

eir fathers waiting in their
anterooms?

Father! cried Villefort, then I was not deceived; I felt sure it
must be you.

Well, then, if you felt so sure, replied the new-comer, putting his
cane in a corner and his hat on a chair, allow me to say, my dear
GÃ©rard, that it was not very filial of you to keep me waiting at the
door.

Leave us, Germain, said Villefort. The servant quitted the apartment
with evident signs of astonishment.

Chapter 12. Father and Son

M. Noirtier"for it was, indeed, he who entered"looked after the servant
until the door was closed, and then, fearing, no doubt, that he might
be overheard in the antechamber, he opened the door again, nor was the
precaution useless, as appeared from the rapid retreat of Germain, who
proved that he was not exempt from the sin which ruined our first
parents. M. Noirtier then took the trouble to close and bolt the
antechamber door, then that of the bedchamber, and then extended his
hand to Villefort, who had followed all his motions with surprise which
he could not conceal.

Well, now, my dear GÃ©rard, said he to the young man, with a very
significant look, do you know, you seem as if you were not very glad
to see me?

My dear father, said Villefort, I am, on the contrary, delighted;
but I so little expected your visit, that it has somewhat overcome me.
But, my dear fellow, replied M. Noirtier, seating himself, I might
say the same thing to you, when you announce to me your wedding for the
28th of February, and on the 3rd of March you turn up here in Paris.
And if I have come, my dear father, said GÃ©rard, drawing closer to M.
Noirtier, do not complain, for it is for you that I came, and my
journey will be your salvation.

Ah, indeed! said M. Noirtier, stretching himself out at his ease in
the chair. Really, pray tell me all about it, for it must be
interesting.

Father, you have heard speak of a certain Bonapartist club in the Rue
Saint-Jacques?

No. 53; yes, I am vice-president.

Father, your coolness makes me shudder.

Why, my dear boy, when a man has been proscribed by the mountaineers,
has escaped from Paris in a hay-cart, been hunted over the plains of
Bordeaux by Robespierres bloodhounds, he becomes accustomed to most
things. But go on, what about the club in the Rue Saint-Jacques?

Why, they induced General Quesnel to go there, and General Quesnel,
who quitted his own house at nine oclock in the evening, was found the
next day in the Seine.

0151m

And who told you this fine story?

The king himself.

Well, then, in return for your story, continued Noirtier, I will
tell you another.

My dear father, I think I already know what you are about to tell me.

Ah, you have heard of the landing of the emperor?

Not so loud, father, I entreat of you"for your own sake as well as
mine. Yes, I heard this news, and knew it even before you could; for
three days ago I posted from Marseilles to Paris with all possible
speed, half-desperate at the enforced delay.

Three days ago? You are crazy. Why, three days ago the emperor had not
landed.

No matter, I was aware of his intention.

How did you know about it?

By a letter addressed to you from the Island of Elba.

To me?

To you; and which I discovered in the pocket-book of the messenger.

Had that letter fallen into the hands of another, you, my dear father, would probably ere this have been shot. Villeforts father laughed. Come, come, said he, will the Restoration adopt imperial methods so promptly? Shot, my dear boy? What an idea! Where is the letter you speak of? I know you too well to suppose you would allow such a thing to pass you.

I burnt it, for fear that even a fragment should remain; for that letter must have led to your condemnation.

And the destruction of your future prospects, replied Noirtier; yes, I can easily comprehend that. But I have nothing to fear while I have you to protect me.

I do better than that, sir "I save you.

You do? Why, really, the thing becomes more and more dramatic "explain yourself.

I must refer again to the club in the Rue Saint-Jacques.

It appears that this club is rather a bore to the police. Why didnt they search more vigilantly? they would have found " "

They have not found; but they are on the track.

Yes, that the usual phrase; I am quite familiar with it. When the police is at fault, it declares that it is on the track; and the government patiently awaits the day when it comes to say, with a sneaking air, that the track is lost.

Yes, but they have found a corpse; the general has been killed, and in all countries they call that a murder.

A murder do you call it? why, there is nothing to prove that the general was murdered. People are found every day in the Seine, having thrown themselves in, or having been drowned from not knowing how to swim.

Father, you know very well that the general was not a man to drown himself in despair, and people do not bathe in the Seine in the month of January. No, no, do not be deceived; this was murder in every sense of the word.

And who thus designated it?

The king himself.

The king! I thought he was philosopher enough to allow that there was no murder in politics. In politics, my dear fellow, you know, as well as I do, there are no men, but ideas "no feelings, but interests; in politics we do not kill a man, we only remove an obstacle, that is all. Would you like to know how matters have progressed? Well, I will tell you. It was thought reliance might be placed in General Quesnel; he was recommended to us from the Island of Elba; one of us went to him, and invited him to the Rue Saint-Jacques, where he would find some friends. He came there, and the plan was unfolded to him for leaving Elba, the projected landing, etc. When he had heard and comprehended all to the fullest extent, he replied that he was a royalist. Then all looked at each other, "he was made to take an oath, and did so, but with such an ill grace that it was really tempting Providence to swear thus, and yet, in spite of that, the general was allowed to depart free "perfectly free. Yet he did not return home. What could that mean? why, my dear fellow, that on leaving us he lost his way, thats all. A murder?

really, Villefort, you surprise me. You, a deputy procureur, to found an accusation on such bad premises! Did I ever say to you, when you were fulfilling your character as a royalist, and cut off the head of one of my party, "My son, you have committed a murder? No, I said, "Very well, sir, you have gained the victory; tomorrow, perchance, it will be our turn.

But, father, take care; when our turn comes, our revenge will be sweeping.

I do not understand you.

You rely on the usurpers return?

We do.

You are mistaken; he will not advance two leagues into the interior of France without being followed, tracked, and caught like a wild beast.

My dear fellow, the emperor is at this moment on the way to Grenoble; on the 10th or 12th he will be at Lyons, and on the 20th or 25th at Paris.

The people will rise.

Yes, to go and meet him.

He has but a handful of men with him, and armies will be despatched against him.

Yes, to escort him into the capital. Really, my dear GÃ©rard, you are but a child; you think yourself well informed because the telegraph has told you, three days after the landing, "The usurper has landed at Cannes with several men. He is pursued. But where is he? what is he doing? You do not know at all, and in this way they will chase him to Paris, without drawing a trigger.

Grenoble and Lyons are faithful cities, and will oppose to him an impassable barrier.

Grenoble will open her gates to him with enthusiasm"all Lyons will hasten to welcome him. Believe me, we are as well informed as you, and our police are as good as your own. Would you like a proof of it? well, you wished to conceal your journey from me, and yet I knew of your arrival half an hour after you had passed the barrier. You gave your direction to no one but your postilion, yet I have your address, and in proof I am here the very instant you are going to sit at table. Ring, then, if you please, for a second knife, fork, and plate, and we will dine together.

Indeed! replied Villefort, looking at his father with astonishment, you really do seem very well informed.

Eh? the thing is simple enough. You who are in power have only the means that money produces"we who are in expectation, have those which devotion prompts.

Devotion! said Villefort, with a sneer.

Yes, devotion; for that is, I believe, the phrase for hopeful ambition.

And Villefort's father extended his hand to the bell-rope, to summon the servant whom his son had not called. Villefort caught his arm.

Wait, my dear father, said the young man, one word more.

Say on.

However stupid the royalist police may be, they do know one terrible thing.

What is that?

The description of the man who, on the morning of the day when General Quesnel disappeared, presented himself at his house.

Oh, the admirable police have found that out, have they? And what may be that description?

Dark complexion; hair, eyebrows, and whiskers black; blue frock-coat, buttoned up to the chin; rosette of an officer of the Legion of Honor in his button-hole; a hat with wide brim, and a cane.

Ah, ha, that's it, is it? said Noirtier; and why, then, have they not laid hands on him?

Because yesterday, or the day before, they lost sight of him at the corner of the Rue Coq-HÃ©ron.

Didn't I say that your police were good for nothing?

Yes; but they may catch him yet.

True, said Noirtier, looking carelessly around him, true, if this person were not on his guard, as he is; and he added with a smile, He will consequently make a few changes in his personal appearance. At these words he rose, and put off his frock-coat and cravat, went towards a table on which lay his son's toilet articles, lathered his face, took a razor, and, with a firm hand, cut off the compromising whiskers. Villefort watched him with alarm not devoid of admiration. His whiskers cut off, Noirtier gave another turn to his hair; took, instead of his black cravat, a colored neckerchief which lay at the top of an open portmanteau; put on, in lieu of his blue and high-buttoned frock-coat, a coat of Villefort's of dark brown, and cut away in front;

tried on before the glass a narrow-brimmed hat of his sons, which appeared to fit him perfectly, and, leaving his cane in the corner where he had deposited it, he took up a small bamboo switch, cut the air with it once or twice, and walked about with that easy swagger which was one of his principal characteristics.

Well, he said, turning towards his wondering son, when this disguise was completed, well, do you think your police will recognize me now. No, father, stammered Villefort; at least, I hope not.

And now, my dear boy, continued Noirtier, I rely on your prudence to remove all the things which I leave in your care.

Oh, rely on me, said Villefort.

Yes, yes; and now I believe you are right, and that you have really saved my life; be assured I will return the favor hereafter.

Villefort shook his head.

You are not convinced yet?

I hope at least, that you may be mistaken.

Shall you see the king again?

Perhaps.

Would you pass in his eyes for a prophet?

Prophets of evil are not in favor at the court, father.

True, but some day they do them justice; and supposing a second restoration, you would then pass for a great man.

Well, what should I say to the king?

Say this to him: ~Sire, you are deceived as to the feeling in France, as to the opinions of the towns, and the prejudices of the army; he whom in Paris you call the Corsican ogre, who at Nevers is styled the usurper, is already saluted as Bonaparte at Lyons, and emperor at Grenoble. You think he is tracked, pursued, captured; he is advancing as rapidly as his own eagles. The soldiers you believe to be dying with hunger, worn out with fatigue, ready to desert, gather like atoms of snow about the rolling ball as it hastens onward. Sire, go, leave France to its real master, to him who acquired it, not by purchase, but by right of conquest; go, sire, not that you incur any risk, for your adversary is powerful enough to show you mercy, but because it would be humiliating for a grandson of Saint Louis to owe his life to the man of Arcola, Marengo, Austerlitz. Tell him this, GÃ©rard; or, rather, tell him nothing. Keep your journey a secret; do not boast of what you have come to Paris to do, or have done; return with all speed; enter Marseilles at night, and your house by the back-door, and there remain, quiet, submissive, secret, and, above all, inoffensive; for this time, I swear to you, we shall act like powerful men who know their enemies. Go, my son"go, my dear GÃ©rard, and by your obedience to my paternal orders, or, if you prefer it, friendly counsels, we will keep you in your place. This will be, added Noirtier, with a smile, one means by which you may a second time save me, if the political balance should some day take another turn, and cast you aloft while hurling me down. Adieu, my dear GÃ©rard, and at your next journey alight at my door. Noirtier left the room when he had finished, with the same calmness that had characterized him during the whole of this remarkable and trying conversation. Villefort, pale and agitated, ran to the window, put aside the curtain, and saw him pass, cool and collected, by two or three ill-looking men at the corner of the street, who were there, perhaps, to arrest a man with black whiskers, and a blue frock-coat, and hat with broad brim.

Villefort stood watching, breathless, until his father had disappeared at the Rue Bussy. Then he turned to the various articles he had left behind him, put the black cravat and blue frock-coat at the bottom of the portmanteau, threw the hat into a dark closet, broke the cane into small bits and flung it in the fire, put on his travelling-cap, and calling his valet, checked with a look the thousand questions he was ready to ask, paid his bill, sprang into his carriage, which was ready, learned at Lyons that Bonaparte had entered Grenoble, and in the midst of the tumult which prevailed along the road, at length reached

Marseilles, a prey to all the hopes and fears which enter into the heart of man with ambition and its first successes.

Chapter 13. The Hundred Days

M. Noirtier was a true prophet, and things progressed rapidly, as he had predicted. Everyone knows the history of the famous return from Elba, a return which was unprecedented in the past, and will probably remain without a counterpart in the future.

Louis XVIII. made but a faint attempt to parry this unexpected blow; the monarchy he had scarcely reconstructed tottered on its precarious foundation, and at a sign from the emperor the incongruous structure of ancient prejudices and new ideas fell to the ground. Villefort, therefore, gained nothing save the kings gratitude (which was rather likely to injure him at the present time) and the cross of the Legion of Honor, which he had the prudence not to wear, although M. de Blacas had duly forwarded the brevet.

Napoleon would, doubtless, have deprived Villefort of his office had it not been for Noirtier, who was all powerful at court, and thus the Girondin of 93 and the Senator of 1806 protected him who so lately had been his protector. All Villeforts influence barely enabled him to stifle the secret Dant s had so nearly divulged. The kings procureur alone was deprived of his office, being suspected of royalism.

However, scarcely was the imperial power established"that is, scarcely had the emperor re-entered the Tuileries and begun to issue orders from the closet into which we have introduced our readers,"he found on the table there Louis XVIII.s half-filled snuff-box,"scarcely had this occurred when Marseilles began, in spite of the authorities, to rekindle the flames of civil war, always smouldering in the south, and it required but little to excite the populace to acts of far greater violence than the shouts and insults with which they assailed the royalists whenever they ventured abroad.

0159m

Owing to this change, the worthy shipowner became at that moment"we will not say all powerful, because Morrel was a prudent and rather a timid man, so much so, that many of the most zealous partisans of Bonaparte accused him of moderation"but sufficiently influential to make a demand in favor of Dant s.

Villefort retained his place, but his marriage was put off until a more favorable opportunity. If the emperor remained on the throne, G rard required a different alliance to aid his career; if Louis XVIII. returned, the influence of M. de Saint-M ran, like his own, could be vastly increased, and the marriage be still more suitable. The deputy procureur was, therefore, the first magistrate of Marseilles, when one morning his door opened, and M. Morrel was announced.

Anyone else would have hastened to receive him; but Villefort was a man of ability, and he knew this would be a sign of weakness. He made Morrel wait in the antechamber, although he had no one with him, for the simple reason that the kings procureur always makes everyone wait, and after passing a quarter of an hour in reading the papers, he ordered M. Morrel to be admitted.

Morrel expected Villefort would be dejected; he found him as he had found him six weeks before, calm, firm, and full of that glacial politeness, that most insurmountable barrier which separates the well-bred from the vulgar man.

He had entered Villeforts office expecting that the magistrate would tremble at the sight of him; on the contrary, he felt a cold shudder all over him when he saw Villefort sitting there with his elbow on his desk, and his head leaning on his hand. He stopped at the door; Villefort gazed at him as if he had some difficulty in recognizing him; then, after a brief interval, during which the honest shipowner turned his hat in his hands,

M. Morrel, I believe? said Villefort.

Yes, sir.

Come nearer, said the magistrate, with a patronizing wave of the

hand, and tell me to what circumstance I owe the honor of this visit. Do you not guess, monsieur? asked Morrel. Not in the least; but if I can serve you in any way I shall be delighted.

Everything depends on you.

Explain yourself, pray.

Monsieur, said Morrel, recovering his assurance as he proceeded, do you recollect that a few days before the landing of his majesty the emperor, I came to intercede for a young man, the mate of my ship, who was accused of being concerned in correspondence with the Island of Elba? What was the other day a crime is today a title to favor. You then served Louis XVIII., and you did not show any favor"it was your duty; today you serve Napoleon, and you ought to protect him"it is equally your duty; I come, therefore, to ask what has become of him?

0161m

Villefort by a strong effort sought to control himself. What is his name? said he. Tell me his name.

Edmond Dant s.

Villefort would probably have rather stood opposite the muzzle of a pistol at five-and-twenty paces than have heard this name spoken; but he did not blanch.

Dant s, repeated he, Edmond Dant s.

Yes, monsieur. Villefort opened a large register, then went to a table, from the table turned to his registers, and then, turning to Morrel,

Are you quite sure you are not mistaken, monsieur? said he, in the most natural tone in the world.

Had Morrel been a more quick-sighted man, or better versed in these matters, he would have been surprised at the king's procureur answering him on such a subject, instead of referring him to the governors of the prison or the prefect of the department. But Morrel, disappointed in his expectations of exciting fear, was conscious only of the others' condescension. Villefort had calculated rightly.

No, said Morrel; I am not mistaken. I have known him for ten years, the last four of which he was in my service. Do not you recollect, I came about six weeks ago to plead for clemency, as I come today to plead for justice. You received me very coldly. Oh, the royalists were very severe with the Bonapartists in those days.

Monsieur, returned Villefort, I was then a royalist, because I believed the Bourbons not only the heirs to the throne, but the chosen of the nation. The miraculous return of Napoleon has conquered me, the legitimate monarch is he who is loved by his people.

That's right! cried Morrel. I like to hear you speak thus, and I augur well for Edmond from it.

Wait a moment, said Villefort, turning over the leaves of a register; I have it"a sailor, who was about to marry a young Catalan girl. I recollect now; it was a very serious charge.

How so?

You know that when he left here he was taken to the Palais de Justice.

Well?

I made my report to the authorities at Paris, and a week after he was carried off.

Carried off! said Morrel. What can they have done with him?

Oh, he has been taken to Fenestrelles, to Pignerol, or to the Sainte-Margu rite islands. Some fine morning he will return to take command of your vessel.

Come when he will, it shall be kept for him. But how is it he is not already returned? It seems to me the first care of government should be to set at liberty those who have suffered for their adherence to it.

Do not be too hasty, M. Morrel, replied Villefort. The order of imprisonment came from high authority, and the order for his liberation must proceed from the same source; and, as Napoleon has scarcely been

reinstated a fortnight, the letters have not yet been forwarded. But, said Morrel, is there no way of expediting all these formalities"of releasing him from arrest? There has been no arrest. How?

It is sometimes essential to government to cause a mans disappearance without leaving any traces, so that no written forms or documents may defeat their wishes.

It might be so under the Bourbons, but at present""

It has always been so, my dear Morrel, since the reign of Louis XIV. The emperor is more strict in prison discipline than even Louis himself, and the number of prisoners whose names are not on the register is incalculable. Had Morrel even any suspicions, so much kindness would have dispelled them.

Well, M. de Villefort, how would you advise me to act? asked he. Petition the minister.

Oh, I know what that is; the minister receives two hundred petitions every day, and does not read three.

That is true; but he will read a petition countersigned and presented by me.

And will you undertake to deliver it?

With the greatest pleasure. DantÃs was then guilty, and now he is innocent, and it is as much my duty to free him as it was to condemn him. Villefort thus forestalled any danger of an inquiry, which, however improbable it might be, if it did take place would leave him defenceless.

But how shall I address the minister?

Sit down there, said Villefort, giving up his place to Morrel, and write what I dictate.

Will you be so good?

Certainly. But lose no time; we have lost too much already.

That is true. Only think what the poor fellow may even now be suffering.

Villefort shuddered at the suggestion; but he had gone too far to draw back. DantÃs must be crushed to gratify Villeforts ambition.

Villefort dictated a petition, in which, from an excellent intention, no doubt, DantÃs patriotic services were exaggerated, and he was made out one of the most active agents of Napoleons return. It was evident that at the sight of this document the minister would instantly release him. The petition finished, Villefort read it aloud.

That will do, said he; leave the rest to me.

Will the petition go soon?

Today.

Countersigned by you?

The best thing I can do will be to certify the truth of the contents of your petition. And, sitting down, Villefort wrote the certificate at the bottom.

What more is to be done?

I will do whatever is necessary. This assurance delighted Morrel, who took leave of Villefort, and hastened to announce to old DantÃs that he would soon see his son.

As for Villefort, instead of sending to Paris, he carefully preserved the petition that so fearfully compromised DantÃs, in the hopes of an event that seemed not unlikely,"that is, a second restoration. DantÃs remained a prisoner, and heard not the noise of the fall of Louis XVIII.s throne, or the still more tragic destruction of the empire. Twice during the Hundred Days had Morrel renewed his demand, and twice had Villefort soothed him with promises. At last there was Waterloo, and Morrel came no more; he had done all that was in his power, and any fresh attempt would only compromise himself uselessly.

Louis XVIII. remounted the throne; Villefort, to whom Marseilles had become filled with remorseful memories, sought and obtained the situation of kings procureur at Toulouse, and a fortnight afterwards

he married Mademoiselle de Saint-MÃ©ran, whose father now stood higher at court than ever.

And so DantÃ©s, after the Hundred Days and after Waterloo, remained in his dungeon, forgotten of earth and heaven.

Danglars comprehended the full extent of the wretched fate that overwhelmed DantÃ©s; and, when Napoleon returned to France, he, after the manner of mediocre minds, termed the coincidence, _a decree of Providence_. But when Napoleon returned to Paris, Danglars heart failed him, and he lived in constant fear of DantÃ©s return on a mission of vengeance. He therefore informed M. Morrel of his wish to quit the sea, and obtained a recommendation from him to a Spanish merchant, into whose service he entered at the end of March, that is, ten or twelve days after Napoleons return. He then left for Madrid, and was no more heard of.

Fernand understood nothing except that DantÃ©s was absent. What had become of him he cared not to inquire. Only, during the respite the absence of his rival afforded him, he reflected, partly on the means of deceiving MercÃ©dÃ©s as to the cause of his absence, partly on plans of emigration and abduction, as from time to time he sat sad and motionless on the summit of Cape Pharo, at the spot from whence Marseilles and the Catalans are visible, watching for the apparition of a young and handsome man, who was for him also the messenger of vengeance. Fernands mind was made up; he would shoot DantÃ©s, and then kill himself. But Fernand was mistaken; a man of his disposition never kills himself, for he constantly hopes.

During this time the empire made its last conscription, and every man in France capable of bearing arms rushed to obey the summons of the emperor. Fernand departed with the rest, bearing with him the terrible thought that while he was away, his rival would perhaps return and marry MercÃ©dÃ©s. Had Fernand really meant to kill himself, he would have done so when he parted from MercÃ©dÃ©s. His devotion, and the compassion he showed for her misfortunes, produced the effect they always produce on noble minds"MercÃ©dÃ©s had always had a sincere regard for Fernand, and this was now strengthened by gratitude.

My brother, said she, as she placed his knapsack on his shoulders, be careful of yourself, for if you are killed, I shall be alone in the world. These words carried a ray of hope into Fernands heart. Should DantÃ©s not return, MercÃ©dÃ©s might one day be his.

0165m

MercÃ©dÃ©s was left alone face to face with the vast plain that had never seemed so barren, and the sea that had never seemed so vast. Bathed in tears she wandered about the Catalan village. Sometimes she stood mute and motionless as a statue, looking towards Marseilles, at other times gazing on the sea, and debating as to whether it were not better to cast herself into the abyss of the ocean, and thus end her woes. It was not want of courage that prevented her putting this resolution into execution; but her religious feelings came to her aid and saved her. Caderousse was, like Fernand, enrolled in the army, but, being married and eight years older, he was merely sent to the frontier. Old DantÃ©s, who was only sustained by hope, lost all hope at Napoleons downfall. Five months after he had been separated from his son, and almost at the hour of his arrest, he breathed his last in MercÃ©dÃ©s arms. M. Morrel paid the expenses of his funeral, and a few small debts the poor old man had contracted.

There was more than benevolence in this action; there was courage; the south was aflame, and to assist, even on his death-bed, the father of so dangerous a Bonapartist as DantÃ©s, was stigmatized as a crime.

Chapter 14. The Two Prisoners

A year after Louis XVIII.s restoration, a visit was made by the inspector-general of prisons. DantÃ©s in his cell heard the noise of preparation,"sounds that at the depth where he lay would have been inaudible to any but the ear of a prisoner, who could hear the splash of the drop of water that every hour fell from the roof of his dungeon.

He guessed something uncommon was passing among the living; but he had so long ceased to have any intercourse with the world, that he looked upon himself as dead.

The inspector visited, one after another, the cells and dungeons of several of the prisoners, whose good behavior or stupidity recommended them to the clemency of the government. He inquired how they were fed, and if they had any request to make. The universal response was, that the fare was detestable, and that they wanted to be set free.

The inspector asked if they had anything else to ask for. They shook their heads. What could they desire beyond their liberty? The inspector turned smilingly to the governor.

I do not know what reason government can assign for these useless visits; when you see one prisoner, you see all,"always the same thing,"ill fed and innocent. Are there any others?

Yes; the dangerous and mad prisoners are in the dungeons.

Let us visit them, said the inspector with an air of fatigue. We must play the farce to the end. Let us see the dungeons.

Let us first send for two soldiers, said the governor. The prisoners sometimes, through mere uneasiness of life, and in order to be sentenced to death, commit acts of useless violence, and you might fall a victim.

Take all needful precautions, replied the inspector.

Two soldiers were accordingly sent for, and the inspector descended a stairway, so foul, so humid, so dark, as to be loathsome to sight, smell, and respiration.

Oh, cried the inspector, who can live here?

A most dangerous conspirator, a man we are ordered to keep the most strict watch over, as he is daring and resolute.

He is alone?

Certainly.

How long has he been there?

Nearly a year.

Was he placed here when he first arrived?

No; not until he attempted to kill the turnkey, who took his food to him.

To kill the turnkey?

Yes, the very one who is lighting us. Is it not true, Antoine? asked the governor.

True enough; he wanted to kill me! returned the turnkey.

He must be mad, said the inspector.

He is worse than that,"he is a devil! returned the turnkey.

Shall I complain of him? demanded the inspector.

Oh, no; it is useless. Besides, he is almost mad now, and in another year he will be quite so.

So much the better for him,"he will suffer less, said the inspector.

He was, as this remark shows, a man full of philanthropy, and in every way fit for his office.

You are right, sir, replied the governor; and this remark proves that you have deeply considered the subject. Now we have in a dungeon about twenty feet distant, and to which you descend by another stair, an old abbé, formerly leader of a party in Italy, who has been here since 1811, and in 1813 he went mad, and the change is astonishing. He used to weep, he now laughs; he grew thin, he now grows fat. You had better see him, for his madness is amusing.

I will see them both, returned the inspector; I must conscientiously perform my duty.

This was the inspectors first visit; he wished to display his authority.

Let us visit this one first, added he.

By all means, replied the governor, and he signed to the turnkey to open the door. At the sound of the key turning in the lock, and the creaking of the hinges, Dantès, who was crouched in a corner of the dungeon, whence he could see the ray of light that came through a

narrow iron grating above, raised his head. Seeing a stranger, escorted by two turnkeys holding torches and accompanied by two soldiers, and to whom the governor spoke bareheaded, Dant  s, who guessed the truth, and that the moment to address himself to the superior authorities was come, sprang forward with clasped hands.

The soldiers interposed their bayonets, for they thought that he was about to attack the inspector, and the latter recoiled two or three steps. Dant  s saw that he was looked upon as dangerous. Then, infusing all the humility he possessed into his eyes and voice, he addressed the inspector, and sought to inspire him with pity.

The inspector listened attentively; then, turning to the governor, observed, He will become religious"he is already more gentle; he is afraid, and retreated before the bayonets"madmen are not afraid of anything; I made some curious observations on this at Charenton. Then, turning to the prisoner, What is it you want? said he.

I want to know what crime I have committed"to be tried; and if I am guilty, to be shot; if innocent, to be set at liberty.

Are you well fed? said the inspector.

I believe so; I dont know; its of no consequence. What matters really, not only to me, but to officers of justice and the king, is that an innocent man should languish in prison, the victim of an infamous denunciation, to die here cursing his executioners.

You are very humble today, remarked the governor; you are not so always; the other day, for instance, when you tried to kill the turnkey.

It is true, sir, and I beg his pardon, for he has always been very good to me, but I was mad.

And you are not so any longer?

No; captivity has subdued me"I have been here so long.

So long?"when were you arrested, then? asked the inspector.

The 28th of February, 1815, at half-past two in the afternoon.

Today is the 30th of July, 1816,"why, it is but seventeen months.

Only seventeen months, replied Dant  s. Oh, you do not know what is seventeen months in prison!"seventeen ages rather, especially to a man who, like me, had arrived at the summit of his ambition"to a man, who, like me, was on the point of marrying a woman he adored, who saw an honorable career opened before him, and who loses all in an instant"who sees his prospects destroyed, and is ignorant of the fate of his affianced wife, and whether his aged father be still living! Seventeen months captivity to a sailor accustomed to the boundless ocean, is a worse punishment than human crime ever merited. Have pity on me, then, and ask for me, not intelligence, but a trial; not pardon, but a verdict"a trial, sir, I ask only for a trial; that, surely, cannot be denied to one who is accused!

We shall see, said the inspector; then, turning to the governor, On my word, the poor devil touches me. You must show me the proofs against him.

Certainly; but you will find terrible charges.

Monsieur, continued Dant  s, I know it is not in your power to release me; but you can plead for me"you can have me tried"and that is all I ask. Let me know my crime, and the reason why I was condemned. Uncertainty is worse than all.

Go on with the lights, said the inspector.

Monsieur, cried Dant  s, I can tell by your voice you are touched with pity; tell me at least to hope.

I cannot tell you that, replied the inspector; I can only promise to examine into your case.

Oh, I am free"then I am saved!

Who arrested you?

M. Villefort. See him, and hear what he says.

M. Villefort is no longer at Marseilles; he is now at Toulouse.

I am no longer surprised at my detention, murmured Dant  s, since my only protector is removed.

Had M. de Villefort any cause of personal dislike to you?

None; on the contrary, he was very kind to me.

I can, then, rely on the notes he has left concerning you?

Entirely.

That is well; wait patiently, then.

Dant  fell on his knees, and prayed earnestly. The door closed; but this time a fresh inmate was left with Dant 's Hope.

0173m

Will you see the register at once, asked the governor, or proceed to the other cell?

Let us visit them all, said the inspector. If I once went up those stairs. I should never have the courage to come down again.

Ah, this one is not like the other, and his madness is less affecting than this one's display of reason.

What is his folly?

He fancies he possesses an immense treasure. The first year he offered government a million of francs for his release; the second, two; the third, three; and so on progressively. He is now in his fifth year of captivity; he will ask to speak to you in private, and offer you five millions.

How curious!"what is his name?

The Abb  Faria.

No. 27, said the inspector.

It is here; unlock the door, Antoine.

The turnkey obeyed, and the inspector gazed curiously into the chamber of the _mad abb _, as the prisoner was usually called.

In the centre of the cell, in a circle traced with a fragment of plaster detached from the wall, sat a man whose tattered garments scarcely covered him. He was drawing in this circle geometrical lines, and seemed as much absorbed in his problem as Archimedes was when the soldier of Marcellus slew him. He did not move at the sound of the door, and continued his calculations until the flash of the torches lighted up with an unwonted glare the sombre walls of his cell; then, raising his head, he perceived with astonishment the number of persons present. He hastily seized the coverlet of his bed, and wrapped it round him.

What is it you want? said the inspector.

I, monsieur, replied the abb  with an air of surprise, "I want nothing.

You do not understand, continued the inspector; I am sent here by government to visit the prison, and hear the requests of the prisoners.

Oh, that is different, cried the abb ; and we shall understand each other, I hope.

There, now, whispered the governor, it is just as I told you.

Monsieur, continued the prisoner, I am the Abb  Faria, born at Rome.

I was for twenty years Cardinal Spada's secretary; I was arrested, why, I know not, toward the beginning of the year 1811; since then I have demanded my liberty from the Italian and French government.

Why from the French government?

Because I was arrested at Piombino, and I presume that, like Milan and Florence, Piombino has become the capital of some French department.

Ah, said the inspector, you have not the latest news from Italy?

My information dates from the day on which I was arrested, returned the Abb  Faria; and as the emperor had created the kingdom of Rome for his infant son, I presume that he has realized the dream of Machiavelli and C sar Borgia, which was to make Italy a united kingdom.

Monsieur, returned the inspector, Providence has changed this gigantic plan you advocate so warmly.

It is the only means of rendering Italy strong, happy, and independent.

Very possibly; only I am not come to discuss politics, but to inquire if you have anything to ask or to complain of.

The food is the same as in other prisons,"that is, very bad; the lodging is very unhealthful, but, on the whole, passable for a dungeon; but it is not that which I wish to speak of, but a secret I have to reveal of the greatest importance.

We are coming to the point, whispered the governor.

It is for that reason I am delighted to see you, continued the abb , although you have disturbed me in a most important calculation, which, if it succeeded, would possibly change Newtons system. Could you allow me a few words in private.

What did I tell you? said the governor.

You knew him, returned the inspector with a smile.

What you ask is impossible, monsieur, continued he, addressing Faria.

0175m

But, said the abb , I would speak to you of a large sum, amounting to five millions.

The very sum you named, whispered the inspector in his turn.

However, continued Faria, seeing that the inspector was about to depart, it is not absolutely necessary for us to be alone; the governor can be present.

Unfortunately, said the governor, I know beforehand what you are about to say; it concerns your treasures, does it not? Faria fixed his eyes on him with an expression that would have convinced anyone else of his sanity.

Of course, said he; of what else should I speak?

Mr. Inspector, continued the governor, I can tell you the story as well as he, for it has been dinned in my ears for the last four or five years.

That proves, returned the abb , that you are like those of Holy Writ, who having eyes see not, and having ears hear not.

My dear sir, the government is rich and does not want your treasures, replied the inspector; keep them until you are liberated. The abb s eyes glistened; he seized the inspectors hand.

But what if I am not liberated, cried he, and am detained here until my death? this treasure will be lost. Had not government better profit by it? I will offer six millions, and I will content myself with the rest, if they will only give me my liberty.

On my word, said the inspector in a low tone, had I not been told beforehand that this man was mad, I should believe what he says.

I am not mad, replied Faria, with that acuteness of hearing peculiar to prisoners. The treasure I speak of really exists, and I offer to sign an agreement with you, in which I promise to lead you to the spot where you shall dig; and if I deceive you, bring me here again,"I ask no more.

The governor laughed. Is the spot far from here?

A hundred leagues.

It is not ill-planned, said the governor. If all the prisoners took it into their heads to travel a hundred leagues, and their guardians consented to accompany them, they would have a capital chance of escaping.

The scheme is well known, said the inspector; and the abb s plan has not even the merit of originality.

Then turning to Faria, I inquired if you are well fed? said he.

Swear to me, replied Faria, to free me if what I tell you prove true, and I will stay here while you go to the spot.

Are you well fed? repeated the inspector.

Monsieur, you run no risk, for, as I told you, I will stay here; so there is no chance of my escaping.

You do not reply to my question, replied the inspector impatiently.

Nor you to mine, cried the abb . You will not accept my gold; I will keep it for myself. You refuse me my liberty; God will give it me. And the abb , casting away his coverlet, resumed his place, and continued his calculations.

0177m

What is he doing there? said the inspector.

Counting his treasures, replied the governor.

Faria replied to this sarcasm with a glance of profound contempt. They went out. The turnkey closed the door behind them.

He was wealthy once, perhaps? said the inspector.

Or dreamed he was, and awoke mad.

After all, said the inspector, if he had been rich, he would not have been here.

So the matter ended for the Abb  Faria. He remained in his cell, and this visit only increased the belief in his insanity.

Caligula or Nero, those treasure-seekers, those desirers of the impossible, would have accorded to the poor wretch, in exchange for his wealth, the liberty he so earnestly prayed for. But the kings of modern times, restrained by the limits of mere probability, have neither courage nor desire. They fear the ear that hears their orders, and the eye that scrutinizes their actions. Formerly they believed themselves sprung from Jupiter, and shielded by their birth; but nowadays they are not inviolable.

It has always been against the policy of despotic governments to suffer the victims of their persecutions to reappear. As the Inquisition rarely allowed its victims to be seen with their limbs distorted and their flesh lacerated by torture, so madness is always concealed in its cell, from whence, should it depart, it is conveyed to some gloomy hospital, where the doctor has no thought for man or mind in the mutilated being the jailer delivers to him. The very madness of the Abb  Faria, gone mad in prison, condemned him to perpetual captivity. The inspector kept his word with Dant ; he examined the register, and found the following note concerning him:

__Edmond Dant :__

Violent Bonapartist; took an active part in the return from Elba.

The greatest watchfulness and care to be exercised.

This note was in a different hand from the rest, which showed that it had been added since his confinement. The inspector could not contend against this accusation; he simply wrote, __Nothing to be done.__

This visit had infused new vigor into Dant ; he had, till then, forgotten the date; but now, with a fragment of plaster, he wrote the date, 30th July, 1816, and made a mark every day, in order not to lose his reckoning again. Days and weeks passed away, then months" Dant  still waited; he at first expected to be freed in a fortnight. This fortnight expired, he decided that the inspector would do nothing until his return to Paris, and that he would not reach there until his circuit was finished, he therefore fixed three months; three months passed away, then six more. Finally ten months and a half had gone by and no favorable change had taken place, and Dant  began to fancy the inspectors visit but a dream, an illusion of the brain.

At the expiration of a year the governor was transferred; he had obtained charge of the fortress at Ham. He took with him several of his subordinates, and amongst them Dant s jailer. A new governor arrived; it would have been too tedious to acquire the names of the prisoners; he learned their numbers instead. This horrible place contained fifty cells; their inhabitants were designated by the numbers of their cell, and the unhappy young man was no longer called Edmond Dant "he was now number 34.

Chapter 15. Number 34 and Number 27

Dant  passed through all the stages of torture natural to prisoners in suspense. He was sustained at first by that pride of conscious innocence which is the sequence to hope; then he began to doubt his own innocence, which justified in some measure the governors belief in his mental alienation; and then, relaxing his sentiment of pride, he addressed his supplications, not to God, but to man. God is always the last resource. Unfortunates, who ought to begin with God, do not have any hope in him till they have exhausted all other means of deliverance.

Dant s asked to be removed from his present dungeon into another, even if it were darker and deeper, for a change, however disadvantageous, was still a change, and would afford him some amusement. He entreated to be allowed to walk about, to have fresh air, books, and writing materials. His requests were not granted, but he went on asking all the same. He accustomed himself to speaking to the new jailer, although the latter was, if possible, more taciturn than the old one; but still, to speak to a man, even though mute, was something. Dant s spoke for the sake of hearing his own voice; he had tried to speak when alone, but the sound of his voice terrified him.

Often, before his captivity, Dant s mind had revolted at the idea of assemblages of prisoners, made up of thieves, vagabonds, and murderers. He now wished to be amongst them, in order to see some other face besides that of his jailer; he sighed for the galleys, with the infamous costume, the chain, and the brand on the shoulder. The galley-slaves breathed the fresh air of heaven, and saw each other. They were very happy.

He besought the jailer one day to let him have a companion, were it even the mad abb . The jailer, though rough and hardened by the constant sight of so much suffering, was yet a man. At the bottom of his heart he had often had a feeling of pity for this unhappy young man who suffered so; and he laid the request of number 34 before the governor; but the latter sapiently imagined that Dant s wished to conspire or attempt an escape, and refused his request. Dant s had exhausted all human resources, and he then turned to God.

All the pious ideas that had been so long forgotten, returned; he recollected the prayers his mother had taught him, and discovered a new meaning in every word; for in prosperity prayers seem but a mere medley of words, until misfortune comes and the unhappy sufferer first understands the meaning of the sublime language in which he invokes the pity of heaven! He prayed, and prayed aloud, no longer terrified at the sound of his own voice, for he fell into a sort of ecstasy. He laid every action of his life before the Almighty, proposed tasks to accomplish, and at the end of every prayer introduced the entreaty oftener addressed to man than to God: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. Yet in spite of his earnest prayers, Dant s remained a prisoner.

Then gloom settled heavily upon him. Dant s was a man of great simplicity of thought, and without education; he could not, therefore, in the solitude of his dungeon, traverse in mental vision the history of the ages, bring to life the nations that had perished, and rebuild the ancient cities so vast and stupendous in the light of the imagination, and that pass before the eye glowing with celestial colors in Martins Babylonian pictures. He could not do this, he whose past life was so short, whose present so melancholy, and his future so doubtful. Nineteen years of light to reflect upon in eternal darkness! No distraction could come to his aid; his energetic spirit, that would have exalted in thus revisiting the past, was imprisoned like an eagle in a cage. He clung to one idea—that of his happiness, destroyed, without apparent cause, by an unheard-of fatality; he considered and