended Louis-Philippe's bourgeois monarchy also ruined the market for his novels and plays and he was never thereafter to earn the vast sums he needed to finance his lavish adventures. In 1850 the 'Chateau de Monte Cristo', which had cost him 400,000 francs was sold to an American dentist for 30,000. the 'Théatre historique' failed and Dumas fled to Brussels to avoid his creditors. His reputation still made him attractive to women who more often than not counted on him to advance their careers. His son grew increasingly embarrassed by his self-indulgence. He continued to write indefatigably and to travel, notably to Russia in 1859. In 1860, he met Garibaldi and was swept up enthusiastically into the cause of Italian independence. In 1867 he began his final liaison, with the American acrobat Ada Mencken, and

published his last significant novel, *La Terreur prussienne* (*The Prussian Terror*), which carried a clear-sighted warning of the threat looming from across the Rhine. He lived long enough to be saddened by the decline of his powers and to witness the Franco-Prussian War he had predicted. In September 1870 he suffered a stroke and lingered until 5 December when he died at the home of his son at Puy, near Dieppe.

Dumas, who had earned millions, was not a rich man when he died. He had no financial sense, nor indeed much of a sense of property. He kept money in drawers and tobacco jars and was as ready to give large sums away as he was unembarrassed when borrowing his cab-fare or annexing sections of a neighbour's land to complete his estate at Marly. This open-handedness helps to explain his cavalier attitude to literary property. Early in his career, comments were made about his use of collaborators, and even friends and fellow authors found it hard to believe that any one man could, unaided, write or even dictate all the vast novels he signed. In 1845 a journalist named Jacquot attempted to expose Dumas, accusing him of directing a 'fiction-factory' which employed writers to turn out the serials and volumes to which he put he signature. Dumas took him to court and won his case.

But though his good faith cannot be doubted, the question of Dumas's authorship of his works cannot be left there. He never tried to hide his debts to others and was always eager to acknowledge the contribution of collaborators. As a play-wright in the 1830s, he had been in the habit of working with one

or more experienced hands. Sometimes plays which had not found a home would be brought to him for rewriting: *La Tour de Nesle* (*The Tower of Nesle*) (1832) was the result of one such proposal. He might call too upon others to supply the historical and documentary background for his romances: for *Georges* (1843) he talked to a Mauritian who gave him enough information for Dumas to describe the island as vividly as though he had been there. His most regular collaborator, however, was Auguste Maquet (1813-88), a failed author of a scholarly disposition, with whom he discussed the direction his plots should take and who furnished him with historical and other materials which Dumas duly incorporated into the books that continued to appear under his name. Dumas's contemporaries raised an eyebrow at this practice, but his collaborative working habits certainly help to explain just why he was able to publish over 300 plays, novels, travel books, and memoirs: 1,348 volumes, in all, it has been calculated. Of this total, it is likely that one or two titles were never even read by Dumas who on occasions agreed to lend his name to help a struggling writer: the name of Dumas could sell anything. But there can be no doubt that he wrote all his books himself, though with the kind of help enjoyed by modern script-writers. Some of his collaborators would nowadays be called 'researchers'. Others, providing no more than secretarial assistance, recopied his manuscripts, adding punctuation and correcting inconsistencies. Others still—Maquet in particular—were involved in what would nowadays be called 'script-conferences', discussing story-lines, the development of characters, and ways

of grafting fictional events onto solid historical stock. But only Dumas had the 'Dumas touch', and he alone was ultimately responsible for the final tone, tension, and form of his romances. The writing of *Monte Cristo* is a case in point.

In an article published in his own newspaper, *Le Monte Cristo*, in April 1857, Dumas explained that in 1842 he had accompanied Prince Napoleon on a sailing expedition to Elba. It was then that he first saw the Island of Monte Cristo which so took his imagination that he promised the Prince that he would one day write a novel in which it would feature. In 1843 he signed a contract with the publishers Béthune and Plon for eight volumes of 'Impressions of Paris'. But the success of Eugène Sue's *Mystères de Paris* gave the publishers second thoughts and they subsequently informed Dumas that they now wanted a novel rather than the historical and archaeological guide they had originally commissioned. Having received an advance but not yet having written a word, Dumas was only too happy to oblige. He dusted down an 'anecdote' which he had found in the *Mémoires historiques tirés des archives de la police de Paris* (1838, 6 vols.) by Jacques Peuchet (1758—1830), a former police archivist, who had written accounts of a number of intriguing cases in the manner designed to thrill, titillate, and horrify.

The affair that had attracted Dumas was entitled 'Le Diamant et la vengeance' ('Revenge and the Diamond') and began in Paris in 1807 where four friends from the Midi, François Picaud, Gervais Chaubard, Guilhem Solari, and Antoine Allut were in the habit of meeting regularly at the café run by

one Mathieu Loupian, a widower with two children. When Picaud, a cobbler, announced that he was to marry Marguerite Vigoroux, a pretty girl with a handsome dowry, the envious Loupian persuaded the others that Picaud needed to be taught a lesson. With only Allut dissenting from what he considered to be a dangerous jest, they denounced Picaud as an English spy. He was arrested and disappeared from sight. Seven years later, in April 1814, Picaud was released from the prison of Fenestrelles in Piedmont. While serving his sentence, he had grown close to another prisoner, a Milanese cleric abandoned by his family, who had come to regard him as a son. Before his death in January 1814, the cleric made over to him a vast fortune which included a secret hoard of three million gold coins. Picaud returned to Paris an extremely rich man on 15 February 1815.

There he learned that Marguerite had waited for him for two years before marrying Loupian who had used her dowry to open what had become one of the most fashionable cafés in Paris. Following the trail, he travelled to see Allut who had retired to Nîmes. Calling himself the abbé Baldini, he explained that he had shared a cell in a Naples jail with Picaud who was now dead. For services rendered to a wealthy English prisoner, Picaud had acquired a diamond worth 50,000 francs and had charged the abbé to give it to Allut, the only member of the conspiracy to demur, on condition that he reveal the identity of those who had denounced him. Their names were to be engraved on his tombstone. Allut hesitated but was brow-beaten into accepting by his greedy, shrewish wife. Subsequently the merchant who bought the

diamond resold it for 100,000 francs, thus incurring the anger of the Alluts. When he was found dead, Allut was charged with murder and jailed.

At about the same time in Paris, an old lady approached Loupian and offered him a small regular payment to employ an old family servant named Prosper. Shortly afterwards, Chaubard, one of the original four friends, was found stabbed on the Pont des Arts. Attached to the handle of the murder-weapon was a note which read: 'Number One'. It was the first of a series of sinister incidents. Loupian's dog and his wife's parrot were poisoned. Mademoiselle Loupian was seduced and promised marriage by a rich nobleman who proved to be a former galley-slave who promptly absconded. The café burned down and Loupian was ruined. One night Solari was taken violently ill and died in agony. A note pinned to the body proclaimed: 'Number Two'. Loupian's son was lured into bad company, took to crime, and was jailed for twenty years. Marguerite died and Loupian's daughter, now destitute, was forced into prostitution by Prosper.

One night in the Jardin des Tuileries, Loupian was surprised by old Prosper who revealed that he was Picaud, the architect of the catastrophes which had befallen him, his purpose being to ruin the man who had ruined his life. Picaud stabbed his victim to death but was himself overpowered by a stranger who locked him up in a lonely cellar. The stranger was Allut who had followed the trail of the 'abbé Baldini' but had arrived too late to warn Loupian. He too now wanted revenge for the time he had spent in prison and demanded 25,000 francs every time

Picaud asked for food. Though he was worth 16 millions, Picaud had grown avaricious and refused to pay. Finally Allut lost patience and murdered him before fleeing to England where he revealed the full story on his death-bed in 1828.

Dumas retained the tripartite structure of Picaud's revenge which he decided initially was the essence of the anecdote. From Monte Cristo's disguises to Vampa's treatment of his prisoner Danglars—but not the character of Marguerite/ Mercédès, who is given a central role—he relied heavily on Peuchet's somber version of events. He began by setting his story in Rome at what is now chapter 31. working quickly, he took events up to the return of Albert de Morcerf and Franz d'Epinay to Paris—though his chronicle was at this stage written in the first person from Franz's point of view. He then showed what he had written to Maquet who asked why the most dramatic part of the story—the betrayal, imprisonment, and escape of the hero—had been omitted. The tale would have to be related at some point to justify the theme of vengeance: it was too long to be introduced retrospectively and too interesting to be summarized. Dumas agreed and the next day decided that the novel should fall into three parts: Marseilles, Rome, and Paris (that is, Chapters 1-30, 31-9, and 40-117 in this translation). Subsequent 'script conferences' prompted Maquet to write out a kind of story-board which Dumas was only too happy to follow.

The 'first part' appeared in *Le Journal des débats* between 28 August and 18 October. The 'Roman' section followed immediately but 'Part III' was delayed by Dumas's other commitments: in addition

to deadlines for *L'Histoire d'une casse-noisette* (*The History of a Nutcracker*) (1845) and a number of similar smaller commissions, he had contracted to write *La Dama de Monsoreau* for *Le Constitutionnel*, and *Les Quarante-Cinq* (*The Forty-Five Guardsmen*) and *Le Chevalier de Maison-Rouge* for *La Démocratie pacifique*. As a result, Part III did not appear until June 1845 and the final instalment, beginning at Chapter 63 of the present edition, ran more or less smoothly until 15 January 1846. It is hardly surprising that Dumas, who regularly over-committed himself in this way, glady accepted whatever help he could get.

But if Maquet had given him a line to follow, it was Dumas who breathed his own life into the saga of Edmond Dantès, which retains many features of Peuchet's anecdote and yet is quite different from its mood. From his stay in Marseilles in 1834, he recalled the Morrel family, the Catalan community, and his visit to the Chateau d'If where he had inspected the cell once occupied by Mirabeau. He remembered too the stories he had heard of the strange and learned abbé Faria who had died in 1919 (see note to p.183). To give a ring of authenticity to the murders perpetrated by Mme de Villefort, the wife of the magistrate who sent Dantès to the Chateau d'If, he borrowed scientific details from the trial of the poisoner Castaing and the experiments he and a friend named Thibaut had carried out with toxic substances (see notes to p.598 and 1224). He drew on his own experience for his descriptions of If, Monte Cristo, and Rome, while his picture of Paris—and Dumas thought of the book as essentially a novel of contemporary manners—was rooted in his own