

asonable sum of 5,050,000 francs, he stretched himself on his bed, and after turning over two or three times, fell asleep with the tranquillity of the hero whose life Luigi Vampa was studying.

Chapter 115. Luigi Vampas Bill of Fare

We awake from every sleep except the one dreaded by Danglars. He awoke. To a Parisian accustomed to silken curtains, walls hung with velvet drapery, and the soft perfume of burning wood, the white smoke of which diffuses itself in graceful curves around the room, the appearance of the whitewashed cell which greeted his eyes on awakening seemed like the continuation of some disagreeable dream. But in such a situation a single moment suffices to change the strongest doubt into certainty. Yes, yes, he murmured, I am in the hands of the brigands of whom Albert de Morcerf spoke. His first idea was to breathe, that he might know whether he was wounded. He borrowed this from _Don Quixote_, the only book he had ever read, but which he still slightly remembered. No, he cried, they have not wounded, but perhaps they have robbed me! and he thrust his hands into his pockets. They were untouched; the hundred louis he had reserved for his journey from Rome to Venice were in his trousers pocket, and in that of his greatcoat he found the little note-case containing his letter of credit for 5,050,000 francs. Singular bandits! he exclaimed; they have left me my purse and pocket-book. As I was saying last night, they intend me to be ransomed. Hello, here is my watch! Let me see what time it is.

Danglars watch, one of Breguets repeaters, which he had carefully wound up on the previous night, struck half past five. Without this, Danglars would have been quite ignorant of the time, for daylight did not reach his cell. Should he demand an explanation from the bandits, or should he wait patiently for them to propose it? The last alternative seemed the most prudent, so he waited until twelve o'clock. During all this time a sentinel, who had been relieved at eight o'clock, had been watching his door.

50249m

Danglars suddenly felt a strong inclination to see the person who kept watch over him. He had noticed that a few rays, not of daylight, but from a lamp, penetrated through the ill-joined planks of the door; he approached just as the brigand was refreshing himself with a mouthful of brandy, which, owing to the leathern bottle containing it, sent forth an odor which was extremely unpleasant to Danglars. Faugh! he exclaimed, retreating to the farther corner of his cell.

At twelve this man was replaced by another functionary, and Danglars, wishing to catch sight of his new guardian, approached the door again. He was an athletic, gigantic bandit, with large eyes, thick lips, and a flat nose; his red hair fell in dishevelled masses like snakes around his shoulders.

Ah, ha, cried Danglars, this fellow is more like an ogre than anything else; however, I am rather too old and tough to be very good eating!

We see that Danglars was collected enough to jest; at the same time, as though to disprove the ogreish propensities, the man took some black bread, cheese, and onions from his wallet, which he began devouring voraciously.

May I be hanged, said Danglars, glancing at the bandits dinner through the crevices of the door, "may I be hanged if I can understand how people can eat such filth! and he withdrew to seat himself upon his goat-skin, which reminded him of the smell of the brandy.

But the mysteries of nature are incomprehensible, and there are certain invitations contained in even the coarsest food which appeal very irresistibly to a fasting stomach. Danglars felt his own not to be very well supplied just then, and gradually the man appeared less ugly, the bread less black, and the cheese more fresh, while those dreadful vulgar onions recalled to his mind certain sauces and side-dishes, which his cook prepared in a very superior manner whenever he said,

Monsieur Deniseau, let me have a nice little fricassee today. He got up and knocked on the door; the bandit raised his head. Danglars knew that he was heard, so he redoubled his blows.

Che cosa? asked the bandit.

Come, come, said Danglars, tapping his fingers against the door, I think it is quite time to think of giving me something to eat!

But whether he did not understand him, or whether he had received no orders respecting the nourishment of Danglars, the giant, without answering, went on with his dinner. Danglars feelings were hurt, and not wishing to put himself under obligations to the brute, the banker threw himself down again on his goat-skin and did not breathe another word.

Four hours passed by and the giant was replaced by another bandit. Danglars, who really began to experience sundry gnawings at the stomach, arose softly, again applied his eye to the crack of the door, and recognized the intelligent countenance of his guide. It was, indeed, Peppino who was preparing to mount guard as comfortably as possible by seating himself opposite to the door, and placing between his legs an earthen pan, containing chick-peas stewed with bacon. Near the pan he also placed a pretty little basket of Villettri grapes and a flask of Orvieto. Peppino was decidedly an epicure. Danglars watched these preparations and his mouth watered.

Come, he said to himself, let me try if he will be more tractable than the other; and he tapped gently at the door.

On y va, (coming) exclaimed Peppino, who from frequenting the house of Signor Pastrini understood French perfectly in all its idioms. Danglars immediately recognized him as the man who had called out in such a furious manner, Put in your head! But this was not the time for recrimination, so he assumed his most agreeable manner and said with a gracious smile:

Excuse me, sir, but are they not going to give me any dinner?

Does your excellency happen to be hungry?

Happen to be hungry,"thats pretty good, when I havent eaten for twenty-four hours! muttered Danglars. Then he added aloud, Yes, sir, I am hungry"very hungry.

And your excellency wants something to eat?

At once, if possible

Nothing easier, said Peppino. Here you can get anything you want; by paying for it, of course, as among honest folk.

Of course! cried Danglars. Although, in justice, the people who arrest and imprison you, ought, at least, to feed you.

That is not the custom, excellency, said Peppino.

A bad reason, replied Danglars, who reckoned on conciliating his keeper; but I am content. Let me have some dinner!

At once! What would your excellency like?

And Peppino placed his pan on the ground, so that the steam rose directly under the nostrils of Danglars. Give your orders.

Have you kitchens here?

Kitchens?"of course"complete ones.

And cooks?

Excellent!

Well, a fowl, fish, game,"it signifies little, so that I eat.

As your excellency pleases. You mentioned a fowl, I think?

Yes, a fowl.

Peppino, turning around, shouted, A fowl for his excellency! His voice yet echoed in the archway when a handsome, graceful, and half-naked young man appeared, bearing a fowl in a silver dish on his head, without the assistance of his hands.

I could almost believe myself at the Caf   de Paris, murmured Danglars.

Here, your excellency, said Peppino, taking the fowl from the young bandit and placing it on the worm-eaten table, which with the stool and the goat-skin bed formed the entire furniture of the cell. Danglars

asked for a knife and fork.

Here, excellency, said Peppino, offering him a little blunt knife and a boxwood fork. Danglars took the knife in one hand and the fork in the other, and was about to cut up the fowl.

Pardon me, excellency, said Peppino, placing his hand on the bankers shoulder; people pay here before they eat. They might not be satisfied, and""

Ah, ha, thought Danglars, this is not so much like Paris, except that I shall probably be skinned! Never mind, Ill fix that all right. I have always heard how cheap poultry is in Italy; I should think a fowl is worth about twelve sous at Rome."There, he said, throwing a louis down.

Peppino picked up the louis, and Danglars again prepared to carve the fowl.

Stay a moment, your excellency, said Peppino, rising; you still owe me something.

I said they would skin me, thought Danglars; but resolving to resist the extortion, he said, Come, how much do I owe you for this fowl? Your excellency has given me a louis on account.

A louis on account for a fowl?

Certainly; and your excellency now owes me 4,999 louis.

Danglars opened his enormous eyes on hearing this gigantic joke.

Very droll, he muttered, very droll indeed, and he again began to carve the fowl, when Peppino stopped the barons right hand with his left, and held out his other hand.

Come, now, he said.

Is it not a joke? said Danglars.

We never joke, replied Peppino, solemn as a Quaker.

What! A hundred thousand francs for a fowl!

Ah, excellency, you cannot imagine how hard it is to rear fowls in these horrible caves!

Come, come, this is very droll"very amusing"I allow; but, as I am very hungry, pray allow me to eat. Stay, here is another louis for you.

Then that will make only 4,998 louis more, said Peppino with the same indifference. I shall get them all in time.

Oh, as for that, said Danglars, angry at this prolongation of the jest,"as for that you wont get them at all. Go to the devil! You do not know with whom you have to deal!

50253m

Peppino made a sign, and the youth hastily removed the fowl. Danglars threw himself upon his goat-skin, and Peppino, reclosing the door, again began eating his peas and bacon. Though Danglars could not see Peppino, the noise of his teeth allowed no doubt as to his occupation. He was certainly eating, and noisily too, like an ill-bred man.

Brute! said Danglars. Peppino pretended not to hear him, and without even turning his head continued to eat slowly. Danglars stomach felt so empty, that it seemed as if it would be impossible ever to fill it again; still he had patience for another half-hour, which appeared to him like a century. He again arose and went to the door.

Come, sir, do not keep me starving here any longer, but tell me what they want.

Nay, your excellency, it is you who should tell us what you want. Give your orders, and we will execute them.

Then open the door directly. Peppino obeyed. Now look here, I want something to eat! To eat"do you hear?

Are you hungry?

Come, you understand me.

What would your excellency like to eat?

A piece of dry bread, since the fowls are beyond all price in this accursed place.

Bread? Very well. Holloa, there, some bread! he called. The youth brought a small loaf. How much? asked Danglars.

Four thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight louis, said Peppino; You

have paid two louis in advance.

50255m

What? One hundred thousand francs for a loaf?

One hundred thousand francs, repeated Peppino.

But you only asked 100,000 francs for a fowl!

We have a fixed price for all our provisions. It signifies nothing whether you eat much or little"whether you have ten dishes or one"it is always the same price.

What, still keeping up this silly jest? My dear fellow, it is perfectly ridiculous"stupid! You had better tell me at once that you intend starving me to death.

Oh, dear, no, your excellency, unless you intend to commit suicide.

Pay and eat.

And what am I to pay with, brute? said Danglars, enraged. Do you suppose I carry 100,000 francs in my pocket?

Your excellency has 5,050,000 francs in your pocket; that will be fifty fowls at 100,000 francs apiece, and half a fowl for the 50,000. Danglars shuddered. The bandage fell from his eyes, and he understood the joke, which he did not think quite so stupid as he had done just before.

Come, he said, if I pay you the 100,000 francs, will you be satisfied, and allow me to eat at my ease?

Certainly, said Peppino.

But how can I pay them?

Oh, nothing easier; you have an account open with Messrs. Thomson & French, Via dei Banchi, Rome; give me a draft for 4,998 louis on these gentlemen, and our banker shall take it.

Danglars thought it as well to comply with a good grace, so he took the pen, ink, and paper Peppino offered him, wrote the draft, and signed it.

Here, he said, here is a draft at sight.

And here is your fowl.

Danglars sighed while he carved the fowl; it appeared very thin for the price it had cost. As for Peppino, he examined the paper attentively, put it into his pocket, and continued eating his peas.

Chapter 116. The Pardon

The next day Danglars was again hungry; certainly the air of that dungeon was very provocative of appetite. The prisoner expected that he would be at no expense that day, for like an economical man he had concealed half of his fowl and a piece of the bread in the corner of his cell. But he had no sooner eaten than he felt thirsty; he had forgotten that. He struggled against his thirst till his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth; then, no longer able to resist, he called out. The sentinel opened the door; it was a new face. He thought it would be better to transact business with his old acquaintance, so he sent for Peppino.

Here I am, your excellency, said Peppino, with an eagerness which Danglars thought favorable to him. What do you want?

Something to drink.

Your excellency knows that wine is beyond all price near Rome.

Then give me water, cried Danglars, endeavoring to parry the blow.

Oh, water is even more scarce than wine, your excellency,"there has been such a drought.

Come, thought Danglars, it is the same old story. And while he smiled as he attempted to regard the affair as a joke, he felt his temples get moist with perspiration.

Come, my friend, said Danglars, seeing that he made no impression on Peppino, you will not refuse me a glass of wine?

I have already told you that we do not sell at retail.

Well, then, let me have a bottle of the least expensive.

They are all the same price.

And what is that?

Twenty-five thousand francs a bottle.

Tell me, cried Danglars, in a tone whose bitterness Harpagon³⁰ alone has been capable of revealing "tell me that you wish to despoil me of all; it will be sooner over than devouring me piecemeal. It is possible such may be the masters intention. The master?"who is he? The person to whom you were conducted yesterday. Where is he? Here. Let me see him. Certainly. And the next moment Luigi Vampa appeared before Danglars. You sent for me? he said to the prisoner. Are you, sir, the chief of the people who brought me here? Yes, your excellency. What then? How much do you require for my ransom? Merely the 5,000,000 you have about you. Danglars felt a dreadful spasm dart through his heart. But this is all I have left in the world, he said, out of an immense fortune. If you deprive me of that, take away my life also. We are forbidden to shed your blood. And by whom are you forbidden? By him we obey. You do, then, obey someone? Yes, a chief. I thought you said you were the chief? So I am of these men; but there is another over me. And did your superior order you to treat me in this way? Yes. But my purse will be exhausted. Probably. Come, said Danglars, will you take a million? No. Two millions?"three?"four? Come, four? I will give them to you on condition that you let me go. Why do you offer me 4,000,000 for what is worth 5,000,000? This is a kind of usury, banker, that I do not understand. Take all, then"take all, I tell you, and kill me! Come, come, calm yourself. You will excite your blood, and that would produce an appetite it would require a million a day to satisfy. Be more economical. But when I have no more money left to pay you? asked the infuriated Danglars. Then you must suffer hunger. Suffer hunger? said Danglars, becoming pale. Most likely, replied Vampa coolly. But you say you do not wish to kill me? No. And yet you will let me perish with hunger? Ah, that is a different thing. Well, then, wretches, cried Danglars, I will defy your infamous calculations"I would rather die at once! You may torture, torment, kill me, but you shall not have my signature again! As your excellency pleases, said Vampa, as he left the cell. Danglars, raving, threw himself on the goat-skin. Who could these men be? Who was the invisible chief? What could be his intentions towards him? And why, when everyone else was allowed to be ransomed, might he not also be? Oh, yes; certainly a speedy, violent death would be a fine means of deceiving these remorseless enemies, who appeared to pursue him with such incomprehensible vengeance. But to die? For the first time in his life, Danglars contemplated death with a mixture of dread and desire; the time had come when the implacable spectre, which exists in the mind of every human creature, arrested his attention and called out with every pulsation of his heart, Thou shalt die!

Danglars resembled a timid animal excited in the chase; first it flies, then despairs, and at last, by the very force of desperation, sometimes succeeds in eluding its pursuers. Danglars meditated an escape; but the walls were solid rock, a man was sitting reading at the only outlet to the cell, and behind that man shapes armed with guns continually passed. His resolution not to sign lasted two days, after which he offered a million for some food. They sent him a magnificent supper, and took his million.

From this time the prisoner resolved to suffer no longer, but to have everything he wanted. At the end of twelve days, after having made a splendid dinner, he reckoned his accounts, and found that he had only 50,000 francs left. Then a strange reaction took place; he who had just abandoned 5,000,000 endeavored to save the 50,000 francs he had left, and sooner than give them up he resolved to enter again upon a life of privation—he was deluded by the hopefulness that is a premonition of madness.

He, who for so long a time had forgotten God, began to think that miracles were possible—that the accursed cavern might be discovered by the officers of the Papal States, who would release him; that then he would have 50,000 remaining, which would be sufficient to save him from starvation; and finally he prayed that this sum might be preserved to him, and as he prayed he wept. Three days passed thus, during which his prayers were frequent, if not heartfelt. Sometimes he was delirious, and fancied he saw an old man stretched on a pallet; he, also, was dying of hunger.

On the fourth, he was no longer a man, but a living corpse. He had picked up every crumb that had been left from his former meals, and was beginning to eat the matting which covered the floor of his cell. Then he entreated Peppino, as he would a guardian angel, to give him food; he offered him 1,000 francs for a mouthful of bread. But Peppino did not answer. On the fifth day he dragged himself to the door of the cell.

Are you not a Christian? he said, falling on his knees. Do you wish to assassinate a man who, in the eyes of Heaven, is a brother? Oh, my former friends, my former friends! he murmured, and fell with his face to the ground. Then rising in despair, he exclaimed, The chief, the chief!

Here I am, said Vampa, instantly appearing; what do you want?

Take my last gold, muttered Danglars, holding out his pocket-book, and let me live here; I ask no more for liberty—I only ask to live! Then you suffer a great deal?

Oh, yes, yes, cruelly!

Still, there have been men who suffered more than you.

I do not think so.

Yes; those who have died of hunger.

Danglars thought of the old man whom, in his hours of delirium, he had seen groaning on his bed. He struck his forehead on the ground and groaned. Yes, he said, there have been some who have suffered more than I have, but then they must have been martyrs at least.

Do you repent? asked a deep, solemn voice, which caused Danglars hair to stand on end. His feeble eyes endeavored to distinguish objects, and behind the bandit he saw a man enveloped in a cloak, half lost in the shadow of a stone column.

Of what must I repent? stammered Danglars.

Of the evil you have done, said the voice.

Oh, yes; oh, yes, I do indeed repent. And he struck his breast with his emaciated fist.

Then I forgive you, said the man, dropping his cloak, and advancing to the light.

The Count of Monte Cristo! said Danglars, more pale from terror than he had been just before from hunger and misery.

You are mistaken—I am not the Count of Monte Cristo.

Then who are you?

50261m

I am he whom you sold and dishonored" I am he whose betrothed you prostituted" I am he upon whom you trampled that you might raise yourself to fortune" I am he whose father you condemned to die of hunger" I am he whom you also condemned to starvation, and who yet forgives you, because he hopes to be forgiven" I am Edmond Dant s! Danglars uttered a cry, and fell prostrate.

Rise, said the count, your life is safe; the same good fortune has not happened to your accomplices" one is mad, the other dead. Keep the 50,000 francs you have left" I give them to you. The 5,000,000 you stole from the hospitals has been restored to them by an unknown hand. And now eat and drink; I will entertain you tonight. Vampa, when this man is satisfied, let him be free.

Danglars remained prostrate while the count withdrew; when he raised his head he saw disappearing down the passage nothing but a shadow, before which the bandits bowed.

According to the counts directions, Danglars was waited on by Vampa, who brought him the best wine and fruits of Italy; then, having conducted him to the road, and pointed to the post-chaise, left him leaning against a tree. He remained there all night, not knowing where he was. When daylight dawned he saw that he was near a stream; he was thirsty, and dragged himself towards it. As he stooped down to drink, he saw that his hair had become entirely white.

Chapter 117. The Fifth of October

It was about six oclock in the evening; an opal-colored light, through which an autumnal sun shed its golden rays, descended on the blue ocean. The heat of the day had gradually decreased, and a light breeze arose, seeming like the respiration of nature on awakening from the burning siesta of the south. A delicious zephyr played along the coasts of the Mediterranean, and wafted from shore to shore the sweet perfume of plants, mingled with the fresh smell of the sea.

A light yacht, chaste and elegant in its form, was gliding amidst the first dews of night over the immense lake, extending from Gibraltar to the Dardanelles, and from Tunis to Venice. The vessel resembled a swan with its wings opened towards the wind, gliding on the water. It advanced swiftly and gracefully, leaving behind it a glittering stretch of foam. By degrees the sun disappeared behind the western horizon; but as though to prove the truth of the fanciful ideas in heathen mythology, its indiscreet rays reappeared on the summit of every wave, as if the god of fire had just sunk upon the bosom of Amphitrite, who in vain endeavored to hide her lover beneath her azure mantle.

The yacht moved rapidly on, though there did not appear to be sufficient wind to ruffle the curls on the head of a young girl.

Standing on the prow was a tall man, of a dark complexion, who saw with dilating eyes that they were approaching a dark mass of land in the shape of a cone, which rose from the midst of the waves like the hat of a Catalan.

Is that Monte Cristo? asked the traveller, to whose orders the yacht was for the time submitted, in a melancholy voice.

Yes, your excellency, said the captain, we have reached it.

We have reached it! repeated the traveller in an accent of indescribable sadness.

Then he added, in a low tone, Yes; that is the haven.

And then he again plunged into a train of thought, the character of which was better revealed by a sad smile, than it would have been by tears. A few minutes afterwards a flash of light, which was extinguished instantly, was seen on the land, and the sound of firearms reached the yacht.

Your excellency, said the captain, that was the land signal, will you answer yourself?

What signal?

The captain pointed towards the island, up the side of which ascended a volume of smoke, increasing as it rose.

Ah, yes, he said, as if awaking from a dream. Give it to me. The captain gave him a loaded carbine; the traveller slowly raised it, and fired in the air. Ten minutes afterwards, the sails were furled, and they cast anchor about a hundred fathoms from the little harbor. The gig was already lowered, and in it were four oarsmen and a coxswain. The traveller descended, and instead of sitting down at the stern of the boat, which had been decorated with a blue carpet for his accommodation, stood up with his arms crossed. The rowers waited, their oars half lifted out of the water, like birds drying their wings.

50265m

Give way, said the traveller. The eight oars fell into the sea simultaneously without splashing a drop of water, and the boat, yielding to the impulsion, glided forward. In an instant they found themselves in a little harbor, formed in a natural creek; the boat grounded on the fine sand.

Will your excellency be so good as to mount the shoulders of two of our men, they will carry you ashore? The young man answered this invitation with a gesture of indifference, and stepped out of the boat; the sea immediately rose to his waist.

Ah, your excellency, murmured the pilot, you should not have done so; our master will scold us for it.

The young man continued to advance, following the sailors, who chose a firm footing. Thirty strides brought them to dry land; the young man stamped on the ground to shake off the wet, and looked around for someone to show him his road, for it was quite dark. Just as he turned, a hand rested on his shoulder, and a voice which made him shudder exclaimed:

Good-evening, Maximilian; you are punctual, thank you!

Ah, is it you, count? said the young man, in an almost joyful accent, pressing Monte Cristos hand with both his own.

Yes; you see I am as exact as you are. But you are dripping, my dear fellow; you must change your clothes, as Calypso said to Telemachus. Come, I have a habitation prepared for you in which you will soon forget fatigue and cold.

Monte Cristo perceived that the young man had turned around; indeed, Morrel saw with surprise that the men who had brought him had left without being paid, or uttering a word. Already the sound of their oars might be heard as they returned to the yacht.

Oh, yes, said the count, you are looking for the sailors.

Yes, I paid them nothing, and yet they are gone.

Never mind that, Maximilian, said Monte Cristo, smiling. I have made an agreement with the navy, that the access to my island shall be free of all charge. I have made a bargain.

Morrel looked at the count with surprise. Count, he said, you are not the same here as in Paris.

How so?

Here you laugh. The counts brow became clouded.

You are right to recall me to myself, Maximilian, he said; I was delighted to see you again, and forgot for the moment that all happiness is fleeting.

Oh, no, no, count, cried Maximilian, seizing the counts hands, pray laugh; be happy, and prove to me, by your indifference, that life is endurable to sufferers. Oh, how charitable, kind, and good you are; you affect this gayety to inspire me with courage.

You are wrong, Morrel; I was really happy.

Then you forget me, so much the better.

How so?

Yes; for as the gladiator said to the emperor, when he entered the arena, ~He who is about to die salutes you.

Then you are not consoled? asked the count, surprised.

Oh, exclaimed Morrel, with a glance full of bitter reproach, do you think it possible that I could be?

Listen, said the count. Do you understand the meaning of my words?

You cannot take me for a commonplace man, a mere rattle, emitting a vague and senseless noise. When I ask you if you are consoled, I speak to you as a man for whom the human heart has no secrets. Well, Morrel, let us both examine the depths of your heart. Do you still feel the same feverish impatience of grief which made you start like a wounded lion? Have you still that devouring thirst which can only be appeased in the grave? Are you still actuated by the regret which drags the living to the pursuit of death; or are you only suffering from the prostration of fatigue and the weariness of hope deferred? Has the loss of memory rendered it impossible for you to weep? Oh, my dear friend, if this be the case,"if you can no longer weep, if your frozen heart be dead, if you put all your trust in God, then, Maximilian, you are consoled"do not complain.

Count, said Morrel, in a firm and at the same time soft voice, listen to me, as to a man whose thoughts are raised to heaven, though he remains on earth; I come to die in the arms of a friend. Certainly, there are people whom I love. I love my sister Julie,"I love her husband Emmanuel; but I require a strong mind to smile on my last moments. My sister would be bathed in tears and fainting; I could not bear to see her suffer. Emmanuel would tear the weapon from my hand, and alarm the house with his cries. You, count, who are more than mortal, will, I am sure, lead me to death by a pleasant path, will you not?

50267m

My friend, said the count, I have still one doubt,"are you weak enough to pride yourself upon your sufferings?

No, indeed,"I am calm, said Morrel, giving his hand to the count; my pulse does not beat slower or faster than usual. No, I feel that I have reached the goal, and I will go no farther. You told me to wait and hope; do you know what you did, unfortunate adviser? I waited a month, or rather I suffered for a month! I did hope (man is a poor wretched creature), I did hope. What I cannot tell,"something wonderful, an absurdity, a miracle,"of what nature he alone can tell who has mingled with our reason that folly we call hope. Yes, I did wait"yes, I did hope, count, and during this quarter of an hour we have been talking together, you have unconsciously wounded, tortured my heart, for every word you have uttered proved that there was no hope for me. Oh, count, I shall sleep calmly, deliciously in the arms of death.

Morrel uttered these words with an energy which made the count shudder. My friend, continued Morrel, you named the fifth of October as the end of the period of waiting,"today is the fifth of October, he took out his watch, it is now nine oclock,"I have yet three hours to live.

Be it so, said the count, come. Morrel mechanically followed the count, and they had entered the grotto before he perceived it. He felt a carpet under his feet, a door opened, perfumes surrounded him, and a brilliant light dazzled his eyes. Morrel hesitated to advance; he dreaded the enervating effect of all that he saw. Monte Cristo drew him in gently.

Why should we not spend the last three hours remaining to us of life, like those ancient Romans, who when condemned by Nero, their emperor and heir, sat down at a table covered with flowers, and gently glided into death, amid the perfume of heliotropes and roses?

Morrel smiled. As you please, he said; death is always death,"that is forgetfulness, repose, exclusion from life, and therefore from grief.

He sat down, and Monte Cristo placed himself opposite to him. They were in the marvellous dining-room before described, where the statues had baskets on their heads always filled with fruits and flowers. Morrel had looked carelessly around, and had probably noticed nothing.

Let us talk like men, he said, looking at the count.

Go on!

Count, said Morrel, you are the epitome of all human knowledge, and

you seem like a being descended from a wiser and more advanced world than ours.

There is something true in what you say, said the count, with that smile which made him so handsome; I have descended from a planet called grief.

50269m

I believe all you tell me without questioning its meaning; for instance, you told me to live, and I did live; you told me to hope, and I almost did so. I am almost inclined to ask you, as though you had experienced death, ~is it painful to die?

Monte Cristo looked upon Morrel with indescribable tenderness. Yes, he said, yes, doubtless it is painful, if you violently break the outer covering which obstinately begs for life. If you plunge a dagger into your flesh, if you insinuate a bullet into your brain, which the least shock disorders,"then certainly, you will suffer pain, and you will repent quitting a life for a repose you have bought at so dear a price.

Yes; I know that there is a secret of luxury and pain in death, as well as in life; the only thing is to understand it.

You have spoken truly, Maximilian; according to the care we bestow upon it, death is either a friend who rocks us gently as a nurse, or an enemy who violently drags the soul from the body. Some day, when the world is much older, and when mankind will be masters of all the destructive powers in nature, to serve for the general good of humanity; when mankind, as you were just saying, have discovered the secrets of death, then that death will become as sweet and voluptuous as a slumber in the arms of your beloved.

And if you wished to die, you would choose this death, count?

Yes.

Morrel extended his hand. Now I understand, he said, why you had me brought here to this desolate spot, in the midst of the ocean, to this subterranean palace; it was because you loved me, was it not, count? It was because you loved me well enough to give me one of those sweet means of death of which we were speaking; a death without agony, a death which allows me to fade away while pronouncing Valentines name and pressing your hand.

Yes, you have guessed rightly, Morrel, said the count, that is what I intended.

Thanks; the idea that tomorrow I shall no longer suffer, is sweet to my heart.

Do you then regret nothing?

No, replied Morrel.

Not even me? asked the count with deep emotion. Morrels clear eye was for the moment clouded, then it shone with unusual lustre, and a large tear rolled down his cheek.

What, said the count, do you still regret anything in the world, and yet die?

Oh, I entreat you, exclaimed Morrel in a low voice, do not speak another word, count; do not prolong my punishment.

The count fancied that he was yielding, and this belief revived the horrible doubt that had overwhelmed him at the ChÃ¢teau dIf.

I am endeavoring, he thought, to make this man happy; I look upon this restitution as a weight thrown into the scale to balance the evil I have wrought. Now, supposing I am deceived, supposing this man has not been unhappy enough to merit happiness. Alas, what would become of me who can only atone for evil by doing good?

50271m

Then he said aloud: Listen, Morrel, I see your grief is great, but still you do not like to risk your soul. Morrel smiled sadly.

Count, he said, I swear to you my soul is no longer my own.

Maximilian, you know I have no relation in the world. I have accustomed myself to regard you as my son: well, then, to save my son, I will sacrifice my life, nay, even my fortune.

What do you mean?

I mean, that you wish to quit life because you do not understand all the enjoyments which are the fruits of a large fortune. Morrel, I possess nearly a hundred millions and I give them to you; with such a fortune you can attain every wish. Are you ambitious? Every career is open to you. Overturn the world, change its character, yield to mad ideas, be even criminal—but live.

Count, I have your word, said Morrel coldly; then taking out his watch, he added, It is half-past eleven.

Morrel, can you intend it in my house, under my very eyes?

Then let me go, said Maximilian, or I shall think you did not love me for my own sake, but for yours; and he arose.

It is well, said Monte Cristo whose countenance brightened at these words; you wish it—you are inflexible. Yes, as you said, you are indeed wretched and a miracle alone can cure you. Sit down, Morrel, and wait.

Morrel obeyed; the count arose, and unlocking a closet with a key suspended from his gold chain, took from it a little silver casket, beautifully carved and chased, the corners of which represented four bending figures, similar to the Caryatides, the forms of women, symbols of the angels aspiring to heaven.

He placed the casket on the table; then opening it took out a little golden box, the top of which flew open when touched by a secret spring. This box contained an unctuous substance partly solid, of which it was impossible to discover the color, owing to the reflection of the polished gold, sapphires, rubies, emeralds, which ornamented the box. It was a mixed mass of blue, red, and gold.

The count took out a small quantity of this with a gilt spoon, and offered it to Morrel, fixing a long steadfast glance upon him. It was then observable that the substance was greenish.

This is what you asked for, he said, and what I promised to give you.

I thank you from the depths of my heart, said the young man, taking the spoon from the hands of Monte Cristo. The count took another spoon, and again dipped it into the golden box. What are you going to do, my friend? asked Morrel, arresting his hand.

Well, the fact is, Morrel, I was thinking that I too am weary of life, and since an opportunity presents itself—

Stay! said the young man. You who love, and are beloved; you, who have faith and hope, oh, do not follow my example. In your case it would be a crime. Adieu, my noble and generous friend, adieu; I will go and tell Valentine what you have done for me.

And slowly, though without any hesitation, only waiting to press the count's hand fervently, he swallowed the mysterious substance offered by Monte Cristo. Then they were both silent. Ali, mute and attentive, brought the pipes and coffee, and disappeared. By degrees, the light of the lamps gradually faded in the hands of the marble statues which held them, and the perfumes appeared less powerful to Morrel. Seated opposite to him, Monte Cristo watched him in the shadow, and Morrel saw nothing but the bright eyes of the count. An overpowering sadness took possession of the young man, his hands relaxed their hold, the objects in the room gradually lost their form and color, and his disturbed vision seemed to perceive doors and curtains open in the wall.

50273m

Friend, he cried, I feel that I am dying; thanks!

He made a last effort to extend his hand, but it fell powerless beside him. Then it appeared to him that Monte Cristo smiled, not with the strange and fearful expression which had sometimes revealed to him the secrets of his heart, but with the benevolent kindness of a father for a child. At the same time the count appeared to increase in stature, his form, nearly double its usual height, stood out in relief against the red tapestry, his black hair was thrown back, and he stood in the attitude of an avenging angel. Morrel, overpowered, turned around in

the armchair; a delicious torpor permeated every vein. A change of ideas presented themselves to his brain, like a new design on the kaleidoscope. Enervated, prostrate, and breathless, he became unconscious of outward objects; he seemed to be entering that vague delirium preceding death. He wished once again to press the counts hand, but his own was immovable. He wished to articulate a last farewell, but his tongue lay motionless and heavy in his throat, like a stone at the mouth of a sepulchre. Involuntarily his languid eyes closed, and still through his eyelashes a well-known form seemed to move amid the obscurity with which he thought himself enveloped. The count had just opened a door. Immediately a brilliant light from the next room, or rather from the palace adjoining, shone upon the room in which he was gently gliding into his last sleep. Then he saw a woman of marvellous beauty appear on the threshold of the door separating the two rooms. Pale, and sweetly smiling, she looked like an angel of mercy conjuring the angel of vengeance.

Is it heaven that opens before me? thought the dying man; that angel resembles the one I have lost.

Monte Cristo pointed out Morrel to the young woman, who advanced towards him with clasped hands and a smile upon her lips.

Valentine, Valentine! he mentally ejaculated; but his lips uttered no sound, and as though all his strength were centred in that internal emotion, he sighed and closed his eyes. Valentine rushed towards him; his lips again moved.

He is calling you, said the count; he to whom you have confided your destiny—he from whom death would have separated you, calls you to him. Happily, I vanquished death. Henceforth, Valentine, you will never again be separated on earth, since he has rushed into death to find you. Without me, you would both have died. May God accept my atonement in the preservation of these two existences!

Valentine seized the counts hand, and in her irresistible impulse of joy carried it to her lips.

50275m

Oh, thank me again! said the count; tell me till you are weary, that I have restored you to happiness; you do not know how much I require this assurance.

Oh, yes, yes, I thank you with all my heart, said Valentine; and if you doubt the sincerity of my gratitude, oh, then, ask Haydée! ask my beloved sister Haydée, who ever since our departure from France, has caused me to wait patiently for this happy day, while talking to me of you.

You then love Haydée? asked Monte Cristo with an emotion he in vain endeavored to dissimulate.

Oh, yes, with all my soul.

Well, then, listen, Valentine, said the count; I have a favor to ask of you.

Of me? Oh, am I happy enough for that?

Yes; you have called Haydée your sister, let her become so indeed, Valentine; render her all the gratitude you fancy that you owe to me; protect her, for (the counts voice was thick with emotion) henceforth she will be alone in the world.

Alone in the world! repeated a voice behind the count, and why?

Monte Cristo turned around; Haydée was standing pale, motionless, looking at the count with an expression of fearful amazement.

Because tomorrow, Haydée, you will be free; you will then assume your proper position in society, for I will not allow my destiny to overshadow yours. Daughter of a prince, I restore to you the riches and name of your father.

Haydée became pale, and lifting her transparent hands to heaven, exclaimed in a voice stifled with tears, Then you leave me, my lord?

Haydée, Haydée, you are young and beautiful; forget even my name, and be happy.

It is well, said Haydée; your order shall be executed, my lord; I

will forget even your name, and be happy. And she stepped back to retire.

Oh, heavens, exclaimed Valentine, who was supporting the head of Morrel on her shoulder, do you not see how pale she is? Do you not see how she suffers?

HaydÃ© answered with a heartrending expression,

Why should he understand this, my sister? He is my master, and I am his slave; he has the right to notice nothing.

The count shuddered at the tones of a voice which penetrated the inmost recesses of his heart; his eyes met those of the young girl and he could not bear their brilliancy.

Oh, heavens, exclaimed Monte Cristo, can my suspicions be correct?

HaydÃ©, would it please you not to leave me?

I am young, gently replied HaydÃ©; I love the life you have made so sweet to me, and I should be sorry to die.

You mean, then, that if I leave you, HaydÃ©?"

I should die; yes, my lord.

Do you then love me?

Oh, Valentine, he asks if I love him. Valentine, tell him if you love Maximilian.

The count felt his heart dilate and throb; he opened his arms, and HaydÃ©, uttering a cry, sprang into them.

Oh, yes, she cried, I do love you! I love you as one loves a father, brother, husband! I love you as my life, for you are the best, the noblest of created beings!

50277m

Let it be, then, as you wish, sweet angel; God has sustained me in my struggle with my enemies, and has given me this reward; he will not let me end my triumph in suffering; I wished to punish myself, but he has pardoned me. Love me then, HaydÃ©! Who knows? perhaps your love will make me forget all that I do not wish to remember.

What do you mean, my lord?

I mean that one word from you has enlightened me more than twenty years of slow experience; I have but you in the world, HaydÃ©; through you I again take hold on life, through you I shall suffer, through you rejoice.

Do you hear him, Valentine? exclaimed HaydÃ©; he says that through me he will suffer"through _me_, who would yield my life for his.

The count withdrew for a moment. Have I discovered the truth? he said; but whether it be for recompense or punishment, I accept my fate. Come, HaydÃ©, come! and throwing his arm around the young girls waist, he pressed the hand of Valentine, and disappeared.

50279m

An hour had nearly passed, during which Valentine, breathless and motionless, watched steadfastly over Morrel. At length she felt his heart beat, a faint breath played upon his lips, a slight shudder, announcing the return of life, passed through the young mans frame. At length his eyes opened, but they were at first fixed and expressionless; then sight returned, and with it feeling and grief. Oh, he cried, in an accent of despair, the count has deceived me; I am yet living; and extending his hand towards the table, he seized a knife.

Dearest, exclaimed Valentine, with her adorable smile, awake, and look at me! Morrel uttered a loud exclamation, and frantic, doubtful, dazzled, as though by a celestial vision, he fell upon his knees.

The next morning at daybreak, Valentine and Morrel were walking arm-in-arm on the seashore, Valentine relating how Monte Cristo had appeared in her room, explained everything, revealed the crime, and, finally, how he had saved her life by enabling her to simulate death. They had found the door of the grotto opened, and gone forth; on the azure dome of heaven still glittered a few remaining stars.

Morrel soon perceived a man standing among the rocks, apparently awaiting a sign from them to advance, and pointed him out to Valentine.

Ah, it is Jacopo, she said, the captain of the yacht; and she beckoned him towards them.

Do you wish to speak to us? asked Morrel.

I have a letter to give you from the count.

From the count! murmured the two young people.

Yes; read it.

50281m

Morrel opened the letter, and read:

My Dear Maximilian,

There is a felucca for you at anchor. Jacopo will carry you to Leghorn, where Monsieur Noirtier awaits his granddaughter, whom he wishes to bless before you lead her to the altar. All that is in this grotto, my friend, my house in the Champs-Élysées, and my château at Tréport, are the marriage gifts bestowed by Edmond Dantès upon the son of his old master, Morrel. Mademoiselle de Villefort will share them with you; for I entreat her to give to the poor the immense fortune reverting to her from her father, now a madman, and her brother who died last September with his mother. Tell the angel who will watch over your future destiny, Morrel, to pray sometimes for a man, who, like Satan, thought himself for an instant equal to God, but who now acknowledges with Christian humility that God alone possesses supreme power and infinite wisdom. Perhaps those prayers may soften the remorse he feels in his heart. As for you, Morrel, this is the secret of my conduct towards you. There is neither happiness nor misery in the world; there is only the comparison of one state with another, nothing more. He who has felt the deepest grief is best able to experience supreme happiness. We must have felt what it is to die, Morrel, that we may appreciate the enjoyments of living.

Live, then, and be happy, beloved children of my heart, and never forget that until the day when God shall deign to reveal the future to man, all human wisdom is summed up in these two words, "Wait and hope."

Your friend,
Edmond Dantès, _Count of Monte Cristo_.

50282m

During the perusal of this letter, which informed Valentine for the first time of the madness of her father and the death of her brother, she became pale, a heavy sigh escaped from her bosom, and tears, not the less painful because they were silent, ran down her cheeks; her happiness cost her very dear.

Morrel looked around uneasily.

But, he said, the count's generosity is too overwhelming; Valentine will be satisfied with my humble fortune. Where is the count, friend? Lead me to him.

Jacopo pointed towards the horizon.

What do you mean? asked Valentine. Where is the count? "where is Haydée?"

Look! said Jacopo.

The eyes of both were fixed upon the spot indicated by the sailor, and on the blue line separating the sky from the Mediterranean Sea, they perceived a large white sail.

Gone, said Morrel; gone! "adieu, my friend" "adieu, my father!"

Gone, murmured Valentine; adieu, my sweet Haydée "adieu, my sister!"

Who can say whether we shall ever see them again? said Morrel with tearful eyes.

Darling, replied Valentine, has not the count just told us that all human wisdom is summed up in two words:

"Wait and hope" (Fac et spera)!

FOOTNOTES:

1 (return) [The wicked are great drinkers of water; As the flood proved once for all.]

2 (return) [\$2,600,000 in 1894.]

3 (return) [Knocked on the head.]

4 (return) [Beheaded.]

5 (return) [Scott, of course: The son of an ill-fated sire, and the father of a yet more unfortunate family, bore in his looks that cast of inauspicious melancholy by which the physiognomists of that time pretended to distinguish those who were predestined to a violent and unhappy death."The Abbot, ch. xxii.]

6 (return) [Guillotine.]