



The Count of Monte Cristo (Annotated)

Alexandre Dumas père

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Dumas has himself indicated that he had the idea for the revenge in The Count of Monte Cristo from a story which he had found in a book compiled by Jacques Peuchet, a French police archivist, published in 1838 after the death of the author. Dumas included this essay in one of the editions from 1846. Peuchet related the tale of a shoemaker named Pierre Picaud, who was living in Nîmes in 1807. Picaud had been engaged to marry a rich woman, but three jealous friends falsely accused him of being a spy for England. Picaud was moved to a form of house arrest where he was placed in the castle Fenestrelle where he served as a servant to a rich Italian cleric. When the man died, he left his fortune to Picaud who he had begun to treat as a son. Picaud then spent years plotting his revenge on the three men who were responsible for his misfortune. He stabbed the first with a dagger on which was printed the words, "Number One", and poisoned the second. The third man's son he lured into crime and his daughter into prostitution, finally stabbing the man himself. This third man named Loupian had married his fiance while he was under arrest.

In another of the "True Stories" Peuchet relates the tale of a terrible affair of poisoning in a family. This story, also quoted in the Pleiade edition, has obviously served as model for the chapter of the murders inside the Villefort family. The introduction to the Pleiade edition mentions other sources from real life: the Abbé Faria existed and died in 1819 after a life with much resemblance to that of the Faria in the novel. As for Dantès, his fate is quite different from his model in Peuchet's manuscript, since the latter is murdered by the "Caderousse" of the plot. But Dantès has "alter egos" in two other works of Dumas: First in "Pauline" from 1838, then, more significantly, in "Georges" from 1843 where a young man with black ancestry is preparing a revenge against white people who had humiliated him.

Includes a Biography of the Author

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